

FirePony Creative Society*

2020 Annual Report

This report includes information about Playa del Fuego 2020, and Constellation 2020 (both canceled), Virtual del Fuego, and ongoing efforts of the FirePony creative society in 2020.

**In February 2018, Playa del Fuego, Inc, a 501c3 registered in Maryland, filed for the trade name of FirePony Creative Society. This report is written to reflect information for the organization as of December 31, 2020.*

Table of Contents

About FirePony Creative Society (FPCS)	3
History of Playa del Fuego (PDF) and of FirePony Creative Arts Society (FPCS)	3
High Level review of 2020	4
Firepony Organizational Structure	6
Governance and Finance	7
Fiscal Overview	7
Current Earmarked Allocations:	8
Corporate Seal	9
Community Art and Civic Engagement (CACE)	9
CACE Grants	9
MidAtlantic Leadership Conference	10
Community Connections	10
Land	10
Communications	11
Technology	11
Conduct	12
Safety	12
Ranger Council	13
Playa del Fuego (PDF)	13
Playa Del Fuego Event Planning Structure	13
Playa del Fuego 2020 (PDF2020 - Canceled)	15

Subcommittee Rules Book	15
Virtual del Fuego 2020	17
VDF Overview and Summary	17
Data & Numbers	18
Some official counts	19
Survey numbers	19
Musing of the VDF Mayor	21
Participant Quotes:	23
Timeline	23
VDF Event Schedule	24
VDF Finances	24
Technology & Tools Used	25
Event Setup	26
Events	26
Maturity Pains	33
Policies and Procedures	34
Escalation Procedure	34
Recognized Challenges and Shortcomings	35
ART: Pony Burn Event	36
Constellation Burn	37
Constellation Event Planning Structure	37
Constellation 2020 (CB2020 - Canceled)	38
Appendix I: Profit and Loss Statement	39
OVERALL 2020 FPCS Profit and Loss:	39
Appendix II: Playa del Fuego Cancellation Message	41
Coronavirus COVID-19 Update #3	41
Appendix III: FPCS Online Code of Conduct & Policies For Virtual del Fuego 2020	43
Introduction	43
Incident Reporting	43
Prohibited Online Behaviors	43
VDF Media Policy	44
VDF Adult Content Policy	44
Repercussions	45
Fine Print	45
Agreements	45
Virtual Del Fuego Privacy Policy	46
What kind of identifiable information do you collect?	46

How is the information you collect shared?	46
How do you respond to legal requests for information?	46
How is my information stored?	47
How is my information secured?	47
What is your data retention policy?	48
How do I contact VDF if I have any privacy questions?	48
Appendix V: VDF Department Reports	49
Mayor	49
Operations - Tech	50
Operations - Design	52
Safety - Moderanger	55
Safety - Sanctuary	59
Appendix VI: VDF Design requests / suggestions	61
Appendix VII: VDF Pony Herd	62

About FirePony Creative Society (FPCS)

FirePony Creative Society is a 501c3 non-profit, participant-directed organization whose mission is to build an interactive, experiential, sustainable environment that encourages a culture of play, artistic creativity and freedom of expression. Our stated organizational vision is to *Attract, inspire, and nurture a diverse community to celebrate and encourage experiments in the creation of art, a culture of play, and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.*

Historically, the signature activity of this organization has been to hold multi-day camping events called Playa del Fuego (PDF). In 2017 we added a second multi-day camping event called Constellation. These interactive events promote artistic creativity and freedom of expression. FPCS provides the framework and the infrastructure to allow artists such as sculptors, painters, musicians, DJs, fire performers, dancers, and any other creatively-minded individuals to come together to practice their unique form of self-expression. In more recent years, FPCS has also supported more community events with our Civic and Community Arts grant program, and been the fiscal sponsor of events such as Burning Man Mid-Atlantic Leadership Conferences.

History of Playa del Fuego (PDF) and of FirePony Creative Arts Society (FPCS)

An event called Playa del Fuego began in 1998 when about 20 East Coast residents, many of whom had been to Burning Man in the Nevada desert, and who wanted to get together closer to home to celebrate the spirit of the Burning Man event, joined together on the beach of Assateague Island on Maryland's coast for a weekend. Over time, this event grew into a group

of over 1200 participants, with a large team of volunteers, many of whom worked year-round to make the event come to life. In 2001, the event was moved from Assateague Island to a location in Townsend Delaware. For over a decade, PDF was a twice-yearly event in Townsend Delaware – a spring event over Memorial Day weekend, and a Fall event over Columbus Day weekend.

In 2017, it became untenable to hold future PDF's in the existing site. Fall PDF was canceled and a new location search commenced. That fall, FPCS started a new event, Constellation, in Elkins, West Virginia. This has become a yearly event. In 2018, PDF was moved to a new location in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania for Spring 2018 PDF, and it became a once yearly event.

As the Playa del Fuego event grew, a governing structure came into place in the form of a 501c3 nonprofit incorporated in Maryland in 2003, named Playa del Fuego, Inc. This nonprofit is now the recognized legal entity that sponsors the Playa del Fuego event and Constellation event. These events are recognized as official Burning Man Regionals. The organization has grown to also support community art in the mid-Atlantic region. In February 2018, Playa del Fuego filed for the trade name of FirePony Creative Society, reflecting the growth in scope beyond hosting the Playa del Fuego event.

Both Playa del Fuego as an event and Constellation, are experiments in collaborative community, featuring art and music. Volunteers work together to build community, utilizing the Ten Principles of Burning Man as a guide. This is a sincere experiment in creating a gift economy. One fundamental tenet of the events is the establishment of a zone that does not involve any currency-based commerce aside from the initial ticket purchase, thus creating a gift-based economy wherein all participants can exhibit, demonstrate, and educate others about their particular form of creativity. There are no spectators at Playa del Fuego or Constellation; everyone collaborates in some way to create the event. It's a place for radical self-expression, acceptance, inclusivity, and respect.

In an effort to bring the burner ethos to our local communities, in 2019 FPCS formed a subcommittee for Community Art and Civic Engagement (CACE). Our longstanding community art grants moved under the CACE umbrella and reworked to be a community arts and civic engagement grant. Also under the CACE umbrella are trainings, workshops and other community programming. For example, in years past, FPCS was the fiscal sponsor of the MidAtlantic Leadership conference for leaders in the east coast burner community.

High Level review of 2020

2020 was an interesting year, to say the least. We were in the midst of planning Playa del Fuego when the pandemic hit. We had already sold out the event, had opened volunteer signups, What Where When¹ submissions were also open, a swag button design contest was underway; PDF planning was in full force.

¹ What Where When is the event guide where participants submit their events, theme camps and art. The guide is then formatted for printing. It is not unusual for PDF to have over 50 events for the 3 day burn.

Then, the pandemic loomed. On 3/11/2020 the board notified the community that there was a possibility of cancelation, and in the event of cancellation, all tickets would be refunded. On 3/16/2020, the board sent another notification, indicating that we are diligently assessing the situation and working with event coordinators on cancelation ramifications, particularly for art & artists. On 3/24/2020 the Board sadly but unanimously canceled Playa del Fuego 2020. That communication can be found here.

<https://mailchi.mp/playadelfuego/fpcs-coronavirus-covid-19-update-3>. The communication is also copied into [appendix II](#) of this document.

We gave current ticket holders the choice of a refund, a rollover to 2021, or to donate the ticket with no answer defaulting to refund. 288 ticket holders chose refund, 138 chose to roll over, 23 chose to donate. (Ticket holders could have up to 4 tickets).

The Board and Community didn't want to let PDF weekend go quietly into the night. With a ridiculously compressed timeline, the community spun up a virtual event named Virtual del Fuego (VDF). The afterburn report for VDF is included in a later section of this document. High level outcome is that it was a great success with 712 registered on the platform and peak participation on Saturday evening of 125 participants. We are very proud of the success of VDF and that it was recognized as an official Burning Man regional event.

Then came the long summer, and while initially hopeful that we could hold the Constellation Burn in October, it soon became apparent that it would not yet be safe to do so. On 07/07/2020 the notice was sent to cancel Constellation.

Around this time, the country was gripped with tension and unrest in the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of police in Minneapolis. In August the board released the following statement:

The FirePony Creative Society Board of Directors stands firmly Anti-Racist and in unity with the missions of Black Lives Matter and the Movement for Black Lives. We support the fight for justice for all people who are targets of inequity and systemic violence.

Over the past few months, the FirePony Board has had many conversations on how best to demonstrate this support. While we could have issued a proclamation weeks ago, we feel that a mere statement is not enough. We will do more.

FirePony has made mistakes and missteps in its handling of issues surrounding racism and its harmful impact on community members. On behalf of the organization, we on the current Board sincerely apologize to those who have been hurt or disenfranchised by FirePony's previous actions and inactions. While we can't undo what has been done, we pledge to work towards a better, more inclusive future.

To that end, the FirePony Board initiated a number of concrete actions as the first steps in our support of the Racial Justice Movement. These included the FirePony [Code of Conduct](#) being updated to define, clarify, and strengthen the language surrounding hate speech, community outreach around holding meetings, with anti-racism, burner diversity, and inclusion as initial themes, posting on local and national anti-racism resource [page](#) on our website, opening of community & civic engagement art grants for Fall 2020, and improvements to Board transparency & contact information, also available on the FirePony.org website.

In October we held a town hall web meeting, where the board gave an overview of the activities of FirePony, and took questions. The theme of the town hall was “Where We’ve Been, Where We Are and Where We Are Going.” A recording of this meeting can be found on our youtube page here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaJrliRgwJ4UgcaghZ14XAA/featured>

Finally, in the latter part of 2020, we spun up a Connections committee to nurture a feeling of community. This committee meets regularly and now sponsors a monthly Burner banter hour plus occasional Art Card exchanges, the first exchange happened in December. The committee also launched a paper “zine”, the first issues also printing in December.

Firepony Organizational Structure

The Board of Directors includes members who are elected by sitting members of the Board from a pool of nominees submitted by the FirePony community. Board members serve a 3 year term, and can serve at most 2 consecutive terms. The Board of Directors works to ensure that the organization fulfills not only its legal and financial responsibilities to maintain non-profit status within the United States, but that the organization meets all requirements to be a “Regional Burn” within the Burning Man network. FirePony has two Burning Man Regional Contacts on its Board of Directors: Bryan “Soapbox” Boru Straube (New Jersey) and Millie McMillain (Baltimore).

The Board responsibilities include engaging with landowners over event space rental. The Board oversees all organizational finances, decides on community art grants, defines short and long term strategic plans, maintains oversight of all official organizational communication, ensures the event fulfills the proper fire and safety regulations, and has the final say on participant ejections.

As of December 31, 2020, the Playa del Fuego Board of Directors included the following members:

- Ursula Sadiq – President
 - Second term ends June, 2023
- Caitlin O’Dwyer - Secretary
 - First term ends November 2021
- Miles Miner - Treasurer
 - First term ends December 2022
- Bryan Boru “Soapbox” Straube

- Second term ends June, 2023
 - New Jersey Burning Man Regional Contact
- Millie McMillan
 - Second term ends June, 2023
 - Baltimore Burning Man Regional Contact
- David “Karnak” Dugard
 - Second term ends June, 2023
- Christopher “M4” Venghaus
 - First term ends November 2021
- Diana “Smiles” Svendsen
 - First term ends December 2022
- Jordan “Epic” Michel
 - First term ends December 2022

The board met regularly through the year. Meeting minutes are posted on the Firepony.Org site under About>Board Meeting Minutes <https://firepony.org/about/board-meeting-minutes/>

The board activities are arranged into committees. Every Board member sits on at least 2 committees. Committees are also open to community members. Current 2020 committees are

- Governance and Finance
- Community Art and Civic Engagement (CACE)
 - Subcommittee Grants
 - Subcommittee Community Connections
 - Subcommittee MidAtlantic Leadership Conference
- Playa del Fuego Burn Event
 - Subcommittees Virtual del Fuego
 - Subcommittee Rules Book
- Constellation Burn Event
- Land
- Communications
- Technology
- Conduct
- Safety
- Ranger Council

Governance and Finance

Fiscal Overview

With no events, we had a quiet year of primarily just paying operating expenses. We had sold PDF tickets before canceling the event, and some people chose to roll over the ticket to the next PDF. So there were some funds coming into FPCS from this, which will support the next PDF event.

In 2018 we invested \$400,000 with a management firm Financial Services Advisory (FSA). More information about FSA can be found at their website <https://fsainvest.com/>. The rest of our funds are in Wells Fargo accounts or Paypal.

