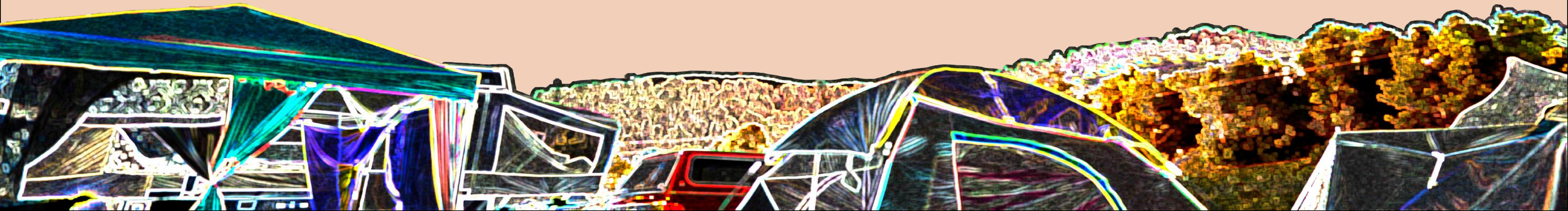


Apogaea **2024** AfterBurn Report

Surreal Safari

June 5-9, 2024
Trinidad, CO





We Burn

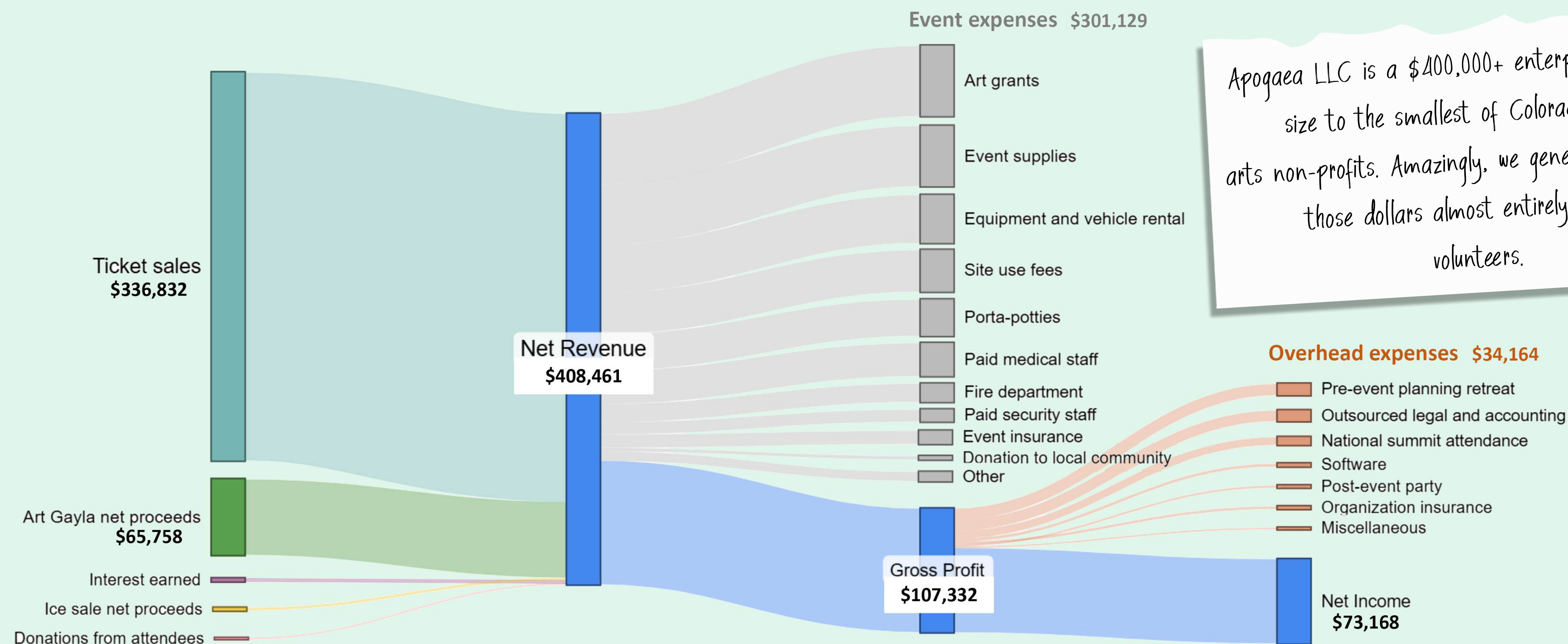
"...to maintain a community that cultivates interest in and pursuit of art, music, and artistic expression."

TO MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY. Apogaea's 5-day Burn event in June exists to give the community of Burners in Colorado a place to connect, get creative, dance, play, and otherwise live the Burning Man Principles in our lives "off-playa." Because, as much as we all love the exuberance of the event in the Nevada desert each summer, as Burners, we strive to live in a way that centers individuality and interconnectedness in equal measure—year-round.

The Burning Man 10 Principles make our community unique and strong. When, as a group, you value **Radical Inclusion**, **Self-Expression**, and **Consent** your people can show up in their most wildly authentic, unexpected versions of themselves. Our Principles of **Civic Responsibility**, **Leave No Trace**, and **Communal Effort** mean we build our temporary city together, and responsibly care for the land when we leave. And ultimately, **Decommodification**, **Gifting**, and **Participation** ensure that *we are the entertainment*—each person's wildly authentic, unexpected creativity makes the event unique and personal each year.

Apogaea's 2024 Surreal Safari was an explosion of that creativity, interconnectedness, and hard work, with its own successes, challenges, and commitment to making sure *it was better next year*.

