

Lakes of Fire Afterburn Report 2014

Thank you to the participants, artists, volunteers and do-ers who made Lakes of Fire 2014, Release the Kraken, another amazing event! 1750 tickets were sold and, once kids under 13 and medical team were added, nearly 2000 participants braved the rain and winds to journey to Lucky Lake near Muskegon, Michigan. Thank you to Lucky Lake Campground for once again being our hosts. DPW and the rest of the setup crews arrived on site Friday, June 13 and along with the amazing LNT team wrapped the site cleanup on Tuesday, June 24. The event opened to Theme Camps / Volunteers and Artists Wednesday, June 18 and to all attendees Thursday, June 19.

Over 500 volunteers pulled together to staff the key event operations roles, a 20% increase in volunteership over 2014! We can't do this without you, so Thank You Volunteers! We would especially like to recognize the new Leads who stepped forward this year. It warms our Kraken to see founding event organizers hand over the reins, and move on to new roles as artists and do-ers at the event, and to see new leads step forward with fresh energy and innovative perspectives. Leads have been actively planning LoF since the Leads Retreat in Chicago in November 2013 -- thank you for every hour, every phone call, every challenge, and every great idea. There are openings for two Board of Directors next year as well as a Parking Lead role to fill this winter. Are you inspired by LoF? Are you ready to go deeper? Join us!

LoF Art Grants grew to \$10,000 this year, and the results were visible throughout Lakes of Fire. Thank you to the artists and crews who brought such diverse and mind-bending works. From flame throwing Duchesses, to soft and inflatable bouncy art, to various Kraken-themed installations, artists really upped the ante this year. Thank you!

Over 80 theme camps were registered this year, and the benchmark in innovation, infrastructure, and interactivity has again been raised! LoF veterans brought their 'A' games again while new-to-us camps offered interactivity and in-house installations out of the gate!

The Department of Mutant Vehicles is happy to report that more art cars motored around LoF this year than any year past. 15 vehicles were registered and offered participants a variety of altered modes of transportation.

New to Lakes of Fire this year was an ambitious parking lot move, and a community-driven food drive. The parking move was facilitated in anticipation of our growing population and to make more intentional use of the group camping space on which our original parking area sat. This transition required the involvement and planning of several teams, paired with the trust and buy-in of LoF participants and we couldn't be happier with the outcome! Our first ever food drive was intended to provide another means of supporting the local community. 300 pounds of nonperishable food were collected near Center Camp and donated to a local food pantry.

The event once again faced challenges with the weather during pre-event setup and particularly during Theme Camp / Volunteer / Art arrival day on Wednesday when the Gate Road was closed for 5 hours due to flooding from heavy rains. We appreciate every participant who teamed up and walked projects in, remained patient, and handled Mother Nature's curve balls.

Another challenge included a necessary on-site adjustment to porto potty numbers, distribution and services, in response to varying concentrations in the population and traffic of participants. The good news is that moving our parking lot to a field east of the event space opened the Keyhole field to open camping and impromptu theme camps!

One final hurdle was in the area of community relations and participant education. We were made aware of some participant vehicles illegally depositing trash in the surrounding area dumpsters after exodus. Fortunately, this occurrence prompted a much-needed conversation on our social forums regarding our LNT principles and what strategies we can employ to maximize patronage and minimize negative impact on the surrounding community. A formal apology was issued to the complainant.

Financially, the organization closed the books with a surplus of \$8,699 after paying out expenses of almost \$116,000. Our financial statement includes \$87,587 in event production expenses for 2014. Total revenue from tickets was \$124,242, leaving a surplus which allowed us to increase some of our program budgets. The new amounts are \$12,500 for Art Grants, \$3,000 for Art Honorarium, and a Community Donation of \$3,000 (all to be distributed in 2015).

New to the 2014 production cycle was an After Burn camp out at Lucky Lake from July 18-20. This event provided organizers an opportunity to review our efforts while still fresh in our minds, close the loop on outstanding items of concern, and create the appropriate space for an earlier, 2015-facing retreat in October.