With almost no income but still incurring operating expenses, the net operating loss was \$6,953.48. Taking into account minor interest gained from the accounts, the net loss was \$ 6,939.54

Profit and loss for 2020 can be found in [Appendix I.](#)

List of funds as of December 31 ,2020

FSA Investment account	\$437,606.10	Invested \$400000; 11/2018
Wells Fargo Accounts	\$102,315.37	
Paypal	\$20,811.28	\$15,763 is rolled over PDF tickets; \$1865 is tickets due a refund but could not contact the owner.

Current Earmarked Allocations:

These are the list of set asides as of December 31, 2020

PDF Tickets	\$ 17628.00	Held In paypal
Land	\$402,757.89	
PDF Art	\$15,741.12	
CB Art	\$4,859.36	
CACE	\$27,969.48	
Admin	\$29,927.08	Will be drawn down to reflect admin charges.
Rainy Day	\$25,000.00	

Note, allocations are currently less than funds. In 2021 the board will allocate investment gains to funds and drawdown admin costs.

Corporate Seal

Section 6.02 Corporate Seal of the bylaws states:

The corporate seal shall be circular in form, shall have the name of the Corporation inscribed thereon and shall contain the words "Corporate Seal" and "Maryland"; and the year the Corporation was formed in the center, or shall be in such form as may be approved from time to time by the Board of Directors.

In the November board meeting, this corporation was adopted:



Community Art and Civic Engagement (CACE)

CACE is all about bringing the burner ethos out from the events and into our local communities and daily lives. To this end we have grants, underwrite leadership conferences, have year long outreach, and support topical seminars.

CACE Grants

In late 2020, we opened a round for CACE grants. This program supports and funds artists and organizations around the mid-Atlantic region in their efforts to create art and projects that are accessible to the public, civic in scope and invites action and participation. These grants will be awarded by March 15, 2021, for projects to be completed by August 31, 2021

MidAtlantic Leadership Conference

Through targeted Programming, CACE supports programs that promote knowledge sharing, leadership, inclusion, equity, civic participation and engaged learning. CACE promotes developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a difference. Example programming may include

We were planning on hosting the next MALC (the Mid-Atlantic Leadership Conference) in Philadelphia the fall of 2020. However, because of the pandemic, it was canceled.

There is discussion of hosting a virtual MALC in 2021

Community Connections

In November 2020, FirePony formed a committee to nurture community connections. From this effort, a monthly Burner Banter Hour was launched. This informal monthly zoom call now happens the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7 PM east coast time.

The connections committee also kicked off a Holiday Art Card exchange. Participants made and sent an art card to other participants. This art card exchange is planned as a recurring activity throughout the next year.

And finally, an honest to goodness paper “Zine” was created and sent via snail mail to those who requested it. This is also expected to be a recurring publication throughout the next year.

Land

For many years, FirePony has been setting aside funds for land purchase. The last contribution to the land fund was in 2017. Over the years it has grown to be about \$400,000.

In 2019, the board decided to engage an outside consultant to help decide what to do about Land and the land fund.

Through change in leadership and other pressing challenges, the land committee has not been active in 2020, beyond doing some initial research in commercial lending options. The Land task force is expected to be more active in 2021.

Communications

The Communications committee for FirePony covers our newsletter, website content, and social media posts. We have 3 websites: playadelfuego.org, constellationburn.org and firepony.org. Constellation Burn and Firepony are Wordpress sites. Playa Del Fuego is on Drupal.

We have 3 newsletters: Burning Pony express for PDF, Shooting Star for Constellation, and the Firepony newsletter. We use MailChimp as our newsletter platform.

On social media, we have on Instagram a mostly dormant @playadelfuego site with 175 followers. There is a Constellation Instagram account of @constellationburn with 229 followers, also mostly dormant since the last burn in 2019.

We have a number of pages and groups on Facebook. This includes Playa del Fuego group with 8.4k members, Constellation Burn group with 2.8k members, Virtual del Fuego group with 957 members, and a FirePony Creative Society page with 1.6k total page likes.

In October 2020, we launched a YouTube channel for FirePony Creative Society. At the end of 2020 it had one posting with 108 views and 12 subscribers. (Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaJrliRgwJ4UgcZ14XAA/featured>)

These communication efforts are supported by a number of community members and board members.

Technology

In 2020 we moved to Google Suite for nonprofits. This allowed for us to have better oversight and recoverability on documents associated with the organization. The previous system of relying on individual user ownership was judged to be a risk, so we made this change.

We use a number of tools in our technology stack. These include

- Zoom for meetings and for webinars.
- Slack for internal communications
- Trello for task management
- Google suite for a group calendar and document store
- We have a ticketing system originally developed by Ben Sarsgard called Black Rock tickets (about info: <http://tickets.playadelfuego.org/about/>).
- This ticketing system links to our PayPal account, which is how we receive funds.

For event support, we allow coordinators a large amount of leeway in selecting tools that they wish to use to support their efforts.

Our technology lead, board member m4, gave a well received talk this year to the Burning Man organization. This talk centered around technology use by regionals, in particular ticketing and the trade off between commercial systems and the privately developed Black Rock Ticket system that FPCS currently uses. In 2021 we expect to undertake a project to upgrade the Black Rock system.

Conduct

FPCS has a conduct committee to review conduct/consent violations within our community. FirePony Creative Society (FPCS) encourages an environment where participants can solve their conflicts themselves or with the help of the community, but we recognize that it may not always be possible. In those cases, you may file a formal incident report with the FPCS Conduct Committee.

Any community member can submit an incident in person to Rangers at an event or anytime via our online FPCS Incident Report Form. The FPCS website has a comprehensive outline of the policy and procedures at <https://firepony.org/conduct-incident-policies-and-process/>.

New this year was our virtual event, Virtual del Fuego (VDF). New online conduct policies were developed for VDF, as discussed in the VDF section of this document. Also under online conduct, we developed a Social Media policy for our board members and coordinators. This policy was rolled out and signed by all Board Members and PDF Coordinators. Constellation coordinators will be contacted to sign before the next event (hopefully in Fall 2021)

In this year of no burns, the conduct committee was fairly quiet. There was one case this year resulting in an investigation.

Safety

In late 2019, FPCS formed a Safety committee. In 2020 the committee charter was nailed down and membership was recruited.

The committee was chartered is : To establish policies, standards, and oversight of practices; established to ensure the safety of all participants and volunteers, to eliminate and reduce any and all potential safety incidents, as well as properties utilized for and at FPCS events

The safety committee *Areas of Concern* are as follows:

- Fire art & performance
- Safety of all participants
- Stability of structures
- Missing persons
- Civil and criminal disputes

- City pathing & Evacuation routes
- Evacuation procedures
- Sanitation
- Trespassers
- Vehicle management & Transportation

Ranger Council

The Ranger council is envisioned as the governing body for Rangers at the multiple events produced by the FPCS. The Council has three primary mandates which may be summarized as: Recognize – issues and concerns facing the Firepony and the BMOrg Ranger community at-large.

Advise – Collaborate with the Board and Ranger leadership to design comprehensive solutions by conducting research and outreach to distill best practices.

Standardize – Ranger policies, procedures, and training across Firepony burns to ensure that Rangers are fully equipped and supported at each event to perform their roles of keeping the Firepony burn community safe and functional.

The council currently consists of four members and a board liaison, all senior rangers with many burns of experience.

The current membership is as follows:

Ranger Wax, Ranger Inkwel, Ranger Gandhi, Ranger Sauerkraut, and *Board Member and Ranger Council Liaison*, Ranger Epic.

In 2020 the council met 4 times. During these meetings, the Council set goals of establishing a presence on the FirePony website, began work on a roles and responsibilities document, considered and began drafting a proposal for creating pink light camps and a plan for outreach and recruiting for additional Council members, Ranger leadership, and volunteers.

Playa del Fuego (PDF)

Playa Del Fuego Event Planning Structure

The Planning Committee (PC) for the Playa del Fuego event includes department coordinators, co-coordinators, and any community participants who choose to participate in the monthly Planning Committee (PC) phone calls. The PC proposes and approves department budgets,

and Coordinators work with one another to oversee the details of the event planning for the Regional event. The following list reflects the list of departments as of

December 31, 2020:

- Art
 - o Art Grants
 - o Pony Wrangler
 - o Burning Arts
- City Planning
- DPW (Department of Public Works)
- Drum Conclave
- Exodus
- Fire Conclave
- Fire Perimeter
- Fire Safety Team
- First Aid
- Gate
- Greeters
- Lamplighters
- LNT (Leave no Trace)
- Parking
- Planning Committee
- Purchasing
- Rangers
- Sanctuary
- Sound
- Ticketing Sales
- Volunteer/Participation Station
- WWW (What Where When Guide)



Playa del Fuego 2020 (PDF2020 - Canceled)

PDF2020 was to be held over memorial day May 24-28 in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania. PDF2020 was planned for about 850 tickets. Round 1 had 500 tickets available at \$65 each. Round 2 had 250 tickets available at \$80 each. Hardship tickets at 25% or 50% discount were also available by application. Prior to cancellation all available 750 tickets were sold. Reserve Tickets for Coordinators, qualifying Volunteers, and Art Grant Recipients would have been made available at \$65 at a later date.

As mentioned in the 2020 High Level review section above, on 3/24/2020 the Board unanimously canceled Playa del Fuego 2020. That communication can be found here <https://mailchi.mp/playadelfuego/fpcs-coronavirus-covid-19-update-3> (and also copied into [Appendix II](#))

We gave current ticket holders the choice of a refund, a rollover to 2021, or to donate the ticket with no answer defaulting to refund. 288 ticket holders chose refund, 138 chose to roll over, 23 chose to donate. (Ticket holders could have up to 4 tickets).

The Planning committee continued to meet periodically throughout the rest of the year to discuss process improvements and plans for 2021.

Subcommittee Rules Book

To preserve operational sustainability as volunteers rotate in and out of leadership positions, the PDF Planning Committee is drafting a rulebook for the committee's overall operation. Current

subsections include meeting procedures, proposal and voting processes, membership eligibility and responsibilities, and the roles of department coordinators, co-coordinators and how those coordinators could be removed, if necessary.

It is our hope that when the document is finalized and has been adopted, it will strengthen our culture and allow us to focus on the work of planning PDF, knowing that the entire team is "on the same page" about what to expect from each other.



Virtual del Fuego 2020

Run as a subcommittee from PDF, Virtual del Fuego (VDF) was a wholly separate virtual event that was held over memorial weekend.

Playa del Fuego (PDF) is a long running Burning Man regional, typically held every Memorial Day weekend, put on by FirePony Creative Society. On March 23, 2020, the Firepony Board of Directors voted to cancel Playa del Fuego 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was just under 9 weeks before Memorial Day.

In preparation for this decision, there was a call with the Art Grant Coordinator (Meta) and 2 board members (Ursula, a former art grant coordinator and current President of FirePony, and Smiles, a former volunteer coordinator and recent addition to the board) around communicating with art grant recipients about PDF cancelation². In this call, the idea was floated that if PDF could not happen in person, an online digital event should be attempted.

VDF Overview and Summary

By and large, we consider VDF to have been a highly successful endeavour. It was ridiculously ambitious to plan and build a virtual burn in 9 weeks from concept to gate opening. And we feel we pulled it off wonderfully. In the end we had over 700 people register, and 58 different rooms created. This was entirely due to the dedicated volunteer efforts of the community.

² Art grant recipients had been selected, but no contracts had been issued, and no funds had been disbursed. Artists had been asked about 10 days prior to hold off on purchasing, as the Covid situation was still developing. The plan was created to offer these 2020 grantees a dedicated art grant round in 2021 to resubmit substantially the same project if they wished to bring it to PDF 2021.

We worked hard to be sure we could capture both the **participation** and **immediacy** aspects of a burn. To do so we created a site with many meeting rooms - some dedicated to theme camps, some dedicated to infrastructure, some created on-the-fly by participants who wished to host an ad-hoc event. While these rooms by default were Jitsi based, participants could spin up rooms in different platforms (zoom, twitch, facebook live, bbs.playa.tel. etc.) if they desired.

The 10 Principles were implemented in a new way, with the Jitsi rooms serving communal and interactive spaces, as opposed to “broadcast” streams such as Twitch, YouTube, or FaceBook Live, which create a performer / spectator relationship. We balanced our **civic responsibility** to keep minors from seeing **self-expressed** adult content with the use of the 18+ rooms. We **decommodified** and used **communal effort** by building our own website on its own server with open source programming so we were not beholden to anyone else’s Terms of Service. Everyone was welcome to **participate** in VDF, and the new platform was able to include those that are differently-abled and may not be able to take the physical rigors of PdF or Burning Man. **Self Reliance** changed from eating and shelter to mastering tech. People participated, and the inclusion of **Immediacy** Rooms gave the event spontaneity, which gave the event a true burn feel. Half way through the event, a lead developer Rechner added an “I’m Feeling Lucky” button which took you to a random room, and people seemed to love that feature. The event grew in popularity as the weekend went on, as more and more people saw what it was all about. And when it was over, we took down the website and **Left No Trace**.

