

celebrating 10 years of NECTR!



NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

A Message from the Event Leads

NECTR was a safe and successful burn once again. We had perfect weather and lots of great art and participation. There were some safety concerns over some twisted ankles and wasp stings. We are considering traps for next year and clearer communication to participants about allergic responses.

Our experiment with replacing Rangers with a more multi-purpose volunteer position was a great success. We are looking forward to building it out more.

We have had a couple board members step down as other life responsibilities have taken a front seat. We have decided to keep the board at five people for now.

Your friendly neighborhood event leads and board,

Seth

Adam

Thomas

Jill

Jon

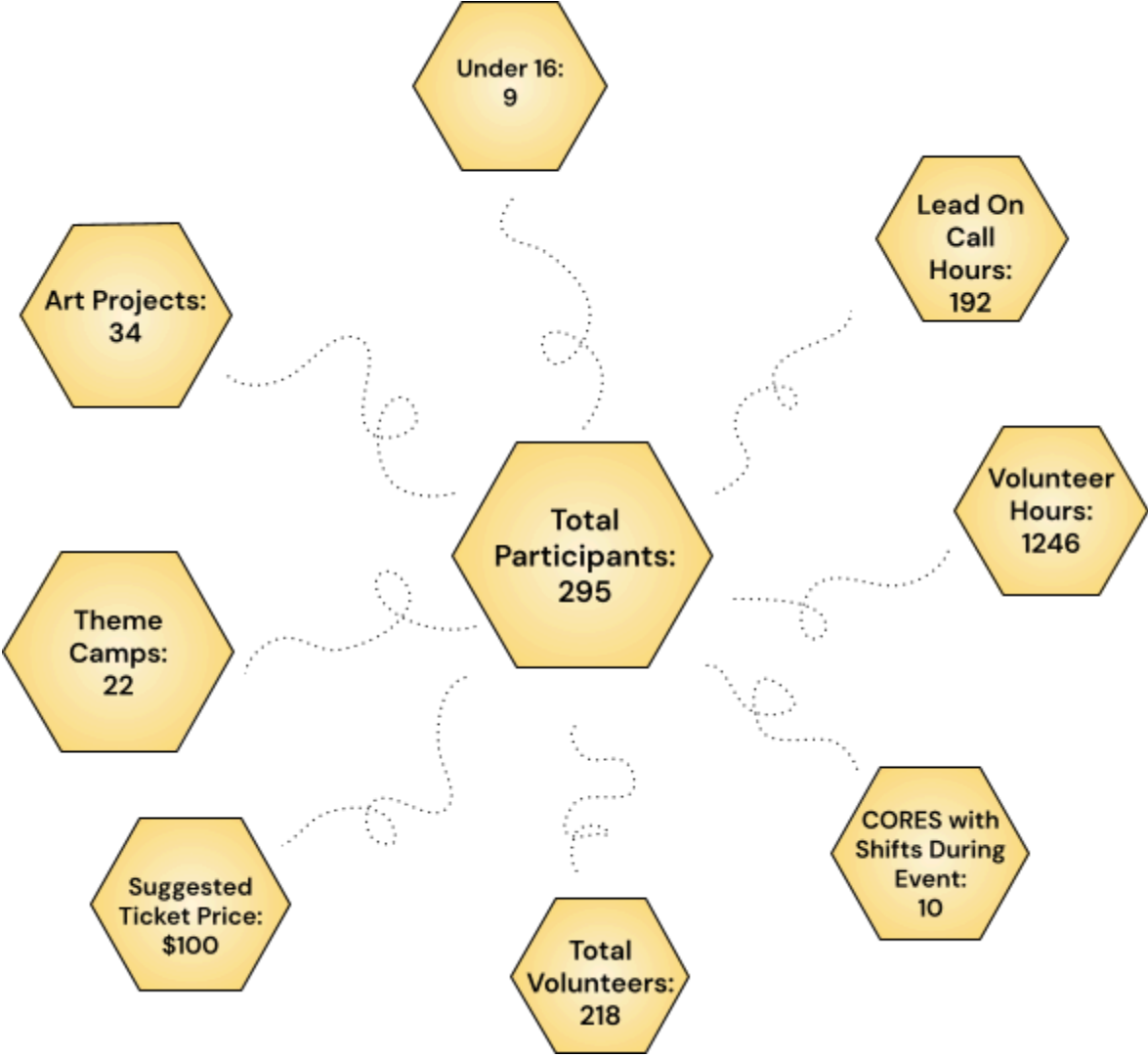
Tatiana

Sarina

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

Event Summary

