

Report of Additional Landscape Rehabilitation near Iron Phone Campground in the Homeland of the Nimiipuu People

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the vast majority of Rainbow gatherers agreed not to gather in Idaho in the summer of 2020. However, a small number of gatherers were intent on having what they insisted on calling the "Rainbow Gathering." They chose a site in Idaho very near Iron Phone Campground within the homeland of the Nimiipuu People and also in the Salmon River District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. Reports indicate that 400-500 persons attended this event.

We had hoped this report would be unnecessary. However, after the attendees cleaned up and rehabbed their site and left the area, several inspections of the site were made by Rainbow gatherers who chose not to participate. Although almost all the trash had been removed and some rehabilitation of the landscape by the attendees was completed, the people inspecting the land, acting as individuals, found that some of the rehab done did not meet the standards of a traditional annual gathering site rehabilitation. It was decided to return to the site and do more rehab to specific places needing more mitigation. The vision was to help the human landscape impacts of this event heal faster. Attempts were made to contact concerned Nimiipuu groups and NPTEC. Two groups responded and said to do the additional work we felt was needed. One of the two said to document with photos what was done. Three gatherers, two of whom had earlier inspected the site and one who had not, and again acting as individuals, did the additional rehab work on 21-24 August 2020. Not having attended the event, the three persons may not have located all places where more work was needed. We repeatedly walked the site and feel we found almost all areas where the attendees were concentrated. We wanted to do the work while the seed cycle was still happening. Additionally, Iron Phone is a popular bow hunting area, so finishing the job before the season there began on 30 August was a consideration.

The greatest need for more rehabilitation was to a rutted area on a ridge meadow where some attendees parked their vehicles during a rainy period. They did partially fill in some ruts. Careful soil and plant manipulation and light mulching by the crew of three to almost all ruts were done on the ridge where native First Foods and a threatened plant are found. Further rehab, including removing visible, fire-scarred rocks, and mulching, were made to most fire pits found and to some holes dug by the attendees. Two slit-latrines were located. Although the slits were filled in by the attendees, the covered slits were not mounded-over and naturalized. We completed this job. Cattle graze and water themselves throughout the site. It appears attendees used the numerous cattle trails within the site, making any human-made trails difficult to determine. One cutout, four-wheeler and cattle trail to a salt block was covered with sticks and logs by the attendees, causing the cattle to start a new trail adjacent to the old trail. This was corrected. Cattle have tromped all over the wet/damp water course through the site. It was impossible to determine any significant human impacts to the Cow Creek water course made by the event. Some (but not all) sets of photos taken before, during, and after our work to places we felt needed more rehab are included with this report.

We feel our work of additional rehabilitation at this site will allow Mother Earth to recover faster and that within a year or two very little evidence of impacts to the landscape from the event will remain.

Respectfully, Feather, Geno and Don Joseph, 9 October 2020

Ruts



Ruts in August



Ruts, before



Ruts, during



Ruts, after

Ruts



Ruts from road, before



Ruts from road, after



Ruts, before



Ruts, after

Firepit



Stump seat firepit, before



Stump seat firepit, during



Stump seat firepit, after



Stump seat firepit, after

Latrine



Three slit latrines, before



One of three slits, before
note: sticks added for photo



Two slits, during



Two slits, after

Hole



Hole, before



Hole, after

Trail



New cattle trail, before



Four-wheeler trail, after