

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Burning Man event was first held on the Black Rock Desert in 1990 and has continued since annually. The combination art festival, social event, and experiment in community living starts on Monday before Labor Day and runs for 8 days. Burning Man is the largest permitted event on public lands for any US federal agency. Since 1990, the event participation has increased from a few hundred participants to almost 50,000. The Winnemucca BLM Field Office received a Special Recreation Permit application from Black Rock City LLC for the Burning Man event for 2006 through 2010. The potential impacts of the event were analyzed and an Environmental Assessment (EA) was issued with stipulated terms to ensure both visitor safety and resource protection. In recent years, permit fees paid to BLM approached \$1,000,000. Given the nature of event activities and the fees involved, Burning Man commands much public visibility. It is critical that BLM closely monitor and document compliance with the event permit.

Project scope

- Monitor stipulations during the event
- Communicate team data and results of efforts at BM08
- Make recommendations for monitoring at BM09

Report goals

Provide managers with knowledge necessary to:

- Determine if permit stipulations were adequately met
- Modify stipulations as needed for next year's event
- Incorporate similar stipulations for other permitted events
- Adopt these monitoring methodologies for other permitted events

B. RESULTS FOR BM08

During the event

Black Rock citizens are a self-patrolling community not shy about pointing out to their neighbor behaviors that might challenge or bend accepted policies. All wish to be welcomed back next year by the Burning Man LLC and BLM alike. During the event most violations were minimal and easily resolved. Most concerns involved greywater. These were usually minor leaks in evaporative pools rather than outright violations.

Nearing the end of event

As the event neared Exodus, the most common violation was the trash left behind by many camps. These violations were resolved by the Burning Man Department of Public Works (DPW) clean-up crews, who spend almost a full month on the playa cleaning up after the week-long party.

Six-weeks after event

In October, members of the Team returned to revisit concern areas of concern.

It was good to see that:

- All sites were cleaned to high standard.
- A repeat occurrence of the orange discoloration left from the gravel used in burn pads in 2007 was not seen this year.
- Most stipulations appeared to have been met.

Most violations and concerns were resolved six weeks after the event. Noted concerns were:

- Gravel was found beneath the burn pad of every art project and community burn barrels.
- The orange discolorations at every burn pad documented in the 2007 Monitoring Report still remain on the playa with no evidence of fading.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BM09

The Monitoring Team recommends:

- Continuing the majority of the studies completed in 2008
- Continuing to improve methodologies based on the lessons learned and emerging technologies
- Shifting focus of future efforts on exploring cumulative impacts

D. COMPLETED STUDIES

	Study	Stipulation	Results [+ Good, - Concern] & Recommendations (●)
1	Monitoring the Good, Bad & the Ugly	20 – Pit or hole 62 – Greywater 31 – Solid Waste Management 28 – Fire (Non- Art burn) 22 – Oil drip 30 – Fugitive dust 57, 58 – Health & safety 60, 74 – EMS & Fire	+ Minor violations resolved during event or by event clean-up crew
2	The Open Playa: Art Projects & Burn Barrels	19 – Art burn 20 – Pit or hole 64 – Community burn barrel 68 – Art burn schedule	+ No burn scars or excessive debris - Decomposed gravel from burn pads remain at all inspected burn pads - Orange discoloration from 2007 burn pad have not yet faded • Explore methods of containment to ensure efficient gravel removal • Return to proven burn pad materials of the past
3	Airport	51 & 53 – Airport	• Simplify stipulations by deferring to FAA-standards • Include airport location on public closure maps • Coordinate BLM and Burning Man planning to ensure facilities are in the BM09 closure area
4	Signs	7, 35 & 56 – Posting regulations 42 & 46 – Exodus traffic and guards	+ Stipulations met • Utilize multiple venues for communication

	Study	Stipulation	Results [+ Good, - Concern] & Recommendations (●)
5	Hot Springs	24 – Cultural resources	+ Stipulations met • Team monitor only Trego and Coyote Springs • Enlist Earth Guardian help for other springs
6	Perimeter Fence	32 – Fence	+ Stipulations met
7	Population	1 - Ticket sales 10 - Reporting	+ Population kept under 50,000 participants - Population numbers received after 60-day reporting date outlined in stipulations
8	Trash Transects	79 – Trash transects	See BLM file report for results
9	Porta-Potty Placement (PeePeePee)	61 – Sanitation	- Each morning, puddles appear adjacent to the Esplanade and on the open playa • Develop methods to successfully document this • Increase visibility of toilets on open playa at night • Utilize GIS analysis to optimize placement of potties that balances the needs of users with that of pumping crews.
Exploring Cumulative Effects			- Large dunes from 07 fence still remain + New dunes did not appear at 08 fence • Include more detailed stipulation for knocking down accumulated dust at fence and other structures