FLASHFEED STUDY GUIDE

# Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City

Unofficial study guide by FlashFeed

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# Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City: unofficial study guide

An evidence-balanced introduction to Burning Man's history, culture, temporary city, art, contradictions, safety, and first-timer planning.

Unofficial study guide for *Enabling Creative Chaos: The Organization Behind the Burning Man Event* by Katherine K. Chen. FlashFeed is not affiliated with the author or publisher.


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## How to use this guide

Take one lesson at a time: read the study guide, then go over any key facts. Where a lesson has a self-test, try it from memory before you check the answer key at the back. Follow the Go deeper links when you want more.

**Free, with no ads and no account to make.**

# Contents


01 What Burning Man Is 4

02 From Beach Burn to Black Rock City 13

03 Black Rock City in Practice 18

04 Art, Temples, and Mutant Vehicles 24

05 People and Milestones 29

06 Ideals and Contradictions 35

07 Safety, Consent, and Access 41

08 Planning Your First Burn 45

Answer key 51

Sources 58

Image credits 61

Useful links 63

About FlashFeed 64

LESSON 1 OF 8

# What Burning Man Is

Event, City, Culture, Network · Participation and the Ten Principles · Ritual, Language, and Belonging

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Distinguish Burning Man as an event, a city, a culture and a year-round network, rather than a music festival.
- Identify the Ten Principles as Harvey's 2004 guideposts and match principles like Gifting and Decommodification to their meanings.
- Recognise the rituals and shared vocabulary that mark belonging in Black Rock City.

## Event, City, Culture, Network

**Burning Man** is best understood in several ways at once: an annual participant-built temporary city, an organized event, a cultural movement, and a global network. Calling it only a music festival misses how it is made and what participants are expected to do. Much of the art, performance, camp life, services, and social experience comes from participants themselves. The event provides a setting and production framework, but people create much of what happens inside it.

It also helps to separate the place from the organization. Black Rock City is the temporary Nevada event. Burning Man Project is the nonprofit that produces Black Rock City and runs other programs. Beyond Nevada, the **Regional Network** connects officially affiliated Burner events and communities around the world. These distinctions explain how one name can refer to an event, a city, a culture, and a much wider community without those things being identical.

The participant-built model joins these meanings. Art, camps, services, performance, and social life are produced inside the temporary city, while the nonprofit provides the event framework and the affiliated network carries related community activity beyond Nevada.

## Participation and the Ten Principles

Larry Harvey wrote the **Ten Principles** in 2004 as guideposts for the Regional Network. They described an ethos organizers believed had already developed; they were not rules established for the first event in 1986. The principles give language to recurring expectations about how people relate to one another and create the experience.

**Gifting** means giving without requiring barter or an equal return. **Decommodification** seeks environments free from commercial sponsorship, advertising, and packaged consumption. It does not mean that attending or producing the event costs nothing. Radical Inclusion welcomes strangers and sets no prerequisite for joining the community, while Civic Responsibility asks organizers to protect public welfare and obey applicable laws.

**Radical Self-reliance** asks people to understand and prepare for their needs, resources, and limits. It works alongside Communal Effort, which values creative cooperation and the social systems that support it. Preparing for yourself and supporting a community are complementary responsibilities rather than opposites.

**Radical Self-expression** encourages people to offer their individual gifts, but that expression remains bounded by the rights and liberties of recipients. It is not permission to ignore consent. **Participation**, Immediacy, and the "no spectators" norm encourage direct involvement. Contribution can take different valid forms, so involvement does not require everyone to perform the same role. Together, the principles describe a culture made through action, cooperation, responsibility, and respect for other people.

Self-reliance does not cancel communal effort, self-expression does not cancel recipients' rights, and decommodification does not erase the real cost of producing the event.

## Ritual, Language, and Belonging

Burning Man culture is often described as cyclical, collaborative, immediate, and sensual. It can support multiple forms of belonging rather than demanding one uniform Burner identity. Its repeated rituals help give the temporary city a recognizable rhythm, while participants can experience and interpret those rituals differently.

The Man burn and the **Temple burn** are distinct. The Man burn is typically celebratory and spectacular. The Temple serves as a space for remembrance, grief, reflection, and release, and its burn carries that memorial role. Treating the two burns as interchangeable misses the different emotional work they do.

The physical setting also has its own vocabulary. At Burning Man, the **playa** is the hard, alkaline surface of the prehistoric lakebed on which Black Rock City is built. The city, its art, and its rituals appear on this surface and then disappear, reinforcing the event's temporary and cyclical character.

Belonging can therefore emerge through different combinations of collaboration, immediate experience, sensory encounter, and shared ritual. The culture may feel recognizable from cycle to cycle without requiring every participant to adopt the same identity.

## Key terms

### Burning Man
Event, city, culture, and global network.

### Burning Man Project
The nonprofit that produces Black Rock City and runs other programs.

### Temple burn
A ritual of remembrance and release.

## Key concepts

**Civic Responsibility**

- Names public welfare
- Applies law to organized events

**Communal Effort**

- Centers collaboration
- Builds networks and public spaces

**Radical Inclusion**

- Concerns the boundaries of belonging in a community
- Welcomes the stranger and sets no prerequisite for participation

**Gifting**

- Concerns how something is offered to another person
- Requires neither barter nor an equal return

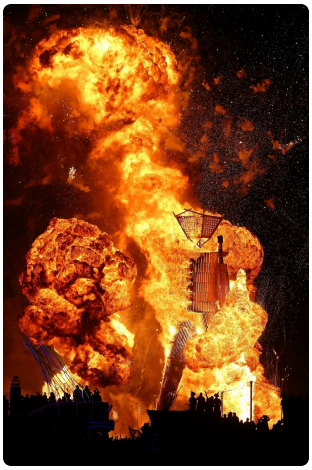
**Radical Self-reliance**

- Concerns a participant's relationship to personal limits
- Calls for preparing for one's own needs and resources

**Radical Self-expression**

- Concerns how individual gifts enter the community
- Remains bounded by recipients' rights and consent

## Key facts



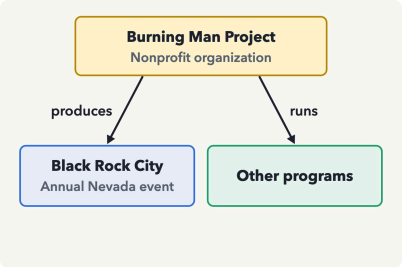
torroid from SF Bay Area · CC BY-SA 2.0

**Burning Man**

Burning Man is best understood as an annual participant-built temporary city, an organized event, a cultural movement, and a global network—not simply as a conventional music festival.

### Participation

The event's central production model expects participants to create much of the art, camps, services, performance, and social experience.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### Event and organization differ

Black Rock City is the annual Nevada event, while Burning Man Project is the nonprofit organization that produces it and runs other programs.



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### Regional Network

The Regional Network connects officially affiliated events and communities beyond Black Rock City.



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### Ten Principles

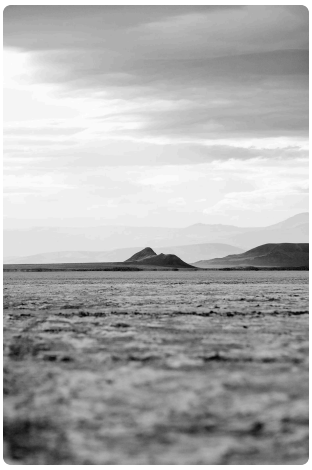
Larry Harvey wrote the Ten Principles in 2004 as guidelines for the Regional Network, describing an ethos that organizers believed had already developed rather than establishing rules for the 1986 event.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### Decommodification

Decommodification seeks social environments free from commercial sponsorship, advertising, and the substitution of consumption for participation; it does not mean that producing or attending the event costs nothing.



Wikimedia Commons · BLM Nevada · CC BY 2.0

### Radical Self-reliance

Radical Self-reliance and Communal Effort are complementary: participants prepare for their own needs while also building and supporting a community.

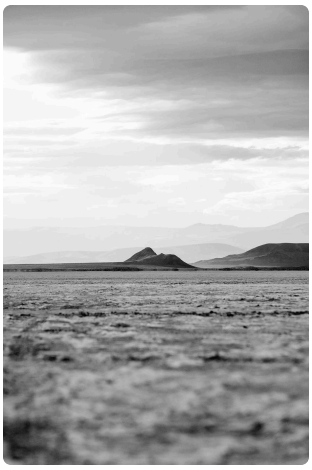


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### Culture

Burning Man scholarship describes the culture as cyclical, collaborative, immediate, sensual, and capable of supporting multiple forms of belonging rather than one uniform identity.

> **Temple burn**
>
> The Man burn and Temple burn are distinct rituals: the Man burn is typically celebratory and spectacular, while the Temple functions as a space for remembrance, grief, reflection, and release.



Wikimedia Commons · BLM Nevada · CC BY 2.0

**Playa**

At Burning Man, the playa is the hard, alkaline surface of the prehistoric lakebed where Black Rock City is built.

## Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

**Man burn** → A large bonfire that draws a crowd to watch it burn

**Temporary playa setting** → City, art, and rituals appear and disappear

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

**1.** Which description best fits Burning Man?

- A An event, city, culture, and global network
- B A weekend camping trip
- C A conventional music festival
- D A commercial arts expo

**2.** Who creates most of the art, camps, and social experience at Burning Man?

- A Burning Man Project staff
- B Ticketed vendors
- C Regional Network coordinators
- D Participants themselves

**3.** Which term names the nonprofit that produces Black Rock City and runs other programs?

- A Regional Network
- B Burning Man Project
- C Ten Principles
- D Black Rock City

**4.** Which of these does NOT describe Burning Man?

- A A participant-built temporary city
- B A global cultural movement
- C A single-day commercial trade show
- D A network of affiliated events

**5.** What does the Regional Network connect?

A. Ticket sales offices across Nevada
B. Affiliated Burner events and communities worldwide
C. Local Reno businesses supplying the event
D. Volunteer shifts inside Black Rock City

**6.** Besides being an event and a temporary city, what else is Burning Man?

A. A political party
B. A film festival
C. A cultural movement
D. A retail marketplace

**7.** Calling Burning Man only a music festival misses that it is also a ___.

A. ticketing agency
B. corporate sponsor
C. tourism board
D. cultural movement

**8.** What connects officially affiliated Burner events and communities around the world beyond Nevada?

A. The Regional Network
B. The Ten Principles
C. Burning Man Project staff
D. Black Rock City LLC

**9.** What kind of ongoing community structure is the Regional Network?

A. A year-round global network of affiliated events
B. A single annual Nevada gathering
C. A temporary desert campsite
D. A seasonal ticket office

**10.** Who wrote the Ten Principles, and when?

A. Regional Network leaders, in 1986
B. Larry Harvey, in 1986
C. Larry Harvey, in 2004
D. Burning Man Project board, in 2004

**11.** What does Decommodification mean at Burning Man?

A. The event costs nothing to attend or produce
B. Only nonprofit vendors may sell goods onsite
C. All goods must be bartered instead of gifted
D. Free of commercial sponsorship and advertising

**12.** Which statement about Decommodification is FALSE?

A. It seeks environments free of advertising
B. It means producing and attending the event costs nothing
C. It seeks environments free of commercial sponsorship
D. It discourages substituting consumption for participation

**13.** What does the principle of Gifting mean at Burning Man?

A. Selling crafts at discounted prices
B. Giving without requiring barter or an equal return
C. Donating money exclusively to Burning Man Project
D. Trading goods evenly through barter

**14.** Which pair of principles are described as complementary rather than opposing?

A. Decommodification and Gifting
B. Participation and Immediacy
C. Radical Self-reliance and Communal Effort
D. Radical Inclusion and Civic Responsibility

**15.** What surface is Black Rock City built on?

A. A paved industrial lot
B. A soft desert sand dune
C. A grassy high-altitude plateau
D. The hard, alkaline playa of a prehistoric lakebed

**16.** How does the Temple burn differ from the Man burn?

A. Temple burn is remembrance; Man burn is celebration
B. Temple burn is celebration; Man burn is remembrance
C. Both burns are purely celebratory
D. Both burns are purely memorial

**17.** What happens to the city, art, and rituals built on the playa each cycle?

A. Only the art is left in place
B. They appear and then disappear
C. The Temple stays as a memorial site
D. The Man stays up until the next year

**18.** Which statement about belonging in Burning Man culture is TRUE?

A. It can take multiple forms rather than one uniform identity
B. Requires every participant to adopt one identity
C. It is defined solely by camp membership
D. It is granted only after attending five events

**19.** Which words describe the recurring character of Burning Man culture?

A. Linear, collaborative, scheduled, and sensual
B. Cyclical, individualistic, immediate, and cerebral
C. Cyclical, collaborative, immediate, and sensual
D. Permanent, collaborative, immediate, and festive

## Go deeper

**LISTEN** Lesson 1 episode 6:40 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

**WATCH** More Than a Festival 0:29
Is Burning Man just a music festival? Calling it that misses how it is made.

**WATCH** Principles Came Later 0:29
Burning Man's Ten Principles were not rules for the first burn in 1986. Larry Harvey wrote them in 2004.

**ONLINE** This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/what-burning-man-is

**STUDY** Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 2 OF 8

# From Beach Burn to Black Rock City

The Baker Beach Beginning · The 1990 Desert Move · Crisis, Rules, and City-Making

**WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO**

- Recount the 1986 Baker Beach origin and what forced the move off the beach.

## The Baker Beach Beginning

The first Burning Man burn took place in 1986, when Larry Harvey and Jerry James built an improvised wooden figure on Baker Beach in San Francisco and burned it. The first Man was about eight feet tall, much smaller than the structures that would appear in later years.

When the figure burned, a curious crowd gathered around the fire. That gathering is an important part of the origin story: the first burn was not yet a temporary desert city with roads, camps, permits, and public-safety systems. It was a small beach event organized around a handmade wooden figure and a fire that drew people together. Harvey and James supplied the initial structure and burn, while the crowd's spontaneous response hinted at the participant gathering that the event would later become.

The three details belong together: two builders made an improvised figure, the figure was modest in size, and a curious crowd formed around its burning.

## The 1990 Desert Move

The decisive move came in 1990. Authorities allowed the Man to be erected on Baker Beach but did not allow it to be burned there. Organizers associated with the Cacophony Society then helped relocate the burn to the Black Rock Desert as Zone Trip #4.

Changing the location changed the gathering. Reaching the desert required a pilgrimage rather than a casual visit to a city beach. People had to practice survival camping and take greater responsibility for their participation. The open setting also allowed a settlement to form around the Man. These features helped move the gathering toward the participant-built desert community that became Black Rock City.

Attendance estimates from this early period require care. Figures for 1990 vary even within official historical materials, so they are best understood as approximate rather than exact. The durable point is the transformation in place and practice: the burn moved from Baker Beach to the Black Rock Desert, and the demands of travel, survival, and settlement reshaped the event.

The move was both practical and cultural. A restriction on burning at the beach prompted the relocation, Cacophony Society organizers helped create Zone Trip #4, and the desert required people to arrive prepared for travel and survival rather than simply gathering around a city fire.

# Crisis, Rules, and City-Making

Growth exposed the limits of informal organization. In 1996, the event reached about 8,000 participants and experienced severe failures involving safety, cleanup, traffic, and organization. The problems made clear that a larger temporary settlement could not operate as though it were still a small beach gathering.

The response helped push Burning Man toward formal roads and zoning, restrictions on vehicle movement, permits, public-safety systems, and a durable production organization. These changes did not simply add bureaucracy. They created structures needed to support a growing city and reduced risks that had become visible in 1996.

The city's location and plan also continued to evolve. Black Rock City used Hualapai Flat once in 1997. It returned to the Black Rock playa in 1998 with a scalable semicircular plan centered on the Man. The sequence from beach burn to desert settlement to planned city shows how participation and organization developed together: the gathering became larger and more complex, and its physical design and operating systems changed in response.

The turning point was not a single rule or map. Safety failures, cleanup problems, traffic, and organizational strain combined to drive formal systems. Roads, zoning, vehicle limits, permits, public safety, and a scalable plan addressed different parts of the same challenge: operating a temporary city rather than an informal gathering.

## Key facts

**Origins**

Larry Harvey and Jerry James built and burned the first wooden Man on Baker Beach in San Francisco in 1986.

**Crowd made the moment**

When the first Man burned on Baker Beach in 1986, a curious crowd gathered around the fire.

**First Man height**

The first 1986 Man was an improvised wooden figure about eight feet tall, far smaller than later versions. The first Man was modest.

**Origins**

In 1990 authorities allowed the Man to be erected on Baker Beach but not burned, after which Cacophony Society organizers helped relocate the burn to the Black Rock Desert as Zone Trip #4.

**Origins**

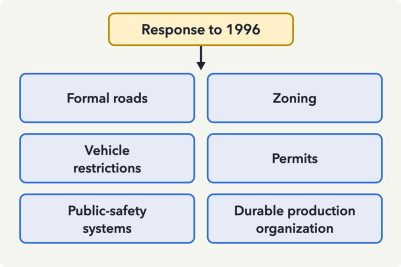
The 1990 move changed the gathering by requiring a pilgrimage, survival camping, and greater participant involvement, while allowing a settlement to form around the Man.

### Historical Method

Early attendance figures, especially for 1990, vary even within official historical materials and should be taught as approximate.

### 1996 event population

The 1996 event reached about 8,000 participants and exposed severe safety, cleanup, traffic, and organizational failures.




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### Turning Points

The response to 1996 helped push Burning Man toward formal roads, zoning, vehicle restrictions, permits, public-safety systems, and a durable production organization.



European Space Agency · Attribution

### City Design

Black Rock City used a one-time Hualapai Flat site in 1997 and returned to the Black Rock playa in 1998 with a scalable semicircular plan centered on the Man.

## By the numbers

First Man height — how many feet?

**8** feet

1996 event population — how many participants?

**8000** participants

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. In what year did Larry Harvey and Jerry James burn the first wooden Man on Baker Beach?

A 1998
B 1996
C 1990
D 1986

**2.** What specifically forced the burn to leave Baker Beach in 1990?

A Severe safety and cleanup failures
B New vehicle and permit restrictions
C Officials barred burning it on the beach
D Complaints about traffic congestion

**3.** About how tall was the first Man built on Baker Beach in 1986?

A About 8 feet
B About 60 feet
C About 40 feet
D About 25 feet

**4.** Which was NOT one of the new demands the 1990 desert move placed on participants?

A Practicing survival camping
B Obtaining formal event permits
C Taking on more personal responsibility
D Making a pilgrimage journey

**5.** What formed spontaneously around the burning figure at the 1986 Baker Beach event?

A A formally organized camp committee
B A team of trained safety marshals
C A curious crowd of onlookers
D A crew of desert survivalists

**6.** Who built and burned the first improvised wooden Man on Baker Beach in 1986?

A John Law and Larry Harvey
B Larry Harvey and Jerry James
C Jerry James and Rod Garrett
D Larry Harvey and Michael Mikel

**7.** What gathered around the burning wooden figure at the original 1986 Baker Beach event?

A A curious crowd
B A film crew
C A ticketed audience
D A city permit inspector

**8.** What specifically forced the burn to relocate away from Baker Beach in 1990?

A Local residents filed noise complaints
B The beach flooded during a storm
C The beach was sold to developers
D Authorities allowed erecting but not burning it there

**9.** Who helped relocate the 1990 burn to the Black Rock Desert as Zone Trip #4?

A The Nevada tourism board
B Cacophony Society organizers
C U.S. Forest Service rangers
D The Bureau of Land Management

## Go deeper

**LISTEN** Lesson 2 episode 6:16 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

**WATCH** Eight Feet on a Beach 0:30
In 1986, two men built a wooden figure on a San Francisco beach and set it on fire.

**WATCH** No Burning on the Beach 0:30
In 1990, the Man could stand on Baker Beach, but it could not burn there.

**ONLINE** This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/from-beach-burn-to-black-rock-city

**STUDY** Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 3 OF 8

# Black Rock City in Practice

Layout and Infrastructure · Camps, Volunteering, and Civic Life · Capacity, Tickets, and Access

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Describe Black Rock City's clock-face street plan, what it is designed to support, and the mix of institutions that operate it.
- Describe what theme camps and open camping involve, and how volunteer departments work alongside paid staff.

## Layout and Infrastructure

Black Rock City's plan is functional as well as visual. Rod Garrett's design evolved to support orientation, traffic, services, social interaction, art, and growth. The layout therefore does more than make an attractive shape on a map; it helps a temporary settlement operate at scale.

The city uses clock-face radial streets and concentric lettered streets. The Man and Center Camp are major orientation anchors. Together, these features give participants a shared way to describe locations and navigate a city that exists for only a short period.

The city is also governed and operated through several kinds of institutions. Its functioning depends on nonprofit staff, contractors, government agencies, and large volunteer departments. Black Rock City is participant-built, but that does not make it an ungoverned city. Formal systems and participant activity work together to provide roads, services, safety, and the social spaces that make the city possible.

