

Earth Guardians

[about] Earth Guardians are focused on educating and inspiring Burning Man participants on how to Leave No Trace (LNT) at the event. We do this both by refining Leave No Trace (LNT) specific and Green multi-media messages and information for the Burning Man community and by sharing our appreciation of the natural beauty of the Black Rock playa.



Introduction

The Earth Guardians have been Burning Man's Leave No Trace environmental educators since 1999. In recognition of this year's theme and our own concerns regarding the environment outside the playa, Earth Guardians incorporated earth-friendly 'Green' practices and technologies into our outreach material for the Burning Man event. We kicked off the year by hosting the Green House in April to help Burners Green their Burn, held several training events in the Black Rock Desert in May and June and ramped up our eco-restoration activities during Burning Man to provide participants a way to give back to our desert home. During the event we showcased green model camps, demonstrate environmentally-friendly practices and shared information about our desert home in our Black Rock Interpretive walk. This year's Green tour, which was documented in the Green Map and Green Guide, doubled to include over 20 camps and villages. All of these projects were developed to be inclusive, to inspire others, to create beneficial information to share with all of BRC.



PRE-PLAYA OUTREACH EFFORTS

Green House

The 2007 Green House was clearly a success and one which Earth Guardians would like to continue as an annual tradition. It was the first time Earth Guardians had organized an off-playa large scale event that required coordination and participation from many different Burning Man Departments and participants. Despite the rainy weather, participants streamed in to view the displays and staBge events as soon as we opened the doors and throughout the entire day. It was great to meet folks in other departments and see attendees interacting with the displays and live performances.

The speakers and fashion show were popular and well attended, particularly considering the weather. Inside there were displays of biodiesel preparation, energy production,



energy efficient lighting, electronic recycling and grey water evaporation, and stations to get your creative juices focused on trashion. Also in attendance were representation from Burning Man volunteer groups like Earth Guardians, the Green Working Group, the BRC Recycle camp and DPW's playa restoration team, joining the Friends of Black Rock and the national LNT Traveling Trainers. In the kitchen, green lighting workshops and environmental movies kept folks busy. Outside, on the stage, the highlight of the day was the trashion show, which followed many speakers on being a green burner, biofuels, and playa restoration and performances by musicians, poets and puppeteers. We're hoping to see many of the same groups participate next year and, with better weather, expand the outside displays to open up the space inside.

BLM Black Rock Rendezvous

For the second year in a row, Earth Guardians participated in the Black Rock Rendezvous organized by Friends of Black Rock/High Rock. The event is a great opportunity to meet with other user groups in the Black Rock National Conservation Area such as the Friends of Nevada Wilderness and the Sierra Club, as well as research institutions like the Desert Research Institute and the Great Basin Institute. During the 2007 Rendezvous, Earth Guardians led a workshop on Leave No Trace principles for participants that included a video presentation and discussions. We also had a table display showing many of the efforts to Green Burning Man and what burners could do to Green their Burn. Lastly, we used the 3-day event as an opportunity to meet with Friends of Black Rock staff to scout out possible restoration sites for a project to undertake during Burning Man. We anticipate continued participation in the event via both LNT/Green training and possible eco-restoration efforts in 2008.



LNT / Green Train the Trainer Back Packing Trip

The 2007 Train the Trainer backpacking trip was held near the Black Rock Point, in the north end of the Black Rock playa. We picked the Black Rock area for this year's trip due to its historical and geological significance. This location also gave us the opportunity to cache shade, refreshments and other items making it a remote, yet comfortable trip. As with many of our outreach materials revised in 2007, Green Principles and Green camping practices were developed and incorporated into the training material developed for the backpacking trip. Since several teachers participated in this year's trip, it was a great opportunity to share teaching ideas and techniques.

Highlights of this year's trip included seeing the historic Black Rock, enjoying camp shade in our new tent, sharing an awesome happy hour, dinner and campfire, hearing each others experiences, and drinking frothy beverages back at the trail head and at our latest find, Black Rock Pizza in Sparks. Our annual backpacking trip has been a great

way to meet burners from many different volunteer groups and theme camps at Burning Man and show them how Leave No Trace principles and Greening concepts apply to our event. As we incorporate our own younger Earth Guardians (Jai) into the training, we will continue to make the trip more family friendly and comfortable, in hopes that more participants will feel that they are able to participate.