There were certainly times where we questioned ourselves, and if we could pull this off. Would we be able to create a site? What would it look like? Would anyone even want to come? Could we create that minimum viable product and get it deployed before our start time? There were times we had to say: even if no one comes, even if it barely works, it is worth the exercise. We sometimes had to remind ourselves that we can do this, as long as we keep realistic expectations.

Post event surveys tracked 79+% satisfaction, with most people indicating they spent 4-8 or 8-16 hours on the site.

On Sunday evening, a number of people remarked how they didn’t want this experiment in virtual burning to end. “Hey, can’t we keep a VDF room open 24/7?” People remarked how it really felt like a burn, and indeed we pushed closing back to 3AM, and some people continued “virtual burning” on their own platforms until dawn.

Data & Numbers

NOTE: All times given in this document are Eastern Standard Time, unless otherwise indicated.

Event date Friday May 22, 6pm - Sunday May 25th Midnight

Cost: Free

- Opening was delayed 1 hour due to technical issues
- Closing was delayed 3 hours because enough participants did not want it to end.

Some official counts

- 712 registered on the platform, 97 of those set an avatar
- 58 rooms created
- Pre-opening Theme camps: 9
- Pre-opening scheduled events: 50
- Peak participation was Sunday at 19:00 with 125 active on the platform
- Facebook Group members (as of 5/26, post event) : 941
- 9 weeks from idea to gates open.
- By 2:30AM Saturday we moved 26TB of traffic.

Survey numbers

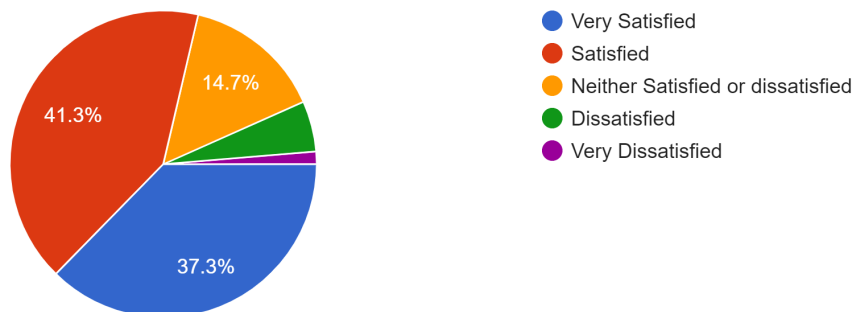
55 respondents

Satisfaction

- 78.6% Satisfied or Very Satisfied. 6.6% Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied.

Please let us know how you feel about your 2020 VDF experience

75 responses



- A general trend can be seen that more time spent at the event is associated with more satisfaction.

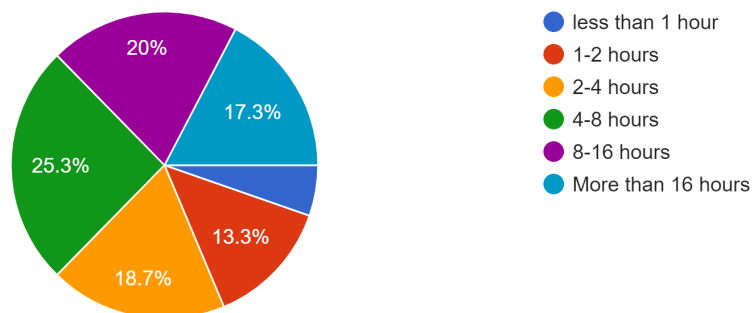
Locations people attended from included PA VA FL NY MD DE DC GA NJ WA CA CO OR, Alberta Canada, and Nijmegen the Netherlands. And Palau, site of the fabulous Monster Bar.



- It was most popular to spend 4-8 hours followed by 8-16 hours on the site. Almost everyone who checked it out, stayed a while.

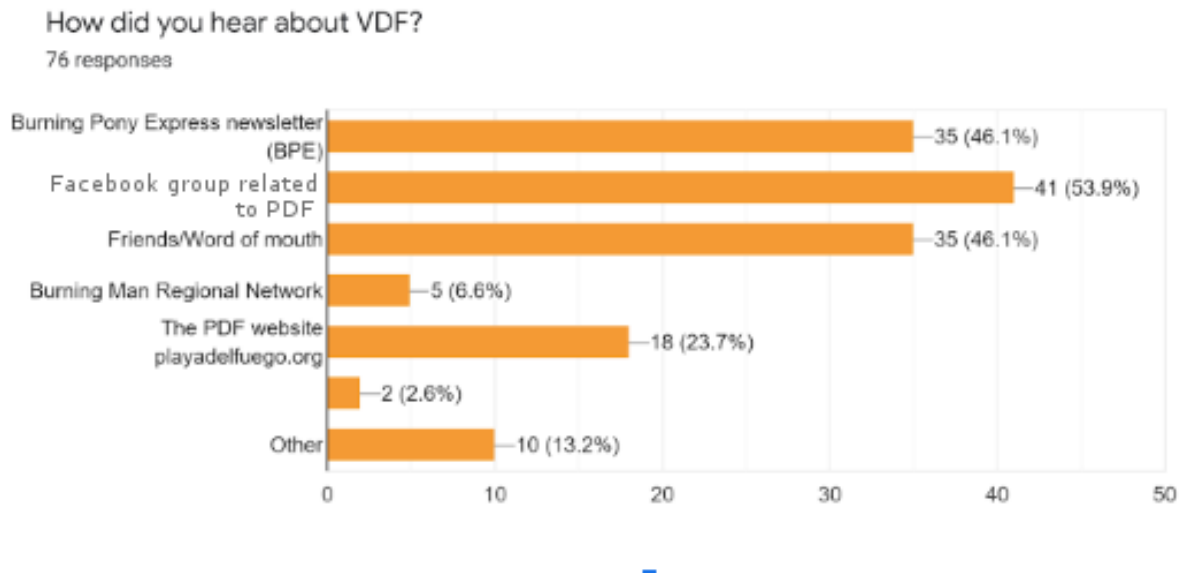
Approximately how much time in total did you spend participating at VDF?

75 responses



About 75% of the attendees had been to a PDF before, and about 75% had been to a regional OTHER than PDF. And interestingly, 56% had been to Black Rock City.

By and large, people found out about VDF through Facebook, our Newsletter, or word of mouth.



Musing of the VDF Mayor

PDF has a tradition of having a Board of Directors member as Mayor. No one really knows what the Mayor does, but they are clearly important. VDF opted to have a Mayor as Diana “Smiles”, the BOD member who spearheaded this event and put her sweat and tears into making it happen. Post event musing from our esteemed Madame Mayor, copied from her Facebook post of 5/25

VDF is in the books and was a great success! I'd like to say THANK YOU to this incredible community for showing up, participating, volunteering, making ponies and events, and for understanding when things crashed! We had an unbelievable 709 burners register!!!




Second, I'd like to thank everyone who made this happen! There were dark times in the beginning when people told us we were crazy or were (literally) angry we were doing this project. Everyone who was involved was involved because they wanted to be, and my love, respect, and gratitude for this team knows no bounds!


THANK YOU Scott and Ursula for thinking up this crazy idea with me and keeping the energy going when the dark times were upon us (especially Scott!). Scott, your vision, guidance, and energy was crucial to making VDF happen!

THANK YOU to the web development team!!!! Rechner, m4, Alessandro, Keith, Kailah, Caitlin, and Scott!!! You guys are the real rock stars here! 🐾 ❤️ 🐾


THANK YOU to [SerenityEntity](#)! Serenity was one of the very first people to enthusiastically jump on the project and she handled all things Sanctuary beautifully! She was crucial to those early conversations in making this happen!

THANK YOU [Jen Finkle](#) and Kailah (again). Both were involved very early in the project that stayed through to the end! Jen handled theme camp applications and helped me with communications, and Kailah handled the what where when, images and logos, and was instrumental in pro-active problem solving all weekend long during the event itself. Both Jen and Kailah were there for me those times when I needed to be talked off the ledge! Thank you both! Much love!!! 

THANK YOU to Tranquility of the Black Rock Rangers!!! Tranquility came into the project very early and engaged us in great conversations (along with Ranger Painter) on how to translate and protect Ranger culture while still serving this crazy experiment in creating communal community. Thank you Tranquility for bringing us Po-Boy, who jumped in later in the process, but picked it all up very quickly and immediately understood the nuances involved. Po-Boy partnered with Tranquility to bring us all the amazing Black Rock Rangers to our event, who ranged and participated and added so much to VDF! Meeting and working with the Black Rock Rangers was such a delightful surprise! Having an independent and self-sufficient Ranger team gave the rest of us the ability to focus on other parts of the project! Your contributions were invaluable! Thank you Thank you Thank you!!!


THANK YOU to the FirePony board for supporting the whole project, particularly financially, which let this event be free to everyone, and for letting your most junior member (me) go crazy with this thing. My respect and love for m4 is enormous! I'm getting verklempt just writing about it 

THANK YOU to anyone and everyone who held conversations with me over these past few weeks surrounding how to translate the 10 Principles onto a virtual platform, preserving Ranger culture, what consent looks like online, problem solving the "minors and adult content" challenges, the Code of Conduct, and so much more!

THANK YOU to the many people who jumped in and out of this project as our Covid life has been evolving and as their spoons allowed. Thank you to each of you for contributing what you could and there are ZERO hard feelings if you had to drop off! 

THANK YOU to the families, partners, and roommates of all the core team members! You are the unsung heroes who supported us through the long hours of development! Much gratitude!

I apologize if I forgot to name someone in this post. Please be assured that it's not that you're not appreciated, but more that I'm still working on my first cup of coffee and I'm trying not to sit in front of the screens today (currently on phone) so I don't have my notes in front of me and this entire post is all off the top of my head. You ARE appreciated!

And most of all THANK YOU beloved community, for allowing me to serve, learn, and grow.
THANK YOU 

Participant Quotes:

We're sharing some quotes from the community participants here, as we feel that it captures the mood and spirit of the event.

"Best Virtual Burn ever " - Shari Berie during burn night.

"Wise person once said: The burn you had was the burn you needed. That was probably never more true than this one." - Mike Ruparena, Facebook commentary

"This was my first experience participating with anything burner related, and it was only for a short bit. But I had such an amazing time hanging out with folks in monsta's bar that I'm definitely planning on attending the next in-person PDF" - Facebook commentary

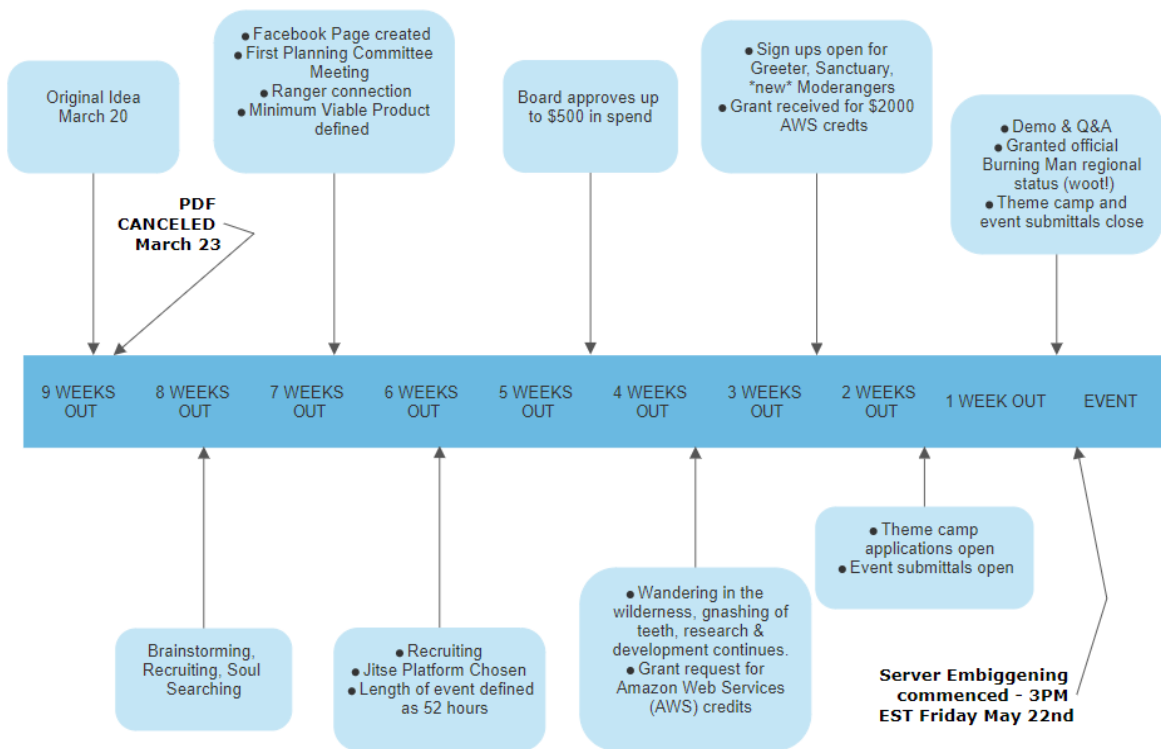
"I so am grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this, and I cannot wait to do it again. The memory of VDF will forever be a part of me, and I thank you all for giving me a bit of purpose and direction in what was a cloudy and gray moment of my life." - Alessandro Federici. On Facebook

"This was so good for me, made me feel connected to our beautiful creative community and made me feel hopeful! I needed that." --flightless, after event survey

Timeline

The timeline is spelled out below, but some critical decisions to highlight were

- Discussion/Definition of Minimum Viable Product. The team identified early on the "must haves" for this event to be a success. This helped keep the project focused on what needed to be done and away from scope creep.
- Selection of Jitsi as a Platform. Settling relatively early on a platform allowed the team to focus on making that platform work
- Community members hearing the call for volunteers and stepping up to "own" various parts of the production - from technical areas like login development, community outreach around theme camp coordinations, interface design, event outreach, volunteer recruiting. One of these that deserves highlighting was establishing a connection to a seasoned ranger who jumped in and ran with building out the "Moderanger" presence.