Financial Stewardship

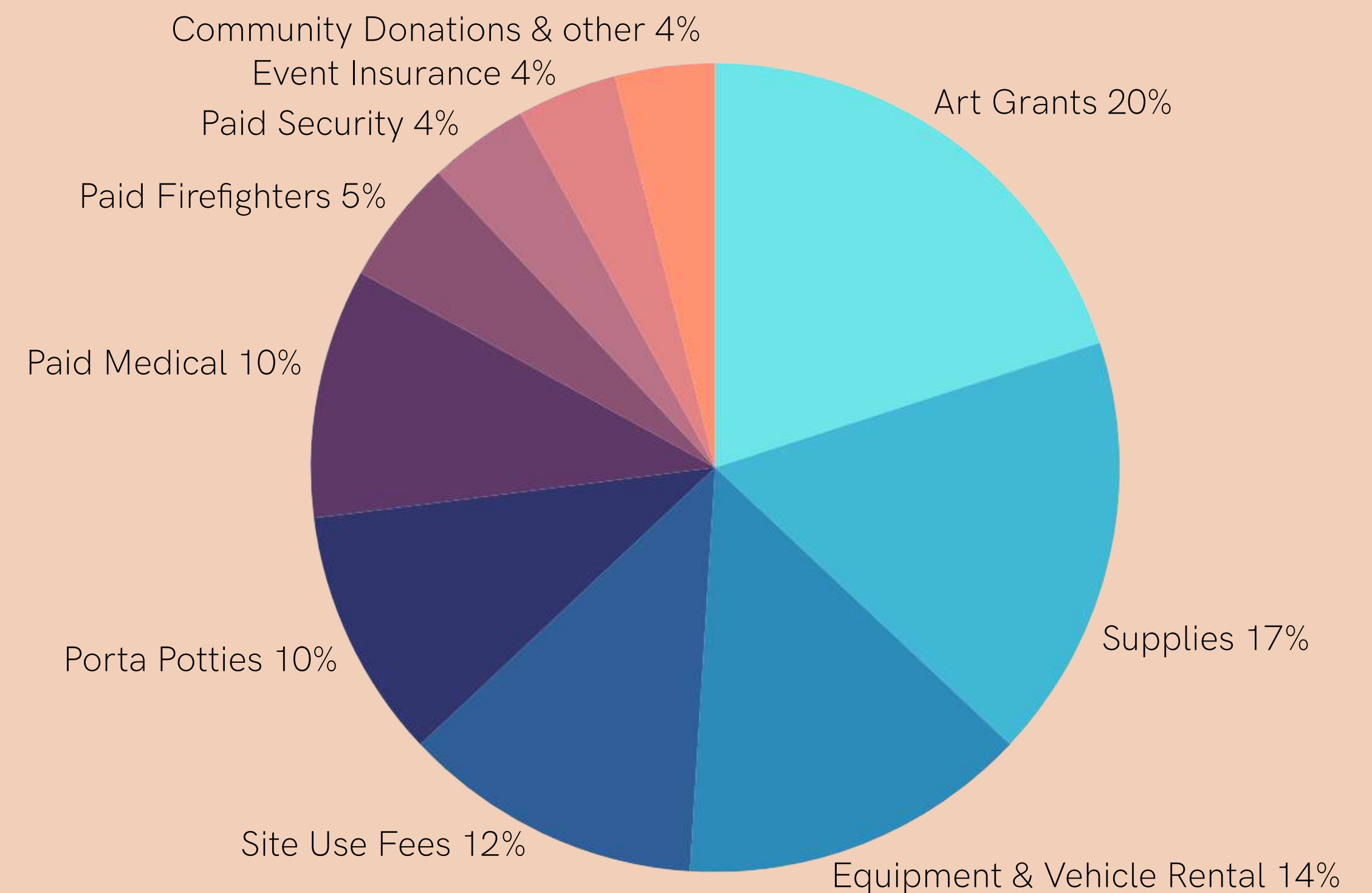


Apogaea LLC is a \$400,000+ enterprise, similar in size to the smallest of Colorado's local arts non-profits. Amazingly, we generate and spend those dollars almost entirely through volunteers.

Creating Surreal Safari

What all goes into making Apogaea happen?

- Grants to artists to create and bring art projects to the event. In 2024, we disbursed \$61,000 for art!
- Supplies. The big line items here are centrally-purchased supplies to support art installations, tools to support Department of Public Works operations, gifted items for volunteers, and food/drink handed out to volunteers and event attendees.
- Equipment and vehicle rental. The Apo Org rents several golf carts for volunteers and rangers to operate during event setup and during the event, and it also rents a fleet of generators to power centralized services (e.g., Center Camp, the Gate, the Department of Public Works camp).
- Site use fees. Each year, we pay about \$36,000 to the wonderful land-owners for use of the Trinidad event site.
- Porta-potties.
- Paid medical, firefighter, and security staff on-site at the event.
- Event insurance policy. In 2024, our policy cost nearly \$12,000.



How does Apogaea compare?

Unfortunately, few numbers are comparable across Burns.

Why is that? First, Burns are often fundamentally different in scale and structure from one another, so one should not expect their financial ratios or results to be aligned. Second, financial figures are reported quite differently across Burns. Nonetheless, it is tempting to benchmark Apo’s financials against those of other Burns. So, we found a few selected points of comparison that may provide some interesting context.

The Big Burn in Black Rock City is some 160 times bigger than Apo, in terms of net revenue (or about 50 times bigger in terms of attendees). With such a difference in scale, one should not expect many expenses to be comparable or proportional. Moreover, the Big Burn has a fundamentally different structure, in that it runs with year-round paid staff.

Love Burn in Miami is some six times bigger than Apo (in terms of net revenue or attendees). We include it here for comparison because financial results for Love Burn 2024 were readily available.

We were not able to find relevant figures for other regional Burns that would be more closely and fairly comparable to Apo (e.g., Element 11).

In 2024, Apo disbursed \$40 in art grants per attendee. In contrast, the Big Burn dispersed only \$18 per attendee. However, it is important to consider that a lot more artists bringing art to the Big Burn typically can and do self-fund their creations (or conduct their own fundraising). Therefore, comparing art grant dollars per capita is not terribly meaningful. And art grant dollars per capita is not a metric that tells us “how much art” was at each event.

Selected comparisons with other Burns			
	Apogaea 2024	Black Rock City 2023	LoveBurn 2024
Attendees <i>Multiple of Apogaea</i>	1,535	73,000 48x	8,500 6x
Net Revenue <i>Multiple of Apogaea</i>	\$408,461	\$66,571,053 163x	\$2,527,301 6x
Net Revenue, per attendee (<i>excluding Apo Art Gayla</i>)	\$223	\$912	\$297
Net Revenue, per attendee (<i>including Apo Art Gayla</i>)	\$266		
Site Use Fees, per attendee	\$24	\$66	n/a
Art Grant Dollars dispersed, per attendee	\$40	\$18	\$52
Net Profit % <i>(excluding Apo ARt Gayla)</i>	2%	4%	6%
Net Profit % <i>(including Apo Art Gayla)</i>	18%		



An open invitation

Principle #1: Radical Inclusion

Usually listed as the first Principle, Radical Inclusion is pretty much the cornerstone of the Burner Ethos. It describes ***who we are***, while the rest outline how we function together. We are Inclusive. Our community is made up of ***anyone who chooses to join us***.

