

## RAINBOW FAMILY SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES CLEANUP WORK OF PARQUE VENADO AREA

Rainbow Family rehabilitation (rehab) crew has successfully completed the cleanup and rehabilitation work in the Parque Venado area, site of the 38th Annual Rainbow Family of Living Light Gathering. This year's gathering drew up to 10, 500 participants at the peak of the event on July 4th. "The 60 Rainbow rehab workers who stayed behind were true to their word," said Derek Padilla, Cuba District Ranger, "They did a good job and their work was completed before the July 31<sup>st</sup> (the agreed upon deadline). The site is recovering well at this early stage and time and nature will complete the healing process, we refer to as "rehab"."

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the Gathering, the crew worked steadily up until July 27<sup>th</sup> to breakdown the 79 sites (trails, camps, kitchens, and other structures) that were built. Specific cleanup and rehabilitation work for the 8,880-acre permitted area was outlined in the agreed upon Gathering Rehabilitation Plan. The Plan provided specifications, methods, guidelines, and objectives for returning the Gathering site to the way the area looked, as close as possible, before the Gathering. During the cleanup and rehab period, the crew worked to restore riparian areas (areas adjacent to streams), minimize erosion, remove trash, dismantle structures, and more.

### Cleanup and Rehabilitation work entailed:

- Removing all hardware, such as hoses and PVC pipes. from water collection points;
- Removing all soil, rock, and vegetation that were used to divert water;
- Restoring all creek and stream crossings to their natural state;
- Placing erosion control measures in stream crossings;
- Constructing water bars on trails to minimize erosion;
- Blocking-off newly created trails that entered a water source such as a river;

### Obliterating and blocking trails and roads;

- Removing all signs, markers, and rock cairns (landmark mounds);
- Collecting and separating trash. Trash and recyclables were transported to several separate facilities, which helped to reduce the impact to any one facility;
- Covering up all fire rings, gray water pits, compost pits, and latrines. Covered areas were mixed with native dirt and scattered with rocks to achieve a natural look;
- Dismantling, scattering or removing all structures including kitchens, ovens, pole frames, sweat lodges, and shrines;
- Scarifying (scraping or raking top soil layer) to allow for moisture to penetrate, encouraging grasses and plants to re-establish
- Mulching, and water-barring all highly compacted areas such as kitchens, trails, and other heavily compacted areas;
- Removing all string, rope, wire, twine, from trees;
- Removing all abandoned animals and vehicles. As of July 27, 2009 two abandoned vehicles still remain onsite, however, arrangements are being made for removal.



**Community fire pit located right off the Main Meadow during the Gathering and after cleanup and rehab. This community fire pit was a main attraction during the Gathering, drawing up to 100 participants each night.**

In general, the site is recovering well; however, the work conducted by the rehab crew was the first step in the process. The next step is to allow the area to heal naturally over time. Grass and other vegetation have begun to grow back in most areas. "Some wildlife, such as elk and deer that were displaced because of the Gathering are all already starting to return to the area," said Ranger Padilla, "In time, more will return." Seeding was not necessary at the site due to the natural re-vegetation that is occurring. Several of the areas most heavily impacted will continue to be monitored by Forest Service into next spring and beyond to ensure that they completely recover.

The completion of the cleanup and rehab work draws an end to the 38th Annual Rainbow Family of Living Light Gathering. Despite minor issues this year, the event was deemed a success by participants and cooperators. "This year's event built and strengthened relationships between the Rainbow Family the Forest Service and the various local, county and state agencies that came together to create a safe and peaceful event for all," said Deputy Forest Supervisor, Erin Connelly. "We worked together with respect and stepped forward in a positive direction to achieve success. We are grateful for everyone's contribution," added Connelly.

## Letter of Gratitude to Community of Cuba:

On behalf of the Cuba Ranger District Staff, and the Santa National Forest, I would like to say thank you to the community of Cuba.

Back in mid-May when we found out that there was a possibility that an area on the Cuba Ranger District would be the host site for the 2009 National Rainbow Family of Living Light National Gathering, we were concerned as to how to address this event. We were not only concerned about the impacts to the natural resources of the national forest, but also the impacts to the community.

The community really stepped up and supported the Forest in a big way. From Daniel Delgado helping me make contact with the local businesses to Mickey Herrera, and all at Cosmo's Grocery, welcoming participants to our community. You all pitched in and made this event a success. I heard from several participants about how welcome they felt and that it had been many years since that had happened.

I would especially like to thank and recognize Mayor Richard Velarde. The community meeting he organized and facilitated went very well, and I believe, put to rest many of the concerns the community had.

It is true that, "it takes a village;" I couldn't mention each and everyone in the community who went out of their way to assist the Ranger District. The local businesses, the local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, NM Department of Homeland Security, and the medical and emergency services providers, you all helped to make this event a peaceful and safe one. I am proud to be part of the Village of Cuba.

Thanks to everyone.

Derek J Padilla

Cuba District Ranger







## Rainbow over the Rainbow Family Gathering July 2009



**Kitchen area before and after.  
The grass is already coming back**



**Over 10,500 people attended the Rainbow Family of Living Light Gathering on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in the Parque Venado area in the Cuba Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest. Below is the meadow two weeks after the gathering.**



**Approximately 60 Rainbow rehab workers completed the rehab of the Parque Venado area before the agreed upon deadline. Wildlife and cattle have returned to the site and the vegetation is recovering well.**

## ***THANK YOU***

Many of us, on behalf of The Rainbow Family of Living Light, sincerely thank the residents of Cuba and the surrounding communities for welcoming us home. And for your hospitality and generosity, as well as loving kindness. We appreciated the help many of you gave to us and hope we gave you something in return. Peace to you all and may your lives all be blessed.

*J'ai*



**The last of the cleanup crew is leaving.**