VDF Event Schedule

Gate opening (planned) - 6PM Friday May 22nd

Gate opening (actual) - 7PM Friday May 22rd

Pony Burn (take 1) - O'dark:30 Saturday, May 23th

Pony Burn (take 2) - O'dark:30 Sunday, May 24th

Event end (planned) - Midnight Sunday May 24

Event end - server shutoff (actual) - 3:12AM Monday May 25

<< reports of afterparties going to dawn >>

VDF Finances

The cost for VDF was the cost for Amazon Web Services (AWS) for server time. We had a budget set by the board of \$500 for this.

In parallel, a grant request was submitted via TechSoup.Org, which is a clearinghouse for technology grants to nonprofits. The cost to apply for the AWS grant was \$175. We were approved and received \$2000 in AWS credits.

The actual AWS charges incurred by the VDF event was \$693.79, broken down as follows:

- data transfer: \$121.40
- Prior staging instance: \$163.28
- Weekend server 3 days: \$310.94
- Elastic storage: \$5.25
- IP Address: \$2.91
- Simple Storage: \$0.01

Rationing the \$175 application fee with the drawdown from the \$2000 credit, this means the true cost to FPCS for VDF was **\$52.83**. (We will use the remaining credits in support of our ticketing system and web sites. FPCS AWS cost averaged about \$94/month in 2019.)

In addition, **\$70.50** was spent in volunteer appreciation buttons and pins swag.

Total cost for VDF: **\$123.33**

Technology & Tools Used

We used a combination of online tools in the planning and coordination of this event.

- We rely heavily on **Google Drive** for documentation.
- We actively use **Slack** for more real time coordination and chatter.
- **Email** was used for some communication.
- Planning Meetings were held primarily in **Zoom**, although also in **Jitsi** upon occasion.

We used **MailChimp** to communicate to the community through our newsletter “The Burning Pony Express”. We also posted info on our **Facebook** pages/groups, and posted info on our **PlayaDelFuego.Org website**.

On the tech side, the VDF site was primarily based around **Jitsi**, an open source video conferencing system. This was combined with **Django** and a custom authentication backend called **MatchBox** to create a service we called “pyromania” that managed users and rooms. The project was developed and coordinated via **Github** and hosted on **Amazon Web Services**.

For greeters and sanctuary volunteers we used **SignUp Genius**. The Moderangers handled sign ups via **email**.

Event submittals were through a **Google form**, as were the afterburn department report collections and the afterburn survey. Theme camp submissions were via **Jot Forms**.

You may note that we use different tools for the same function at times. PDF has long had a tradition of letting the leads choose what works best for their department. We recognize that there are pluses and minuses to this approach. It works for us, your mileage may vary.

Event Setup

The event had 4 types of rooms

- Infrastructure rooms
- Open Spaces
- Theme Camps
- Immediacy rooms

Infrastructure rooms were those staffed by VDF department volunteers. These were Greeters, Sanctuary and the Moderangers rooms. Additionally there were 2 “stages” for scheduled events such as the BOD meet & greet, Jammy Jam Jam session or the Pony Burn(s). These were called “Main Stage” and “BackStage”, where BackStage was for 18+ events.

Open Spaces were envisioned as “chat rooms”. These were Front field chat & Back field (for 18+) chat. As it turned out, these spaces were generally empty.

Theme camp rooms were rooms hosted by theme camps. These turned out to be the most popular spaces. We had 9 registered theme camps. (*Pyramid People, Fuck a Duck, Upper Dutch Blumpkin, The Third Floor Society Presents: The Too Late Show With Dr. Beelzebub Crow, Iguana Chill and Jam Camp, Furry Camp, Camp Jellyfish, Camp Tasty, and Videogasm*). Some camps had 2 rooms if they had both all ages and 18+ content.

Fuck a Duck was the most popular theme camp at any point, maxing at 25 participants.

Some honorable mentions:

Pyramid People and Camp Tasty 4 All: 20

Camp Tasty Over 18: 17

Upper-dutch-blumpkin: 16

99bottles: 15

Greeters-room: 14

Fur-xxx: 13

Events

We had 50 (!!) events on the schedule when the gate opened. Additionally, we had the capability to create on the fly pop-up “Immediacy” rooms.

The most attended events were: Fuck a Ducks’ triva hour(s) and Upper Dutch Blumpkins Shakespeare reading.

The pre-opening submitted events were as follows:

Ongoing Events				
Ongoing Event	"How Are You... REALLY?"	Camp Tasty	<p>An interactive sculpture installed at Camp Tasty, with regular photo updates (&/or live feed) to show its current state. Hanging below a skylight in Columbia Heights, this roiling mass of probing sincerity, inadvertent frankness, and ironic tentacles will change as the daylight hits it, when it's lit up at night, and as the sculpture itself evolves over the weekend.</p> <p>Bring a Sharpie! OK, text/comment with your contributions. Your bespoke graffiti will be hand-lettered onto the sculpture. Your other additions and interactions will also be performed upon the sculpture to the extent that we can do so using materials in our quarantine bunker.</p> <p>Unlike the traditional Temple structures, this sculpture is not burnable. It contains mixed media and is intended to be saved as a relic of our event, ideally even to be displayed at a future Actual Gathering of some kind! But if you have specific messages that you would prefer to be transitory, Flightless can add them via small paper flags and will burn them at the end of VdF.</p>	Art
FRIDAY EVENTS				
6:00-7:00 PM	Balls Happy Hour	Balls camp / Backstage	Join us in viewing our balls and partaking in some drinks and fun. Formal Post-apocalyptic face paint is encouraged.	Food/Drink
6:30-7:30 PM	Mocktail Hour	Camp Tasty	BYO non-alcoholic drink ideas and ingredients. A few yummy mocktails will be demonstrated.	Food/Drink
7:00-8:00 PM	Another Wasted Hour	Fuck a Duck	Join us for comedy and trivia. You can win made up internet points which mean absolutely nothing! You can win style points which mean even less!	

8:00-9:00 PM	Eye of Argon Reading challenge	Upper Dutch Blumpkin	<p>Come to Upper Dutch Blumpkin for the Eye of Aragon Party Game</p> <p>https://ansible.uk/misc/eyeargon.html</p> <p>how long can you read out loud without bursting into laughter??</p> <p>we might also try My Immortal</p> <p>https://myimmortalrehost.webs.com/chapters122.htm</p> <p>OR Irene Iddesleigh</p> <p>https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34181/34181-h/34181-h.htm</p>	Art
8:00-8:30 PM	Goose Chase Scavenger Hunt	Pyramid People	<p>Go on a wild Goose Chase with me!</p> <p>Use the free app to find scavenger hunt items in your yard or neighborhood and take pics of them in real time. I will teach you how in the kickoff meeting. Let's go play!</p>	Sport
8:30 -9:30 PM	Jigsaw Puzzles are Cool	Fuck a Duck	<p>Keith bought me a 24000 piece jigsaw puzzle and it's time to bust that baby out. I heard jigsaw puzzles are the cool thing to do in quarantine. You can play along at home with your own puzzle or just point at your screen and yell "It goes THERE."</p>	Crafts
11:59 - 1 AM Saturday	ART AT MIDNIGHT	Camp Tasty	<p>A link to a communal online canvas will be provided where all participants can simultaneously create digital art on the same canvas at the same time.</p>	Art
SATURDAY EVENTS				
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Stitch and/or Bitch	Camp Tasty	<p>Bring your own sewing, knitting, unexpressed grievances, TMI, or other projects. And your own coffee (tea, kombucha, hand-sanitizer martinis...). We will gather to gripe, vent, overshare, and/or show off what we've been crafting.</p>	Other
12:00 - 2:00 PM	PLAYA SHAKESPEARE	Upper Dutch Blumpkin	<p>Join us for a reading of 12th night - just listen or volunteer for a part!!! - http://shakespeare.mit.edu/twelfth_night/full.html</p>	Art

12:00 - 1:00 PM	Easy Bake Lovin'	Fuck a Duck	Bake along with me as I make...something. Probably chocolate chip cookies. Watch as my cat tries to get me to drop food on the floor. Maybe we can invent smell-o-vision together.	Food/Drink
1:00 - 2:00 PM	Eric Likes String	Camp Tasty	Eric will demonstrate knots and ways to play with string. All ages.	Educational
1:00 - 3:00 PM	Craft Time with Daisy Looney	Pyramid People	It's been a busy week, and I have not even begun to build my pony! I am going to start at 1:00 on Saturday, and would love for you to join me - be it crafting your own pony, or any other craft you want to work on. Other Pyramid People are planning to attend... drop in and join us even if just to say hello!	Crafts
1:00 - 2:00 PM	The Mofessional Sing-a-long-din g-dong	Pyramid People	Come sit around the Pyramid People campfire and hear the musical stylings of The Mofessional. Hear some of PDFs greatest hits such as "Jason's Fuckbench", "Fifty on a Fixie", and "The Connection Song."	Music
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Freeform Music with Friends	Jammy Jam / Main stage	An improvisational set from the 4our Flight Crew	Music
3:00 - 4:00 PM	Board Meet and Greet	Mainstage	Do you have a question for the board or maybe just want to see their faces? Come join us at the BOD Meet and Greet. BYO refreshments and questions.	
3:00 - 3:30 PM	Hug Nation - Group Hug & Gratitude	Pink Heart	Halcyon will lead a Gratitude Circle & Digital Group Hug. "It doesn't matter where you feet are at, it matters where your HEART is at.	Spiritual
3:00 - 4:00 PM	Jumping Frog Contest	Pyramid People	This isn't Calaveras County, but we're going to have a Jumping Frog Contest! Come learn to make an origami frog, then race him/her against other frogs to see which frog reigns supreme! Ribbit! (Please bring paper, scissors, and a ruler or yardstick!)	Sport
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Origami Pony Build	Iguana Chill and Jam	IGUANA MAKE ORIGAMI? All ages --- learn simple origami. We'll try our best to make origami ponies so we can all	Crafts

			burn them virtually at the Community Pony Burn. **BRING: a square piece of paper (e.g., 8 1/2 x 8 1/2)	
4:21 - 5:21 PM	4:21 Potlook	Camp Tasty	Camp Tasty can't host our traditional 4:21 Potluck... well, not exactly... but join our pot-LOOK! "Bring"/make/eat your own treats, and hang out with us in the Camp Tasty room while we all snack separately. Then -- if you give Cynthia your recipe(s), she will include them in a beautiful recipe zine to be sent out after the event!	Food/Drink
4:44 - 5:55 PM	Person is Asleep (Hypnosis & Astral Journey)		✨ Group Hypnosis Session - Wizard Devin Person will guide us into our astral bodies, leading into a sonic journey for the mind ✨ (Headphones and somewhere to lay down is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)	Spiritual
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Freeform Music with Friends	Jammy Jam /Main Stage	An improvisational set from the 4our Flight Crew	Music
5:00 - 5:30 PM	Doing Yoga Poorly	Fuck a Duck	I have been doing yoga for just about three weeks now. Come watch me do it poorly and play along at home. I'll stream an actual grown up doing yoga and then try my best not to break my nose as I fall over.	
6:00 - 9:00 PM	Iguana Jam	Iguana Chill and Jam	IGUANA JAM? Bring your rattles, bring your strings, bring your voice and let the wild rumpus start! Come jam with the Iguanas. Or just chill with us and listen.	Music
6:00 - 7:00 PM	Community Dinner	Main Stage	Community Dinner and Conversation. Open to everyone, kid-friendly, and casual. Make a yummy dinner and share a virtual communal table with friends.	Food/Drink
6:00 - 7:00 PM	Kitties or GTFO		Show us kitties and drink with us. Well-behaved dogs and furies welcome as well	Food/Drink
7:00- 8:00 PM	Another Wasted Hour	Fuck a Duck	Join us for comedy and trivia. You can win made up internet points which mean absolutely nothing! You can win style points which mean even less!	