It seems a simple thing, until you realize how many spaces you are excluded from on a regular basis, often for reasons beyond your control. Exclusion and trolling have become a vicious norm in our world.

But Burning Man culture has always been a haven from that, and Apogaea manages this brilliantly. We're not perfect, but on the whole, we are very good at including whoever, and whatever they bring to our event.

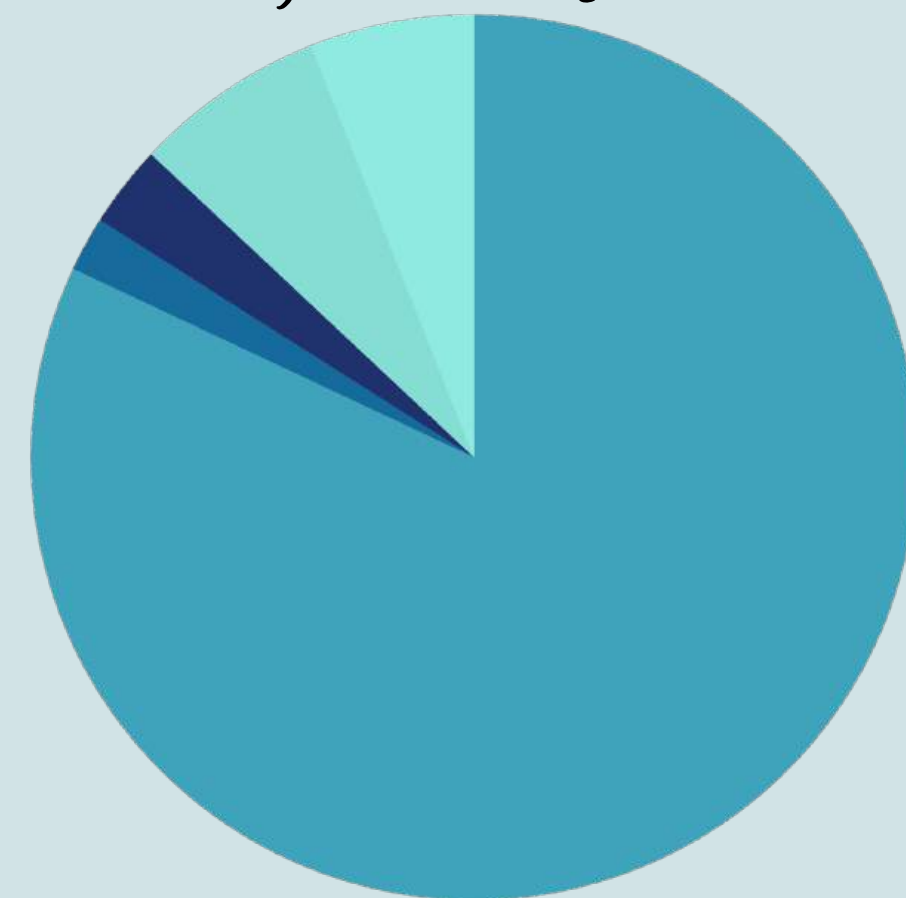
And it goes so far beyond basic demographics of age, race, and religion. We are the geeks and nerds, the artists and builders, creatives and expressives. We're entrepreneurs and wage slaves, stoners and tee-totalers, brilliant, and barely functional. Like Walt Whitman said of his own desire to understand himself, We contain multitudes.

Of course we don't always all get along, but we do value the guiding Principle that ***we can all belong here***, if nowhere else.

It's interesting to note that when founder Larry Harvey was asked in 2004 to describe Burners, these principles are what he saw in his community. He didn't stand on that beach in San Francisco in 1996 and dictate that future Burners needed to be Inclusive; the Burners themselves created this out of a desire to build a better world for themselves. And now, nearly 30 years later, we have an invitation to build it again in our corner of Colorado each summer.

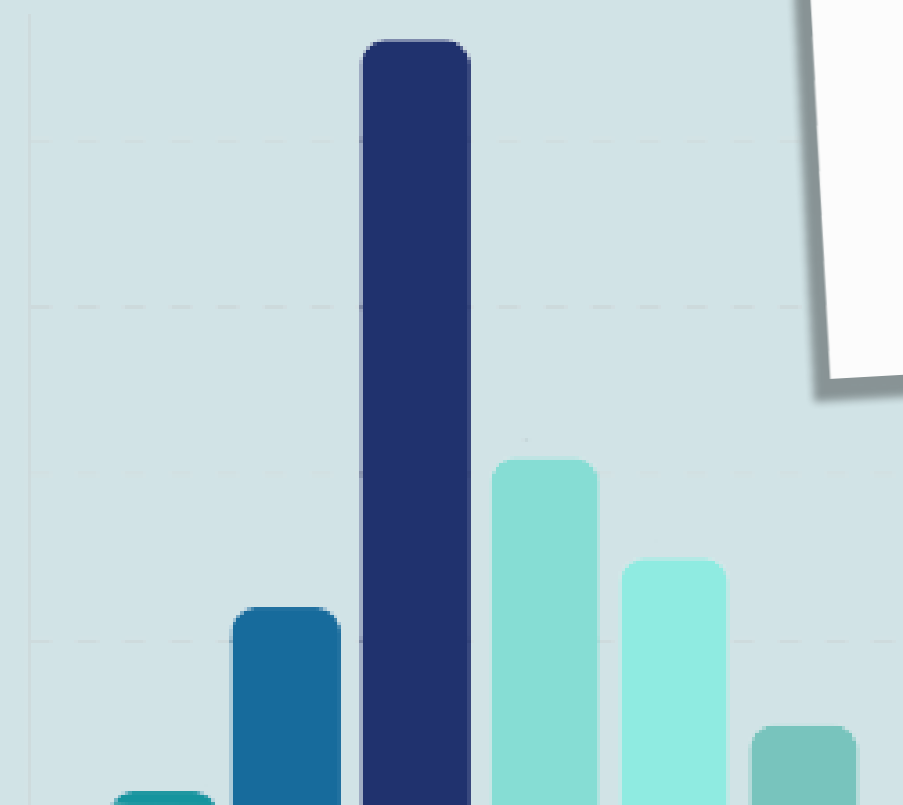
Who We Are

Apogaeans by Race



- White/Caucasian (82%)
- Black or African American (2%)
- Asian (3%)
- Hispanic (7%)
- Mixed Race (6%)