NECTR is a four-day Regional Burn held on Indigenous People's Day Weekend (10/10-10/14) on a privately owned pig farm on the border of Andover and Coventry, CT. NECTR has just celebrated its 10th year and is regularly sold out with a long waiting list. NECTR is a 10 Principles event and Inc 5013C.

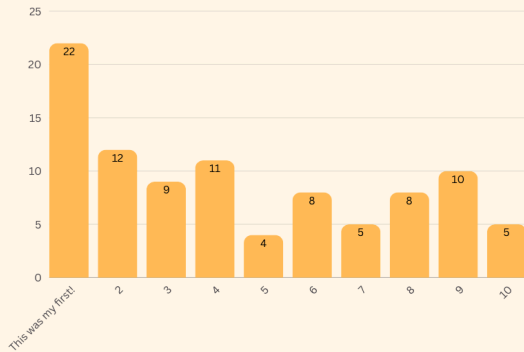


NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

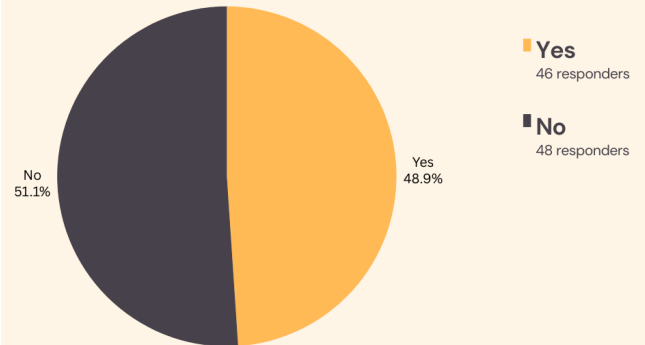
Summary of Survey Results

Following is a selection of the responses from the post-event survey that we sent out to participants. Of 295 participants, we received 94 responses. Results are included in this summary section as well as in the summary for each CORE. Where open responses were provided, we've selected up to 5 to include.

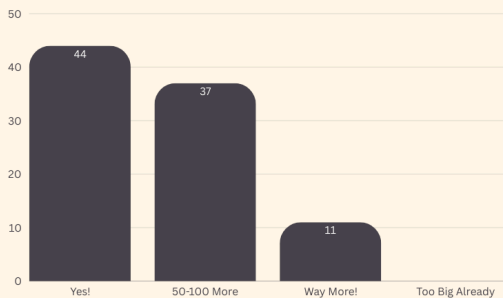
How Many NECTRS Have You Attended?



Have You Been to the Big Burn?

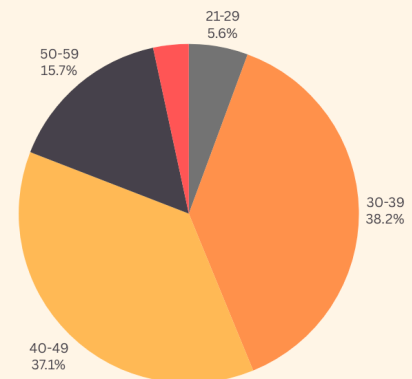


Do You Think the Event Size Should Stay at 300 People?

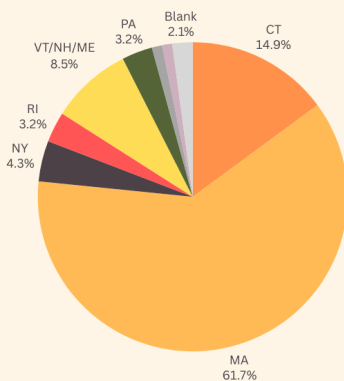


47.8% of responders felt the event is the perfect size, 52.2% feel the event should grow.