8:00 - 9:00 PM	Pre-burn Bass and love set for the playaponies	Backstage	Bring the booty for dancing	
8:00 - 9:00 PM	The Somnia Experiments	WitchTech Rituals / Mainstage	Art and circus performance in an indoor art installation, concepts centered around biology, space, science about the future of mankind.	Art
8:00 PM - 1:00 AM Sunday	Prince Bowie Playlist	Nothing But Love	A Burn Night dance/chill playlist featuring the music of the late great David Bowie and Prince	Music
8:00 - 10:00 PM	The Too Late Show	The Third Floor Society Presents: The Too Late Show with Dr. Beelzebub Crow	We run a "talk show" that tries to get artists and burners talking about their experiences in a staged and visibly "false" environment in an attempt to juxtapose the immediacy of a burn with each person's interpretive schema (informed as it is usually by media tropes inculcated through media like talk shows). Think like 50% Eric Andre, 25% Conan, 25% Hee-Haw	Other
10:51 - 11:57 PM	Witness: Eastern European Dance Party	Camp Tasty	Come enjoy music primarily by Eastern European artists while watching members of the EFAC crew commit burning art.	Music
11:00 - 11:59 PM	Iguana Jam	Iguana Chill and Jam	IGUANA JAM? Bring your rattles, bring your strings, bring your voice and let the wild rumpus start! Come jam with the Iguanas. Or just chill with us and listen.	Music
11:00 PM - midnight	Capital Dank With DJ mTp!	Backstage	Capital Dank With DJ mTp!	
11:30 PM - 2:30 AM Sunday	snarky "bartending"	Monsta Bar	are you down to a bottle of peach schapps and some malort? or maybe you have a full liquor cabinet. either way, come by and i'll tell you how to make what's in your cabinet delicious, in exchange for a joke or story or something else i make up. also i'm in Palau, and it's tomorrow here so...that's cool. guest bartenders may also appear. snark abounds.	Food/Drink
11:59 PM- 1:00 AM Sunday	ART AT MIDNIGHT	Camp Tasty	A link to a communal online canvas will be provided where all participants can	Art

			simultaneously create digital art on the same canvas at the same time.	
SUNDAY EVENTS				
12:00-1:00 AM	Mystery Music Artist	Main Stage	Mystery Music Artist	
1:00 - 2:00 AM	Camp Tasty's Kitty Kat Club Peek-A-Boo Revue		Sit down and relax, enjoy a special event just for you, a Peek-A-Boo Revue!	Other
3:00 - 4:00 AM	Playa Sing Along	Main Stage	Live acoustic easy going tunes, Hudson and Mattie	
9:00 - 9:30 AM	Message in A Bottle	Camp Stay Gold	Write a message. We will catalogue it and keep it secure until next years PDF. In 2021 we will open it back up, post it, burn it!	Spiritual
11:00 - Noon	Uke Lessons	Iguana Chill and Jam	IGUANA LEARN TO PLAY THE UKE? Do you have a uke that you've always wanted to learn how to play?! Bring your ukulele for a live virtual lesson.	Music
1:00 - 2:00 PM	Pet Meet and Greet	Camp Tasty	Bring your furry, scaly, featherd, or other critter companions to meet us!	Other
1:00 - 2:00 PM	SALT PLAY-DOUGH LESSON	Iguana Chill and Jam	IGUANA LEARN TO MAKE SALT PLAY-DOUGH? All ages, EQUIPMENT TO BRING: mixing bowl, mixing spoon, surface to roll dough. INGREDIENTS TO BRING: ½ cup salt, ½ cup four, ¼ cup water (plus more water to add), food coloring (optional)	Crafts
1:00 - 4:00 PM	Ride Around Reno Mobile Art Tour		Welcome to Reno, and the Biggest Little Art Tour! Join us as we "tulle" around Reno in costume on our motorized trikes to give our fam back east a little glimpse of the amazing art that Reno hosts/boasts. You'll see all of the major Burning Man art installations as well as many of those fabulous murals around town. We will act as your dosents for the afternoon, giving some background and tidbits on the pieces we experience.	Art

			The event is scheduled for a 3 hour slot, but we have no idea how long the tour will actually be, so join in early!	
2:00 - 3:00 PM	Craft and Creativity (Unlike this event name)	Damnation Alley (But also something else I forgot)	It's my Birthday, I wanna craft. Let's make shit and day drink! Arts, crafts, skills, and trades. 18+ because clothing optional (Again.. Birthday. The only reason outfit is a birthday suit)	Crafts
3:00 - 4:00 PM	Sharing the Outdoors	Camp Tasty	We will go for a walk "together" and share our respective gardens, yards, or other outdoor things.	Other
4:00 - 5:30 PM	Death Cafe	Camp Tasty	Discuss end of life issues in a positive, compassionate conversation, with Death Doula and Crowned Priestess of Yemaya, Jhada.	Educational
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Stuffed Animal Tea Party	Pyramid People	Calling all plushies! Bring your favorite human along to Pyramid People virtual camp Sunday at 4:00 and join us for a Stuffed Animal Tea Party. BYO tea-party snacks to nom and sip while our plushies introduce themselves to each other.	Food/Drink
7:00 - 8:00 PM	Another Wasted Hour	Fuck a Duck	Join us for comedy and trivia. You can win made up internet points which mean absolutely nothing! You can win style points which mean even less!	
8:00 - 9:30 PM	Ghost Stories / Weird Fiction Hour	Camp Tasty	Eric will bring us his voice acting talents and read some spooky stories by EF Benson.	Other

Maturity Pains

Gate opened approximately an hour late. There were some last minute snafus when porting to the production server. (Something something volatile storage needed changing to elastic storage something) Github briefly going down right at port time didn't help.

Some users had login issues. Most were solved, some got so frustrated they gave up.

When everyone (185 people at one point) tried to get on for the Pony Burn Saturday 9PM, we crashed the MainStage :-/ After some scrambling, we called it a rain delay, and reset to try again

Sunday night. PDF has a history of rain on burn nights and serious mudburns, so it is almost fitting that VDF had this issue.

“ Only PDF could possibly get rained out even when it's online. This burn I swear lol” -
facebook commenter

But the mulligan burn Sunday Night was a success. We learned to ask everyone to turn off video unless they were actively burning. And that helped tons.

Policies and Procedures

In the course of planning the event, we identified the need for a few new policies and procedures.

As this was going to be different from an in person event, we created an *Online Code of Conduct*. When signing up for a VDF login, participants had to agree to the code of conduct. The code of conduct is appended to this document.

We created a *Privacy Policy* around our use of participant information that was collected at login. The privacy policy is also appended to this document.

We created a fire safety recommendations document since we were asking participants to create a piece of burnable art.

Escalation Procedure

Finally, the escalation procedure needed to be fleshed out for the case of a problematic participant. Fortunately, we did not need to evict anyone. But if that had been needed, we wanted to be sure we had a procedure in place.

Purpose: Establish escalation procedures, in case any participant needs to be blocked from the event due to conduct issues.

Mechanism:

No one can be evicted from the event without agreement from the Board member on call.

If Ranger thinks conduct warrants expulsion from the event:

- Escalate the issue through the established Ranger chain of command
 - If a Moderanger is unsure how to handle an issue, they should escalate to Khaki in the #moderanger slack channel. Use @(on-call khaki's name) to get their attention. If Khaki isn't available, consult with another Ranger online or escalate to a board member for ideas.
 - Most issues can use a little FLAME-ing -
Find Out what the issue is.

Listen to the participant/reporter's issue and info from others who can fill in the blanks.

Analyze what seems like the most amenable or workable solution.

Mediate by proposing the solution to all parties.

Explain how things can go forward if everyone accepts the mediation.

- What are our zero tolerance issues? See the code of conduct.
- If Khaki or the highest level ranger available agrees eviction is warranted, they will escalate to Board member on call before advising participant of the expulsion

Recognized Challenges and Shortcomings

Virtual is of course not real physical space, and as such you can't completely translate a live burn to virtual space. There are some things that will always be hard virtually. These include people who spend their days on video calls and have no desire to do more of that as a weekend event. Also, when video rooms get more than a handful of people talking, it can get chaotic and hard to prevent people from talking over one another. There is a blowback effect, that after a good few hours with friends on a video call, people burn out, more acutely miss real life interaction and aren't recharged as they would be in meatspace.

There are other challenges that we had at VDF that could be sorted, given more time. One of these would be how better to show the schedule of what was planned/what was going on. And a way to clean out "dead" rooms from the display. Another is room "scaling" where a room will automatically duplicate itself when it reaches a certain user limit. There will always be folks with technology challenges, so a stronger help-desk/tech-support could have addressed that.

Greeters fell short of the mark for VDF. The lead had pervasive technology issues such that she was a no-show at the event. This left a gaping hole and a subpar Greeter experience for participants, particularly ones who needed more guidance in finding their way on the site. A strong Greeter lead for next time, who has a better handle on how to greet virtually would be a big improvement.

Sanctuary was not as peaceful and chill as many would like, and was not well integrated with the moderangers team. Not to say the Sanctuary room wasn't fun, but it did not fill the space as one typically thinks of Sanctuary. More clarity to the leads on expectations would have helped this along.

Having never done this before, we didn't figure out a way to show static art projects. A gallery room of sorts would have been lovely. Next time we would plan on a lead for the Art Gallery to recruit and guide Art displays.

Also as a first time attempt, we had no documents on how to be a good virtual moderator or room host. We left it to the participants to figure out what worked and what didn't. For a future event, either training, or how to, or tips & tricks or something similar would be helpful.

In an ideal world, we would have had the site ready a few weeks ahead a time (or at least days) so we could have done more testing & training, and the “staff” would have had a chance to get familiar with all the features. This likely would have helped the marketing of the event also, increasing the attendance, events, and art.

And finally, we could have marketed this event much more heavily. It is important to note that the limited marketing was in some part deliberate, as we were not sure how much to push this new, untested system. But in hindsight, we could have done more. We could have reached out to other burns more intentionally, the planners could have leveraged personal contacts to create even more events and activities. We could have done simple things like make a Facebook Event, or other social media outreach. VDF could have been much bigger, more geographically diverse, more dense with events at all times. We do believe that if there is a next time, since 700+ people now know what to expect, it would attract a larger number of camps, events and attendees organically. Also, if there is a next time, now it is easier to market, since visuals and workflows would be available.