Green Plan Model Plan / JRS Green Principles

A couple of years ago, to get residents of Black Rock city to focus more of their planning efforts on prevention, we developed a LNT plan to replace the existing theme camp clean-up plan. With smart planning, it is easier to keep things from hitting the ground if you don't bring them in the first place. This year, we developed a supplement, the Green Plan, which could be used by theme camps to guide them through a process of thinking greener. Taking 'green' into consideration means thinking about the effect each of your decisions has on the environment and choosing the least harmful option. To learn more about the Green Plan, check it out at:

http://earthguardians.burningman.com/burning_lnt_samplelntplan.htm

Each year, Earth Guardians contribute material to the JRS devoted to the environment. We have typically used the email to send LNT trips and techniques to burners about a month before the event. This year we used it as a way to introduce burners to both LNT and Green principles to help them rethink preparations for the playa and our top 10 reminders. The final Green principles are shown below.

1. Rethink What We Need to Thrive
2. Reduce What We Purchase & Bring,
3. Conserve Energy & Reduce the Use of Fossil Fuels
4. Reuse What We Can From Year to Year
5. Recycle Everything Else – Aim for Zero Waste
6. Coordinate With Our Neighbors to Share Resources
7. Respect the Environment - Restore the Playa

Green and LNT tips were given with each principle to help explain how to put the principles into action. To learn more about these principles, check out the LNT/Be Green JRS at the JRS archive:

http://www.burningman.com/blackrockcity_yearround/jrs/vol11/jrs_v11_i15.html

Earth Guardian Web Site / Burning Man Environment Web Site

Again, in 2007, Earth Guardians were active in developing web based environmental material for burners. In addition to revising the Earth Guardians pages on the Burning Man web site, Earth Guardians were actively involved in developing material for the new Environmental Section of the Burning Man web site, involved in development of material

for the environmental wiki and assisted with revisions to the theme camp questionnaire aimed at getting burners to think greener.

ON-PLAYA LNT OUTREACH

The Green Map & Green Model Tour

This year Earth Guardians expanded our sixth annual LNT theme camp tour and map into an official Green Map, using the Green Map System (GMS). The GMS promotes inclusive participation in sustainable community development around the world, using



mapmaking as our medium. Green Maps have been developed for over 300 areas across the world, showcasing locations of green facilities with consistent icons to help residents make decisions regarding their own local community. For Black Rock City's Green Map, we invited theme camps to participate and be 'shown' on the map. Participating camps had to apply to demonstrate that they would go the extra mile and showcase examples of earth and playa friendly ways to camp greener at Burning Man. To learn more about the GMS, check out the BRC section of the Green maps web site:

<http://www.greenmap.org/greenhouse/en/node/2480>

The Black Rock City Green Map identified the Green Model Camps (more than 20) and venues for Green Educational events. Featured practices in this year's Model Camp Tour included:

- Biodiesel Use
- Carbon Offsets:
- Education / Outreach
- Energy Conservation
- Good Neighbor
- Green Building
- Grey Water Treatment:
- Leave No Trace / Less is More
- Reuse
- Solar and Wind Energy:
- Trash Management / Recycling / Composing

As in the past, the Tour was self-guided; participants visited camps of interest to them. A guided bus tour was offered for the first time this year, with mixed success.

Model camps ranged in size from a camp of 7 to a village of 500. They represented a range of styles and scale. There were challenges and disappointments along the way with some notable accomplishments. Radical self-reliance was transformed into something much closer to collaboration and sharing of resources and ideas.

The map also showcased Black Rock City's new 'Green infrastructure': alternative power sources, wood and aluminum recycling depots, the community bike program, civic kiosks and recharging stations. The Green Man Pavilion got its own section of the Green Map, showing the pavilion layout and a list of the art installations and exhibits.

The Green Guide

The Green Guide contained useful and informative data: location and time information for each event categorized by type of event. Categories of events in the Guide included:

- Environmental Movies,
- Speakers/Lectures/Debates,
- Workshops,
- MOOP sweeps,
- Open Discussions,
- Green Model Camps and
- Ways that participants could volunteer during the event.

The guides (on the back of the Green Map) was made available to all burners and posted in large scale throughout the City at each plaza, at the Green Man Pavilion and at the Earth Guardians pavilion. Besides providing a concise visual guide to all things green in Black Rock City, we got a significant amount of positive feedback from participants that the map and guide were quite helpful during the event.

