

**OREGON COUNTRY FAIR
EVALUATION MEETING
AUGUST 22, 2010**

SESSION NOTES

CAMPING EQUITY/FIRE PREPARATION

Notetaker: Danya Ariel

Attendees: Charlie Ruff, Steve Wisnovsky, Paxton Hoag, Sue Theolass Cathy Coulson-Keegan, Michael "Fire Pye" Gibbons, Rich Reuter, Bill Pack, Danya Ariel, Jon

(Some speakers in this group are not identified.)

Camping Equity

Bigger – fewer spots. Not adequate camping spots in some places. Other places use more space than needed.

Some use lots of space ("claimed space"), others are then crowded. Camp hosts don't have power to say "no" or "take that down."

Charlie Ruff: Super sensitive subject. Even just inches. Site changes yearly. Volunteer/crafter work load differences. Equity is hard. Organic evolution – unorganized. Early crews get bigger spots. Space saving can be organized. Crafts lot = "land grab." Need more space, hard to shift. Campers who get in without working (donators, etc.). Trade passes. Selling shirts/official stuff. Get a BUM involved. Cannot "donate" to get a pass. Can get pass through trade. Can't track booths selling passes, or staff trading.

Steve Wisnovsky: Camping crew (tent taggers, camp hosts, develop new camps). RV space is becoming a problem. Suggests size based vehicle camping fees – goes toward necessities. Laying out camping areas (path and pod systems). Not trying to limit populations, trying to accommodate them. Coordinators need to give camp coordinators the power to say no. (Or camp- crew).

Sue Theolass: Community Village does orientation meetings pre-fair (sweep, fire, camping tour, etc.). Everyone is shown where fire staff is. Did a fire drill to example why. Tell everyone to bring the smallest possible tent that they can be comfortable in. "Hi, I'm the camp host. You NEED to do this." Get info out ahead of time.

Paxton: Divide Fair into neighborhoods. Camp host helps settle them. Neighbors help say say keep it small. Official neighborhoods. In general, camps elect their own "camp host" to deal with issues, but they don't make sure it works for the Fair. Neighborhood coordinators help make sure it works for all.

Neighborhoods are 30 – 50 tents. Neighborhood coordinators help camp coordinators avoid/work out conflicts. (There are 20 or so neighborhoods).

Vick Parkison: Some camp hosts do job very well; I don't see this problem. Some camps are creating second layers (scaffolding).

Rich: Some camps are organized, spread that word. Knock down waddle gates for fire exits.

Fire Preparation

Camp with 130 tents. Blocked fire lane (no extinguisher or burlap.) 130 tents with only two extinguishers and three burlap bags. Camp is not a fixed term. Camp size needs to be a fixed size (5ish circle of tents). Bucket with burlap very important, with fire or no fire. Camp is not 150 people.

). Security posts are supposed to have extinguishers, but don't.

Fire extinguishers marked (signs).

Cathy: Every tent has an extinguisher. Fair can run recharging station. Bucket at every ten.

Pye: All fire prevention = visible. Fire prevention should not be near fire's likely spot. Fire crew member in every neighborhood. Fire Crew has 17 2-person crews for neighborhoods.

Bill: Have fire plans/drills. Crafts have got it. They're fantastic. Staff needs to get the message.

Jon: Encourage no open flames in tents.

Danya: Neighborhood coordinators can become fire coordinators as well.

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ENHANCING THE OCF EXPERIENCE

Convenor: Jay Hogan

Notetaker: norma sax

Attending: Jain, Dana, norma, Joe , Jay, Bob, Amy, Randie

norma: I see a need for more benches and bathrooms for our guests

Jay: More benches are being made, winding up in camps

Joe: We should help public be happy to be here. We shouldn't be putting our blankets at Main Stage to reserve spots for evening shows.

Amy: Regarding bifercation, can we offer incentives for crew members to be day use people? Day workers are seen as not as cool as campers. Encourage people to carpool and make sure they have spot on bus. Health and safety issues need to be mitigated. Need storage for day workers. Place for them to meet their families.

Jay: For a lot of people, it's about deciding one's kinship with Fair. There's room for everybody.

Jain: Pushing for a different mindset. They're our friends, we're showing them what we did. Everybody with camping pass should remember guests come in because they appreciate us.

Jay: Concerned about growing presence of battery powered, pre-recorded music. It is prohibited. Fair is about live music. When someone plays pre-recorded music it creates a dead zone and acoustic musicians can't play. I came through Spoken Word camp. Robert and Laura wanted live music, which Jay heard. They I went to the Eight and heart pre-recorded music at Front Porch, a Spoken Word venue. On Strawberry Lane, I heard loud sound of mechanical noise and cannon fire coming from WC Fields where ninja group was performing. Next day, I heard loud music at WC and asked the sound guy to turn it off. Within 5 minutes, there was acoustic music.

Bob: Performers who come in on peach passes can't come in until 11 am. They should be able to come in same time as worker day pass folks.