Orientation and operation reinforce each other. Radial and lettered streets organize movement, the Man and Center Camp help people locate themselves, and the plan leaves room for social activity, services, and art as the city changes in scale.

## Camps, Volunteering, and Civic Life

**Theme camps** are organized groups that create residential communities and offer public interactivity. Placed camps receive locations through an application process. A camp might give members community and shared infrastructure, but it can also require dues, work shifts, rules, and other obligations. Joining one therefore changes both what a participant receives and what the participant may be expected to contribute.

A placed theme camp is not the only way to live in the city. Open camping allows participants to camp outside placed camps without submitting a placement application or operating a required public program. That option preserves a path for people who do not want the commitments or structure of an organized camp.

Volunteer departments help operate Black Rock City alongside paid staff, contractors, and public agencies. This mixture reflects the wider production model: participants create much of civic life, but specialized workers and public institutions also carry essential responsibilities. Camps, open camping, and volunteer departments provide different routes into community and contribution rather than a single required experience.

These choices carry different obligations. A placed camp applies for a location and offers public interactivity; its members may share costs and shifts. Open campers do not need a placement application or required program. Volunteers join departments that support city operations alongside other workers and agencies.

## Capacity, Tickets, and Access

The organization behind the city changed as the event matured. Burning Man Project completed its transition to nonprofit control in 2014. Black Rock City LLC became its subsidiary, and the annual Black Rock City event became the nonprofit's largest program.

Ticket access has also changed over time. Tickets sold out for the first time in 2011, but that history should not become a permanent assumption that every sale always sells out. The official final sale still offered tickets in August 2026. Availability is a dated condition, not an evergreen rule.

Price can remain a barrier even when tickets are available. For 2026, the Ticket Aid Program offered a reduced $250 ticket to qualifying applicants with limited income or other eligibility. The combination of ordinary sales and aid programs shows that access involves more than capacity alone: availability, price, timing, and eligibility can all affect who is able to attend.

A first sellout occurred in 2011, tickets remained in an official sale in August 2026, and an aid program offered a lower price to eligible applicants. Any current plan therefore needs current sale information rather than assumptions based on an earlier year.

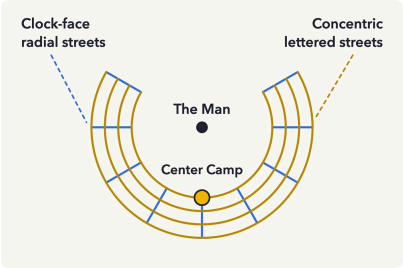
## Key terms

### Theme camps

Organized groups that create residential communities and public interactivity.

## Key facts

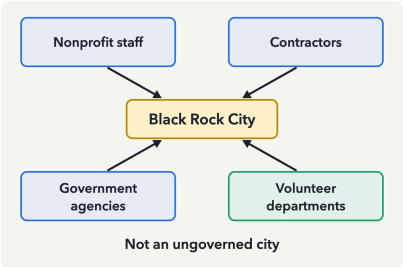
> **City Design**
>
> Rod Garrett's city plan evolved to support orientation, traffic, services, social interaction, art, and scalability rather than serving only an aesthetic purpose.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### City Design

Black Rock City is organized around clock-face radial streets and concentric lettered streets, with the Man and Center Camp serving as major orientation anchors.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### Organization

Black Rock City's functioning depends on a mixture of nonprofit staff, contractors, government agencies, and large volunteer departments; it is not an ungoverned city.

### Theme camps

Theme camps are organized participant groups that create residential communities and public interactivity; placed camps receive locations through an application process, while open camping remains available.

### Camping

A theme camp can provide community and shared infrastructure, but may also require dues, work shifts, rules, and other obligations.

### Open camping is valid

Open camping lets participants camp outside placed camps without a placement application or required camp program.



BLM Nevada · Public domain

### City mixes labor models

Volunteer departments help operate Black Rock City alongside paid staff, contractors, and public agencies.

### Organization

Burning Man Project completed its transition to nonprofit control in 2014, making Black Rock City LLC a subsidiary and the annual event the nonprofit's largest program.

> **Growth**
> Tickets sold out for the first time in 2011, but the official final sale still offered 2026 tickets in August; scarcity is not an evergreen rule.

> **2026 Ticket Aid price**
> The 2026 Ticket Aid Program offered a reduced $250 ticket to qualifying applicants with limited income or other eligibility. A reduced-price route exists.

## By the numbers

What was the 2026 Ticket Aid base ticket price before applicable taxes and fees?

**250** USD

## Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

**Placed camps** → Receive locations through an application process

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which two features serve as Black Rock City's major orientation anchors?

A. The radial streets and the lettered streets
B. The Temple and the landmark art installations
C. Theme camps and open camping areas
D. The Man and Center Camp

2. What street pattern organizes Black Rock City's layout?

A. Hexagonal blocks and ring roads
B. Grid streets and numbered avenues
C. Clock-face radial and lettered streets
D. Spiral streets and diagonal boulevards

3. Which of these is NOT part of how Black Rock City is governed and operated?

A. A single elected city council
B. Contractors
C. Volunteer departments
D. Nonprofit staff

4. What did Rod Garrett's city design evolve to support?

A. Ticket sales and revenue growth
B. Orientation, traffic, and scalability
C. Vehicle speed and parking capacity only
D. Aesthetic appeal only

**5.** Which statement best describes how Black Rock City is run?

A. Only private contractors, no volunteers
B. Participant effort plus formal staff and agencies
C. Entirely self-governed with no formal staff
D. Run solely by government agencies

**6.** How are Black Rock City's streets organized to help participants navigate?

A. A single spiral street winding inward
B. Randomly placed footpaths with no naming
C. Clock-face radial streets and concentric lettered streets
D. A numbered grid like a typical downtown

**7.** What two features serve as the major orientation anchors in Black Rock City's layout?

A. The Man and Center Camp
B. The Trash Fence and the Airport
C. The airport and the ticket office
D. City Hall and the Temple

**8.** What is a theme camp?

A. Nonprofit and contractor staff providing city services
B. Camping option requiring no application or program
C. Volunteer department operating city services
D. Organized group creating residential communities

**9.** How do placed theme camps receive their location in Black Rock City?

A. Through an application process
B. First-come, first-served on arrival
C. By registering with a government agency
D. By vehicle license lottery

**10.** What distinguishes open camping from a placed theme camp?

A. Limited to volunteer staff only
B. Requires paying higher dues
C. Requires a government permit
D. No placement application or public program required

**11.** Which is NOT something theme camp membership can require?

A. Rules and other obligations
B. Dues
C. A government-issued operating license
D. Work shifts

**12.** How do volunteer departments contribute to civic life in Black Rock City?

A. Replace paid staff and government agencies entirely
B. Assist paid staff and agencies in city operations
C. Operate independently without any paid staff
D. Provide only entertainment, not operations support

**13.** Who do volunteer departments operate Black Rock City alongside?

A. Federal park rangers exclusively
B. Ticketing vendors only
C. Paid staff, contractors, and public agencies
D. Only unpaid campers

**14.** What does the mix of volunteer departments and paid staff show about the city's civic work?

- (A) Participants and specialized workers share responsibility
- (B) Civic operations are fully outsourced to contractors
- (C) Volunteers replace all paid staff entirely
- (D) Only nonprofit staff run city operations

## Go deeper

**LISTEN** Lesson 3 episode 6:25 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

**WATCH** A City on a Clock 0:29
Black Rock City's streets are laid out like a clock face.

**WATCH** Camp or Open Camp 0:31
Nobody at Burning Man has to join a theme camp.

**ONLINE** This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/black-rock-city-in-practice

**STUDY** Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 4 OF 8

# Art, Temples, and Mutant Vehicles

How Playa Art Works · The Temple and Landmark Works · Mutant Vehicles and Mobile Worlds

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain how playa art is funded, sited and encountered differently from gallery art.

## How Playa Art Works

**playa art** is often large-scale, interactive, collaborative, temporary, and designed in response to the desert. None of those tendencies creates a single required style. Works can use different forms, materials, scales, and modes of participation while still belonging to the artistic life of Black Rock City.

Honoraria partially support selected works, but artists and crews often contribute substantial money, labor, and materials of their own. An **Honorarium** is therefore a partial grant, not a promise that Burning Man will cover the full cost of an artwork. The difference matters for understanding how ambitious works reach the playa: institutional support can help, while artists and teams still carry much of the production effort.

The art is made for a temporary desert city. Its interactivity and collaboration invite participants into the work, while its temporary character distinguishes it from an object intended to remain permanently on the site.

Scale and interactivity are common, not mandatory formulas. The desert can shape how a work is built and encountered, but no single aesthetic defines the category in practice. Partial grants and crew contributions likewise produce different combinations of institutional support and artist-provided resources.

## The Temple and Landmark Works

The recurring Temple tradition began in 2000 with David Best and Jack Haye's Temple of the Mind. The Temple became a communal setting for memorial ritual, and later designers developed that role through changing architectural forms. In 2018, Arthur Mamou-Mani's Galaxia used a spiraling timber structure to join digital design with communal remembrance.

Other landmark works show the range of art associated with the event. Marco Cochrane's Truth is Beauty debuted at Burning Man in 2013. Its monumental female figure asked how women might move if they felt safe. Embrace, a 72-foot wooden sculpture by Matt Schultz and the Pier Group, burned at dawn in 2014.

Burning Man-associated art has also traveled beyond the playa. The Smithsonian's No Spectators exhibition in 2018–2019 brought such work into a major national museum. These examples span

memorial architecture, figurative sculpture, a temporary burn, and a museum exhibition, demonstrating that the art's cultural life can continue even when an individual playa installation is temporary.

The landmarks also connect different purposes. Temple of the Mind established a recurring memorial form; Truth is Beauty posed a question about women's safety; Embrace culminated in a dawn burn; and Galaxia joined digital design with communal ritual.

## Mutant Vehicles and Mobile Worlds

A **Mutant Vehicle** is an art vehicle built from scratch or changed so extensively that it becomes more than a normally decorated car. To operate at Black Rock City, it must be invited and pass an on-playa Department of Mutant Vehicles inspection. Artistic transformation and operational permission are both part of the form.

El Pulpo Mecanico, created by Duane Flatmo from recycled scrap, debuted in 2011 and became a widely recognized flame-effect vehicle. Robot Heart began on playa in 2008 as a converted 1972 English double-decker bus. It helped make mobile deep-playa sound gatherings prominent in later Burner culture. Mayan Warrior became an iconic Mexican-led sound and light project widely recognized within Black Rock City's mobile sound-camp culture.