What is Your Age?

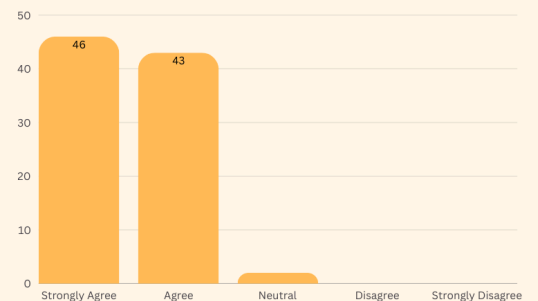


Where Do You Live?



Montreal, Canada and Maryland each had 1.1% of responders

NECTR Was a Well-Organized Event This Year



NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

- To make it ultra clear, I would have each day start at 12am and end 24 hours later at 12am when the next day starts. That way, if I have a 1-3am Friday shift, it's listed as 1-3 am on Friday, not as 1-3am on Thursday night like it was this year. It leaves no room for confusion, because the schedule would follow the standard convention for telling time. If there are shifts that don't need to be filled (for example, gate at Wednesday morning at 12am), the time should still be listed under Wednesday, with the shift marked as not needed, or something similar.
- Maybe it makes sense to combine some duties together on low-traffic shifts. "LNT+FAST+BEE shift".
- It would be nice to have some sort of way to post info for people. So a bulletin board somewhere that the central check-in point for people. Some had no idea when the temple burn was, and had to keep asking around. If things like that could be posted in a central location it would be great. Possibly at the beehive. This would include any impromptu events people wanted to run but didn't get into the mailed out schedule.
- (speaking as a Queen Bee) we had some volunteer gaps towards the back half of the event. On the first few days, we had several late ticket acquirers come by and ask about any volunteer shifts they could fill. It might be nice if the volunteer corps leads could identify the high priority shifts for this late arrivals to fill.
- Parking needs better education, see notes. Greeters could probs use a checklist they HAVE to cover with everyone - it's never helpful to assume knowledge is retained from a year or more ago

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

General Event

What Worked Well

Weather was great this year and impacted attendance positively. Lots of participants showed up early or right as the event started. Because of wet weather during previous events, we opted to forgo building a bridge to the temple structure burn area and placed it where the effigy has been previous years. We moved the effigy into the field. This freed up DPW to work on other tasks like improving trails.

Challenges

Dry weather and wind made burning the effigy in the field slightly problematic. But the wind cooperated and the landowner and community worked together to mitigate hazards in the field

Warm Dry weather led to a lot of yellow jacket wasps attending the event uninvited. We had a couple stings that resulted in urgent but not critical allergic reactions and participants self transporting to seek medical attention.

Despite our best efforts the terrain resulted in some twisted ankles and minor injuries. Cold packs were in hot demand.

Communication was all around better this year but there is always room for improvement.

Areas for Improvement

There are a few minor things to improve on, including better communication between leads and participants on the location of event-provided resources like first aid and lost and found. We are also still trying to figure out the best way to track volunteers and who showed up for their shifts.

NEXT-R

Multiple participants/volunteers stepped up to take on new leadership/co-lead roles, I am excited to see how this goes!

Still looking for a parking co-lead and Event Lead co lead.

Two Board members stepped down after this year to focus on other things.

Improved pre-event communications from CORE leads.

Better communication on site for events such as burns.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE REVIEWS

The following sections detail each of the volunteer organizations (Cores) at NECTR. For each area we provide a summary of what the Core is responsible for, what worked well, challenges that were encountered, specific areas for improvement, feedback from the participant survey if applicable, and specific plans for next NECTR.

CORE: LIGHTING

Summary

The Lighting Core handles trail lighting at NECTR. At the beginning of the event, volunteers distribute lights along each trail. During the event they ensure that they remain lit, and help to collect all the lights at the end of the event.

In the early days of NECTR, as we expanded, trail lighting started to become a big problem. In the past few years, with a solid Core Lead coordinating lighting, NECTR lighting has greatly improved.

