



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

March 30, 2022

Scott C. Addison  
Coordinator  
9858 Rivermont Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63137

Dear Mr. Addison:

Thank you for your letter and petition of September 12, 2021, regarding revising the Forest Service's non-commercial group use regulations at 36 CFR Part 251, Subpart B.

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has reviewed your letter and petition for revising the Forest Service's non-commercial group use regulations at 36 CFR Part 251, Subpart B. The Secretary of USDA establishes the regulatory priorities for the USDA and the Forest Service based on Presidential and Congressional priorities.

The noncommercial group use rule has been upheld repeatedly by the courts. The Forest Service is applying it consistently and fairly to noncommercial groups using National Forest System lands. Based on a thorough review by the Forest Service, the Department has determined that there is no need to revise the noncommercial group use rule. Therefore, the USDA is denying your petition for rulemaking.

We appreciate your interest in the management of National Forest System lands. We are always interested in working with individuals on planning and administration of Rainbow Family gatherings, including advance site selection, operation and maintenance plan development, and permit administration. Please work with the appropriate forest supervisor and local government officials on the specifics for upcoming Rainbow Family gatherings.

Sincerely,

*Homer Wilkes*

Dr. Homer Wilkes  
Under Secretary

cc: Chris French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System  
Gregory C. Smith, Director of Lands and Realty Management  
Gordon Blum, Acting Director of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources