

FEEDBACK REPORT – 2014



Note: This is a compilation of the feedback received from the forms submitted during & after the Fair and via email. We received much less feedback than in past years. The responses are recorded as submitted with minor corrections for spelling and syntax without negating the respondents' intentions. Personal names have been included when celebrated and omitted when negatively criticized. The coordinators, committees, and management will receive relevant information with respondents' contact information.

Thank you, all!

AAAA

Fair handicap parking should not be two fields away. Show more regard to handicapped.

ACOUSTIC, ELECTRONIC, CANNED & AMPLIFIED MUSIC

To those who care: My family and I were disappointed and regrettably aggravated to find out that after hours (1am-5am) amplification of small stages seems to be totally acceptable now. Our tent has been behind the Spirit Tower for 22 years and this year I was made to feel like the bad guy when I approached staff about the amplified stage 10 feet from my 3 and 5 year old children's bed. Staff at the information booth on Saturday night told me there are no rules on stages after hours and that there was nothing they could do.

Is this still required? If so, does the community surrounding the stage have no voice?

<http://oregoncountryfair.net/Pages/amplifiedsoundpermit.pdf>

The fair has always been a place of joy and happiness for me and my family. A place we look forward to visiting every year to refresh our spirits and let go of the hectic world outside. This has changed in recent years, I return from the fair with more stress, anxiety and anger in my heart than when I arrived. I am not an easily angered person, nor violent, I have never felt the way I did this weekend at the fair.

Having been a fair goer for 33 years I thought I had a pretty good sense of the base culture of the OCF and some of the highest values being respect and courtesy. Given my interactions this weekend, these values are no more.

From the OCF website: "The Oregon Country Fair creates events and experiences that nourish the spirit, explore living artfully and authentically on earth, and transform culture in magical, joyous and healthy ways."

Please read this and my comments and tell me if my spirit was nourished, if culture was transformed in a magical, joyous, and healthy way? As Bill Wooten, one of the OCF founders, wrote:

This is a community of choice of reason rather than by the chance of birth. Reason is found more each day on the side of cooperation, conservation, and community. Reason stands with those who reduce their wants and simplify their needs, which lessens demands upon the world's resources. Reason stands with those who do not ask the world to do for them what they can do for themselves. Reason stands with those who treat neighbors as friends, friends as brothers and sisters, and this earth, as our one and only home. Let us so stand together. It stands to reason, to endure is to prevail.

We are not being treated as a neighbor, friend, brother, or sister. Our home and its year round, native inhabitants are already being assaulted in the day light. Must we also assault their senses in the night?

If the fair is to continue to hold these values and insist on having this image we think it's time to stand up for it.

If the real goal is a 24/7, no rules, alcohol and drug inspired weekend of disrespect and debauchery maybe the mission statement should reflect that.

I would appreciate a response and expect future dialog.

Thank you for the lower volume of amplified coming from Main Stage, especially after hours! Much appreciated!

I really appreciated the lower volume of electric music from Main Stage. It gave smaller acoustic venues, as in campfire circles, etc. a chance to be heard. Thank you & see you next year!

Thank you for the lower volume of amplified coming from Main Stage, especially after hours! Much appreciated!

Still hoping the Fair will unplug the electronic music after hours on all nights but Saturday Midnight Show. I hear so many people (of all ages) say they miss the sweet ambiance of acoustic musicians & the feeling of being in a forest.

No recorded music. This is a live music venue!

At the Fair, we make our own music. The giant canned music thing Thursday PM violated this basic rule. A boom box with KLCC on it is still a boom box, and a corporate one at that. No more of this nonsense ever again, please. Thanks.

We moved To Far Side from behind the Ritz years ago and every year the Far Side gets more wonderful, but the teens who head out to Far Side late at night are hauling boom boxes down the path all night, yelling & singing. All good, but sooo sooo loud for the kids & elders sleeping (not to mention the teen drinking...) Please think over.

Everyone in my neighborhood on Abbey Rode hated the disco party on Saturday night hosted by the Cajun food booth. Very loud amplified music until the wee hours, screaming 'DJ' & dancing on the chess board. I've had my booth here for 35 years and have always loved this quiet neighborhood and logs of good neighbors. Let's leave the disco mirror ball & 'DJ' & amplified music for Main Stage or out in the lots. We missed hearing Main Stage from bed.

On Saturday night at the Fair I was at the library on abbey road where I saw and heard a beautiful unique handmade instrument played by a real artist accompanying poetry until it was interrupted by amplified commercially recorded music. I was told that this canned music was permitted by the general manager himself. If this is true he is simply ignoring our bylaws and guidelines and I am very disappointed. Article two of the bylaws should stand or be repealed, not ignored.

Loved booth # 958's concert Saturday night. Amazing.

Heard more acoustic and less amplified music in the 8 at night,. Very nice, I've missed that for some years!

Seems like the non-live music thing has settled out. Biggest annoyance is folks walking around with boom-boxes and boom-box-backpacks.

ADMISSIONS

I paid over \$60 on Tickets West for my tickets and was supposed to get a poster. When I went to Will-Call they informed me that they didn't have me under their poster list, and that there might have been a deadline. When I bought the tickets there was no mention of a deadline. I'm really upset that I spent over \$100 on my tickets and didn't get my poster. Thank you.

Love the cloth 3-day wristbands.

AMBIANCE

Pink flagging tape in Dragon Plaza?!? Yuk! Otherwise, a beautiful new dragon & plaza look.

Pretty mellow ambiance, no path bottlenecks

BUBBLE

Great Fair! I like the expanded areas and all the new things you do each year. Two suggestions: Order more t-shirts, etc. The XL sizes sell out really fast each year! Please do water bottle in stainless steel; aluminum is not a good material to drink from.

Not sure on the point of the Craft Lot Bubble. Seemed like a lot of pain for not much gain. But I suppose that it was just a one-year thing.

We need more camping space, not more booth space. Stop expansion of craft lot.

BUDGET

Food prices have gone up at least 2x, but vouchers only increased .50 cents. At most booths can't even get a full meal.

Food vouchers are clearly not holding their own against food booth price inflation. Once again, I suggest that the redemption value of a food voucher be less than the face value so that booths profit from the public, not the family. Silver Star specials are nice but seem to mostly be inclusion of a drink that doesn't appeal.

Been coming for 12 years and still love the Fair. But, it's getting too expensive. We are an adjunct teacher and a substitute teacher with two kids over 10 now, and it's really stretching our summer budget, so we can't come more than one day. The food also has gone up (except Springfield Creamery, bless their hearts :)). So it makes the Fair feel a bit more commercial than it used to be, all in all. Thank you!

BUS

Great Fair. Usually when you show up at 10am at the VRC there are buses lined up, but today (Friday) we were there at 9:30am & didn't get on a bus until 10:45am.

CAMPING

Marshall's Landing Campground: Very nice to have wood chips to level camp sites No issues with neighbors conflicting over camp boundaries!

I have been camping at the Fair since 1978. I am a very long time strolling vendor roses. The camping situation for me makes me cry every year. It's horrible; the worst. (herding) No respect. We need new people who care running things. Give the craft artists more respect! Bigger Fair? More money? For who? The G. Manager?? The crafts people need to be treated better. The land rush still is a big problem. It's not fair. The main artists should have priority to space to be closer. The woods are crowded.

My booth is located just by the Far Side bridge gate. I have been camping there 10 years or so. Because I work another festival in California over the July 4th weekend. We usually cannot go to the Fair until Wed, or Thurs, beforehand. Every year it becomes harder to secure parking and camp space in the Far Side. (We sleep in the vehicle.) It became so impossible to secure space that we began to camp in the parking area outside the Ball Field. The reason things got so difficult is because folks on the Far Side began to set up huge camps, with domes, giant sunshades, etc. filling up the space. The Fair is supposed to be democratic, with equal access/opportunity for all. The "real estate" on the Far Side is apparently under the dictatorship of "Bob" and "Big Mike". And, if you aren't "in" with these guys you are out of luck on securing camping space. Last year effort was made to pre-assign areas for this year. Unfortunately for me, I was working my booth when this assignment took place.

CIGARETTE SMOKING

Delighted that smoking areas are better marked on map. However, there seems to be a shortage of butt cans, particularly in non-grassy & shaded areas. Also, wondering if you are creating a policy re electric cigarettes.

Please, make the shell non-smoking. It's a great musician spot.

Shell opposite Ritz please not be a smoking area as it is so beautiful and resonant for music making and conversation.

Lots of smoking areas, but people still smoking tobacco everywhere.

Smoking an issue for walking from main stage to water gate.

Smoking is a continuing problem. Not just in the Fair, but in the camping areas too. Seems like many of the few benches that we have are now smoking areas. Non-smokers need to sit down too. Would like to see the smoking policy treated more seriously, and to see it extended to the non-public parts of the Fair. The whole organic, sustainable, and environmental message is kind of lost on me when delivered by someone smoking a cigarette.

COMMEMORATIVE SALES

Order more t-shirts, etc. The XL sizes sell out really fast each year! Please do water bottle in stainless steel; aluminum is not a good material to drink from.

Please try to stock specifically for Sunday more XL & XXL t-shirts for men. We are Sunday people and often can't get T-shirts. Thank you!

CONSTRUCTION

Shady Grove 6-pack toilets vent fan not working.

Some sort of raised platforms to put our feet on at the women's urinal for easier squatting. The old design was much more comfortable and easy. Feet go on level with the top of the trough. Thank you!!

CRAFTS

Would love to have an Elders' booth for access to craft of theirs that might still be around but they have no booth?

CRAFT INVENTORY

- Please have the name of the booths in the craft inventory book. And food booths with type of food.
- Put name of business on Vendor Guide (i.e. Oregon Soap).
- Need vendor index by booth#, # order, and company name. For instance, how do I find Moon Roots soap if I don't know who is associated with the company or their booth #.
- Have to have booth names in big book.

RE Peach Pit—I sell in Booth #52. In the Peach Pit, I am in the wrong category. I sell furniture and other woodwork. Because I sell candlesticks, I am listed in candles. Please take me out of candles. Please list me in furniture. For several years I have asked to be in the correct category, which would be Furniture or Woodwork. Thank you.

CREW SERVICES On the flip side Crew Services seemed a bit slow getting water out to crews in the hot weather.

DOGS Too many dogs....

ELDERS

Dictating to people that they can be an artist or an elder but, not both is disrespectful, ageist and crappy.

The Fair needs to acknowledge their long-term "elders" with respect. Fine that those no longer offering their artwork/crafts receive passes from Elder Committee and those still participating in their booths get their passes from their booths. However, I feel all elders deserve an elder "dog tag."

ENTERTAINMENT

I went to the Gypsy Caravan stage four times over 3 days and the sound was bad 3 of the times. It could have been fixed on Friday!

Really enjoyed the "Last Waltz Show." Thanks, what a treat!

Lots of questions at Info about after-hours entertainment. Would be great to have some sort of guide for nighttime stages.

A weaker midnight show than usual. Unfortunate as it was the only performance I was able to see due to mobility and challenges with a new crew member.

Some of the entertainment was weak because entertainers with talented kids were using their shows to showcase their kids instead of to entertain the audience themselves. For example, the Flying Buttresses. Granted these kids have lots of talent. But, they should be earning their way onto the stage by refining their acts like their parents have done. Putting them up on stage before they've found their own groove is cute but not very entertaining. Stage Left needs to come up with a decent show too. On the flip side, the DuCaniveaux kids hold their own.

In general I thought that the entertainment was a bit on the weak side this year. Little that really called to me.

FAIR AREA RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM (FARTS)

They want craft people to park far away. No shuttle bus. They pay a lot to be there. Should at least give shuttle to out of site lot. (have to tote heavy crafts)

Need more transportation (safe!!!) to out of site!!

FIRE CREW

Every smoking area should have a 5-gallon pail, water & burlap, just in case, ya know.

There's an odd conflict between the "don't bring anything you don't want stolen" guidance and the "each camp needs a fire extinguisher." My fire extinguishers cost about \$75 each, and I don't want to bring them to the Fair to be stolen. Not sure I even want someone else using them unless they're willing to cover the cost of recharging them. Maybe the Fair needs to supply fire extinguishers for camps.

FOOD

Is the OCF developing a policy regarding genetically modified foods or is Fair sustainability confined to the Energy Park & Community Village?

HOW WE (MIS)-TREAT EACH OTHER

This is my 33rd year at the Fair. I have been a vendor, crafter, path rover, and many things while here. Now that glow sticks have been banned at the Fair, I have noticed that many of the Fair family have been left without a way to give their kids a unique light pattern so that they can track them. People use small flashing lights to keep things like baby carriages visible and also to just have more fun at night at the Fair

I set up a small table and set out a few flashy things that people could use to stay happy and safe. All the vendors that stopped by were extremely happy and relieved to have a solution to their problem.

On the second night, a staff member started harassing me about the light toys. She was very angry and belligerent about the whole idea that vendors would sell safety and fun equipment to other vendors.

I believe that this kind of misplaced aggression is serving to make the Fair less family-friendly and less fun for the vendors and staff who spend their nights here (like me). I really hope this situation improves next year.

I was sprinkling ??? At the library on Upper River Loop. A man from Site Crew parked his truck over my hose & told me to stop. I said I would stop when my shift was done. He told me to just stop & get the fuck out. I moved away to work on another part of my route. He disconnected my equipment & threw it in the path. When I asked him to get it out from under his truck he was rude & slow but eventually did, & I moved my hoses out of earshot. After 5 minutes I had to go back to get my hose bell. At that time, he asked me what booth I was from (I was wearing a staff shirt) I told him I worked for Water & this was my appointed route & shift. He said he'd "talk to Tim & take care of me." His attitude the entire time was loud, blustery & belligerent. My biggest concern was that he thought I was from a booth & that he thought it was ok to talk to & swear at a booth vendor like that.

Last year was my first year at OCF for the full fair experience. I came as an SO on the durables team. This year, we came back, even after hearing recycling was doing the job. When we arrived on Monday, July 7, no one could specify how we were doing our duties on durables. We are both 40/41 years old and have some limitations which is why durables was a good fit. Once we had set up camp and signed for our bracelets we were informed of the new shift requirements and in fact taken away from any jobs related to durables. On Wednesday, the 9th, I was accepted as a crew. On Friday and Saturday a.m., I got up & did a regular shift of picking up cardboard & silver. On Saturday, I completed a fork-washing shift at which my previous year's knowledge was utilized. When I arrived Sunday, after my 'crew leader' left, I asked what the deal was and he then informed me he had changed my duties to be better for my back. The first thing I was asked to do was push a red tippy hopper into position. This is far harder than moving cardboard and is disingenuous at best. I have a lot more to say – but it all boils down to a lack of communication and lacks love. I would like the opportunity to tell my whole story.

It was a real bummer to have my partner's trekking poles stolen from outside of the porta-potties in Marshall's Landing. She needed them to get around due to an ankle injury. Made her Fair very difficult. Whoever you are that stole them, it was a pretty low thing to do. Not what I expect from my Fair Family, and since it was in camp I assume that it was a Fair Family member. Or is theft by Fair Family members the new norm?

I don't want to involve Fair in booth boundary issues but I need my space, and because my neighbors think I am entitled to less space (and they want more frontage) I want some privacy, an established fence line that I can drape between our back spaces would be great. An understanding that our view between the trees and the fence is not un-used space (frontage) they should be allowed to use. (I tried to resolve this last year with a 'BUM' who didn't show up) Everyone seems to be getting 2-story booths built in my area... I would love help figuring out a loft that I could take away most of the parts of each year. Just big enough for the experience and sleeping. Sorry to ask for assistance, I inherited this booth 10(?) years ago after many years of sharing and these neighbors have never been friendly.... just greedy.

INFO

Please have clocks at the info booths so we minimalists can meander our way to the appropriate performance stages.

IT App to navigate between stages for Android, please.

I WANT TO PLAY, TOO

I talked with Johnny in the daycare about storytelling – I'd love to hear back from him.

I know how to fix the Wi-Fi. I am experienced in trouble-shooting & fixing networks. I would be happy to help assist in any IT-related OCF problem. Let me fix your Wi-Fi.

LASERS

Hate the lasers at light pointed low - fear eye damage.

I'm concerned by the amount of laser use at night and think that it needs to be moderated before someone gets hurt. I came across kids pointing high powered lasers across the path at my waist level, and saw little kids whose eyes were at that level walking through. Wouldn't take much to blind someone. PP Even if the kids with the lasers are careful it would only take someone walking by with something reflective to cause the light to shoot in an unexpected direction. I think that lasers should only be pointed up, and if that behavior can't be the norm then they should be banned. There are still plenty of sparkly things that can entertain us at night; banning glow sticks hasn't dampened the fun. This is a serious safety issue that'll be way easier to deal with before someone gets injured than after.

MEMBERSHIP I would love to see membership forms at info booths

MISCELLANEOUS

the water temperature was better than the Ritz which was alternating freezing and scalding.

We are interested in the bales of hay for the Whiteaker Community Garden to help keep the weeds down. Please, let me know if we can pick some up after the Fair. Thank you for all your work. I work very hard in the garden in the summer with some friends as well.

PATH PLANNING

It would be great if there were even more casual seating areas along the pathways. Quite often we get food or want to stop and rest and we find a place to settle ourselves. Usually we end up sitting on the ground, which is okay, I guess, but as we near middle age (I'm 47) it's not as easy to get up again. I'm able-bodied, -- hooray! -- but more senior community members or alternately-abled folks are probably wishing there were more benches, too. This is a completely delightful event and we've been coming for years, but it just gets harder and harder to find an easy resting spot. Oh -- and maybe swings! :))

Pretty mellow ambiance, no path bottlenecks

Not many rest areas on 13th for non-smokers.

PEACH PIT

Directory of artisans in Peach Pit. Please include the name of the booth. Very difficult to direct people to a specific booth.

Kindly put Peach Pit out sooner at Main Camp. We did not get a large stack until Saturday. Thank you. So glad to be part of this family.

PHILANTHROPY I could not find donation boxes....

REGISTRATION

Registration should open before 9am on Friday morning. Myself & lots of other people with problems stood around from 8:00 to 9:00 when we should have been getting our booths ready to open.
Special trouble-shooting line?

SAFETY

An electrician visitor dropping by Shady Grove info said that he was concerned by the wiring system for the solar panels on the river; it didn't look like there was a ground, and he thought it was unsafe.

SANITATION

I'm part of the crew that takes care of the drinking fountains before and during Fair. What I've seen the fountains used for, by staff & Family, is horrifying. Washing babies, tooth-brushing & spitting, even to fill a portable toilet, and probably worse, goes on during pre-fair and off hours.

Human sanitation needs should be addressed. More areas, plumbed into the well water, to provide wash-up areas & facilities need to be put into place. Drinking fountains currently provide many people the easiest access to water for their hygiene needs. Drinking fountains are an inappropriate venue for anything besides getting a drink or filling a bottle. Main concern is disease spread. The "yuk" factor is high, but public health is paramount. Thanks!

Need signs on bathrooms – kids go first!

Marshall's Landing Campground: The bucks were cleaner than I've ever seen, even on Saturday night late, late! The location of the sinks by the Marshall's Landing bucks could be improved. The one closest to main camp had one side facing into brush so it was not used. The sink closer to the Hub was up against a urinal that had no screen for the first couple days. Even after the urinal had a doorway privacy screen, one sink was in one of the doorways. Marshall's big sink had a bucket to capture the water so there was less of a muddy area around it

You stop stocking the restroom adequately on Sunday, and close most early Monday before booths have left (before noon) on Monday. I suffer from ulcerative colitis. I can't make it to Main Camp Monday morning when I'm flaring up. You are required by health codes and good manners to keep the restrooms supplied and functioning until the event and the members have left. For those of us with Crohns or colitis this is a very important matter. I want to know why you feel it's ok to not maintain the restroom come Sunday (Saturday night this year).