Amy: Dust is a problem for patrons. Craft Lot development idea has to consider dust.

Jay: No group or crew who takes care of this.

Dana: Spent lot of years with Renaissance Fair. It's very similar. It's essential for Fair family to understand our guests are our lifeblood. We need to honor them. We need to limit our day use impact.

Jay: Lack of blending comes from our attitude and vocabulary.

Randie: Maybe there can be places the public can go and we can't.

norma: We shouldn't encourage segregation.

Amy: Maybe new booths can be non-profit booths; an expansion of Community Village.

Jeremy: How about a vegan awareness booth with information about different options with samples. The Peach Pit should carry a list of vegan booths. I encourage more awareness of different cultures.

Jain: Heard that the longer you've been (at the fair) the cooler you are. At Burning Man they make a big fuss over you if you're a first[timer. We should make a button and fuss over Fair virgins.

Amy: My first reaction to extra night of electric music was great, but after talking to others I understood you can go other places for loud music and light shows. It impedes experience of people who want quiet.

Joe: Regarding sound, people gather before the show starts, so having a center of attention before show enhances experience, gets people's attention.

Jay: I hope Decon plays as much music as it wants. Recycling put speakers on recycling camp. Concerned was expressed about Recycling crew waking people up.

Jain: More women's urinals!

Randie: 6 packs need to be refurbished and maintained more often. Build another one .

Amy: When Honey Bucket stays in one place too long, ground is contaminated. Cannot be in same place for a month at a time.

Jain: Kids and pregnant women should go first.

Dana: Each booth can be wristbanded as a group.

Randie: Booths have huge lines, crews not so much.

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GROWTH

Convenor: Paxton Hoag

Attending: Diane Albino, Bill Wright, Lee Welch, Steve Wisnovsky, Fiora Starchild-Wolf, Hilary Anthony, Paxton Hoag, Dana Merryday, Bill Pack, Leone Gholston, Jay Hogan, Charlie Ruff, Sue Theolass, Patty Linn, Marcus Hinz, Don St. Clair, Amber Peoples, Kendon Bright, Elder Vick, Michael Gibbons, Joe Magner, Bob Fennessey

Paxton: Hopes Board will do a work session on the big issue of growth.

Charlie Ruff: Our internal capacity (family, staff, crafts, teens, S.O.'s), has grown. The paying public numbers have remained static. They pay about 2/3 of revenue. Without new expansion, etc. will we continue to draw public? Would our message get out? Can we pay our bills?

Bill P.: What about the surrounding private camps? They are independent and out of our control.

Steve W.: We struggle every year to keep up with our parking, water, etc. We are very close to closing space to family cars, before the public gets here. Solution? Limit vehicle stickers. Encourage (force) to carpool. Store equipment in Veneta. Encourage economies in crews by capping passes, etc.

Marcus: Growth is inevitable. We need to make large investments to get ahead of growth. We need to invest in infrastructure. There are many layers of solutions that allow people to make responsible choices.

Hilary: Use our camping space wisely. [There is a problem with] huge motor homes vs. tents, small VW campers. How are camping spaces allocated? Where can new folks camp? WE need a space for overflow camping. Entertainment storage areas so small people can't see or get to. Paths are too busy for path entertainment. Entertainment needs to be a key aspect of Fair. Are we exclusionary? It's competitive to get a wristband. [We need] training and community development.

Paxton: I believe we need an expansion every 10 years or so to keep fresh. Proposes neighborhoods (formal) that would rule areas and resolve questions.

*Another topic: “Do we need to grow at all? “

Bill: Observed crafts judging and impressed by what is there and wants to be included. We need to grow to be viable.

Corvallis: Has observed how much is required to do stuff like the sauna. We need to be clear about infrastructure.

Diane: We can't stop growth either way. Family: Grows through relationships, babies, etc. Public, too. Think outside of box. Two weekend Fair. Not all could do both. More opportunities. Footprint would be about the same.

Don: Also would like two week-end fair. Gives chance for people to enjoy fair by working one, playing the other. Cross population.

Patti: Crafts lot over filled by camping. Water crew can't get in to deliver. Water crew has grown in accordance with growth and demands put on it. Campground hosts need to have authority to regulate good use of space. We need to have system for regulation. Fire marshals.

Charlie: Every year crews ask for budget increases. More bodies require more infrastructure. Throwing more bodies isn't solution. With so many festivals, competition is fierce. We need great exit stage, act, big investment. Our quaintness is a plus.

Mike: Suggesting two fees: car riders, bus riders. Shake our image as a drug fest. Use camping to crush non-native species. Non-camping workers – Have night crew bus that would commute. Reduce campsite size and impacts.

Vic – Community store for general building supplies such as boards, blocks, etc. Security posts, for example, use do to have shade structures. Our level of volunteerism is slipping. There is a problem having volunteers. Do we look down on our visitors?