Worked Well

NECTR was *lit* and the fairy light system continues to work well. The migration of lighting maintenance to Bees worked relatively well.

Pre- & post- event maintenance is still relatively easy and the maintenance costs are low.

Challenges

As usual, lighting setup/teardown shifts are often hard to fill as they require early arrival or someone staying until the last day. Even when people fill them, due to the special time slots for these shifts, people often arrive late or miss their shift entirely. Often these shifts are filled by scavenging for volunteers from other EA crew or people who stayed until the last day.

One of the key lighting-related tasks – setting up / tearing down the street sign lights – isn't formally captured in a volunteer role, as the artists who made the street sign lights were taking responsibility for it. As one of them wasn't able to join this year, the lighting lead (who is also one of the artists who made them) had to do it all, which turns out to be a lot of work.

A misinformed Queen Bee told Worker Bees to turn off the lights on the morning of the last day, which ended up causing the lights to be off along some trails on the last night.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

Thankfully the Bees were able to fix it. As a note, all the battery packs say, "DO NOT TURN OFF" on them and the lighting instructions shared with Bees say "do not turn off the lights" in many places.

Areas for Improvement

Fully document the pre-event work, so that any new lighting leads know what worked well before. Pre-event work (a few hours of work a few weeks before the event) includes testing of all the used batteries and existing light packs, inventorying the light packs, ordering replacements for damaged ones, ordering more batteries.

Solve the problem of volunteers not showing for their shifts on time (impossible).

Capture the setup and teardown of the street sign lights as part of the lighting setup & teardown tasks. This will involve working with the street sign core.

NEXT-R

- Better incentivise actually showing up to lighting volunteer shifts on time.
- Capture setup/teardown of street sign lights as volunteer roles with instructions

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: CENTER CAMP

Summary

Center Camp at NECTR is a welcoming space where participants can enjoy free coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, and find shelter from the rain. It's "staffed" by two volunteers during peak hours (morning and early evening) and one volunteer during off-peak times, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. There is also a late-night shift for a rotating hour of hot beverage service. Volunteers keep hot water and coffee going, along with a selection of teas and additives (sugar, creamer, honey, etc.). This is a bring-your-own-cup and leave-no-trace site.

NECTR On-Tap, a draft tap system featuring three rotating beverages each day, served by theme-camp based volunteers from the community, returned this year. Offerings include iced coffee, cider, kombucha, and more. Additionally, there is a community table often hosting rotating interactive art activities, such as coloring books, collages, board games, and more.

Worked Well

NECTR on-tap was a hit, volunteers attended their shifts and did an excellent job keeping the beverages hot and the space clean. Everything ran smoothly overall. Center Camp has been run by a team of three since the start of the event so the improvements are well tracked and the bulk of the infrastructure is housed at the NECTR site which makes setup easier. The structure itself and furnishings are put up a weekend before and fully taken down during the weekend after.

Challenges

After a few years of mostly very rainy and very warm NECTRs – this one was dry, sunny, and back to the cold weather we expect in New England in October. As such, participants wanted to see a fire pit and a few mentioned this on the survey.

Areas for Improvement

Center Camp runs on deep cycle batteries to keep the space quiet and powered – we are making some changes to negate the need to charge mid-event.

Firepit needed for cold nights once again (especially for volunteers).

NEXT-R

NECTR on-tap will return as the theme next year!

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: Fire and Art Safety Team (FAST)

Summary

The FAST team conducts safety inspections of all planned burns and all fire art installations including propane-based fire art. The FAST team also provides burn perimeter teams as well as safeties for fire performers.

Worked Well

- Getting help from other volunteers to prepare the field last-minute

Challenges

The Temple Burn was scheduled to occur in the big field on a windy dry day, which turned out to be a challenge to prepare for. We will need more prep and planning ahead of the event, especially for a dry or wet year, to have contingency plans based on weather.

Areas for Improvement

If we know ahead of time that it is a very dry year, get the effigy artists to scale their plans appropriately for fire safety

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: GATE

Summary

It's gate. They make sure only ticketed participants are admitted and staff both the main gate as well as the upper gate.

