

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
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NOTE TO MEDIA – Please contact the Chequamegon-Nicolet Public Affairs Officer, Hilary Markin, if you have further questions at 715-482-0115 or email hilary.r.markin@usda.gov.

Rainbow Family National Gathering to occur on Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Forest Service and local authorities prepare to manage record crowds

WASHBURN, Wis. (June 12, 2019) – The Rainbow Family of Living Light has chosen a site on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest for its 2019 national gathering. The event will coincide with the Fourth of July holiday, and participants have already begun arriving. The forest will experience the highest concentration of visitors during the first week of July. They selected an area near Canthook Lake on the Washburn Ranger District, just outside the community of Delta in Bayfield County, for their gathering.

The Rainbow Family is a loose-knit group of people from throughout the USA and other countries. Each summer they hold a national gathering to pursue social and spiritual activities and pray for world peace. Since 1972, the event has taken place on a different national forest each year. Crowds range from 2,000 to 10,000 forest visitors.

The USDA Forest Service manages the annual event in close coordination with Tribal, state and local partners to protect the health and safety of everyone involved, and to lessen environmental impacts to the site by providing information and enforcing laws.

“We understand there may be impacts to our community, our neighbors and other forest visitors,” said Jamie Davidson, Deputy Forest Supervisor for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. “We are working hard to minimize effects to our local communities and the environment. All visitors to the national forest are expected to obey federal, state and local laws and regulations, and we take the enforcement of these laws very seriously.”

The forest resource protection plan addresses concerns about health and safety, watershed protection, natural resource protection and rehabilitation of the event site before the group leaves. The Forest Service is mobilizing a national incident management team with experience managing these types of events. The team is working in unified command with the Bayfield County Sheriff’s Office and other local authorities.

An event of this size can have significant impacts on traffic, communities, local resources, residents and visitors. Local businesses can expect to see large numbers of Rainbow Family participants visiting stores and buying food and supplies along routes to the gathering site. Forest and county roads in the Delta area as well as the communities of Drummond, Barnes, Grandview and Iron River are expected to become congested during the event and road closures and/or traffic detours may occur on the National Forest.

In addition to the Rainbow Gathering, contracts to complete the permanent repairs to roads damaged during the June 2018 flood in this same area underway.

A closure order will be issued identifying roads that will be closed until further notice. This order is in addition to the order currently in place for those roads and trails damaged during the 2018 flood that were not temporarily repaired. Please visit the website listed below for a listing of roads that will be closed and for information on traffic flow for the Rainbow Gathering.

For more information about the Rainbow Family national gathering, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xmJJ5>.

For more information about the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest please visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CNNF002> or like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CNNF002>.