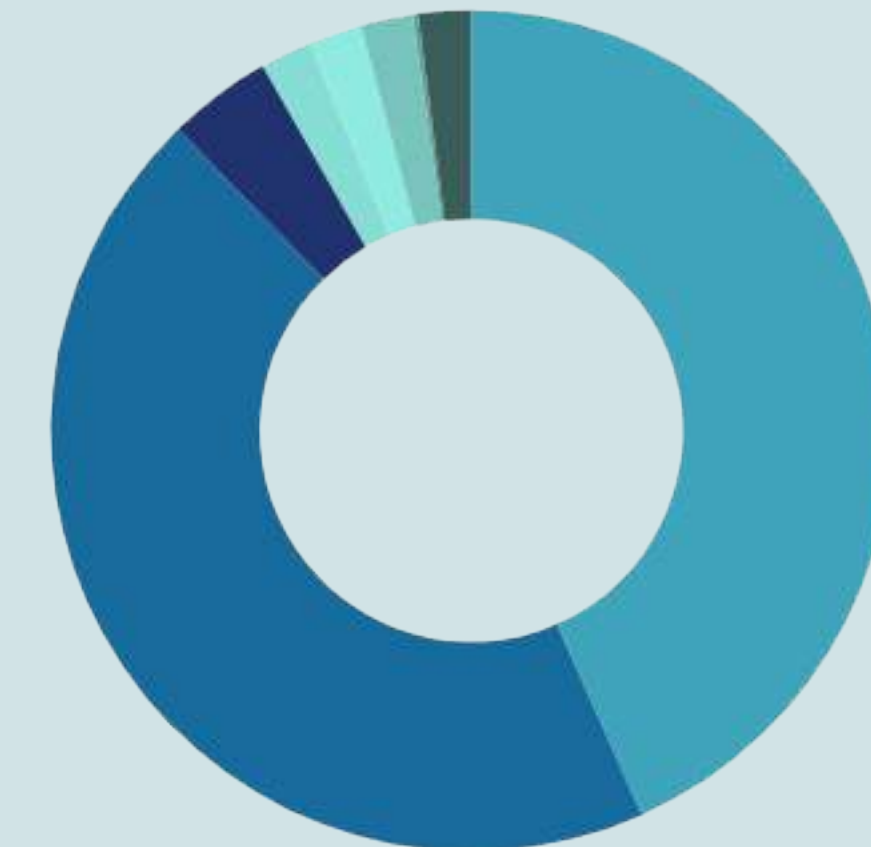
By Age



- Teens (.006%)
- Twenties (12%)
- Thirties (46%)
- Forties (21%)
- Fifties (15%)
- 60+ (5%)

More demographic info is available from our 2024 Census, published at Apogaea.com

By Religion



- Spiritual but not Religious (43%)
- Atheist, Agnostic, or Indifferent (44%)
- Christian (4%)
- Jewish (2%)
- Buddhist (2%)
- Pagan (2%)
- Hindu (.2%)
- Other (2%)

Giving it your all

Principle #2: Gifting

The Gifting Culture is probably the biggest, and most universally adhered-to, difference between a Burn and a festival. Instead of booths with vendors hawking their art/food/experiences, everything at a Burn is gifted, which makes everything available to anyone who shows up. (Try walking around Apo selling your jewelry. You'll learn very quickly how important the principle of Gifting is!)

And it's more than the fact that money isn't exchanging hands; the power of Gifting is that it fosters community by eliminating the barrier of currency. "Want to enjoy my movie night/yoga class/whiskey tasting/cosmic journeying? Come on in! Join the party! Let's make this memorable!" The only hurdle is your willingness to participate.

And when everything is a gift, rather than something you have to market and sell, it allows you to bring whatever goofy thing you're passionate about and share it with anyone who's interested.

And—super bonus! Gifting also produces Oxytocin, the bonding hormone, in the brain. Which is a huge part of why we feel so connected to each other out there.

Apo's 73 registered Theme Camps, most of which were designed around their gifting, were largely about creating experiences. Even food and drink were offered as games, or experiences to be shared. In a lot of ways, Gifting is the glue of a Burner community.





Let's do *all the things* Now!

Principle #3: Immediacy

No wi-fi, No cell service. Just 1500 of your closest friends camping in the woods with music, art, shenanigans, games, and the opportunity to experience something new in every moment. As Burners, we understand that what is happening RIGHT NOW may never happen again, and that fully immersing ourselves in whatever-this-is is how we make our Burn a thing we'll never forget.

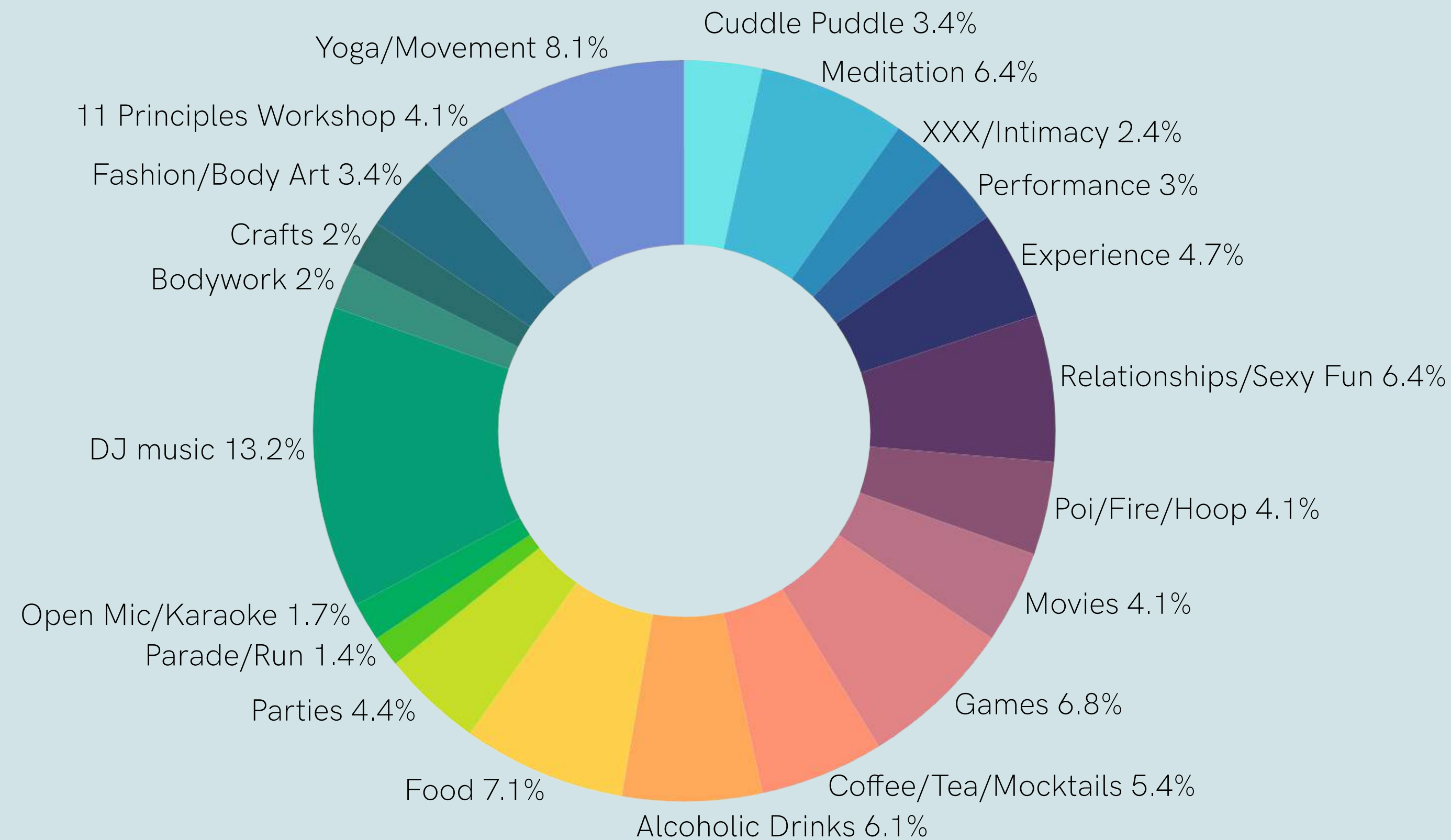
Because we know that this will all be gone some day, and the community and memories we make while we're here need to sustain us through the rest of the year. And of course the best way to do that is to do *all the things, all the time.*