Large sound stages are only one category. Mutant vehicles can also emphasize kinetic sculpture, fire art, public transportation, whimsy, or small-scale craft; a separate Accessibility Vehicle license covers vehicles built for participants with disabilities.

El Pulpo Mecanico represents recycled scrap and flame effects, Robot Heart and Mayan Warrior represent influential mobile sound projects, and many other vehicles center transport, accessibility, kinetic form, fire, humor, or small-scale making.

## Key terms

### Honorarium
A partial grant for selected playa art.

### Mutant Vehicle
A radically transformed licensed art vehicle.

## Key facts

> **Playa art**
> Playa art is often large-scale, interactive, collaborative, temporary, and responsive to the desert, but it has no single required aesthetic. Art made for participation.



Wikimedia Commons · RawWriter · CC BY-SA 4.0

### Grants cover only part

Honoraria partially support selected works; many artists and crews still provide substantial money, labor, and materials.

> **Honorarium**
>
> An Honorarium is a partial art grant rather than a promise to cover an artwork's full cost. A grant, not full funding.



Wikimedia Commons · Steve Jurvetson · CC BY 2.0

### Temple tradition begins

David Best and Jack Haye's Temple of the Mind began the recurring Black Rock City Temple tradition in 2000.



Wikimedia Commons · dana robinson from los angeles, ca, usa · CC BY-SA 2.0

### Safety embodied at scale

Marco Cochrane's Truth is Beauty debuted at Burning Man in 2013 and used a monumental female figure to ask how women might move if safe.

> **Digital design meets memorial ritual**
>
> Arthur Mamou-Mani designed the 2018 Temple, Galaxia, as a spiraling timber structure joining digital design with communal memorial ritual.

> **Mutant Vehicle**
>
> A Mutant Vehicle is an art vehicle built from scratch or transformed so extensively that it is more than a normally decorated car, and it must be invited and pass on-playa DMV inspection to operate. Mutant Vehicles.



BLM Nevada · Public domain

**Mutant Vehicles**

El Pulpo Mecanico, created by Duane Flatmo from recycled scrap, debuted in 2011 and became a widely recognized flame-effect mutant vehicle.

> **Mutant Vehicles**
>
> Robot Heart began on playa in 2008 as a converted 1972 English double-decker bus and helped make mobile deep-playa sound gatherings a prominent part of later Burner culture.

## Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

**El Pulpo Mecanico** → Recycled-scrap flame vehicle that debuted in 2011

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

**1.** Which claim about playa art funding is FALSE?

- A Honoraria are partial grants only
- B Artists often add their own labor
- C Honoraria cover full production costs
- D Grants supplement artist resources

**2.** How does playa art's lifespan compare to a gallery artwork's?

- A Displayed year-round at a fixed venue
- B Kept on a permanent gallery loan circuit
- C Stored in a climate-controlled vault indefinitely
- D Built for one desert event, then removed

**3.** Compared to a typical gallery visitor, how does a Black Rock City participant usually experience playa art?

- A By booking a timed entry ticket
- B By collaborating with the artwork
- C By viewing it from behind a rope barrier
- D By reading a wall placard before viewing

**4.** What best defines an Honorarium in Burning Man's playa art program?

- A A partial grant that artists must supplement themselves
- B A refundable deposit paid by exhibiting artists
- C A cash prize awarded after the burn
- D A full budget guarantee covering every cost

**5.** Which trait most distinguishes playa art from a passively viewed gallery piece?

- A A fixed price tag and provenance record
- B A docent-led exhibit tour
- C Interactivity and collaboration
- D Climate-controlled gallery lighting

**6.** What best describes how Burning Man honoraria fund playa art?

- A A partial grant, supplemented by artists' own resources
- B Full funding covering an artwork's total cost
- C A no-cost loan program
- D A commercial sponsorship deal

**7.** Besides any honorarium, what do many artists and crews still contribute to their playa art?

- A Only volunteer hours and no money
- B Substantial money, labor, and materials of their own
- C Nothing further, since honoraria cover everything
- D A share of ticket sales revenue

**8.** What shapes how playa art is typically built and encountered?

- A A permanent concrete foundation
- B A fixed indoor gallery floor plan
- C A museum's climate-control system
- D Its responsiveness to the desert setting

**9.** Unlike a gallery piece, how is playa art situated at Black Rock City?

- A In a permanent outdoor plaza year-round
- B Behind a roped-off velvet display
- C In a climate-controlled museum wing
- D In the open desert as a temporary work

**10.** What distinguishes how participants encounter playa art from how visitors experience typical gallery art?

- A Playa art is roped off and untouchable like gallery work
- B Playa art is viewed only through audio guides
- C Playa art invites interactive, collaborative participation
- D Playa art requires a paid museum admission ticket

## Go deeper

LISTEN Lesson 4 episode 6:28 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

WATCH The Other Burn 0:29
Burning Man has a second burn, and it has a different job. It is the Temple.

WATCH More Than a Painted Car 0:30
A Burning Man art vehicle can be far more than a painted car. It is called a Mutant Vehicle.

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/art-temples-and-mutant-vehicles

STUDY Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 5 OF 8

# People and Milestones

People Who Built the Story · A Timeline of Turning Points · Beyond Black Rock City

**WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO**

- Identify the people whose decisions shaped Burning Man and what each contributed.
- Date Burning Man's turning points from 1986 to 2014 and put them in chronological order.

## People Who Built the Story

Burning Man's history is collective. Builders, Cacophony Society organizers, artists, city designers, operations leaders, and volunteers shaped it at different stages. Crediting Burning Man contributors by phase is more accurate than treating one founder as the sole author. The most visible people also changed as the project moved from a beach ritual to a desert city and then to a nonprofit network.

Larry Harvey co-built the first Man and later articulated the Ten Principles. Jerry James brought carpentry to the physical construction of the earliest Baker Beach effigy. John Law connected the event with the Cacophony Society and helped shape its desert era, while Michael Mikel helped organize early desert operations and community.

As the event developed, other forms of leadership became central. Crimson Rose helped build its fire-art culture and organizational leadership. Marian Goodell helped lead the organization and its transition into Burning Man Project. These roles are not interchangeable: construction, cultural connection, desert operations, fire art, organizational leadership, and nonprofit development each belong to a different part of the story.

Harvey and James belong to the earliest physical burn, Law and Mikel to the formative desert community, Rose to fire art and organizational leadership, and Goodell to organizational and nonprofit development. Volunteers and other builders remain part of the collective history.

## A Timeline of Turning Points

The timeline begins in 1986 with the first Baker Beach burn. In 1990, the first Black Rock Desert burn moved the gathering into the setting that would reshape participation, survival, and settlement. The organizational crisis of 1996 accelerated formal organization as attendance and operational problems outgrew earlier practices.

The recurring Temple tradition began in 2000. Larry Harvey wrote the Ten Principles in 2004, giving the Regional Network a set of guideposts that described the culture's developing ethos. In 2014, Burning Man Project completed its transition to nonprofit control.

These dates mark different kinds of change. The 1986 and 1990 moments concern the origin and relocation of the burn. The 1996 turning point concerns safety and organization. The year 2000 marks

the beginning of an enduring ritual tradition, while 2004 marks the written articulation of principles. The 2014 milestone concerns institutional form. Read together, the dates trace a movement from a small beach gathering through a temporary desert city to a nonprofit organization and wider cultural network.

The order helps prevent anachronism. The desert move came before the organizational crisis, the Temple tradition came before the written principles, and the principles came before completion of the nonprofit transition. Each development belongs to the conditions of its own period.

## Beyond Black Rock City

The culture's reach extends beyond the Nevada event. The Regional Network began after the 1997 event, and Burning Flipside became the first official Regional Event in 1998. The network now supports events and projects beyond Black Rock City.

Regional Events adapt the culture to their local communities rather than reproducing Black Rock City exactly. This allows common principles and practices to take forms suited to different places, people, and conditions. The network is therefore connected without being uniform.

The cancellations of official Black Rock City in 2020 and 2021 made that wider cultural life especially visible. Virtual and unofficial gatherings continued even without the official event. Those years showed that Burning Man culture was larger than one annual city: the event remained central, but the communities, relationships, and locally adapted projects around it could persist beyond the playa.

The network's early sequence is also useful: it began after the 1997 event, and Burning Flipside became the first official Regional Event in 1998. Expansion beyond Nevada thus developed through locally adapted events rather than exact copies of Black Rock City.

## Key concepts

**Crimson Rose**

- One of Burning Man's long-term organizers
- Helped build its fire-art culture

**Jerry James**

- Worked at the Baker Beach origin
- Co-built the first wooden figure

**John Law**

- Helped shape Burning Man's early desert era
- Connected the event with the Cacophony Society

**Larry Harvey**

- Co-built the first Man
- Wrote the Ten Principles in 2004

### Marian Goodell

- A long-term organizational leader
- Associated with the nonprofit era

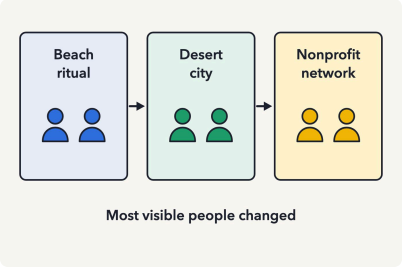
### Michael Mikel

- Helped sustain Burning Man beyond its beach beginnings
- Organized early desert operations and community

## Key facts

> **No single-founder story**
>
> Burning Man's history is a collective story spanning builders, Cacophony organizers, artists, city designers, operations leaders, and volunteers.

> **Credit the work by phase**
>
> Crediting contributors by phase makes the history more accurate than treating one founder as the sole author of the event.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

> **Leadership changed with scale**
>
> The people most visible in Burning Man's history changed as the project moved from a beach ritual to a desert city and then a nonprofit network.

> **Crisis that accelerated formal organization**
>
> On the turning-point timeline, "The crisis that accelerated formal organization" is placed at 1996.

> **First Black Rock Desert burn**
>
> On the turning-point timeline, "The first Black Rock Desert burn" is placed at 1990.



BradleyPelton · CC BY-SA 4.0

> **The first Baker Beach burn**
>
> On the turning-point timeline, "The first Baker Beach burn" is placed at 1986.

**Regionals**

The Regional Network began after the 1997 event, the first official Regional Event was Burning Flipside in 1998, and the network now supports events and projects beyond Black Rock City.