I've had major surgery over this and I use these rooms 10-12 times a day.

Need tongs for urinals – clean up

Thank you for cleaning the bathrooms near Upper River Loop Info Booth until the very end. We noticed they were even cleaned on Monday morning. Much appreciated.

Thank you so, so, so much for cleaning the toilets at River Loop on Sunday evening. Wow! That was so kind! An entire Fair without a disgusting toilet. Thank you. Do want to point out that a lot of the portas were installed strangely; too tilted to use, or urinals facing out into roads, or inaccessible hand washing stations, or the hand washing station in the urinal doorway. Would get more use out of stuff if it was more thoughtfully placed.

SIGNS & BANNERS

Need more signs so visitors can figure out where they are & where they want to go. Signs & Arrows

SITE

Poison oak we flagged in June was removed by Fair!

Please consider using decomposed granite as a surface at the dustiest parts of the path. The folks in the booths have to suck it in all day. Plus, it's not good for little kids to breathe in so much dust. Thank You!

Dust was extra, extra bad this year, especially in our area near Upper River Loop Info Booth. Can you do more dust mitigation on Tues-Thurs before Fair and be sure booths with water barrels for path watering have full barrels by Weds morning? We did not get water until mid-day on Thursday and by then everything was covered in dust.

The dust was super bad this year. No water til late Thursday. So disappointed not to have anyone hosing trail by our booth as in past. Please, please, please, make dust control a bigger crew and/or priority as it so affects the comfort level.

TEENS

Greetings, I believe our runner staff—youth aged 11-18, should be given t-shirts while they work their shifts at the Fair. My 11-year-old nephew's first year as a runner, last year, would have been thrilled with his very own staff t-shirt!

TOWING

Gator transport on Far Side caused us to be 45 minutes late to come back for our car, which was too late. It was towed. Not a pleasant start to Fair. Some grace period seems appropriate or do something with gator/trainers in Far Side. We were trying to set up tent before dark. Perhaps a cash or license deposit to enter. Worried people will stay overnight.

TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION

Why couldn't the back gate be opened for exiting traffic on to Hwy 126?

How about using the train to bring folks to the Fair? Building a platform, renting some passenger cars would be fun and help solve the traffic problem

VIDEO

The Fair's video policy is sorely in need of update. I'm sure that you're aware of how many videos are on YouTube, so it's not working. I saw folks walking around with GoPros strapped to their chests, and people using all sorts of other cameras to shoot video. Hurts credibility to have a policy that is not enforced. Maybe the policy should say something like "professional video cameras". BTW, saw a few GoPros outside of booths pointed into the path that were clearly part of the booths like Springfield Creamery. What's with that?

KUDOS

Kudos to the construction folks for getting the new security tower together in such short order. And it was amazing to see the new Dragon come together at the last minute.

Despite the huge winter storm damage, the clean-up was so well done it was barely noticeable

Awesome, awesome, awesome always (my 27th year)

Another awesome Fair. I was impressed by how much the various support services have improved.

Water crew has done great stuff. No more empty water barrels; the faucets, sinks, and drinking fountains are great. And even drains so that there aren't swamps near the water.

It's really awesome having Ki as our camp host. She's doing a great job. Really helps having a camp host who pays attention. Everything works better when there are good people in positions of responsibility.

Staff showers worked great. No huge lines. Never had them break when I got to the front of the line.

Great Fair! I like the expanded areas and all the new things you do each year.

on sunday morning my boothmates and i, in booth 224, were on the edge of despair thinking it was going to be '09 all over again. then we heard the band, there you all were marching up from main stage!!!!!! we could see the entire band since there was not yet a crowd, you marched by with such energy you inspired us all, we had the booth set up within minutes and proceeded to have an amazing day :). the people who had already come in picked up on your energy and cheered. my friend miles (yeah miles!!) told me that before you all marched howard said 'it's up to us to start the fair today'. howard, thank you, we really did need your help that morning, thank you fighting instruments of karma marching band/orchestra, we could not have done it without you!! well done! already looking forward to next year, no rain please, and really looking forward to seeing you all again.

Love to all who gave so much!