As usual, this year's events showcased a wide range of interests. You could go from a naked parade, or rocking out to an air guitar competition, to quietly learning to process deep grief together in the presence of new friends.

There was coffee, and whiskey, and food, and crafts, and dancing and cheese (so very much grilled cheese!).

During peak daytime hours, as many as 20 registered events were going on at the same time, not to mention the thousands of spontaneous encounters. We brought our passions, from the absurd to the profoundly meaningful, and shared them with our community.

Interactive Events



So much to do, so little time

The types of events at a Burn tells you a lot about the community; interestingly, the largest category this year was Yoga/Movement, totalling 24 events from 7 different theme camps.

Our *Who, What, When, Where* guide showed 302 events scheduled over the 5-day Burn. That averages to **72 events per day** on peak days! (6 events were on Sunday, when most Burners were packing out.)

And while the music and lights and *Untsa* were **Fire** throughout the Burn, 80 events offered downregulating experiences, creating an impressive balance between stimulation and chill.

Responsible Stewardship

Principle #4: Leave No Trace

The land Apogaea has called home for the last 7 years is a quiet, treed valley in southern Colorado, in use most of the year as a family cattle grazing operation. We are the only event these landowners invite onto their land, and as such, we have a special responsibility to be good neighbors and remove all trace of our event when we leave.

What that means in practise is that the roughly 1500+ of us who bring our art, music, and absurdity each year, also bring our trash bags, and when we pack out our tents and RVs, we also pack out trash, down to the last whisky bottle and errant sequin.

And by all accounts, we do this very well. Maybe because we're Coloradan, and the ***Pack-it-in, Pack-it-out*** camping ethos is ingrained in us, but when the last truck rolls out, we are confident the cattle roaming in after us won't impale themselves on the odd nail or tent stake or shard of plastic or wood.

Because Leaving No Trace means caring for the experience of those who come after us, whether it's in this little valley, or on Black Rock City's Playa, or out in the default world.



"The Land" is about 3/4 mile long and 1/4 mile wide, encompassing about 120 acres. Because of the short distances and uneven terrain, bicycles are not usually necessary, but stout walking shoes are.

How Apogaea's Org works

Mission Control

7-9 Board Of Directors +
4 Org Officers (year-round)

Ground Control

27 Department Leads (year-round)

Ignition

87 Crucial volunteers, 1 BM Org Representative, 5 Regional Contacts (year-round)

Sparks

18 Volunteers to support Department Leads (year round)

Production Volunteers

477 who worked 5511 hours during the 2024 event

Putting on this event requires the efforts of roughly 150 year-round volunteers, plus the more than 5500 shift hours volunteers worked onsite during the 5-day Burn.



Making it Work For Everyone

Principle #5: Civic Responsibility

As much as Burns are rambunctious, no-holds-barred camping trips often held in remote locations far from civilization, they're also a significant legal enterprise, required to provide for the public welfare of their participants, and with the responsibility to recognize local, state, and federal laws.

And good Burners know that adherence to Civic Responsibility is how we get to come back and do this thing again, year after year.

Civic Responsibility is our organizers maintaining good relationships with nearby communities and surrounding landowners. It's us Leaving No Trace when we pack up and go. It's making sure we have the requisite fire, medical, and security personnel contracted and scheduled to be onsite. It's every Burner practicing fire safety and taking care of their campmates and neighbors who might've gotten in over their head.

Civic Responsibility is making our community work, for ourselves, and for those we interface with. And while most of that responsibility is managed by the leadership staff behind the scenes, it's up to each of us to help make this work.

Sustainability Successes

The first year of Apo's Sustainability Committee accomplished a great deal, and is set up to create greater impact in years to come.

In 2024 they had 5 main projects: The Seed Distribution Project, Updating the Apo Website with helpful information on Sustainability, The Recycling Camp Project, Gathering Data on our Baseline Carbon Footprint, and Working towards Carpooling Solutions.

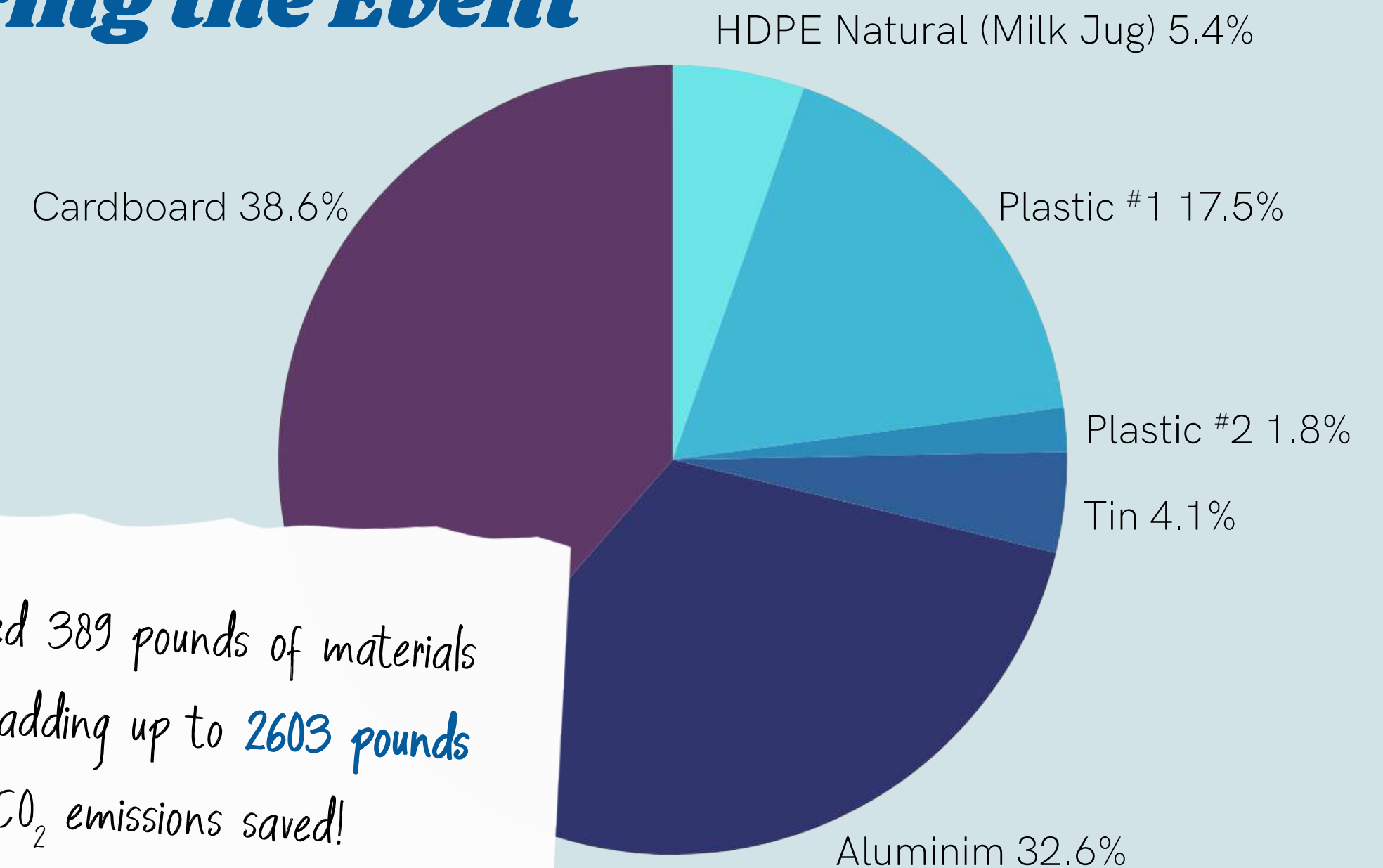
The Seed Distribution Project was probably the most beloved project by all Apogaeans involved. Everyone enjoyed the process of packaging the seeds during our retreat, handing them out to participants, educating participants, and scattering them after their MOOP sweeps.

The Recycling Camp Project was also very successful and widely utilized.

Updating the website was very easy thanks to the help of the IT department and many people stated to our volunteers that they had read it!

The Recycling Camp Project was wildly successful despite that it was pulled off last-minute.

Pounds of Material Recycled During the Event



*We recycled 389 pounds of materials
this year, adding up to 2603 pounds
of CO₂ emissions saved!*

Giving Burners a break from “BUY NOW”

Principle #6: Decommodification

In today's default world, we are exposed to literally thousands of advertisements, product placements, sales pitches, and other artefacts of commercialism in a single day, all telling us that we need to do, be, and most importantly, ***purchase something*** to make our lives better right now. A landmark Happiness Study* following 900,000 people over 30 years found that overall happiness declines significantly as ad exposure increases. It doesn't take a social scientist to infer how hard that can be on a person's mental health.

And it's one of the ways Decommodification helps create a slightly more utopian Burner experience. For 5 days, we step into a place where nothing (except ice) is for sale. Freed from our wallets, we are able to experience everything on offer, from midnight grilled cheese, to exotic whiskey tastings, to primal yoga classes and so, so, so much more.

And of course it's imperfect. Product labels are impossible to avoid completely, the cost of attending and creating a Burn is significant. But for the days we are out on the Land, the principle of Decommodification gives us a break from need to BUY NOW.

And who knows—experiencing community without commerce might just gives us a cleaner lens through which to see our world.

*<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/advertising-major-source-human-dissatisfaction-cross-national-evidence-one-million>





Showing up as we choose

Principle #7: Radical Self-Expression

For most people, the culture and environment we are born into shape us into a version of ourselves that fits into our culture with minimal friction. And while growth is always possible and maybe even encouraged in many cultures, *experimentation* in the area of self-definition nearly always comes at a cost.

Which means the self you created may not be your authentic self at all. Because if that culture never allowed you to feel free to find your voice, display your art, wear that hot pink leather harness you saw in the shop window and have been dreaming about for years, how do you know whether that is your authentic self or not?

Radical Self-Expression as a founding principle is not necessarily about being more authentic, but it does create a culture that celebrates experimentation. It allows a wider field of expression, as long as that expression doesn't violate other Principles. And in that realm of possibility, self-expression becomes freedom. Freedom to be, do, create, say, wear, think, and try things that had been off-limits in the default.

And at Apogaea, that freedom comes out in countless ways. Because if there's room for 73 different theme camps, each built on and executed by the creative visions of anywhere from one to 50 people, and an additional 43 registered art pieces, more than 40 performing artists, and every one of the 1500 attendees choosing and exploring and expressing whatever uniqueness appeals at the moment, there's room for whatever version of your self you want to share today.