ART: Pony Burn Event

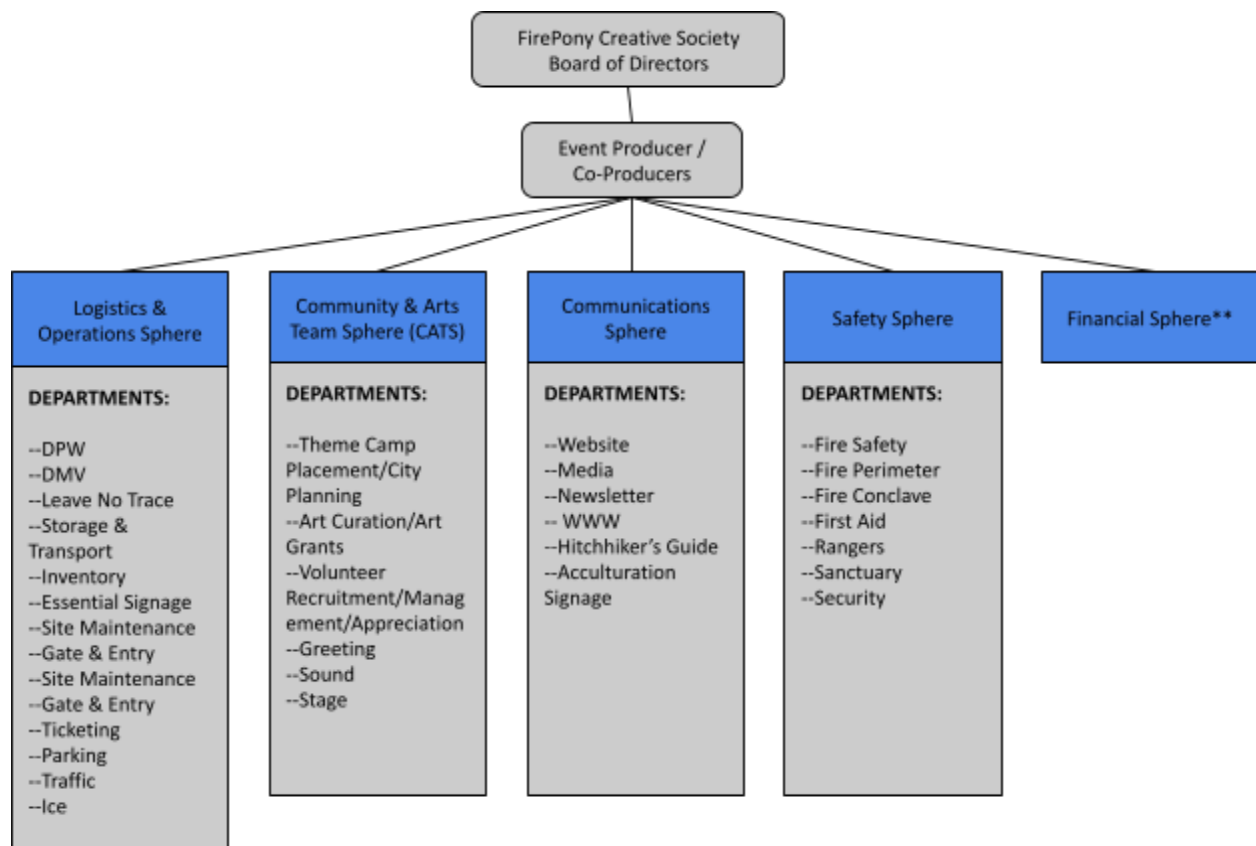
We did not have art grants or art coordinators for this event. However, we asked for community participation to create a pony herd as art (and burn it!) in honor of our roots on Assateague Island. The first PDF was on the beach at Assateague where wild pony herds still roam - we traditionally burn an effigy of a pony. Photos of the herd can be found in [appendix VI](#).



Constellation Burn

Constellation Event Planning Structure

Constellation is led by an Event Producer or two Co-Producers. Under this producer, there are four spheres: Safety, Operations, Communications, and Community and Arts. Each sphere is run by a lead. The lead then had sub departments in each sphere.



** The financial sphere is BOD treasurer

Constellation 2020 (CB2020 - Canceled)

Constellation 2018 was scheduled to be in October 2020 in Elkins, West Virginia. In consultation with the Board of Directors, the event Producers announce the decision to cancel the event on July 7, 2020.

Appendices

Appendix I: Profit and Loss Statement

OVERALL 2020 FPCS Profit and Loss:

Playa del Fuego dba FirePony Creative Society	
Profit and Loss	
January - December 2020	
	Total
Income	
Amazon Donation	9.74
Total Income	\$ 9.74
Gross Profit	\$ 9.74
Expenses	
Board of Directors Expenses	127.07
Board Retreat	
Housing	0.00
Total Board Retreat	\$ 0.00
D&O Insurance	954.00
Total Board of Directors Expenses	\$ 1,081.07
Communications & Technology	
Newsletter Software	736.68
Web Hosting	687.98
Webinar Technology	219.88
Total Communications & Technology	\$ 1,644.54
Dept of Public Works	
Supplies	20.99
Total Dept of Public Works	\$ 20.99
Meetings & Conferences Supplies	167.37
Printing & Publications	
Office & Mail Supplies	10.65
Total Printing & Publications	\$ 10.65
Professional Fees	
Accounting	261.00
Total Professional Fees	\$ 261.00

Purchases	963.10
Rent	
Land Rental	0.00
Storage Unit	2,744.00
Total Rent	\$ 2,744.00
Volunteer Management	
Volunteer Appreciation	70.50
Total Volunteer Management	\$ 70.50
Total Expenses	\$ 6,963.22
Net Operating Income	-\$ 6,953.48
Other Income	
Interest Income	13.94
Total Other Income	\$ 13.94
Net Other Income	\$ 13.94
Net Income	-\$ 6,939.54

Appendix II: Playa del Fuego Cancellation Message

FirePony Creative Society Newsletter

March 24, 2020

FirePony Statement on COVID-19

Coronavirus COVID-19 Update #3

Dear beloved FirePony community,

One of the principles held closely by the Burning Man community is Civic Responsibility and the FirePony Creative Society board assumes responsibility for the public welfare of our participants while at one of our events. And so, it is with great sadness that we inform you that on Monday March 23, 2020 the FirePony board unanimously voted to cancel Playa del Fuego 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. After researching various options, it was concluded that it was not feasible to ensure sufficient sanitation at the Tamaqua site to host a large gathering during a pandemic, resulting in the vote to cancel.

But before we begin looking toward PdF 2021, we need to wrap up the details of PdF 2020:

2020 Ticket Holders:

Beginning March 31st, all current ticket holders will have 15 days to sign into their [ticketing account](#) and choose one of three options:

- **Refund** - Obtain a Paypal refund to the email address connected to the account.
- **PrePaid** - Save the ticket purchase as a pre-paid ticket to Playa del Fuego 2021
- **Donate** - Gift the ticket to Playa del Fuego to offset the costs incurred by the cancelation, which includes things like infrastructure storage, PayPal fees, and other administrative costs. Any monies above cost will be donated to the Art Grant fund.
- If no option is selected by April 15, 2020, the email address on file will automatically be sent a Paypal refund.

Please note that ticket transfers have been closed at this time.

Volunteer Reserve Tickets:

All 2019 Volunteer Reserve tickets will be honored in 2021. Those that earned a Volunteer Reserve ticket should already have a preliminary email confirming that they are eligible for the program.

2020 Art Grants:

All 2020 Art Grant winners will be honored in 2021. Artists will be asked to reaffirm their 2020 art grant submission and those art grants will be given priority. Details are being sent to the art grant winners via direct email.

Looking Forward:

While the cancellation is a great loss, there is also great hope and optimism for PdF 2021. We received a record number of art grant submissions for PdF 2020 and we are hopeful that there will be new inspirations for artists in 2021 resulting in double the art and double the fun! We plan to use this time to tackle some of the long term projects that seem to get put off year after year and we are confident that Playa del Fuego 2021 will be the shiniest, most art filled, most inclusive PdF yet!

The board would like to thank the Planning Committee, all the coordinators and team leaders, the Art Grant Committee, and all the artists who were working so hard to make PdF 2020 happen, please know your efforts have not gone unnoticed. We look forward to seeing all of you in 2021.

Keeping our community safe and informed is a priority, so we are sharing links below.

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Public Health](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

Sincerely,

FPCS Board

board@firepony.org

Appendix III: FPCS Online Code of Conduct & Policies For Virtual del Fuego 2020

Introduction

FirePony Creative Society (FPCS) strives to keep the number of rules to a minimum, however certain types of online behavior serve only to harm other participants or the event itself. Radical inclusion means that strangers are welcome to participate in our community; it does not mean tolerance of harmful behaviors.

Just as the landscape of any burn impacts its unique rules, the virtual landscape presents its own set of challenges. This document identifies behaviors and actions that will not be tolerated in any virtual spaces sponsored by FirePony Creative Society, including Virtual del Fuego (VDF). In addition to the conduct detailed below, participants of any FirePony Creative Society-sponsored events are expected to comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

Incident Reporting

- **During the Event:** Participants may report any incident in which another participant is engaging in any Prohibited Online Behavior or not upholding the Media and Adult Content Policies as detailed in this document via the Call a Moderanger button enabled in VDF rooms or by visiting the Moderanger HQ room.
 - Note: The Call a Moderanger button will not be available in participant-driven streams on platforms not provided by VDF.
- **Outside the Event:** Conduct Violations can also be reported at any time through the FPCS Incident Report Form found here <https://firepony.org/conduct-committee/>.

Prohibited Online Behaviors

The following types of behavior are unacceptable at any FirePony Creative Society-sponsored online/virtual event.

Consent violations. In a virtual world, consent violations include, but are not limited to, unwanted sexual, violent, graphic, or racist expression, depiction, video, image, audio, chat, conduct, gesture, symbol, chat, and/or discussion (“content”) without the express consent of the involved participants. Includes any depictions, incitement, or conduct involving non-consensual sexual acts, as well as doxxing, blackmail, and re-sharing of VDF content without the consent of all parties involved (see Media Policy, below).

Bullying. Any content that intimidates, abuses, menaces, or threatens participants and has the intention to exclude, silence, shame, or degrade a participant (or group) or incites others to do so. Includes all manner of stalking and harassment.

Stalking/Harassment. If someone asks you to leave them alone or stop communicating with

them, continued engagement with them or following them from virtual room to room is considered stalking/harassment. Any content consisting of verbal assaults, threats of violence or harm, degrading or shaming speech, humiliation, and repeated unwanted contact are considered harassment.

Hate Speech. Any content, speech, conduct, or expression that consists of attacks or incitement of attacks against an individual or group of people and is defined in terms of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender expression, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, health status, or any identifying characteristic. Hate Speech includes slurs and the incitement of hatred or violence against these groups. Also includes praise and glorification of terrorism, organized crime, hate groups, and/or dangerous individuals or groups.

Hate Speech that is shared in an educational, historical, satirical, or artistic manner with the spirit of challenging it or raising awareness must clearly declare their intention surrounding that content, speech or expression.

Deliberate Derailment of an Online Event or Conversation. Any content that is **unwelcome** and intentionally controversial, contrary, repetitively off-topic, deliberately instigates anger or unwanted arguments, and/or any other content or conduct with the purpose of derailment or interruption of any online event, stream, or conversation.

Endangering Self or Others. Includes inciting, glorifying, instructing, or teaching self-harm or harm to others in any way.

VDF Media Policy

Due to the nature of the internet and the platforms involved, privacy can not be guaranteed for participants or for any content within or through VDF. However, as VDF is a consent oriented community, participants are required to get consent of all the involved parties before re-sharing of any content taken during the event.

VDF Adult Content Policy

Adult content ("18+") is defined as any explicit sexual content and / or nudity for erotic purposes or of an erotic nature.

- VDF encourages Radical Self Expression including adult content.
- VDF encourages Radical Inclusion, including minors.
- VDF encourages Civic Responsibility, which guides us to obey the law.

In an online world, these three Principles collide in new ways. The VDF team has worked hard to come up with a balance that allows freedom of expression while protecting the organization, and has come up with a series of policies to manage this conflict which all participants will be required to uphold. All participants agree to:

Self Identify:

- **Participants:** will be required to create a VDF profile and affirm their minor/majority

status. Profiles of minors will systemically be barred from 18+ Rooms.

- **Rooms:** will be required to Self-Identify their content as either 18+ or All Age. If participants want both kinds of content, they are encouraged to get two rooms.

18+ No Spectator Rule:

- **18+ Rooms.** Rooms marked as 18+ must have all participants on streaming video to reasonably ensure no young children are present, i.e. No Lurkers
- **Other rooms.** If 18+ content emerges in an All Age room or is occurring on any stream in, through, or connected to VDF, the 18+ No Spectator Rule is in effect until the 18+ content is over.

Self Monitor:

- **Minors in your Home.** Just like at any physical burn event, minors are the responsibility of their guardians at all times. All participants with minors in their household are expected to monitor their minors while they are participating in VDF to ensure that they are not accessing adult content
- **All Age Rooms.** Participants are expected to keep All Age Rooms all age. If 18+ content emerges, participants are asked to move the content to an 18+ room
- **Alternate Platforms.** 18+ content may occur in participant linked platforms where minors are not systemically blocked, such as Zoom, Facebook Live, or Twitch. All participants are required to uphold the Terms of Service for those platforms as well as monitor their homes and streams to ensure minors do not access 18+ content

Repercussions

Repercussions. Participants in violation can be removed from VDF rooms or the event, depending on the severity of the transgression. All removals from the event will result in a Conduct Committee case to review for additional repercussions, up to and including the suspension from participation in one or more future FirePony Creative Society-sponsored events (such as Playa del Fuego and Constellation). Other actions, such as a formal warning or a removal from volunteering are also possible. Transgressions that violate federal, state, or local laws will be escalated to the appropriate authority.

