

# **PortalBurn 2014 Afterburn Report**

## **PREFACE**

This document is a compilation of findings and post-event assessments for key aspects of PortalBurn 2014 held July 11-14, 2014 in Candor, NY. Key Contributors to this document are listed at the end.

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## **TICKETING**

We used Brown Paper Tickets for our ticketing platform. Their fees were reasonable and their customer service was exceptional. We set our cap at 300 and sold tickets in two rounds. We chose to leave our ticket sales live until the day of the event to allow the maximum potential for attendees. We will review this decision and how well our ticket check-in process worked before choosing to do this again next year. Out of 201 tickets sold 170 people attended (84%).

## **PARKING**

The parking area was located approximately 2000' from the event area itself. The parking area was a rectangular grassy field on the South side of the main road, with about 1000' of frontage along the road, and about 380' deep away from the road, sloping downhill. A walking trail through woods to the main field was about 700' in length. Temporary parking was situated as the first row of parking near the gate structure, and was demarcated by stakes and caution tape.

Arriving entrants would be seen approaching from the West and a parking volunteer, dressed in an orange vest and holding an orange-coned flashlight, would flag them to the temporary parking area. As people got out of their vehicle, they were instructed to bring their ticket and driver's license to the gate (see Gate for ticket procedure).

The road from the gate to the event itself was a one-way road through a wooded area, and controlling traffic was vital for safety. Where the road entered the event there was another EZ-up with table and chairs. This was known as the command center, which was used as a central location for volunteer information and parking assistance. Once the event participants were approved to enter the event and were back in their car, they were asked to remain stopped on the road until cleared to drive. The parking volunteer would radio to the command center.

A sample radio exchange went like this:

"Parking to command center. Over."

"This is command center. Over."

"I have two vehicles. Is it clear? Over."

"Yes. You may send two cars. Over."

"Thank you. Two cars on their way. Out."

This exchange worked flawlessly. There was never an instance where cars were on the road from both directions at the same time, forcing someone to back up. The event was small enough (probably around 100 cars) such that traffic never backed up and there was never a wait, but radio communication was always done. There was an occasional complaint about radio signal being weak.

## GATE

The gate was located in the Northeast corner of the parking area. It acted as the entry point for ticketing and as parking headquarters. The event provided a 10'x10' EZ-up structure with a 6' table and two folding chairs, a cooler with water and a porta-potty nearby. A walking trail through woods to the main field started right next to the EZ-up.

Arriving entrants parked in a temporary parking area and arrived at the gate with their ticket and driver's license in hand, and the following took place:

- They presented their ticket. This was referenced against a master list of tickets purchased that was printed and kept at the gate. It was sorted in alphabetical order.
- Once verified, the attendee was asked to sign a waiver.
- The waiver and ticket were filed, alphabetically, in an accordion folder.
- A wristband was placed on the wrist of each person, adult and children included. Wristbands for children were labeled with the parent's/guardians camp name.
- They were issued a 'temporary parking' pass, leaving a driver's license as collateral, allowing them to drive into the event to unload, and asked to return within 30 minutes.
- Once they got in their car and pulled back onto the road, they were held there until the parking attendant made sure the one-way road was clear.
- Once cleared, they drove down the road and turned into the main event area.
- After unloading, they would return the temporary parking pass and get their license back, park their car, and take the walking trail through the woods to the main event.

Discussions for improvement: A list of the gate and parking volunteers should be printed and kept at the gate. Also, a gate checklist should be taped to the table, or printed on the ticket or waiver. The checklist would include:

- Ticket verified
- Waiver signed and dated
- Wristband placed
- HELP guide handed out
- Reminder to stop at command center to volunteer
- Driver's license exchanged for parking pass
- If a minor is present, 'minor' wristband issued and guardians name and camp is written on the wristband.
- Driver told to wait for clearance, and given directions as needed.
- The waiver should have a box to check if minors are included with that ticket. A space for minors' names and ages should be there as well.

## HELP GUIDE

The PortalBurn HELP Guide contains information for Happenings (Art and Theme Camps), Events, Logistics and the 10 Principles. Kim 'Dusty' Robinson created a Google Form to collect event listings, and gathered input from various contributors for content. Claire Jackson contributed artwork. Deb 'CrackerJack' Monsour handled editing, formatting and printing.

To save printing costs, participants were asked to print their own copies, and the event provided a printed copies at the gate for about 50% of tickets sold. There were a significant number of copies of the HELP Guide left over. In the future, we should consider printing enough for 25% of tickets sold.

Using Google Forms for Event submissions worked fairly well, however it made revisions and public viewing of all events challenging. A better forum for collecting and sharing Event listings would be helpful.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

The system that was used for volunteer signup was the free service from Signupgenius.com. This worked well and we did not receive any complaints about the system itself. There was only one issue with determining the type of Ranger volunteers after signups had begun. This will be resolved by fully explaining to any volunteers the rationale for the change when making an adjustment. We expect adjustments to be few and far between. The volunteer coverage was very good. We don't have numbers for people who signed up at the event, though we had 62% coverage through the website. There was almost never a time we were looking for additional volunteers for coverage over the weekend. The exception being the gate/ticketing on Sunday (which largely consisted of managing traffic).