Art that breaks the mold

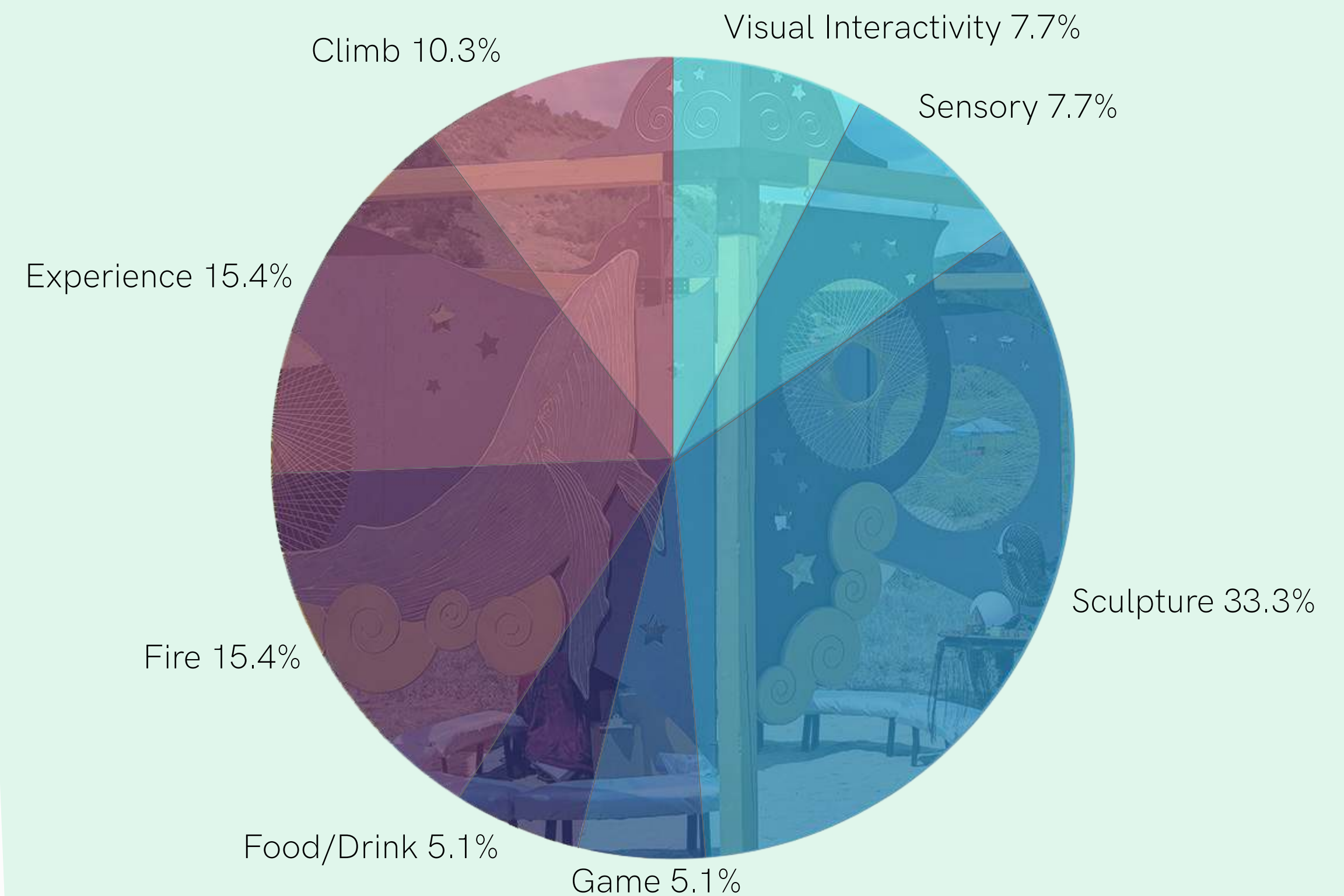
...but what if we could make it do *THIS?*

One of the hallmarks of Burner art is its interactivity. A piece of metal art doesn't just shoot fire, it's a *set of pogo-sticks that shoot more fire the harder you jump on them*. It's mirror-mosaic Llama guardians that serve lemonade. It's a wishing well where your wishes dissolve before your eyes.

To engage with a piece of Burner art is to remember how to play, to experience something just for the delight of it.

And there's also the giant works of metal art that shoot fire. Or water the plants held in their embrace. Or just stand there, being extraordinary. Burner art breaks the fourth wall and invites the viewer to experience something new, whether it's slimy, scary, mesmerizing, comical, or even inscrutable.

This year's 43 registered pieces ranged from static sculptures to a functional recycling machine, and nearly every one of them engaged the senses in unexpected ways. Pieces were built to climb on, talk or hug in, zone out to, explore, compete, and sometimes just to stare at. Burner art nearly always invites you closer, challenging you to see it, or yourself, in a different way.



Earning your Bragging Rights

Principle #8: Radical Self-Reliance

By 2004, Burning Man had been held in the Black Rock desert for 15 years. At that time, Regionals were becoming more popular and the Org wanted to help regional planners keep the ethos of Burning Man alive around the world, so they asked founder Larry Harvey to describe the principles he saw in his community. Near the top of the list was Radical Self-Reliance, which in Larry's view was to "discover, exercise, and rely on [one's] inner resources." What Larry found was that to Burn is to come to understand, and expand, what we're capable of.

Of course, an 8-day event on the alkaline-dust playa of Nevada's Black Rock desert with 100-degree days and 50-mph winds is going to push a person to their limits. But even 5 days in southern Colorado with the heat, and noise, and chaos, and too-little sleep and too-much stimulation can put a strain on a person.

And Radical Self-Reliance is not just about bringing enough water and food for 5 days in the woods. It's also bringing the creative engineering and adaptability necessary to create and live in an off-grid city with 1500 of your best friends, most of whom are dis-oriented most of the time.

It's what makes Burners resilient—finding a way to continue the party, when you haven't slept in three days and an unexpected wind gust shreds your tent, or rain soaks EVERYTHING. Burners don't give in. Partly because we have community, partly because we're a little crazy.

And partly because it gives us bragging rights. Knowing you can fix most anything with a little duct tape and bailing twine. Or in this case, ratchet straps and lag bolts.



How We Camped



Theme Camp: 71%



Open Camping: 29%



Apo had 73 Theme Camps this year, grouped into zones and neighborhoods by sound preference and maturity level, from chill to wild. We had 3 kids-centric camps, 6 Red Light district camps, and a wide variety of themes in between.

Percentages derived from Apogaea's after-event Census. Note: data not weighted to correct for self-selection bias.

Creating something larger than life

Principle #9: Communal Effort

Creating a temporary city with sanitation, mapped streets and neighborhoods, emergency services, communications, and more in a remote, forested valley with no power grid is hard work. Doing so without any paid staff is probably insanity.

But Burners know how to work hard. And the contribution of every attendee is what makes the event possible. Apogaea's nearly 500 event week volunteers logged more than 5,500 hours, managing everything from entry gate to info booth to Center Camp sound production and event-wide photographers. Not

to mention every Theme Camp setup crew, or the 3-day build-week and year-round planning and administration volunteer hours, which easily 10x that total.