Amber: A newcomer to Fair. 4 years. [Likes] the community spirit. How do you get late-comers who bring other life experiences? Our public – how are they messaged? What are our goals?

Jen-lin: I don't want us to stop being ourselves in order to attract others that might be offended. Entitlement: Who says you get this much space? Who gets what?

Charlie: We have 62 crews; we're an incredible machine with lots of moving parts. Complex organization. 20 years ago, lots more room, flexible, room to grow. It was very organic. Now, we're so fine-tuned, one action has lots of repercussions.

Hilary: Vital to keep family generations. Bring fresh blood to do the heavy lifting. The new generations of entertainers need a home.

Corvallis: What about a movie from start to finish so people can see what really goes on!

Fiora: I have seen expansion. I've seen kids take over when grown. What about people who camp and are vital but are not on a crew or part of group? We all need to feel we have a home and community. We can't think of us as groups. Where are we all going to go when the craft lot goes? Not opposed to crafts lot development.

Paxton: Points out that Path Planning does consider and talk about camping expansion. Encourages others to come out and get involved. Points out about two week-ends event currently not possible because of grandfathered status. Things may change to allow it. Board will continue to study possibility.
Movie documentation has begun.

Bill Sounds like the Board and committee are on these issues. What would help?

Paxton: We need to have feedback.

Bill: We are the largest campground in the state.

We did not get a chance to discuss implementation.

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CARPOOLING/TOWING

Convenor:

Notetaker: Rich Reuter

Fair Expansion

As we expand into Crafts Lot and other areas, let's limit people, stuff and cars. Suggestion: Car Pool Committee (like ODOT) to reduce cars, limit baggage transport (like airlines), charge fees for excels bags. Have "check bag" system, take home what your brought to the Fair.

Craft Lot

Many campers there feel disenfranchised, having to move. Health issues: port-a-pottys, hand-cleaning stations, insufficient. Idea: Propose growth moratorium until problems solve, car pooling = fewer cars, more camping space.

Towing

Some cars towed off-site from Far Side, seemed unfair, predatory, rude. Is-information given by Fair. \$80 only car safe, on-site; wait until Monday to get car back. Meanwhile, towing charges mounted off-site, people had to pay \$225 to get cars back. Ideas: Don't hire off-site, predatory, over eager tow company. Keep all towed vehicles on-site, limit to \$80.

Sabbatical Year

Expand Fair to off-site locations, combine with other events, festivals. Limit growth by sending Fair emissaries to these other locations instead of Fair, taking "sabbatical" from Fair, to tell Fair's story, show live video-feed, grow Fair to additional sites, bring Fair values to the world.

Etc.

As it stands, S.O. pass holders can't vote, be members of Fair. Idea: Make them working S.O.'s; give them membership status. Have membership vote on Fair Expansion Plan, membership input and "say-so" on planning committee. I.D. timeline for any changes.

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**ENCOURAGING AND WELCOING A MORE DIVERSE COMMUNTION
TO THE OCF**

Members present:

David M. Besonen

Jain Elliott

Betsy McCluer

Jeremy Sullivan ('Butterfly from New York')

Jen-Lin dropped in for part of the discussion.

Notetaker: Cathy Keegan-Coulson

How to create an opening to diverse communal groups in USA

- Vegan diets
- Lesbian and Gay folks (Betsy noted a drop in attendance on OCF crews)
- More Racial Diversity
- Attract the younger folks

Ideas:

Build community online with different groups such as Lesbian and Gay groups, Native American, Latino, Black, Asian organizations. Find out about events they are having and write articles to go into the different event's literature. Place an ad for the OCF in their literature if appropriate.

Teens and young adults are into the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) movement. Reach out to them.....they are wired!

Go to local events of the diverse communities and have an OCF presence. Reach out to give an OCF 'hand' (Stillpoint Women's Festival had recycling info and help from the OCF)

Present skits, to be acted out while folks are in the waiting line to get into the Fair or waiting for buses to leave, that show a healing of racial or sex preferences discrimination.

Make signs that reflect diversity even if we had a smaller Fair due to a respect of diversity atmosphere it might be OK if it is the outcome of reflecting Fair Values.

Help to educate folks by saying out loud, "Ouch" when hearing offensive conversations.

Express more individual sensitivity to all – rules apply to everyone.

Increase Latino attendance by having Salsa Bands at many stages, Mexican and South American food booths and a wandering Mariachi Band.

African food booths, more world music.

Hip-hop music on paths - punk rock needs electronic instruments but a boom box will do, with a limit on volume or decibels.

How to welcome parents with small children to front of the line @ food booths, bathrooms.

Community Village has a sign that they use to take small children to the bathroom that says, "Kids Go First".

It would be hard for folks waiting in a food booth line to have to let moms and dads with small kiddos go first but maybe there could be a sign at the food booth Order spot saying something like, "We Love Kids!" or even possibly someone to give a cracker or popcorn to folks waiting in line.

Bathrooms might have a sign, "We Love Kids!"