**Pandemic**

Official Black Rock City was cancelled in 2020 and 2021, while virtual and unofficial gatherings showed the culture was larger than the event.



Nettadi · CC BY-SA 3.0

**Regional culture changes locally**

Regional Events adapt the culture to local communities rather than reproducing Black Rock City exactly.

## By the numbers

In which year did the first Black Rock Desert burn take place?

**1990** year

In which year did Burning Man Project complete its nonprofit transition?

**2014** year

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

**1.** Who co-built the first Man and later wrote the Ten Principles?

- A Larry Harvey
- B Crimson Rose
- C Michael Mikel
- D John Law

**2.** Who brought carpentry skills to building the earliest Baker Beach effigy?

- A Larry Harvey
- B Michael Mikel
- C Jerry James
- D John Law

**3.** Which pair belongs to the formative desert community phase, not the earliest beach burn?

- A Crimson Rose and Marian Goodell
- B John Law and Michael Mikel
- C Larry Harvey and Jerry James
- D Larry Harvey and Michael Mikel

**4.** Whose contribution centers on fire-art culture and organizational leadership?

A Marian Goodell
B John Law
C Michael Mikel
D Crimson Rose

**5.** Who connected the event to the Cacophony Society and helped shape its early desert era?

A Larry Harvey
B John Law
C Jerry James
D Crimson Rose

**6.** In which year did the first Black Rock Desert burn take place?

A 1996
B 2000
C 1990
D 1986

**7.** In which year did Burning Man Project complete its transition to nonprofit control?

A 2014
B 1996
C 2000
D 2004

**8.** Which milestone came directly before the 1996 organizational crisis?

A Start of the Temple tradition
B Writing of the Ten Principles
C Completion of nonprofit transition
D First Black Rock Desert burn

**9.** Which milestone came directly before the Ten Principles were written in 2004?

A Completion of nonprofit transition
B Start of the Temple tradition
C First Black Rock Desert burn
D The organizational crisis

**10.** Marian Goodell's leadership was most directly tied to which turning point?

A Completion of nonprofit transition
B Start of the Temple tradition
C The organizational crisis of 1996
D First Black Rock Desert burn

**11.** Which of these four Burning Man turning points occurred earliest?

A Start of the recurring Temple tradition
B Organizational crisis that spurred formalization
C Writing of the Ten Principles
D First Black Rock Desert burn

**12.** Which of these four milestones happened earliest in Burning Man's history?

A Nonprofit transition completed
B Official Black Rock City cancellation
C Temple tradition begins
D Ten Principles written

## Go deeper

**LISTEN** Lesson 5 episode 6:40 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

**WATCH** Six Dates 0:27
Burning Man's history fits in six dates.

**WATCH** No City, Still a Culture 0:29
In 2020 and 2021, there was no official Black Rock City. The culture kept going.

**ONLINE** This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/people-and-milestones

**STUDY** Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 6 OF 8

# Ideals and Contradictions

Environment and Public Land · Neighbors and Tribal Context · Money, Labor, and Governance

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify what Leave No Trace requires, the wider public-land impacts cleanup misses, and the BLM population cap.
- Describe the benefits and burdens the event brings to nearby communities, including the Pyramid Lake Paiute homeland.
- Identify the tensions over access costs, plug-and-play camps, mixed paid and volunteer labour, and governance structure.

## Environment and Public Land

Black Rock City's remote public-land setting creates environmental and civic effects that extend beyond the event site. Documented impacts involve traffic, air quality, dust, waste, cultural resources, public health, and nearby communities. The event's temporary form does not make those effects disappear.

Leave No Trace requires participants to remove visible **Matter Out of Place**—anything that does not belong on the playa—and to handle gray water and other waste properly. Passing a site inspection, however, does not erase transportation emissions or every off-site impact. Site cleanup is essential, but it is not a complete measure of the event's environmental footprint.

Public-land permission also places a formal limit on the city. The Bureau of Land Management's 2019 Record of Decision set a total permitted-event population cap of 80,000, a limit that applied from the 2019 event onward. The cap is one example of how a participant-built city still operates within external land-management rules.

Cleanup and permitting answer different parts of the public-land problem. Removing visible misplaced material and managing waste address the site itself. A population cap regulates permitted scale, while traffic, air quality, emissions, public health, and regional effects require a wider view.

## Neighbors and Tribal Context

Travel to Black Rock City passes through and affects communities in the homeland of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. Nearby communities are not merely scenery on the route to the event; they experience consequences from the movement of people, vehicles, and supplies.

The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and other nearby communities can receive business and partnership benefits. At the same time, they can bear traffic, congestion, unsafe driving, trespass, trash, and pressure on local services. Some of these burdens extend beyond the week of the event.

The tradeoff cannot be reduced to either benefit or harm alone. Business income can coexist with disruption, and partnerships can coexist with strain on roads and services. Understanding the event in its regional setting requires recognizing both sides and remembering that the route crosses a Tribal homeland.

The same traffic can bring customers and create congestion. The same flow of visitors can support partnerships while increasing trespass, trash, unsafe driving, and demand for services. Those effects fall on communities along the route, including communities in the Pyramid Lake Paiute homeland.

## Money, Labor, and Governance

Radical Inclusion exists alongside real economic barriers. Tickets, travel, equipment, time away from work, and camp expenses can make attendance difficult even when reduced-price programs are available. A stated principle can guide a culture without eliminating the material limits on access.

**Convenience camps**, formerly called turnkey or **plug-and-play camps**, sell pre-packaged experiences such as housing, meal plans, and bicycles for a set price. They become contentious when money buys a packaged experience and paid service replaces contribution, gifting, or engagement. Burning Man Project has said it wants to end convenience camping in Black Rock City. The concern is not simply that money is present; producing and attending the event already cost money. The conflict centers on whether purchasing service substitutes for participation.

Burning Man depends heavily on volunteers and participant labor as well as paid staff and contractors. That mixture produces recurring debates about recognition, compensation, authority, and who benefits from unpaid work. Governance has its own balancing problem: too little structure can threaten safety and fairness, while too much can suppress participant creativity. Burning Man must continually work between those pressures rather than resolving them once and for all.

The three tensions are connected but distinct. Cost limits access; packaged service can replace contribution; and a mixed paid-and-unpaid workforce raises questions about value and authority. Governance must respond without removing the participant creativity on which the city depends.

Reduced-price ticket programs can lower one barrier, the cost of the ticket, without removing travel, equipment, time-off, and camp costs. Likewise, volunteer participation can build the city while leaving questions about compensation, recognition, and authority unresolved.

## Key terms

### Matter Out of Place

Anything that does not belong on the playa.

## Key facts

### Criticism

The event's remote public-land setting creates documented impacts involving traffic, air quality, dust, waste, cultural resources, public health, and nearby communities.



Wikimedia Commons · BLM Nevada · CC BY 2.0

### Matter Out of Place

Leave No Trace requires removal of visible Matter Out of Place and proper handling of gray water and waste, but passing site inspection does not by itself erase transportation emissions or every off-site impact.



Ikluft · CC BY-SA 4.0

### BLM total population cap

The BLM's 2019 Record of Decision set an 80,000-person total population cap for the permitted event, counting participants, staff and volunteers; it applied from the 2019 event onward.



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### Local Impact

Pyramid Lake Paiute and other nearby communities can receive business and partnership benefits while also bearing traffic, unsafe-driving, trespass, trash, congestion, and service burdens extending beyond event week.




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**Benefits and burdens coexist**

Nearby communities can receive business income while also facing congestion, unsafe driving, trespass, trash, and pressure on local services.



Ken Lund from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA · CC BY-SA 2.0

**Route crosses Tribal lands**

Travel to Black Rock City passes through and affects communities in the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's homeland.

> **Access**
>
> High ticket costs, travel, equipment, time off, and camp expenses create real access barriers even though Radical Inclusion is a stated principle and reduced-price programs exist.

## By the numbers

Under the 2019 BLM Record of Decision, what total permitted-event population cap took effect?

**80000** people

## Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

**Documented public-land impacts** → Traffic, dust, waste, health, culture, and neighbors

**Too little structure** → Can threaten safety and fairness

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Under Leave No Trace, what does "Matter Out of Place" mean at Black Rock City?

(A) Anything sold without a vendor permit
(B) Anything that does not belong on the playa
(C) Anything not registered with the BLM
(D) Anything left behind after sunset

**2.** What population cap did the 2019 BLM Record of Decision set for the event?

A) 90,000 people
B) 70,000 people
C) 100,000 people
D) 80,000 people

**3.** Which of these is NOT a documented public-land impact of Black Rock City?

A) Wildlife habitat destruction
B) Air quality effects
C) Dust
D) Cultural resources impacts

**4.** Passing a Leave No Trace site inspection does NOT erase which effect?

A) Gray water handling violations
B) On-site trash left on the playa
C) Transportation emissions
D) Visible Matter Out of Place

**5.** Which effects require a wider view beyond site cleanup and the population cap?

A) The population cap itself
B) Traffic, air quality, and regional health effects
C) Visible Matter Out of Place on the playa
D) Gray water handling on-site

**6.** Travel to Black Rock City passes through and affects the homeland of which tribal nation?

A) Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
B) Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
C) Reno-Sparks Indian Colony
D) Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

**7.** Which of these is NOT a burden nearby communities may bear from event traffic?

A) Improved public transit infrastructure
B) Pressure on local services
C) Trespass by visitors
D) Unsafe driving on local roads

**8.** What can nearby communities receive alongside these traffic burdens?

A) Local infrastructure improvement grants
B) Free event tickets for all residents
C) Business and partnership benefits
D) Additional funding for county emergency services

**9.** Increased local revenue alongside more unsafe driving during event week best illustrates that...

A) The event has no lasting effects on neighbors
B) Only tribal communities experience any burdens
C) Benefits and burdens can coexist for neighbors
D) Benefits always outweigh burdens for neighbors

**10.** Some burdens on nearby communities can extend how long?

A) Only through the event's opening day
B) Until the Saturday burn night
C) Until the final day of the event week
D) Until well after the week of the event

**11.** What can nearby communities receive from Black Rock City traffic, alongside burdens like trespass?

A) Exemption from BLM land-use rules
B) Business and partnership benefits
C) Full reimbursement for municipal costs
D) Guaranteed year-round tourism contracts

**12.** Which burden do nearby communities bear from event traffic, alongside business income?

A Trespass and unsafe driving
B Permanent population growth
C Higher property taxes for residents
D Reduced water access for local ranches

**13.** What term describes camps where money buys a packaged experience, replacing contribution or gifting?

A Sound camps
B Theme camps
C Convenience Camps
D Art camps

**14.** What mixture of labor does Burning Man depend on?

A Volunteers and participant labor alongside paid staff and contractors
B Paid employees only, with no contractors or volunteers
C Volunteers only, with no paid staff or contractors
D Paid staff and contractors only, with no volunteer labor

**15.** What can happen if Burning Man's governance imposes too much structure?

A It can increase trespass and traffic in nearby communities
B It can suppress participant creativity
C It can threaten safety and fairness
D It can make tickets, travel, and camp costs harder to afford

**16.** Radical Inclusion is a stated principle, but what still limits attendance?

A A requirement to join a camp in advance
B A strict invitation-only application process
C A mandatory skills test for volunteers
D Real costs like tickets, travel, and equipment

**17.** Reduced-price programs lower which specific barrier while others remain?

A Equipment costs for camping
B Travel costs to the event
C Camp expenses once on-site
D The cost of tickets

## Go deeper

LISTEN Lesson 6 episode 6:24 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

WATCH A Cap of 80,000 0:28
Black Rock City has a population limit, and public-land rules set it.

