



Gateway Burn 2015 After Action Report

**Organized By: Gateway Burners II, LLC
St. Louis, Missouri**



OVERVIEW

The Gateway Burn is an annual event which celebrates the St. Louis, Missouri-based Gateway Burners community. In the spirit of Burning Man, attendees of all ages gather and camp together for four days to bring art, creativity, music, workshops, community activities, and education. The event culminates with a burn of an effigy. The theme in 2015 was “Whoa! The Spaces You’ll Grow!” This year, the event was held at a new site, Astral Valley. The community also decided this year to address consent concerns more effectively with the creation of the Principles' Office, a new department tasked with improving education around the issue of consent as well as investigating and making recommendations for consequences in the event of consent violations, which debuted at the Gateway Burn.

Overall, participants reported that they were very pleased with the event. The effigy, a rocket ship/tree hybrid, was unanimously praised. The theme camps were engaged and Rangers did an excellent job. 80% of art grant artists brought their work to the event. A new program to promote consent education by reviewing consent basics at Greeters and asking participants to attend a short consent discussion was successful. The new location at Astral Valley received a lot of praise from community members for the beauty of the location, access to water and swimming, and the overall layout. We had significant child and family participation, and no

significant issues in that arena. We had Denver burners attend the event for the first time who came away sharing great praise for the event and our community.

However, there are a few areas we'd like to see improved in the future. The Medic role was not filled easily, and didn't function as smoothly as we would have liked. In addition, there were some hiccups to work out with the new site owners, including ensuring that everyone from their team who needs access to the event is documented. There are a number of other details to work out with the landowner in the contract for future events. Some local residents who attended and were not familiar with burn culture stepped on toes and may need more education. There needs to be better communication with Leads regarding expectations. It would be better to have art location better indicated. In the future, we'd like to see better communication with theme camps to ensure they understand what different wristbands mean.

MEDIC

The event coordinators had difficulty getting a commitment from a Medic lead. As a result, things were not well organized - it was hard to find the medic tent and supplies. There was some confusion with the system to sign up for medic roles as well. In the future, the review team recommends putting together a medic committee to determine how to better recruit and train for medic roles.

GATE

Booklets in use to communicate information were very effective. They were successful at recruiting volunteers, and it was very helpful to have a co-lead. Having participants make their ticket into art is a unique and welcome part of our culture - however, there was a suggestion that it would be nice to display tickets in some way before burning them in the effigy. Some areas that should be changed in the future: Some people tore their vouchers out of the booklet at the gate and if we can prevent that it would be better. There as a suggestion that kids should receive their own ticket number so they can make a separate ticket. The traffic flow was impeded when there was a large number of arrivals. IDs were not checked consistently. Ensure that gate attendants have a reminder of the date someone has to be born to be twenty-one years old. There was no list of who should be allowed into the event from the landowner. Community members need to know they need to show up with a ticket number not just the name of the person. There needs to be better clarity with landowners about what we are allowed to do to close the gate.

GREETERS

Our greeters did a great job enthusiastically and ensured that incoming participants understood the principles and burn culture. The interactive art that encouraged participants to add a symbol of one of the principles to a man made people more interested in stopping. The schedule notebook was a great idea, but didn't include all updates and as a result there were two

notebooks, which was confusing. In the future, we'd like to consider how to better integrate the art project, because at times going through all the steps for the art distracted from teaching the principles and other core information. We may also want to consider making the Greeters tent more of a hang-out space or destination to attract participants to spend time there.

TICKETING

332 tickets were sold in 2015. Ticketing seemed to be very effective and went well. In the future there was a suggestion that we make it clearer that we'd like participants to make art with their ticket number on it. Also, there was some confusion because right before the event some people hadn't received their ticket number, but the only people with access to the database were on site already.

RANGERS

Rangers were praised for being effective at their jobs. We had lots of volunteers on site and a lack of useless chatter on the radios. There were complaints about the 6 hour shifts beforehand, but most liked them once they completed one. There was a suggestion that in the future, there should be shorter 2 hour trainee shifts for new Rangers. It was noted that making Rangers be on effigy perimeter limits the volunteers because people don't want to do both jobs. Other issues were that radio batteries kept dying because they were old, and the radio signal cut out in areas where a repeater is needed. We may need better quality radios and earpieces for noisy areas. There was also discussion about the need for training for volunteers on radio usage. It was difficult to identify Rangers, and in the future we recommend Ranger shirts or other identifiers.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

Fire Suppression did a great job ensuring that the only things that burned were things that were supposed to burn. There was an issue because people who had volunteered for the Sandman role didn't show up, so Rangers were recruited for the job. We had some hot ash blow onto tents and vehicles that were too close to the effigy (even though they had been warned to move away) as well as some that were farther away. In the future we recommend enforcing a 20 ft area clear of camping and vehicles beyond the perimeter to minimize damage. In addition, camp location coordination was inadequate onsite, which resulted in people camping in places they were not supposed to. In the future, better onsite coordination would help. We recommend staying away from cedar wood in the effigy except for in small amounts.

FINANCIALS

Financial summary will be available at year end when the accounting cycle is complete.