## **THEME CAMPS**

Placement: Kim 'Dusty' Robinson created a Google Form to collect Theme Camp applications. All camps that planned to have amplified sound or fire were asked to complete the application, and they did. Camp placement was based primarily upon requested space needs and anticipated sound needs, with respect to their planned activities. Eleven camps were placed. Four placed camps had amplified music. One placed camp did not come. Average theme camp lot size was approx 30x40. Theme camp placement was marked by caution tape prior to the event, and allowed a traffic lane for load/unload, emergency vehicle and porta potty maintenance access. There were no notable issues related to theme camp placement, sound or fire. In the future, a better application process is desired.

Sound: The Pavillion was made available for participants who wished to play amplified music but were not part of a placed Theme Camp. A number of activities took place in the pavillion without incident, however the amplified sound required significant monitoring. Throughout the event efforts were made by Rangers, Organizers and Participants to gauge sound levels and minimize disruption for the neighbors. Despite the cooperation of the DJ's, we still received neighbor complaints, and as a result, it jeopardized our ability to host PortalBurn at this site in the future. Future events will require two key elements: 1) a more conscientious commitment to assess, monitor and maintain sound levels for amplified music and 2) a more remote location where sound is less likely to disturb neighbors.

## **DPW**

DPW provided infrastructure for PortalBurn. Here are some of the highlights:

- The docks and the perimeter of the pond were well illuminated at night. The umbrella on the floating dock met an untimely end.
- The ticketing and command center tents had sufficient equipment to effectively function during the day and night.
- The walking path and bridge through the woods between the event and parking was well illuminated.
- DPW trained a lead Lantern-lighter on Friday night who assumed responsibility for turning on the lights at the pond and the path to parking, and deploying lanterns in the Land of the Lost. They turned on the 24 fiber-optic lights along the main "road" in the Land of the Lost as well.
- An outdoor shower was created. Participants were invited to bring in their own water, pulley it into place, and collect grey water. The shower was used by two participants.

DPW would like to thank the following individuals who contributed to the success of various projects:

Stacy Fuller; Becki and Amanda Hawley  
Jennifer Lavado; Alan Shechter  
Natania Kremer and Gregory Thomas  
Andrea Levine and friend  
Josh Russo; Dennis Schnell

And everyone else who lended a hand!

## **RANGERS**

Ranger Training: Ranger Training was scheduled to be lead by Ranger Dave, the Ranger Coordinator, at 8:00 on Friday night. Dave was not yet on site when training was due to start so Deena (a.k.a. Painter/Prophet) took over as she was an organizer with experience as a dirt ranger and ranger coordinator. Ranger Dave was also bringing the ranger manuals, so Deena proceeded with training, without manuals, basing it loosely on manuals from other burns that she and other rangers brought with them to Portalburn. Ranger Dave arrived midway through ranger training with beautiful ranger manuals and took over the training. In the future, the organizers need to ensure the Ranger Coordinator is on-site prior to ranger training. Some miscommunications arose from the organizers not being able to communicate the specific needs and policies of PortalBurn in person prior to the training.

Theft at PortalBurn: On Sunday night it was brought to our attention that a disoriented individual had been taking objects from other people's camps. This individual was talked to and all materials were returned. It was determined that this was an isolated incident and was not likely to be repeated over the remaining time at the burn. The individual was monitored for the remainder of the event both for personal safety and to insure no other thefts and there were no further issues.

Comments: Overall the Ranger coverage was adequate. It appeared, based upon Ranger training, that many new people came out to Ranger, and many of these new Rangers shadowed experienced Rangers throughout the burn. Rangers stepped in as needed for fire perimeter and handling the commotion during the extreme weather but overall, there were few incidents requiring their assistance.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

Fire safety worked in conjunction with Rangers to oversee daily fire supervision at theme camps. As we were such a small burn this year there were only a couple of burn barrels so that made it easy. All rules were followed regarding open flame in the Land of the Lost (open camping in the woods). All flame effects were monitored and within guidelines. Effigy perimeter was on point and the crowd was easy. One thing we'd possibly consider changing is the number of folks who man the effigy perimeter due to the recent tragedy in Utah. Next year we should also have a co-coordinator for fire or revamp the fire safety plan to give the rangers on duty more responsibility in the event of a minor or major fire.

## **EFFIGY**

We opted to leave the subject of our effigy up to the artists. We had a budget of \$500. Luke Elasky and Stacey Fisher built a working scale. Participants were able to write their favorite moments of the burn on pieces of wood and add them to either the night or day side of the scale. With the exception of a minor collapse during construction, the effigy went off without a hitch and was a beautiful piece of art. The final piece came in under the \$500 budget at \$469.63.