Worked Well

No issues with unexpected participants or anything else unexpected.

Challenges

Some inconsistencies as far as what is to be expected of Gate volunteers as they welcome participants to the event.

Areas for Improvement

Communication to volunteers, especially between shifts.

NEXT-R

Provide a checklist for Gate volunteers to ensure consistency throughout shift changes.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: GREETERS

Summary

Greeters is located just after parking at the head of the main trail and serves to welcome participants into the event and promote practicing the 10 Principles. This year, greeters eliminated all volunteer shifts with the hope of getting better volunteer coverage for more essential event roles.

Tatiana and Feanil built a bulletin board with solar lights to host the map and other information at the entrance to the event where the greeter table used to be. Tatiana also created a series of signs that went along the entrance to the event, describing the 11 Principles of Burning Man.

Tatiana distributed acculturation pamphlets, "no photography" bracelets, MOOP bags, stickers, and consent cards to the front gate and stopped by the front gate a few times during the first two days of the event to encourage gate staff to greet attendees and pass out materials.

Worked Well

NECTR is such a small event and maybe it doesn't make sense to have a greeter volunteer core because that takes away from other essential volunteer functions. If the event were to grow, bringing back greeter volunteers would be great, but in the meantime it works fine to not have them.

The bulletin board and the principles signs were a great addition to the event! Lots of positive feedback.

Challenges

Gate volunteers are not always eager to pass out greeter materials and take on acculturation duties.

The bulletin board broke when we took it down (ripped the cork board), so that will need to be repaired before next year's event.

Areas for Improvement

Diversity, consent training, communications. Not that we have any problems, they are just things that could be improved. New cork for bulletin board.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

NEXT-R

- Training or training materials for gate volunteers, to empower them to take on greeter roles (working with the gate lead on this).
- Working with communications to improve acculturation before the event through blog/newsletter/emails.
- Acculturation video?
- Spring 2025- Connect with some other regional burns to learn about their work to increase event diversity.
- Consent and first time burner events hosted by greeters next year.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: PARKING

Summary

The first stop for all participants after the gate is parking. Parking helps direct people where to park and try to not get stuck in what can be fairly muddy conditions.

Worked Well

We created a parking map for general parking! This was printed along with a parking volunteer cheat sheet on the back. Accessibility parking was well-received and a success. Parking passes with contact information on dashboards was helpful. Separating high clearance vehicles from lower clearance vehicles and creating "Truck land" in the upper lot helped streamline and organize parking. We allowed many volunteers to figure out their own system to let folks park, unload, and keep the flow going which worked very well for individual volunteers

Challenges

We did not have enough Gate/Parking volunteers during peak arrival times. There was difficulty with knowledge transfer between volunteer shifts, especially when coming off Nightgate. Many volunteers had difficulty splitting time between theme camp duties and parking duties. Gate/parking volunteers need better clarity as to when driving on the field is permitted (or process for getting permission).

Areas for Improvement

- Create a parking map for Early Arrival parking.
- Add parking permits (a bin) for EA parking.
- PSA for EA arrivals - where/how to park, use a parking pass.
- PSA for attendees on where/how to park and instructions for volunteers.
- PSA on goals for parking (park tightly to avoid mud, fit more cars, etc.)
- Set a deadline before the event for taking accessibility parking requests (when we head to the site and stop checking emails).
- Print more parking passes ahead of time.
- Put all accessible parking on the F path side (less slope).

Next NECTR

- Have a parking co-lead so onsite responsibilities can be split.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

- Add a bin for parking passes in the Early Arrival lot.
- Send out PSAs ahead of time.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: DPW

Summary

Department of Public Works coordinates the pre-event work weekends, handles clearing Temple Island, building the bridge to Temple Island, pre-event and during event trail maintenance.

Worked Well

Placement process continues to improve. There were very few if any conflicts. Improved forms/communications as well as an on-site markup placement map were key. We had a nice weather year which alleviated much of the heavy DPW labor usually required. We made significant trail improvements in several problem areas using gravel and tractor. Additional new traction mats were amazing and helped cover rough patches and muddy areas. They are easy to move and infinitely durable.