WATCH Buying a Burn 0:30
Some Burning Man camps sell a packaged experience: housing, meals and bicycles, for a set price.

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/ideals-and-contradictions

STUDY Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 7 OF 8

# Safety, Consent, and Access

Consent and Boundaries · Getting Help in Black Rock City · Accessibility and Health Planning

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Apply the consent norms, support pathways, and accessibility planning the Black Rock City community expects and knows how to use.

## Consent and Boundaries

Consent in Black Rock City must be specific and reversible. Permission for one interaction does not authorize a different interaction, and a person can withdraw consent after giving it.

Capacity is essential. Minors, people who are intoxicated, and people who are sleeping cannot consent. Silence is not consent. A participant therefore cannot treat a lack of resistance, a person's condition, or earlier permission as a substitute for present and specific agreement.

Photography has separate layers of permission. Consent to be photographed or recorded does not automatically grant permission to post, publish, sell, or commercially use the image. Taking an image and distributing it are different actions, so permission for one does not cover the other. Specific, reversible consent provides the clearest guide across personal contact, recording, and later use.

These rules reject several unsafe shortcuts. Earlier permission is not permanent permission, agreement to one act is not agreement to another, and silence cannot stand in for a clear answer. Capacity must be present at the time, which excludes sleeping, intoxicated, and underage people.

Someone may agree to the creation of an image while withholding permission for publication or commercial use. Asking separately keeps the scope of consent visible.

## Getting Help in Black Rock City

Black Rock City promotes consent education and provides pathways for reporting and survivor support. Survivor accounts and investigations have also criticized aspects of disclosure, training, response, and reliance on internal systems. The existence of a support pathway should therefore not be confused with a claim that every response has worked well.

After non-consensual contact, a participant can seek a certified survivor advocate through the Survivor Advocacy Center, any Black Rock Ranger, or an Emergency Services station. Law enforcement is available when requested. Knowing several entry points matters because someone seeking help may encounter different parts of the city first.

Different resources address other urgent needs. For emotional overwhelm, Black Rock Ranger Green Dot teams offer support. For a mental-health crisis or psychological support, Emergency Services can connect a participant with the Crisis Intervention Team. These options distinguish survivor advocacy,

emotional support, crisis care, and law enforcement while allowing a participant to enter through accessible city resources.

The available entry points are deliberately varied. A participant seeking survivor advocacy can approach the dedicated center, a Ranger, or an Emergency Services station, and can request law enforcement. Emotional overwhelm can go to Green Dot support, while a mental-health crisis can be connected to the Crisis Intervention Team.

At the same time, criticism from survivor accounts and investigations is part of the record. Support options should be taught clearly without implying that disclosure, training, and response have been free of problems.

## Accessibility and Health Planning

Black Rock City's Accessibility Vehicle Operator's Handbook documents a licensing path for accessibility vehicles for participants with disabilities. Toilet accessibility and ASL-interpretation availability are not confirmed by that source; check the event's official accessibility resources for current details.

Support does not remove the conditions of the setting. Dust, long distances, heat, and temporary infrastructure still require advance planning. A participant may need to understand how available services connect with personal equipment, transportation, shelter, medication, and other needs before arriving.

The city has medical resources and crisis-support resources, but it remains a remote temporary city with limited services. That combination is the practical baseline for health planning: help exists, yet it is not equivalent to the range or proximity of services in a permanent city. Accessibility and health preparation should account for both the supports that are offered and the environmental limits that remain.

Advance planning should start with the actual conditions: dust, distance, heat, and temporary infrastructure. It should then match personal needs to the documented accessibility-vehicle licensing path, and to any toilet or sign-language accommodations confirmed through the event's official accessibility resources. Medical and crisis resources remain part of a limited remote system.

## Key facts

> **Consent stays specific and reversible**
> Consent in Black Rock City must remain specific and reversible: permission for one interaction does not authorize another, and consent can be withdrawn.

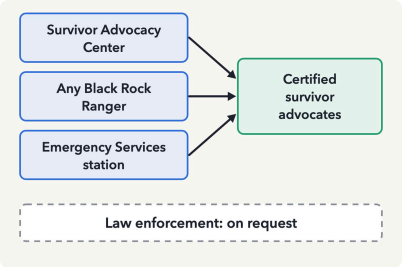
> **Who cannot give consent**
> Minors, intoxicated individuals, and sleeping people cannot consent in Black Rock City, and silence is not consent.

### Taking and posting require separate permission

Permission to photograph or record someone in Black Rock City does not automatically include permission to post, publish, sell, or commercially use the image.

### Safety

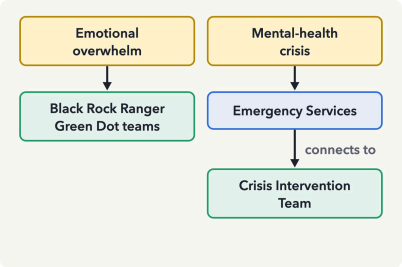
Black Rock City promotes consent education and provides reporting and survivor-support pathways, but survivor accounts and investigations have criticized disclosure, training, response, and reliance on internal systems.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### Several routes lead to survivor support

For non-consensual contact, participants can seek certified survivor advocates through the Survivor Advocacy Center, any Black Rock Ranger, or an Emergency Services station; law enforcement is available on request.




FlashFeed original diagram · CC-BY-4.0

### Match the need

For emotional overwhelm, Black Rock Ranger Green Dot teams provide support; for a mental-health crisis or psychological support, Emergency Services can connect participants with the Crisis Intervention Team.

### Accessibility

Black Rock City offers specific accessibility supports, but dust, distance, heat, and temporary infrastructure still require advance planning.

### Accessibility vehicle licensing is documented

Burning Man's DMV issues Accessibility Vehicle (AV) licenses so participants with physical disabilities can get around Black Rock City. Toilet and ASL-interpretation details aren't covered in that handbook; check the event's official accessibility resources.

### Support exists within limits

Black Rock City has medical and crisis-support resources, but it remains a remote temporary city with limited services.

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

**1.** What best describes valid consent in Black Rock City?

- A Specific and reversible
- B Automatically broad ranging
- C Valid unless objected to aloud
- D Permanent once given

**2.** A participant is intoxicated. Per BRC norms, what is true about their consent?

- A Consent granted by prior act
- B Cannot give valid consent
- C Can consent by nodding
- D Consent needs no capacity check

**3.** A participant feels emotionally overwhelmed, not in a mental-health crisis. Which resource fits?

- A Survivor Advocacy Center
- B Crisis Intervention Team
- C Law enforcement
- D Green Dot team

**4.** For a mental-health crisis, Emergency Services connects participants to which team?

- A Green Dot team
- B Black Rock Ranger
- C Crisis Intervention Team
- D Survivor Advocacy Center

**5.** Which resource can a participant approach for survivor advocacy after non-consensual contact?

- A Regional Network contact
- B Survivor Advocacy Center
- C Green Dot team
- D Crisis Intervention Team

**6.** When is law enforcement involved after non-consensual contact?

- A When the participant requests it
- B Only once the event has ended
- C Only after an advocate approves it
- D Automatically, with every report to a Ranger

## Go deeper

LISTEN Lesson 7 episode 6:52 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

WATCH Specific and Reversible 0:31
A yes to one thing is not a yes to everything. That is the consent rule in Black Rock City.

WATCH Help, With Limits 0:31
Black Rock City has medical and crisis-support resources. It is still a remote, temporary city.

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/safety-consent-and-access

STUDY Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

LESSON 8 OF 8

# Planning Your First Burn

Fit, Tickets, Time, and Budget · Shelter, Water, Dust, and Weather · Arrival, the Week, and the Return

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Judge whether attending fits your circumstances, and plan tickets, time and budget.
- Plan shelter, water and dust protection adequate to playa conditions.

## Fit, Tickets, Time, and Budget

A prospective Black Rock City attendee should first assess tolerance for remoteness, dust, heat, cold, noise, disrupted sleep, crowds, expense, and limited services. The event also expects preparation and contribution. Assessing your tolerance for those conditions is part of planning, not an afterthought.

Black Rock City 2026 is scheduled for August 30 through September 7 with the theme Axis Mundi. Those details are current as of August 10, 2026 and should be treated as dated. The same rule applies to prices, deadlines, and availability. Use official sales or **STEP**, the official face-value Secure Ticket Exchange Program.

The public 2026 sales plan listed several prices before taxes and fees. The lowest public tier was 550, followed by another reduced tier at 675. Burning Man said the 775 tier covered the operational cost of one participant. The 975 tier added support for art grants and Black Rock City operations, while the 1,500 tier helped underwrite lower-cost access programs. The highest listed tier was 3,000.

The ticket is only one part of the cost. A realistic budget includes fees, travel, shelter, shade, food, water, waste handling, lighting, mobility needs, possible camp dues, and contingencies.

The tier structure gave different prices different roles. Reduced public tiers lowered the listed entry price, the $775 tier represented one participant's operational cost, and higher tiers added support for art, operations, or lower-cost access. Every figure still requires taxes, fees, and a current availability check.

## Shelter, Water, Dust, and Weather

The 2026 Survival Guide directs each participant to bring 1.5 gallons of water per person per day. That supply must cover drinking, washing, and cleaning. Water planning should therefore account for the entire stay rather than drinking alone.

Core preparation also includes secured shelter and shade, protection for eyes and breathing, layers for temperature changes, rain gear, lighting, food, medication, first aid, and a plan for waste. Each item responds to the conditions of a remote temporary city, where dust, weather, darkness, and limited services can turn an omitted basic into a serious problem.