Camp of the Day Contest

This Earth Guardian contest recognizes the best examples of Leave No Trace and Green Camping practices throughout the city. Any registered theme camp can apply, before or during the event. All camps that were included on the Green Map as model camps were automatically entered in the Camp of the Day contest. Model Camps in 2007 included: Amphibia, the Alternative Energy Zone, the BRC Recycle Camp, BYB, Entheon Village, EverWOW, False Profit, Free Style Palace, Green Society Village, HeeBeeGeeBee Healters, HOODville, Hot Monkey Sox, Nose Fish, Radio Free Vahalla, 7 Sins Lounge, Silicon Village, Soulicious, Sushi Love Cake, Sustainabilaville, and Whiskey Tango Foxtrot- Tall Grass.



Earth Guardian gurus visited camps throughout the event to view them in action and also evaluated camps based on their documentation of practices and post-event cleanup reports. Each camp is judged on their pre-camp application and LNT/Green camp plans, on site implementation of the green practices, performance on the MOOP map and post-playa documentation available for sharing with other camps. We had many outstanding camps with simple and ingenious features this year. Each winning camp earned two tickets to Burning Man 2008 and special recognition in the Earth Guardian web pages. The 2007 Camp of the Day winners are: Entheon Village, Sustainabilaville, Soulicious. AEZ Village, and Amphibia. Honorable mention goes to Snow Koan Solar, Carbon Dioxide, NoseFish, HOODville and Ashram Galactica.



Environmental Movies/LNTV and Playa Talks

This year the Earth Guardian pavilion was the host for many Green workshops, demonstration and environmental stewardship meetings throughout the day. We had some great speakers from UC Davis and the Desert Research

Institute sharing their knowledge and their research on Black Rock Desert. In the evenings, we had nightly environmental movies to go along with our LNTV environmental tips; also several green mixers, including a Green Cocktail Hour Discussion on Wednesday to thank all the participants on the Green Map (and all of you!)

Outreach with Other Groups

Expanded Nature Walks and Cooperative Eco-Action Project

This year Earth Guardians coordinated with Friends of Black Rock, Friends of Nevada Wilderness and BLM to complete eco-restoration at the much-damaged coyote springs dune area. Located on the playa less than a mile from the edge of Black Rock City, Coyote Springs was a landmark and water source on the 1850s emigrant trail. The BLM chose Coyote Springs for restoration work because it is historically significant and a habitat for kit foxes, a species of concern. Several human impacts have reduced Coyote Springs in size and vitality. About 50 years ago, wells were drilled at nearby Garrett Ranch (aka Frog Pond) that reportedly reduced the water flow. Lately, the many mounds along the playa edge have attracted off-road vehicles that kill plants and chew up the loose sediment. Coyote Springs has shrunk and could go into severe decline if human impacts continue.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Burning Man, four groups of volunteers were bussed from the Earth Guardians Pavilion to Coyote Springs, a half-mile from the northeast edge of the city. The project had three parts: 1) building 250 feet of fence, 2) raking out the vehicle tracks from the whole dune surface, and 3) breaking up several roads and compacted areas. A large proportion of the dune surface was marked by tracks, from one vehicle or many. Volunteers used rakes and their artistic eyes to smooth the surface and make tracks disappear.



Several remarked that we were creating a giant meditation garden, interacting with the land surface in a deep and inspiring way. All ecological restoration is a kind of environmental art, with the land and its life the medium and inspiration and sweat the tools. Brush cut from the nearby shoreline was placed over the pits, camouflaging the road and promoting re-vegetation. Each small pit collects water and traps blowing seeds, and dead brush shelters seedlings in a protected microclimate.

The better and more artistic the restoration work, the less it looks like art and more like nature. Burning Man volunteers created a true environmental art installation, erasing traces and making Coyote Springs look untouched. Friday's high wind and rain completed the job with blowing sand and a light crust to lock it in place. However, there is a significant chance that Coyote Springs will be further damaged by off-road vehicles despite the fencing, restoration and signage. This year's project was an experiment and a gauge of public reaction to new management methods. Burning Man and its partner groups will be back for years to come, continuing a long-term adaptive program of

environmental stewardship, outreach and education.

The Playa Exhibit

For several years we have worked in partnership with BLM and other wilderness groups to explore different themes in outreach to the residents of Black Rock City. Themes for past exhibits range from Wilderness Areas and Black Rock's National Historic Trails to dinosaurs on the playa. This year's exhibit focused on the playa itself – how it got here, what it is made out of, is it alive, how safe it is to breathe and what we do to protect it. The exhibits included a map of Lake Lahontan in the Pleistocene period, science posters on the geology, current research, and actual living playa shrimp. The exhibit was also set up like a research camp with a cozy campfire (gas) and a special LNT burn barrel from DPW. Volunteers from the Nevada state parks, BLM and the Nevada Outdoor School hosted the exhibit to answer questions from burners.