Challenges

No significant issues this year. There is some minor flooding on the F trail that will need to be dealt with but was easily handled with traction mats this year.

Areas for Improvement

Open camping continues to be a concern and might need to be discussed. With so many newbs this year there was some questions online about "where to camp". Do we need a permanent spot?

NEXT-R

Temple island was closed this year due to issues in previous years. Do we attempt a re-open next year?

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: BEES

Summary

The Bees at NECTR are a new core for 2024. They combine some responsibilities from Ranger, DPW, and Gnome cores at other events. Like Rangers previously, they carry radios and can wander the event. Unlike Rangers, their primary purpose is to help other volunteer cores and contribute to overall event logistics by taking on tasks (for example, bringing supplies from one part of the event to another) and by standing in for important volunteer shifts in other cores that are unstaffed. Like Rangers, they continue to serve as a communications hub and way to reach event organizers / Board members during the event.

Worked Well

The overwhelming majority of feedback received on-site and in the post-event survey was positive about the change from having Rangers to the new Bees core, both from participants who volunteered for those cores and "outsiders". Comments generally had the theme of the idea for the Bees core being a better match for an event of NECTR's size than the Rangers. The Bees had a number of unplanned situations come up during the 2024 event, ranging from extra DPW work needed to prepare for an effigy burn on a dry and windy day to assisting participants who were dealing with several minor medical incidents. Feedback we heard from the Bees volunteers as well as from those observing the situations was generally very positive about the impact the Bees were having on the event.

Challenges

As this was the first year the Bees existed (and this core replaced a previous Ranger core), there were some challenges around communicating the purpose of the core and its differences from Rangers. While there were communications about this to participants before the event, these efforts didn't reach everyone and there were still some on-site questions.

Areas for Improvement

The Bee Hive (Bees HQ) could use some organizational improvements next year to provide better access to supplies. We also noted a number of specific areas where our written volunteer guide documents could be clarified or expanded to answer questions that came up during the event.

CORE: SANCTUARY

Summary

Sanctuary provides a quiet peaceful space for participants that may be having a challenging experience or a challenging event.

Worked Well

Sanctuary continues to be a valuable part of the NECTR infrastructure. There were no issues with the running of Sanctuary and no incidents during the event that required support from Sanctuary.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: SOUND

Summary

The Sound Core helps with sound placement and directionality, making sure that sound is not overlapping and establishes rules for sound camps to help minimize the impact on surrounding neighbors.

Challenges

One Sound Camp played music outside of the limit, but fortunately caused no issues among participants or outside of the event.

Next NECTR

There is no Sound Core lead, so Event Leads will clearly communicate responsibilities of this Core to another Core support this area.

NECTR 2024 AFTERBURN REPORT

CORE: Street Signs

Summary

Street Signs are placed at each intersection throughout the event, to help especially new participants at NECTR to find where events are occurring.

NECTR enjoy a healthy continuation of the practice of signs going missing over the course of the event. Given the size of the event, we don't perceive this to be a significant problem and hope the recipients enjoy their new signage.

Worked Well

Early mowing of field and main trails (before first work weekend) is useful for sign installation. This year, finding random helpers during the event worked well.

Challenges

This year saw unusually dry weather, which contributed to loose soil which caused the signs to have trouble standing up in some locations

NEXT-R

- Think about repainting poles
- Think about replacing dowels that are wearing out (switch to PVC/metal/carbon fiber?)
- Make the sign lanterns easier to set up / documented

Financials

Summary

NECTR's primary expenditures include the land reservation, art grants, and event insurance which is consistent across most regional event budgets. Last year, we introduced micro-art grants. This was a very popular opportunity and we continued it this year. As a result our Art Grant expenditures ended up being over-budget and we will likely need to increase ticket prices next year to balance this out. Through the course of the pandemic and subsequent years, our reserves have decreased, however are steady with about \$12k in reserve for unforeseen emergencies, including those relating to last-minute venue changes. The summaries below include spending trends from 2014 onwards, including a detailed breakdown of costs for the 2024 event.