



Forest Service News Release

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Virtual public meeting Tuesday, closures now in place within Plumas National Forest Unauthorized Group Use Incident

Quincy, Calif., June 22, 2024 — A virtual public meeting will be held Tuesday, June 25 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. to inform area residents and visitors about the unauthorized noncommercial group use incident (Rainbow Family Gathering) occurring on the Plumas National Forest.

The gathering is currently located on the Mount Hough Ranger District, approximately 5 miles north of Antelope Lake Recreation Area in Plumas County, just south of Lassen County.

The public meeting can be accessed by joining <https://tinyurl.com/3sskz6wj>. The format will include local and Incident Management Team leadership sharing information about the incident. Questions can be submitted in the chat during the meeting.

This incident began Monday afternoon when members of the Rainbow Family traveled into the Plumas National Forest and began establishing a camp. Within a few days, numbers exceeded what is allowable without a permit.

The group does not have, nor have they applied for, a special use permit for noncommercial group use that is required for any event with more than 75 people. This is in violation of Title 36 in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

“While this is the first time the Rainbow Family is gathering on the Plumas National Forest, this is the 52nd annual gathering and, historically, they have refused to comply with the Forest Service permit process,” said Plumas National Forest Supervisor Chris Carlton. “They claim to not have leaders and no single member of the group who can speak for them or sign a permit on their behalf.”

Forest Service regulations require that all noncommercial group use, defined as activities that have no entry or participation fee charged nor the primary purpose being the sale of a good or service and activities, being conducted on National Forest System lands that involves 75 or more people, be authorized by the Forest Service through a special use permit for noncommercial group use (36 CFR 251.54).

“We have the support of a National Incident Management Team that has several years of experience with these incidents and are providing advice and counsel as we address this unexpected and rapidly evolving situation,” Carlton said. “We are working closely with local, state and federal law enforcement, emergency response resources, local government and tribal

officials to mitigate impacts, address concerns to navigate the next few weeks with community safety and resource protection at the forefront.”

As part of initial steps for public safety, to help protect natural resources and to avoid traffic congestion, the Forest has issued two closure orders.

Forest Order 05-11-02-24-01 restricts traffic on Forest Road 28N15 to one-way travel to manage traffic flow and ensure an open roadway throughout the incident and closes Forest Roads 28N15A and 28N15B at the base of Red Peak.

Forest Order 05-11-02-24-02 prohibits the parking and leaving of a vehicle in posted areas on Forest Road 28N15. This is to ensure safe ingress and egress in the area for the public and emergency vehicles if there is a need for response, as well as to protect natural resources in the area.

Both orders are in place through July 15 or until Forest leadership determines they can be lifted, whichever occurs first.

Violations of the closure orders are punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment of not more than 6 months, or both.

“Our communities have been through a lot over the past several years and this incident is occurring during a time of year when annual festivals, events and traditions already draw thousands of people to the area,” Carlton said. “We are hearing and understand the concerns from residents and visitors about this increase in traffic, the risk of wildfire, the potential damage to resources from this unauthorized use and unwanted impacts to communities in and around the Plumas National Forest.”

Please visit the Plumas National Forest’s website at www.fs.usda.gov to view the Forest Orders and accompanying maps.

For more information about the Unauthorized Noncommercial Group Use Incident, please visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/rainbowgathering>.

About the Forest Service: The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages the 193 million acres of National Forest System land, provides stewardship assistance to non-federal forest landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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