Fine Print

Nothing herein is intended to or shall waive the right of the Board of Directors of FirePony Creative Society to restrict the access of an individual or entity to any FirePony Creative Society event as it may determine, in its sole discretion, is warranted.

Agreements

[] I agree to abide and uphold this Code of Conduct and Policies during my participation at any Online FirePony Creative Society event, including Virtual del Fuego.

Updated: May 2020

Virtual Del Fuego Privacy Policy

2020-05-13 - v0.1

What kind of identifiable information do you collect?

While accessing any of Virtual Del Fuego's servers, we log minimal amounts of basic information in order to deliver safe, reliable service, troubleshoot errors, and respond to incidents. For each request, we collect:

- Your IP address
- Your browser's identification
- The requested URL or resource
- The date and time

In order to participate at Virtual Del Fuego, users are required to enter their legal first and last name, their date of birth, their email address, a preferred username, and a password. Your legal name is only used for security purposes, your date of birth is needed to help prevent minors from accessing adult content, and your email address is used to aid in password recovery and communications pertaining to the Virtual Del Fuego event.

We use cookies to keep you logged into the website and remember your preferences.

We will never share any personal information about our participants with third parties.

How is the information you collect shared?

We will never share, sell, rent, or trade participants' personal information with third parties for commercial purposes.

The only times we will ever share your info is to investigate, prevent, or take action regarding illegal activities, suspected fraud, situations involving potential threats to the physical safety of any person, violations of our Terms of Service, or as otherwise required by law. This may include the Firepony Creative Society Board of Directors and/or Conduct Committee, the Virtual Del Fuego Planning Team, and the Virtual Del Fuego "Moderangers" team.

How do you respond to legal requests for information?

Playa Del Fuego, Inc. will not share your data with anyone except in accordance with a lawful court order.

If we are requested to share your information in response to a legal process, we will give you notice unless we are prohibited from doing so by law or court order.

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Transparency Report - 2020-05-13

As of the date above, The Fire Pony Creative Society and Playa Del Fuego, Inc. has not received any National Security Letters or any orders under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The Fire Pony Creative Society and Playa Del Fuego, Inc. does not have any knowledge of any search orders, search warrants, discovery motions, or gag orders that have been issued or carried out.

We will update this report daily during the event.

PGP 4096R/D150AC77 m4@firepony.org

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How is my information stored?

We use third-party vendors and hosting partners for hardware, software, networking, storage, and related technology we need to run Virtual Del Fuego.

All data is written to multiple disks instantly, backed up daily, and stored in more than one location.

How is my information secured?

Whenever your data is in transit between you and us, everything is encrypted and sent using Transport Layer Security (TLS).

All backups and data stored on our servers is encrypted at rest.

What is your data retention policy?

After Virtual Del Fuego is over, we will delete all access logs, recordings, chat conversations, events and event descriptions, and user profiles not directly involved with security or conduct incidents after 30 days.

We may retain your email address in order to send you information on Virtual Del Fuego and other Firepony Creative Society events in the future. If you do not wish to receive these emails, an unsubscribe link is provided at the bottom of every email we send.

How do I contact VDF if I have any privacy questions?

If you have any questions about our Privacy Policy, please get in touch with us at vdf-leads@firepony.org, and we will be happy to answer any questions you might have!

Appendix V: VDF Department Reports

Mayor

Department	Board Member / SpearHeader / Communications / Recruiter / Mayor
Submitted By	Smiles
	<p>The first good is really a Great! The Team: This amazing team of people who came together to make this happen. Teams were passionate about the project, independent, dynamic, and flexible, which is what allowed this event to come together so quickly. I was very naive in the beginning, thinking “oh just throw up a web page up with some zoom links and we’re good to go!” Ensuing soul searching sent us looking for the best ways to integrate the 10 Principles into a virtual platform, because Zoom is not it. We found open source Jitsi, and then lucked into a willing-to-learn Jitsi developer (Rechner), and m4 jumped in to help manage the tech side of things, and somehow they pulled it off. So much gratitude for an amazing team! On a personal note, I had never run a project like this before, I’m a new board member, and I’m not a tech person; however, I felt my leadership skills and experience grow week to week throughout this project, as did my personal confidence and my confidence in this team!</p> <p>Communications: we had a good click rate for BPE’s, averaging around 30% for VDF. Jen F was a great help, and we make a good team on Comms. I worked hard to integrate more pictures and less wall-of-text. BPE was the 2nd most common way people heard about the event.</p>
The Good	The Event: Overall, a great success!
	<p>The Team: People who dropped out + lack of communication about their dropping out. Most people who dropped out of the project communicated with me about it, but two people would say “yes yes I want to be involved” when I reached out, but then their actions wouldn’t match their words. One person would never show up to calls or take any initiative (so I stopped reaching out) and the other (the Greeter lead) didn’t show up to the event itself, didn’t communicate their issues to me or anyone else during the event, and didn’t communicate with their volunteers throughout the event. It forced Kailah and I to take turns trying to be there to orient the volunteers on shift change with varying success. Overall, it led to a greeter experience that was less than best.</p> <p>Communications: The short timeframe + initial community backlash against the event made communicating the vision difficult, which resulted in low community interest pre-event. The survey results show a very low interaction with the playadelfuego.org website itself as a means of communication. The website is old and dated and needs a complete overhaul. Also, I needed a secretary to take agenda notes during the calls. Taking agenda notes is my personal biggest area of opportunity.</p>
The Bad	

	<p>The Event: The lack of art. There was one room dedicated to a sculpture in which participants could leave words or phrases that the artist would add to the sculpture, but not much else (except Ponies). There are 3 reasons for this that I can see. One, most people could not envision what the event would be like, so there was general apathy. Excitement about the event grew throughout the event as people “got it”, and we had our highest rate of participation on Sunday night. Two, time. The incredibly short timeframe meant participants couldn’t plan and make art. I would expect that if there were a future VDF, there would be much more art and creative backgrounds on video streams from our participants. The third reason is trickier. As we wanted to make VDF a free event for everyone to enjoy, there were no art grants offered. And due to the short timeframe, solutions to this were not able to be explored.</p>
The Ugly	<p>There is the obvious gate delay on Friday and the rain delay (Jitsi crash) on Burn night. Beyond that, losing the profile database on Friday afternoon meant a ton of scrambling and confused ModeRangers and their log-ins.. Not much else.</p>
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	<p>Give us more time, lol. Seeing that Facebook was the primary way to drive interest and knowledge about the event, I would leverage FB more, encouraging the community to create events and cross posting to other groups to reach a wider range of audience. I would recruit harder for the vacant positions. And I would generate conversation surrounding art grants and alternative ways to fund them.</p>
Any additional comments?	<p>I can’t say enough good things about the tech team Rechner, m4, Alex, Scott, Keith, and Caitlyn! But I also want to give a shout out to the Black Rock Rangers, who contributed so much to the development of - and participation in - the event. Their Ranger hats contributed to the look of the event and made it feel “home-y” and all those leadership skills I talked about above was watching and learning from Tranquillitea. Overall, really, really great people to work with.</p>
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	<p>More time to get the word out and have events scheduled. Also, have a participant tips and tricks guide that includes how to host a room, including muting and greeting newcomers. There was feedback that sometimes people would enter a room and not feel welcomed by those deep in conversation. Tackle the art grant question if you can, or consider other ways to promote and encourage art. Also, I’m available if another regional wanted to pick my brain over topics such as what does consent look like in a virtual space, code of conduct issues, minors and inappropriate content, platforms we looked at and rejected, or anything else.</p>

Operations - Tech

Department	Technical
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Submitted By	M4, VDF Technical Operations Coordinator
The Good	Everything worked! Our team put together a ridiculously complex project in an incredibly short amount of time with very few hiccups in the process. We created something that we believe could have some significant potential for future events.
The Bad	A lot of unnecessary work was done in the beginning that slowed things down and caused some headaches further down the road. Fortunately we learned from our mistakes and have a plan to optimize things a bit if we use this platform again in the future.
The Ugly	This was an extremely stressful project that required a ton of blood, sweat, and tears to get off the ground. If we do another heavily technical project like this again, we need to develop some better internal policies to keep our volunteers happy and healthy.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	I'd plan this a year in advance. :) All joking aside, we do need to develop a volunteering policy for software development and work to establish proper project management protocols.
Any additional comments?	We're living in a really strange world right now, and experiences like these give me hope that things can be better. I'm super proud of everyone that worked on this project. The dev team, the rangers, the BOD, and all the other volunteers that helped contribute. You're all rock stars.
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Read every TOS/AUP/PP for every platform you plan to utilize. It's really hard to find existing solutions that are in line with the 10 principles that won't violate your community's privacy.

Department	Dpw
Submitted By	Keith, Front end coder
The Good	We pulled off something very difficult with very little money.
The Bad	Technical direction and vision.
The Ugly	I wrote a bunch of code that wasn't needed and was late writing code that I thought someone else was doing. When push came to shove, there would have been easier ways to accomplish what we accomplished if there had been more forethought
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	First come up with a plan. Determine the quickest path forward then improve from there.
Any additional comments?	Rechner is basically the reason the technical part of this burn happened.

BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Start with jitsi and build forward with the path of least resistance. Also, more than 50 people in a room causes everything to blow up... So figure that out ahead of time.

Operations - Design

Department	Web Team
Submitted By	Meta, Project Management / Design / Inspiration
The Good	Creating stable and integrated final functionality. Establishing and maintaining excellent team cohesion and communication. Adeptly leveraging existing open source tools to develop and implement the back end code. Applying for and receiving an AWS Non-profit grant for hosting. Choosing Jitsi, React, Django and .net -elements that integrate well.
The Bad	Aside from what's in the ugly below, there were people who had challenges getting technically ready to digitally burn (web cams and Mics, mostly), and so couldn't. We could get the specs to what people need to participate out ahead of time to get more people engaged.
The Ugly	<p>We did not get to test high volumes of simultaneous users with full video and audio before the burn. Our load/smoke test only got to 54 and it looked great. At 75 the whole thing started to choke. Some kind of testing that would show us the drop off so we could have prepared for the high volume rooms.</p> <p>CMS was the initial selection for the web layer but we did not have an expert in that technology so React was chosen.</p>
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	Implement web server clustering and some type of connection manager (Like F5), and multiple integrated Jitsi video bridge servers on the back end. Perhaps a bigger tech team and a Django expert earlier (we did get one last minute and it helped a bit). Testing the infrastructure and better automate initial connection parameters to reduce potential lag from consumer / vs / presenter content.
Any additional comments?	I was so pleased with the "Burn feels" we managed to inspire, despite the significant limitations of non physical interaction. Communities want to engage, and they are already connected to each other. Giving them a platform upon which to interact undoubtedly lifted the spirits of ALL our participants.

BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	<p>Get your technology team together Immediately. Put the biggest call out that you can to your community for specific skills. These are not typical Burner endemic skills, but this is a new era and geeks are needed.</p> <p>Be prepared for a lot of incremental progress updates and lots of back-and-forth collaboration between technical elements. Technical meetings, Agile-like planning, and iterative design principles are valuable to understand. Oh and be sure your Minimum Viable Product or MVP. . . . what you minimally need to actually have an event, is described... and ensure you have a testing deadline that helps you make a go - no-go decision before you get your community all fired up for nothing.</p>
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Department	Schedule/Calendar/WWW
Submitted By	Kailah, Schedule Wrangler
The Good	We successfully had a schedule available to participants and a link appeared on the VDF landing page! The Google form worked well for collecting the event's info. The schedule displayed the event time, title, description and a link to go directly into the room. I think this feature was really helpful for many participants.
The Bad	There were some things I wish I had the time to improve on. I would have added in more info into each event. I would have liked to see the Room it was being held in and the image that participants submitted in the form. It would have been nice to add in the event type and 18+ designation too. Some of the room links were missing and/or incorrect. This was mostly due to events that were held in "immediacy rooms". There wasn't a work flow for getting those room links into the event descriptions on the schedule. I found myself adding in or updating links throughout the weekend. Despite those few things, I still am very happy with how the virtual WWW turned out!
The Ugly	Nada! I didn't find anything ugly about what we completed in such a short amount of time.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	I'd prepare a bit more in terms of workflow and processes. Starting earlier would be a huge help I think. I'd research some other possible schedule platforms that looked a little nicer/had more features. I'd complete more testing of links, etc.
Any additional comments?	EVERYONE DID AN AMAZING JOB in both the planning stage and during the event. I saw improvements happening all throughout the event. Thank you to every volunteer and coordinator, and the Board for allowing us to create something beautiful out of nothing.
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Start planning as early as possible. Figure out your must do's vs want to's. Keep in mind the end user / participant experience in all stages of planning.

