

Mike Gray's letter about the Summer 2005 Pine Ridge Projects

"Certainly, that's life on a Joint Service Project. Life is not carefully scripted and neither are our projects. There is room for the spirit to move among us and through us. We just need to be prepared to go where it leads." (05/03/05)

Summer, 2005

Dear Friends,

I am writing this to advertise the project for the summer on Pine Ridge.

As I write, I am filled with memories of the recent projects in Mexico. Like, after we leveled a site for a reservoir in El Cordon that turned into a volleyball court and the back-bending labor of picks, shovels and wheelbarrows suddenly turned into block, set and spike when someone turned up with a ball and net.

Like getting lost on detours. Driving through rivers. Changing tires. Dancing. Rain. Removing the tree from the road. Sharing food on the road crews. Seeing whales playing near Isla Patos. Being followed by dolphins while checking crab traps. Being with Comca'ac para-ecologists when they identified a species of bird they had never seen before in the mangrove estuary at Bahia Sargento.

Farther back, but coming back to the front, are memories from last summer on Pine Ridge. Rebuilding the cook-shack at the High Horse sundance grounds. Registering voters. Going to large and small pow-wows. Rain. Touring the devastation in Manderson after a hail storm that came close to our camp. Sweat lodge ceremonies. The One Feather barbeque for all the volunteers. Paddling our canoe. Pounding nails. Indian Tacos. Angie's Burritos. Fry Bread. Lots of memories of food.

Every participant does not have all of these memories. Some are once-in-a-while events. Some are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. I don't even get to see it all. That's life.

Certainly, that's life on a Joint Service Project. Life is not carefully scripted and neither are our projects. There is room for the spirit to move among us and through us. We just need to be prepared to go where it leads.

So we may be moving around the rez to work on several different projects based on timing and need. We will be making those decisions later in the summer. We will be setting up a camp as usual. You will again be welcome for one week or as many as you can donate. You can get to the rez on your own or ride with us from Denver.

We are again planning to drive from Denver to Pine Ridge on Sundays, camp and work for a week, and return to Denver on Saturdays to change groups. We will be hosting a free overnight on Saturday night in Denver. We may be seeking some local volunteers to help with airport runs on weekends. It will all be easier if participants can group incoming flights on Saturday evenings. Outgoing flights are easiest before or after Meeting on Sundays.

Cost will be \$375.00 for the week, including the transportation from Denver.

Weeks will run July 10-16, July 17-23, July 24-30, July 31-August 6, and August 7-13.

In service,
Mike Gray

Autumn '05:

We plan to return to the Sierra Madres of Mexico for the harvest in late October.

We plan to spend the week of Thanksgiving with the Comca'ac in Mexico.