In a whiteout, current Black Rock City guidance is to seek shelter. If no shelter is available, sit down, turn away from the wind, cover your face, wait, and stay alert for moving vehicles. Continuing to travel

through low visibility can add risk, so the guidance emphasizes shelter and stillness.

Preparation connects these needs. Secured shelter and shade address exposure, eye and breathing protection address dust, layers and rain gear address changing weather, and lighting helps in darkness. Food, medication, first aid, and waste plans must also function within limited services.

## Arrival, the Week, and the Return

Plans should tolerate delay and changing conditions. In 2023, heavy rain stopped ordinary vehicle movement and temporarily stranded tens of thousands of people. The event demonstrated why first-timers need food, water, medication, shelter, communication, and waste plans that can continue working when movement stops.

Leave No Trace begins before arrival. Reduce packaging, secure loose materials, plan to contain fuel and gray water, clean throughout the week, and pack out waste. Starting with less disposable material and preventing releases is easier than trying to recover everything at departure.

Plan the trip home before entering the city. Allow for Exodus delays and fatigue, arrange sober driving, decide where waste will go, and make room for rest, equipment cleaning, and decompression. Arrival preparation, daily practices, and the return plan are one continuous system. The aim is not to predict every condition, but to carry enough capacity and flexibility to respond safely when the temporary city does not run exactly on schedule.

The 2023 rain is a planning example rather than a forecast. Movement stopped, so supplies and waste systems had to last through delay. A return plan likewise assumes that Exodus, fatigue, disposal, and cleaning may take more time than a simple departure schedule suggests.

## Key terms

### STEP

The official face-value ticket exchange.

## Key facts

> **First Timer**
> A prospective attendee should first assess tolerance for remoteness, dust, heat, cold, noise, sleep disruption, crowds, expense, limited services, and the expectation of preparation and contribution.

> **Current Event**
> Black Rock City 2026 is scheduled for August 30 through September 7 with the theme Axis Mundi; these details are current only as of August 10, 2026.

> **Budget**
> A realistic budget includes the ticket, fees, travel, shelter, shade, food, water, waste, lighting, mobility needs, camp dues, and contingencies.



Ebenezer Sasu · CC0

### Official water recommendation

The 2026 Survival Guide directs participants to bring 1.5 gallons of water per person per day for drinking, washing, and cleaning.

> **Survival**
>
> Core preparation includes secured shelter, shade, eye and breathing protection, layers, rain gear, lighting, food, medication, first aid, and waste plans.



Wikimedia Commons · BLM Nevada · CC BY 2.0

### Survival

In a whiteout, current guidance is to seek shelter; if shelter is unavailable, sit down, turn away from the wind, cover the face, wait, and remain alert for moving vehicles.

> **Weather**
>
> Heavy rain in 2023 stopped ordinary vehicle movement, stranded tens of thousands temporarily, and demonstrated why first-timers need food, water, medication, shelter, communication, and waste plans that tolerate delays.



Wikimedia Commons · Bureau of Land Management · Public domain

### Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace starts in planning: reduce packaging, secure materials, contain fuel and gray water, clean continuously, and pack out waste.



Victorgrigas · CC BY-SA 3.0

**Departure**

Plan the return before arrival: allow for Exodus delays, fatigue, sober driving, waste disposal, rest, equipment cleaning, and decompression.

## By the numbers

According to the 2026 Black Rock City Survival Guide, what general amount of water should each participant bring per day?

**1.5** gallons per person per day

## Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

**1.** What is STEP?

- A A face-value ticket exchange
- B Registration for low-income access programs
- C Applications for art grants
- D Processing of camp dues

**2.** What was the lowest public price tier for 2026 Burning Man tickets, before taxes and fees?

- A $675
- B $975
- C $775
- D $550

**3.** Which 2026 ticket tier did Burning Man say covered the operational cost of one participant?

- A $550
- B $975
- C $775
- D $1,500

**4.** Which is NOT specifically listed as part of a realistic first-timer budget?

- A Waste handling
- B Airfare cancellation insurance
- C Shelter and shade
- D Contingencies

**5.** Which of these is NOT something a prospective attendee should assess beforehand?

- A Tolerance for crowds and noise
- B Tolerance for dust and heat
- C Cell signal strength
- D Tolerance for limited services

**6.** Which of these should a prospective attendee assess before committing?

- A Tolerance for dust, heat, and limited services
- B Ownership of a four-wheel-drive vehicle
- C A desert survival certification
- D Tolerance for altitude sickness

**7.** Besides physical conditions, what expectation should a prospective attendee weigh?

A. A requirement to join a theme camp
B. The expectation of preparation and contribution
C. A mandatory volunteer shift
D. A minimum group size requirement

**8.** What are the 2026 Black Rock City event dates?

A. September 1 through September 9
B. July 4 through July 12
C. August 15 through August 23
D. August 30 through September 7

**9.** The 2026 dates and theme are given as current 'as of August 10, 2026'. How should a planner treat them?

A. Rely on them unless the theme is renamed
B. Confirm them through any third-party resale site
C. Treat them as fixed once ticket sales open
D. Treat them as dated and recheck official sources

**10.** What was the lowest public 2026 ticket price tier listed, before taxes and fees?

A. $975
B. $775
C. $550
D. $675

**11.** How much water does the 2026 Survival Guide recommend each participant bring per day?

A. 3 gallons
B. 1.5 gallons
C. 1 gallon
D. 2 gallons

**12.** Which item is NOT among the core preparations for playa conditions?

A. GPS navigation device
B. Eye and breathing protection
C. Secured shelter and shade
D. Rain gear

**13.** If caught in a whiteout with no shelter available, what does current guidance recommend?

A. Drive slowly toward camp
B. Continue walking toward the nearest landmark
C. Sit down, turn from the wind, and cover your face
D. Lie flat and remove eye protection

**14.** Besides drinking, what other uses must the recommended daily water supply cover?

A. Washing and cleaning
B. Keeping dust down around camp
C. Cooking meals
D. Misting to cool off in the heat

**15.** Which of these is included in the core preparation for dust and weather protection?

A. Insect netting
B. Eye and breathing protection
C. Portable air conditioner
D. Waterproof phone case

## Go deeper

**LISTEN** Lesson 8 episode 6:21 · FlashFeed Study Notes podcast

**WATCH** Water and Whiteouts 0:28
The 2026 Survival Guide says to bring 1.5 gallons of water per person, per day.

**WATCH** When the Rain Came 0:30
In 2023, heavy rain stopped ordinary vehicle movement at Burning Man. Tens of thousands of people were stranded for a time.

**ONLINE** This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/burning-man/planning-your-first-burn

**STUDY** Burning Man: From Curiosity to Black Rock City in the FlashFeed app
flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/burning-man

# Answer key

## Lesson 1: What Burning Man Is

**1. A** An event, city, culture, and global network
Burning Man is a temporary city, an event, a culture, and a network at once, not simply a music festival.

**2. D** Participants themselves
The participant-built model means attendees produce most art, camps, services, and social life themselves.

**3. B** Burning Man Project
Burning Man Project is the nonprofit organization; Black Rock City is the event it produces.

**4. C** A single-day commercial trade show
Burning Man is a temporary city, a cultural movement, and a global network of affiliated events — not a single-day commercial trade show.

**5. B** Affiliated Burner events and communities worldwide
The Regional Network links affiliated Burner events and communities beyond Nevada, carrying the culture further.

**6. C** A cultural movement
Burning Man is an event, a city, a cultural movement, and a global network.

**7. D** cultural movement
Burning Man is an event, a city, a cultural movement, and a network — not merely a festival.

**8. A** The Regional Network
The Regional Network connects affiliated Burner communities beyond Nevada.

**9. A** A year-round global network of affiliated events
The Regional Network carries affiliated Burner community activity worldwide beyond the single Nevada event.

**10. C** Larry Harvey, in 2004
Larry Harvey wrote the Ten Principles in 2004 to describe an ethos that had already developed.

**11. D** Free of commercial sponsorship and advertising
Decommodification seeks environments free from commercial sponsorship and advertising; it does not make the event free, and it does not require barter instead of gifting.

**12. B** It means producing and attending the event costs nothing
Decommodification does not mean the event is free; producing and attending still has real costs.

**13. B** Giving without requiring barter or an equal return
Gifting means giving without expecting barter or an equal return in exchange.

**14. C** Radical Self-reliance and Communal Effort
Preparing for yourself and supporting a community work together; self-reliance does not cancel communal effort.

**15. D** The hard, alkaline playa of a prehistoric lakebed
The playa is the hard, alkaline surface of a prehistoric lakebed where Black Rock City is built.

**16. A** Temple burn is remembrance; Man burn is celebration
The Man burn is typically celebratory and spectacular, while the Temple burn serves remembrance and release.

**17. B** They appear and then disappear

The city, its art, and its rituals appear on the playa and then disappear, reinforcing the event's temporary, cyclical character.

**18. A** It can take multiple forms rather than one uniform identity

The culture supports multiple forms of belonging rather than demanding one uniform Burner identity.

**19. C** Cyclical, collaborative, immediate, and sensual

Burning Man culture is cyclical, collaborative, immediate, and sensual.

## Lesson 2: From Beach Burn to Black Rock City

**1. D** 1986

The first Baker Beach burn was in 1986. 1990 was the move to the desert, 1996 was the crisis year, and 1998 was the return to the Black Rock playa.

**2. C** Officials barred burning it on the beach

Authorities allowed the Man to be erected on Baker Beach but not burned there, prompting the desert relocation. Safety failures, traffic problems, and permits all arose later, from the 1996 crisis and its aftermath.

**3. A** About 8 feet

The 1986 Man was an improvised wooden figure about eight feet tall, much smaller than the structures built in later years.

**4. B** Obtaining formal event permits

The desert move required travel, survival camping, and personal responsibility. Formal permits arrived later, as part of the response to the 1996 crisis.

**5. C** A curious crowd of onlookers

A curious crowd gathered spontaneously around the fire at Baker Beach in 1986. Safety marshals, survivalist camping, and organized camp committees only emerged later as Black Rock City became a planned settlement.

**6. B** Larry Harvey and Jerry James

Larry Harvey and Jerry James built and burned the first Man on Baker Beach in 1986.

**7. A** A curious crowd

A curious crowd gathered around the fire when the first Man burned in 1986.

**8. D** Authorities allowed erecting but not burning it there

Authorities permitted erecting the Man on Baker Beach but not burning it, forcing the move.

**9. B** Cacophony Society organizers

Cacophony Society organizers helped relocate the burn to the desert as Zone Trip #4.