National LNT Traveling Trainers

The National LNT organization sent their Senior Traveling Trainers, Dusty and Amy, to Burning Man. They had participated in the Green House back in April, so were well prepared to jump in and do community talks at Center Camp Café and get involved with several Earth Guardian teams including the information desk, nature walks, and the 'Toxic Avenger' burn patrols.

Other Activities and Operations at Burning Man

Hot Spring Patrols

Burning Man has agreed with BLM that participants will not use area hot springs during the event. The springs are delicate ecosystems and cannot handle more than a few occasional visitors. During Burning Man, Earth Guardian outreach patrols visit the springs to let people know about the restrictions and impacts and protect the springs. We work with Rangers to transport volunteers posted at the springs at Trego, Black Rock and Double Hot springs each morning, afternoon and overnight at the springs during the event.



The hot spring patrols were busy again in 2007, operating around the clock from the day the gates opened through Sunday after the burn. In the last few years we have incorporated additional volunteer leads to be responsible for transporting the volunteers to and from the three springs to cover each shift. We have been exploring the use of alternative vehicles since the long miles and frequent drives require significant use of

personal vehicles over extreme terrain. Also, having a passenger van, allows the hot spring lead driver to transport a full contingent of volunteers (6+ volunteers) without having to bring the volunteers' personal vehicles outside of the fence and gate. In 2007, the Burning Man fleet vehicle we used had some problems, so we are hoping to use a rental vehicle in 2008.

Burn Platform Patrols

Once again, our Toxic Avengers volunteers patrolled the burn platforms on Sunday. Armed with five golf carts and extra radios, we did our best to prevent participants from burning banned items or overloading the platforms. Once again, this task was much bigger than 5 golf carts, 1 pickup, 1 chainsaw, and 10–15 people could manage to control. This year the signage was not as clear as last year about what could be burned: clean wood and paper. However, most importantly, the messaging about burning less and burning responsibly seems to be reaching people. The improved wood recycling certainly helped!

The Water Works project

In front of the Earth Guardian pavilion, the 'H2OK Corral' intrigued visitors with two wind-powered gray-water evaporators spinning in the breeze. The evaporators disposed of over fifty gallons of gray water and, we hope, provoked visitors to consider designing and building their own. A list of Frequently Asked Questions informed visitors of the do's and don'ts for disposing of used water on the playa.

Ideas for 2008



Earth Guardians would like to further expand our role in promoting environmental stewardship, sustainability, and environmentalism in 2008. We will develop outside display and workshop material and expand our partnerships internally on greening issues and externally on stewardship and restoration, continuing our partnerships with Friends of the Black Rock, BLM, Nevada Wilderness Project, and others to advance our reach.

The Burning Man Ecological Restoration Program is a key element of the event's 'green evolution'. Two years of intense organizing led up to this year's ambitious environmental project. Burning Man excels at bringing creative, skilled volunteers together around visionary ideas and making dreams become reality. We have a proven record of doing big, complicated things in a difficult, remote desert environment. Now is the time to continue and capitalize on the momentum built by all this hard work.

Environmental stewardship offers a venue to build on this strong basis and expand capacity for environmental education and organizing. Earth Guardians propose hosting a three-day ecological restoration seminar on the weekend before the event. In cooperation

with our non-profit partners, we will develop a curriculum of nature education and restoration training to prepare dedicated volunteers for projects during the event. Participants will camp out and travel to a variety of sites, learning by seeing and doing. The Restoration program will be a focus for expanding the Earth Guardians' existing program of speakers, meetings, symposiums and events at the EG Pavilion during Burning Man.

This year's event, the Green Man, brought Eco-Art to burners for the first time in a large way. Eco-art is a new, 'sexy' field that is attracting a lot of attention in both artistic and scientific circles. There are great potential opportunities for funding, outreach and exposure. A Burning Man eco-art program is a new idea that will require much development and growth before it produces results, but those results may be spectacularly innovative. Burning Man is the perfect venue for integrating art and science into hands-on projects that make a difference. Starting small, a collaboration of artists and environmental scientists may blossom into a movement of its own.