## **ART GRANTS**

We had a \$1,000 budget set aside for art grants, plus a \$250 loan from the organizers which was reimbursed because it was not needed. \$340 went to Novimir's Heartpath object, which was a light installation in the woods. \$239 went to Willie's Flaming Willies, which was a sound reactive double Ruben's tube by the pond. \$69.96 went to Alan Shechter for "The Real You in Real Time", which is a true mirror, and his present Portal Potty. Several smaller projects were awarded grants but the artists either did not complete their projects or they did not seek reimbursement. A total of \$648.96 was paid out for art grants. As PortalBurn grows, we expect more people to seek grants. There were no issues with the application process and the reimbursements were all completed in a very timely manner.

## LEAVE NO TRACE

Monday morning as the event wound down, volunteers conducted sweeps. Findings include:

- Land of the Lost was swept by Alan and Jack Jones. One bottle cap was found.
- The trail through the woods was swept by Alan, Sticky Mike and Anthony, removing lights and banners. One empty can was found.
- The parking area was cleaned and swept by Alan and Ranger Dave, removing stakes and ribbons and packing the EZ-Up, table and chairs, using Alan's trailer. Ranger Dave accidentally sliced the EZ-Up canopy with a knife when removing tie-wraps. No MOOP.
- The road from Parking to the event was swept by Alan. Ribbon was removed, no MOOP.
- Medical tents and supplies were packed up by Alan, Deena and Jack Jones. No MOOP.
- Alan swept the portal-potties to remove bottles and other items that weren't supposed to be in them. One bottle found.
- Command Center was cleaned and swept by the clean up crew. Not bad.
- Pavilion was cleaned and swept; Deena and Dusty did a bulk of the pick up. The Pavilion was a massive MOOP zone, with many bottles, cans, foodstuff and party goods left behind in the aftermath of the impromptu 'After the Storm Party'.
- The pond area and perimeter was swept by the clean up crew. Many floats, towels and swimwear was left behind. Floats needed to be deflated, which proved very time consuming for CrackerJack. With pending rain and much work to do, the decision was made to slice some unclaimed floats and discard them, some went home with CrackerJack and will return next year (assuming there is a swimming hole).
- A Lost and Found bin was filled with items that the clean up crew felt might be missed by someone. Dusty took the bin home and posted a list to the PortalBurn FB group looking for owners. Only one item was claimed. The rest will return to PB2015 in the hopes of finding owners.
- Many trash bags were filled, and brought by Becki and Doug Shire to the local dump. Any expenses incurred as a result are included in Misc Costs.

Final MOOP assessment is that open camps and theme camps did extremely well in managing MOOP. Common areas, like the Pavilion and Pond, were a problem. Future PortalBurns need a higher level of ownership over common areas, and more education about balancing Gifting concepts with Leave No Trace.

PortalBurn has also acquired infrastructure to support the event, which was packed up by the clean up crew. DPW has an inventory. Becki is currently storing the majority of the infrastructure and has volunteered to hold it until PortalBurn 2015. Plans for the 2015 event must include a formal inventory and storage plans (i.e. expenses) for all infrastructure.

## FINANCIALS

<b>PortalBurn Revenue</b>	
Carryover from PortalBurn 2013	268.50
PortalBurn Tickets Revenue 201 sold at \$40 per ticket	8040.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 8308.50</b>

<b>PortalBurn 2014 Expenses</b>	
Land Lease	1000.00
Ticketing Fees	99.20
Event Insurance	394.18
Legal Fees	353.50
Portajohn Rental	1294.60
DPW Costs	861.47
Walkie Talkies	164.06
Volunteer Costs	50.00
Medical/Safety	407.40
HELP Guide Costs	160.00
Art Grants	696.15
Effigy Grant	469.63
Main Sign	27.15
Miscellaneous Cost	208.25
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6185.59</b>

<b>Surplus Revenue</b> <b>\$ 2123.11 plus .02 interest</b>	<b>\$ 2128.14</b>
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Surplus revenue, and any interest earned, is earmarked for PortalBurn 2015, to be used for event related expenses, infrastructure and/or art grants. The Organizers are currently holding the funds and will open a bank account in the name of PortalBurn.

## KEY CONTRIBUTORS

This is by no means a complete list of all who contributed to the success of PortalBurn 2014. The list is long and every contribution is valued and appreciated! This is the list of people who collected information and contributed to the Afterburn report, and their key area of responsibility.

Kim 'Dusty' Robinson: Organizer, Theme Camp Coordinator  
 Joshua 'Bonus' Russo: Organizer, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Deena 'Painter' Salzman: Organizer, Arts Coordinator, Ranger Liasson  
 Alan 'Sheck' Shechter: Organizer, Governance  
 Greg 'Bird' Cunningham: Organizer, DPW Coordinator, Ranger Liasson  
 Dove 'Starfish' Russo: Organizer, Pavilion Coordinator, Governance  
 Becky 'Poppy' Hawley: Organizer, Finance Coordinator, Governance  
 Rob: Fire Coordinator