## Lesson 3: Black Rock City in Practice

**1. D** The Man and Center Camp

The Man and Center Camp are the orientation anchors. Radial/lettered streets organize movement, and staff, agencies, contractors, and volunteers govern operations — neither role is an orientation anchor.

**2. C** Clock-face radial and lettered streets

The city uses clock-face radial streets crossed with concentric lettered streets, not a grid, spiral, or hexagonal pattern.

**3. A** A single elected city council

The city runs on nonprofit staff, contractors, government agencies, and volunteer departments, not on an elected city council.

**4. B** Orientation, traffic, and scalability

The plan evolved to support orientation, traffic, services, social interaction, art, and scale, not looks alone, speed and parking alone, or ticket revenue.

**5. B** Participant effort plus formal staff and agencies

Black Rock City is participant-built but still depends on nonprofit staff, contractors, and government agencies working alongside participants.

**6. C** Clock-face radial streets and concentric lettered streets

BRC's layout consists of clock-face radial streets crossed by concentric lettered streets.

**7. A** The Man and Center Camp

The Man and Center Camp are the layout's major orientation anchors.

**8. D** Organized group creating residential communities

Theme camps are organized participant groups building residential communities, unlike open camping (no application/program), volunteer departments, or paid staff and contractors.

**9. A** Through an application process

Placed camps receive locations through an application process, not by agency registration, arrival order, or lottery.

**10. D** No placement application or public program required

Open camping lets participants camp without submitting a placement application or running a required public program, unlike placed camps.

**11. C** A government-issued operating license

Dues, work shifts, and rules are possible camp obligations, but a government-issued operating license is not one of them.

**12. B** Assist paid staff and agencies in city operations

Volunteer departments help operate the city alongside paid staff, contractors, and public agencies rather than replacing or excluding them.

**13. C** Paid staff, contractors, and public agencies

Volunteer departments help operate the city alongside paid staff, contractors, and public agencies.

**14. A** Participants and specialized workers share responsibility

This mixture reflects a model where participants and specialized workers share responsibility.

## Lesson 4: Art, Temples, and Mutant Vehicles

**1. C** Honoraria cover full production costs

Honoraria are partial grants, not full funding — artists and crews still cover much of the cost with their own money, labor, and materials.

**2. D** Built for one desert event, then removed

Playa art is built for the temporary desert event and typically removed or burned afterward, unlike a gallery piece kept on permanent long-term display.

**3. B** By collaborating with the artwork

Playa art's interactivity and collaboration invite participants to engage directly with the work, unlike a gallery visitor who views art from a distance.

**4. A** A partial grant that artists must supplement themselves

An Honorarium is a partial grant; institutional support helps, but artists and crews still supply much of the money, labor, and materials themselves.

**5. C** Interactivity and collaboration

Interactivity and collaboration set playa art apart from a passively viewed gallery piece, which is typically just looked at, not touched or built with others.

**6. A** A partial grant, supplemented by artists' own resources

An Honorarium is a partial grant, not full funding for a work's total cost.

**7. B** Substantial money, labor, and materials of their own

Artists and crews often contribute significant money, labor, and materials beyond any honorarium.

**8. D** Its responsiveness to the desert setting

The desert can shape how playa art is built and encountered, unlike a fixed indoor setting.

**9. D** In the open desert as a temporary work

Playa art is temporary and sited in the open desert, unlike permanent gallery placement.

**10. C** Playa art invites interactive, collaborative participation

Playa art emphasizes interactivity and collaboration, unlike passive gallery viewing.

## Lesson 5: People and Milestones

**1. A** Larry Harvey

Larry Harvey co-built the first Man and later articulated the Ten Principles in 2004.

**2. C** Jerry James

Jerry James brought carpentry to the physical construction of the earliest Baker Beach effigy.

**3. B** John Law and Michael Mikel

Law and Mikel shaped the formative desert community, while Harvey and James belong to the earliest physical burn.

**4. D** Crimson Rose

Crimson Rose helped build Burning Man's fire-art culture and organizational leadership.

**5. B** John Law

John Law linked the event to the Cacophony Society and helped shape its move into the desert era.

**6. C** 1990

The first Black Rock Desert burn took place in 1990, moving the gathering into the desert.

**7. A** 2014

Burning Man Project completed its transition to nonprofit control in 2014.

**8. D** First Black Rock Desert burn

The desert move (1990) came directly before the 1996 organizational crisis; the other options all happened later.

**9. B** Start of the Temple tradition

The Temple tradition began in 2000, the milestone immediately preceding the 2004 Ten Principles; the others are further back or later.

**10. A** Completion of nonprofit transition

Marian Goodell helped lead the organization through its 2014 transition into Burning Man Project; the other milestones predate that role.

**11. D** First Black Rock Desert burn

The desert move happened in 1990, before the 1996 crisis, the 2000 Temple tradition, and the 2004 Ten Principles.

**12. C** Temple tradition begins

The Temple tradition began in 2000, before the 2004 principles, the 2014 nonprofit transition, and the 2020 cancellation.

## Lesson 6: Ideals and Contradictions

**1. B** Anything that does not belong on the playa

Matter Out of Place is anything that does not belong on the playa, and participants must remove it under Leave No Trace.

**2. D** 80,000 people

The BLM's 2019 Record of Decision capped the permitted event population at 80,000.

**3. A** Wildlife habitat destruction

The documented impacts are traffic, air quality, dust, waste, cultural resources, and public health, not wildlife habitat destruction.

**4. C** Transportation emissions

Passing inspection does not erase transportation emissions or every off-site impact, even though it addresses on-site cleanup.

**5. B** Traffic, air quality, and regional health effects

Traffic, air quality, emissions, public health, and regional effects need a wider view, unlike site cleanup or the cap.

**6. D** Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

Travel to Black Rock City passes specifically through the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's homeland.

**7. A** Improved public transit infrastructure

Trespass, unsafe driving, congestion, trash, and service pressure are burdens; improved public transit is not.

**8. C** Business and partnership benefits

Nearby communities, including the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, can receive business and partnership benefits.

**9. C** Benefits and burdens can coexist for neighbors

The tradeoff cannot be reduced to only benefit or only harm; both can coexist for the same community.

**10. D** Until well after the week of the event

Some burdens on nearby communities extend beyond the week of the event itself.

**11. B** Business and partnership benefits

Nearby communities can receive business and partnership benefits while also bearing burdens like trespass and traffic.

**12. A** Trespass and unsafe driving

Trespass, unsafe driving, trash, and congestion are burdens nearby communities bear alongside business income.

**13. C** Convenience Camps

These are called 'Convenience Camps' (also known as plug-and-play or turnkey camps), where paid service replaces contribution, gifting, or engagement.

**14. A** Volunteers and participant labor alongside paid staff and contractors

Burning Man depends on volunteers and participant labor as well as paid staff and contractors.

**15. B** It can suppress participant creativity

Too much structure can suppress creativity, while too little structure can threaten safety and fairness.

**16. D** Real costs like tickets, travel, and equipment

Tickets, travel, equipment, time off, and camp expenses create real access barriers despite Radical Inclusion.

**17. D** The cost of tickets

Reduced-price programs can lower ticket cost without removing travel, equipment, or camp expenses.

## Lesson 7: Safety, Consent, and Access

**1. A** Specific and reversible

Consent in BRC must stay specific to the act and can be withdrawn at any time; it is never permanent or automatically broad, and silence or lack of objection does not count as agreement.

**2. B** Cannot give valid consent

Intoxication removes the capacity to consent in Black Rock City, regardless of nodding, gestures, or an earlier agreement to a different act.

**3. D** Green Dot team

Black Rock Ranger Green Dot teams support emotional overwhelm, distinct from the Crisis Intervention Team for mental-health crises, the Survivor Advocacy Center for non-consensual contact, and law enforcement.

**4. C** Crisis Intervention Team

Emergency Services connects participants in a mental-health crisis with the Crisis Intervention Team, separate from Green Dot's emotional-support role, the Survivor Advocacy Center, and general Ranger patrols.

**5. B** Survivor Advocacy Center

The Survivor Advocacy Center, Rangers, and Emergency Services stations are survivor-advocacy entry points.

**6. A** When the participant requests it

Law enforcement is available when requested. The Survival Guide adds that participants may ask for officers at any time, and a report is filed if that is their wish.

## Lesson 8: Planning Your First Burn

**1. A** A face-value ticket exchange

STEP is the official face-value ticket exchange. The other options describe other official programs, not STEP.

**2. D** $550

The public sales plan listed $550 as the lowest tier, with $675, $775, and $975 as progressively higher tiers.

**3. C** $775

Burning Man stated the $775 tier covered one participant's operational cost, while $975 and $1,500 added support for art, operations, or access programs.

**4. B** Airfare cancellation insurance

A realistic first-timer budget covers ticket, fees, travel, shelter, shade, food, water, waste, lighting, mobility needs, camp dues, and contingencies; airfare cancellation insurance is not among them.

**5. C** Cell signal strength

The things to assess first are tolerance for remoteness, dust, heat, cold, noise, sleep disruption, crowds, expense, and limited services; cell signal strength is not on that list.

**6. A** Tolerance for dust, heat, and limited services

Attendees should assess tolerance for remoteness, dust, heat, cold, noise, crowds, and limited services.

**7. B** The expectation of preparation and contribution

The event expects preparation and contribution, part of judging whether attending fits you.

**8. D** August 30 through September 7

Black Rock City 2026 runs August 30 through September 7.

**9. D** Treat them as dated and recheck official sources

The 2026 dates and theme are current as of August 10, 2026 and should be treated as dated, as should prices, deadlines and availability; it points to official sales or STEP.

**10. C** $550

The lowest public 2026 ticket tier was $550, before taxes and fees.

**11. B** 1.5 gallons

The 2026 Survival Guide directs participants to bring 1.5 gallons of water per person per day for drinking, washing, and cleaning.

**12. A** GPS navigation device

Core preparation includes shelter, shade, eye and breathing protection, layers, rain gear, lighting, food, medication, first aid, and waste plans, not a GPS device.

**13. C** Sit down, turn from the wind, and cover your face

Guidance says to sit down, turn away from the wind, cover your face, wait, and stay alert for moving vehicles rather than continuing to travel through low visibility.

**14. A** Washing and cleaning

The 1.5-gallon daily recommendation must cover drinking, washing, and cleaning, not cooking, irrigation, or vehicle needs.

**15. B** Eye and breathing protection

Eye and breathing protection is among the core preparations for dust, alongside layers, rain gear, and lighting.

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## The book

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