Department	Theme Camps
Submitted By	Jen Finkle
Role	Coordinator
	JotForm worked well for theme camp submissions, allowing attachment of image files for room displays and conditional questions to show if 18+/AllAges/Both room types were requested. I was able to have each submission sent to the VDF Coord email, although images were inaccessible without signing in..
The Good	Setting up Theme Camps on the VDF site was easy.
	Some theme camps were unclear on what content would require them to use an 18+ room, and originally requested an 18+ room when they didn't really need/want one.
	Since I set up the JotForm under my email/account, no one else had direct access to the responses, especially the images files.
The Bad	Due to the delay in the embiggening, setting up theme camp rooms was a bit down to the wire.
The Ugly	Since admin and user profiles were the same, and some of the theme camp rooms kept reverting back to being "owned" by me no matter how many times I changed them, it looked like Camp Upper Dutch Blumpkin was mine no matter how many times assigned it to Karnak.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	State what content does and does not require an 18+ room in the theme camp room request form. Set up JotForm account with commonly accessible Coord email for easier/wider accessibility.
Any additional comments?	Diana is the best! And our entire web team are techo-wizards!
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	I'd offer them a copy of the theme camp form so they didn't have to make it from scratch.

Department	BOD/General Help
Submitted By	Miles, BOD on Call, and general assistant

The Good	The event went very smoothly for the most part. Everyone that I spoke to really loved the platform. There were a lot of comments that this actually felt like a real burn which is what the team set out to create. The demand was higher than I expected. It really is amazing what the team pulled off in such a short amount of time. There were groups of people that were so enthralled with the platform they tried to stay past gate closing and had to be booted! There were others that requested we keep open just one channel so they can continue to connect.
The Bad	I'd say the obvious is the gate delays and server crash. The gate delays was a bummer, but was worked out so quickly. The server crash in my mind is kind of cool that we had so many people interested in this virtual platform that the server crashed. From conversations I had it seems like there would be ways to help alleviate these issues next time.
The Ugly	I saw several discussions about screenshots being taken. This was in direct violation of our consent policy and will be the most difficult thing to enforce as it's so easy to take a screen grab these days.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	Again....from the conversations I've had there were learnings that would have allowed for gates to open on time and also ways to increase server capacity for the burn itself. I think us getting more info out early next time will help with participation.
Any additional comments?	Hoping we don't ever have to do a virtual burn again, but if so I'm happy we have an amazing team that would be able to pull this off again. Same for the platform and knowledge. It's nice to think we have the infrastructure to do this again!
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Have an amazing dev team just like we did!!

Safety - Moderanger

Department	Moderangers
Submitted by	Tranquillitea & Po-Boy, Co-Leads for the VDF 2020 Moderanger Team

The Good	<p>Overall, from a Moderanger perspective, the event went well, only a few minor incidents. Each room was pretty self moderating. Shifts were smooth, jitsi worked well, Slack comms was great, partner communication worked well. Other VDF staff members were welcoming. Communication around the event was largely clear and thorough. The intent of the event as a “burn” was realized, even though tech was a little rough at times.</p> <p>TModerangers expressed appreciation that the leads Tranquillitea & Po-Boy were consistantly available.</p> <p>Positive Moderanger Jitsi Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a designated Moderanger Room in Jitsi • “Request a Moderange”r in every room was an efficient way of being able to summon Moderangers. We were able to show-up for each and every call. • Well organized, easy to move around room to room. • Once you were into Jitsi, it seemed intuitive, and worked out well instead of Zoom. • Private messages in jitsi worked well for inter-moderanger communication • This did feel more like a burn, whereas other events have seems more like attending a “conference” • It was interesting to use social media platforms outside of the normal BM Community. • Good that there was a Sanctuary room <p>Event Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a good sense of the PDF/ East Coast community who were also surprised how much interest in/to have those from the West Coast and all other regions join the event. • Participants were happy to see Moderangers there! It did feel like what it’s like to be “home” (BRC). Roaming around the rooms was welcoming, you could walk in and start a conversation and it was acceptable. • Moderanger HQ was a place for participants to wander into, kind of like a Theme Camp. Participants were happy to have access and that there was a ranger presence at the event. • Rangers reported they enjoyed having the ability to share in what people were doing, learning how to adapt to the technology, going into different camps, experiencing what everyone was creating. Rangers participating went well, with feelings of engagement and contributing to the social capital. • The availability of immediacy was appreciated. Anyone could create and send out last minute events which was good. Using the FB Group you could send invitations to others which was a big plus. Individuals could do whatever they wanted, be leads for their own camp. There was a “try your best with what you had in the moment” kind of feeling. Even at the last minute, Ponies were made,
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The Bad

Jitsi Account issues:

There were multiple account creation & login questions and confusion. More clarity on how staff accounts were expected to be accessed would have been helpful. Also we had an issue with password/permission reset mid event.

It would have been better if

- Have site set-up a few days prior to be able to navigate around. Could have tested the site a bit more.
- Training on Jitsi would have been helpful. - Get a sense of the lay of the land.
- There was a easy to access list of active rooms to reference.

Suggested Staffing Improvements:

- Needed more Khakis to fill Grave shifts
- Recommend "Playa Info" on the FB Page which includes a Tech Help Desk about how to login, password reset, set-up your event on the schedule, etc.
- Rangers to have a Tech Contact. Tech Support pre and throughout the event. Visible DPW (tech support) would have been good not just for rangers but for all participants .
- There were not enough Greeters.

After experiencing the event, the team has a list of suggested design improvements. These are detailed in the WIBNIF/Nextime section later in this report. Some of the highlights high level suggestions are as follows:.

- Needed some kind of badging or identification for Board Members & other event staff.
- Improve room count accuracy as well as an overall room count display, and find a way to hide/minimize empty rooms, and delete abandoned rooms..
- A Moderanger "burn barrel" room as the public "front porch" where Rangers could be hanging out and would allow Moderangers and participants to shoot the shit and casually ask for help if they needed it. And has a seperate private room for Moderanger operational tasks.
- Tools that might aid in Moderanging - e.g. peek into a room function, a turn on/off video tool, feedback feature on kickouts.
- As a virtual event, time zones/time differences are important. A standard posted "time" or "clock" would have helped

Procedures

- VDF Incident Reports procedure needed to be tighter. There was disconnect from incident to dispatch to complete. This led to things like working on incidents that were still "open", lack of clear passdown.
- Needed a clear wind down procedure for End of Event. Stay on or let things happen?
- More on procedures/instructions on expectations for room Hosts and Moderators. I.e. Moderators of 18+ rooms did not always monitor the

	<p>pre-determined.</p> <p>There was a sense of no other staff working at the event. I felt a sense of not being prepared to be the only person on duty.</p> <p>The concept and execution of Sanctuary needs improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing happening in Sanctuary. No presence. No one appeared to be “staffing” the “front desk”. • Sanctuary music not calming. • No apparent direct line from Moderangers to Sanctuary. • No way to divert from Sanctuary to Moderanger room, or vice versa <p>Comments about the Event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would have been better with more participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Very little content late at night, not much to do. • More Promotion of the event needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Suggestion of making a FB Event to drive traffic
The Ugly	<p>Jitsi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday, May 23 9:00pm complete overload of jitsi. Frozen and dropped most everyone. 60-90 Participants spiked in one room.. 9:15pm some improvement. We learned to go to watch only mode, and to split into different rooms, supposed to be able to see the burn, but not obvious how to do that. • Shifting login endpoints made it necessary to create users multiple times and reset a lot of passwords. • Administration of the moderanger accounts could be simplified and streamlined if there was a way to bulk add accounts or even a consistent way to give them all privileges and access without creating accounts one by one. • The ‘Kick Out’ functionality wasn’t available at event time. We’d trained for using it, and it wasn’t available, so we were able to Ranger without it, but there seem to be a few instances where it would have been helpful. <p>Comms for the Event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more instruction, invitation on how to create a workshop -options to be able to see things, inviting camps, people want to plan their time could have raised the number of participants.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kicking a person out a room - tiered response such as a “time out” for 5mins and incrementally longer. • Creation of private rooms so that they are hidden. • Playa Info! We need it! With Tech Camp to help with login issues. • On-duty participant facing Tech Team throughout the event. In addition for Ranger needs, perhaps a dedicated member of Ranger Team -point person for Tech. • Establish secondary systems in case of failure. Rally point - zoom room or phone number if system crashes, pre declared places to meet when things go sideways. • Last minute they changed the link. - Need to figure out best ways to get this

	<p>information out to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant Training. Interface tweet. • A staff or at lead department level ‘walkie-talkie’ or group-txt app like Zello or “Group-me” (https://groupme.com/en-US/)
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Start planning early!

Safety - Sanctuary

Department	Sanctuary
Submitted By	Serenity Jessica Beetsch, Lead / Coordinator
The Good	VDF Sanctuary was, for the most part, pretty quiet. The sanctuary volunteers were able to be there for some people that sought sanctuary, it's so lovely we were able to provide this space. The “training” on Zoom seemed to work efficiently, volunteers knew what to do upon arriving for their shift, which was super nice.
The Bad	<p>I don't believe many knew that sanctuary was open or had burners in it because it didn't have the burner count since it was on Zoom. I'd like to keep it on zoom, unless there was a way for Jitsi to accommodate the needs of sanctuary. If it is kept on zoom, then I think it should be noted that sanctuary is open and there are volunteers present.</p> <p>I would also like yo take the title of coordinator and train some enthusiastic sanctuary peeps to be leads to help me with the running sanctuary portion (it was a lot to do it all weekend by myself).</p>
The Ugly	Everything flowed pretty smoothly at sanctuary, minimal hiccups. More time would be nice to better prepare.... we didn't have the spoons for that this year haha. So it's not a complaint haha.
What would you do differently next time, if there is a next time?	<p>Ummm.... see above answers. I answered this question there. (:</p> <p>(Pulling in leads and becoming coordinator, switch to Jitsi or have a way to let burners know we are open, and more time to prepare obvi)</p> <p>I would also get on slack.... I slacked on slack because I couldn't figure out how to operate it... and then I burnt out there. I would like to get more involved in the planning than I was this year, I fell off a bit when I slacked on the slack.</p>

Any additional comments?	You all da besttttt <3! It's been an honor to witness this come together, and to be a part of such a powerful team....
BONUS QUESTION: If a different regional wanted to host a virtual burn, what words of wisdom do you have to offer?	Videos are so helpful to communicate during this time.

Appendix VI: VDF Design requests / suggestions

In the course of the event, and in our debriefs, we collected a list of “wouldn’t it be nice if” enhancement requests to the VDF platform. These are all items that were not part of the minimum viable product, but are captured for “better next time” experience.

- Needed some kind of badging or identification for Board Members, other event staff.
- Find a way to hide/minimize empty rooms. Empty Rooms took up a lot of space. On smaller devices such as a smart phone it might be challenging.
- Find a way to have an inviting late night hub room. Suggestion -Use of a “burn barrel” room could be more inviting for participants especially at night.
- Improve room count accuracy. Leave room button and pick another room button - throws the room count off.
- Request a panel that would show who is in each room and room overall.
- Turn off somewhat annoying message that would come up whenever anyone entered
- No ability to delete rooms, like after a pop-up event ended
- Sanctuary was hosted on zoom, so room count did not show.
- On a Tablet - icon to show that it was an 18+ room was not present.
- Request: “Ask a Ranger” in addition to “Call a Moderanger” buttons.
- A Moderanger “burn barrel” room as the public “front porch” where Rangers could be hanging out and would allow Moderangers and participants to shoot the shit and casually ask for help if they needed it. And the private room for Moderanger operational tasks.
- Tools that might aid in Moderangering - peek into a room function. A “short drive by” feature to get a sense of what is going on to see if you wanted to participate or not..
- As a virtual event, time zones/time differences are important. A standard posted “time” or “clock” would have helped
- Request “tools” to help the community. In particular, a tool Turn their video off, which would especially helped with the burn lag issue.
- Maybe an ask for consent option to come into the room.
- For moderators kicking a person out a room - tiered response option such as a “time out” for 5mins and incrementally longer.
- Creation of private rooms so that they are hidden.

Appendix VII: VDF Pony Herd

Below are photos of the ponies built for the VDF DIY effigy event.

Popup & Tushie Pony



Johnell's Sparky Pony



Titsy's Mini Pony



Karnaks' Pony



Pete and Chilltown's Cerberus Pony



Hatter's Flying Unicorn Anteater Pony



Extinct Flightless Birds Tiny Pony



Sheri's Sparkle Pony



Alessandro's Fugly Pony



Ursula's Backyard Pony



Pyramid People's Ponies



Kailah n Mel's Pony



Voyager Pony



Hudson's Vermont Pony