It's a ridiculous amount of work to put on a Burn. And in a way, that's the point. Because in the cooperation and collaboration of building something together, we come to know one another better. We don't just value the event *because we built it*, we value one another, because we learned to work together. It's not much of an exaggeration to say that as Burners, we forge our community one lag bolt at a time.



Milestones in our History



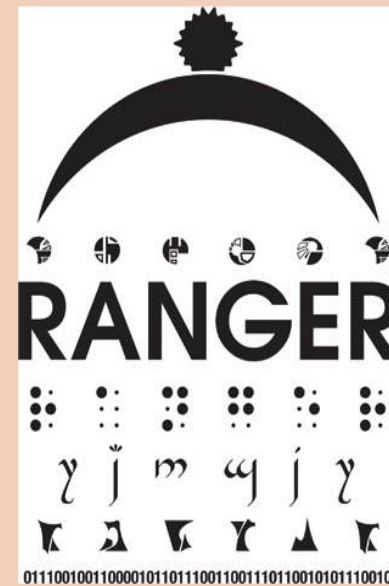
2001-2003 Geodesika

Pop. About 100

Organized by many of the original Apogaea founders

Location: Lake Wellington campground, CO

Fire and sound were limited by fire bans and noise restrictions in public camping area.



2004 Apogaea in Dreamtime

Pop. 350
Art grants - \$2,000

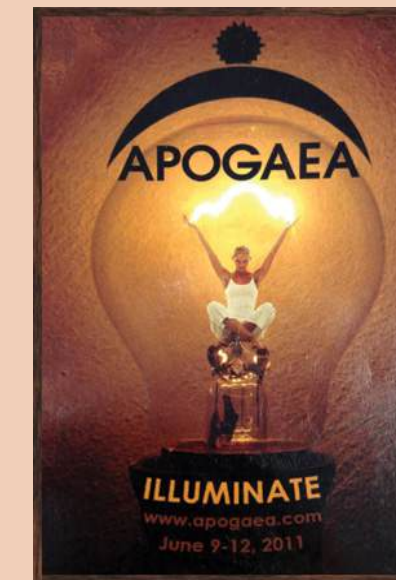
Location: outside Paonia, CO

Ticket Price: \$40

No effigy

Apogaea becomes an Official Regional Burn

Apogaea Rangers established



2011 Illuminate

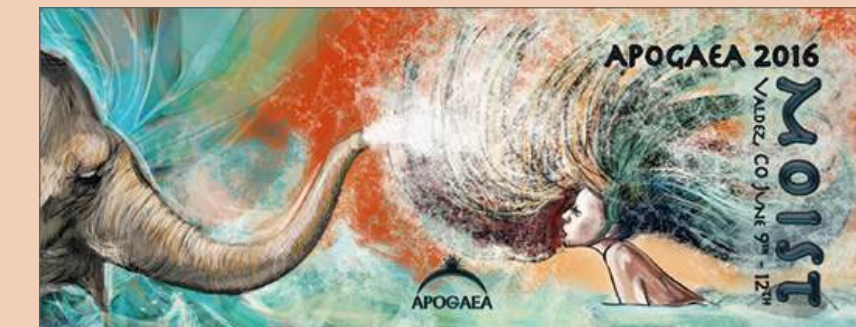
Pop. 1134
Art grants - \$19,500

Location moves to Bailey, Fhloston Peak

Ticket Price: \$80 presale, no gate sales

Effigy: Butterfly/Chrysalis
"Transformation"

First Temple: Temple of Moon



2016 Moist

Pop. 1750
Art grants - \$12,000

Location moves to new land in Valdez, CO

Ticket price: \$150

Effigy: None

Temple: Temple of Resonance

24 theme camps

Budget limits from canceled event in 2015

Getting into the Ring

Principle #10: Participation

There's an aphorism you'll often hear that claims *Burning Man is not a spectator sport*. The difference between watching someone paint and painting, between watching someone dance, and being the one out there on the dance floor, dancing, is Participation.

And in many ways, it's the essence of all the Burning Man Principles. The inclusion, self-expression, communal effort, self-reliance—they all work to get you into the Ring where you are no longer watching life, but experiencing it.

Because experience changes us. It broadens our horizons, it challenges what we think we know, it creates space for greater understanding—of ourselves, of others, of our world, of what is possible.

And Apogaea, like all Burns worldwide, is bursting with opportunities for people to participate. There are no (real) VIP lounges, no (prohibitive) velvet ropes. Whether it's art you can climb on, a stage you can perform from, a flame-throwing teeter totter you can jump on, or a neon Wormhole to cuddle in, you are invited to participate. To experience something new, or old, or crazy, or possibly dangerous.

If every offering is one person's self-expression, then you participating in that offering helps you understand them in a way you didn't before. And understanding others is how we make our world a better place.



"We believe that transformative change, whether in the individual or in society, can occur only through the medium of deeply personal participation. ...We make the world real through actions that open the heart."

-Burning Man Project

Consent is **SEXY!**

Honorary Principle #11: Consent

Consent wasn't one of the original principles laid out by the Org 20 years ago, but it is becoming increasingly adopted on Playa and at Burns around the world. As published in Apo's Survival Guide,

"Consent is respect for the autonomy, agency, safety and lived experience of every participant in our cities. Recognize and respect people's personal boundaries. People should be able to safely express themselves and enjoy the event, without having to worry about their personal safety."

For many Burners, Radical Self-Expression is an **empowering AND vulnerable** experience. If this is the first time you're wearing that hot pink leather halter in public, the frisson of vulnerability and exhilaration is strong. It's why we do it!

And maybe asking for consent every time you want to take a photo, or hug a stranger, or goggle at someone's beautiful body can feel off-putting, or not worth the effort. But consent is crucial when you're hoping to create a culture in which people feel free to radically express themselves.

Having a stranger ask for your consent before they take their photo is not just calming and safety-creating, it's sexy. Trust us. Getting to say Yes!, rather than Ew! is **HOT**.



That's all, Folks!

Hope to see you next year!

Apogaea 2025 important dates:

Theme: Disco Dystopia

Dates: June 4-8, 2025

Location: Valdez, CO (same location)

Info: www.Apogaea.com

Ticket dates & pricing:

3/14/25: Tier 1 Ticket Sale Starts at \$250

3/23/25: Ticket Art Contest Deadline

4/1/25: Tier 2 Ticket Sale Starts at \$275

5/12/25: OMG Ticket Sale Starts at \$300

