

Guide to BLAST Certification

Overview

BLAST = Burner

Leadership

Achieving

Sustainable

Theme Camps

The BLAST rating system provides a framework for energy and resource efficient, environmentally conscientious, and regenerative Burning Man theme camps. If you've heard of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for green buildings, think of BLAST as the Burning Man equivalent.

Theme camp organizers and other ecologically-minded Burners gathered at the Green Theme Camp Summit in October 2020 to brainstorm how theme camps might contribute to Burning Man's sustainability efforts. BLAST represents the culmination of many months of work following the summit, proudly brought to you by The Green Theme Camp Community (GTCC).

By participating in BLAST, you'll be contributing to Burning Man's mission to become carbon negative, sustainably manage waste, and be ecologically regenerative by 2030. We'll support you in implementing sustainable infrastructure and projects for your camp each year, and you'll then have the opportunity to share data and learn from other camps, as we co-create the sustainable practices and technologies of the future. You'll be able to visualize how your camp stacks up and your improvements year-over-year with our [BLAST Radius Sustainability Tracker](#).

This guide will walk you through the process of applying for BLAST certification. If you get stuck or have any questions, please reach out to blast@greentheme.camp.

How Certification Works

1. Understand the [Credits System](#)
2. [Ecological Acculturation](#)
3. Meet the [Prerequisites](#)
4. Participate in [Placement](#)
5. Complete the [Application Form](#)
6. Go Build BRC!
7. [Camp Visits](#)
8. [Receive Certification](#)
9. [Share](#) what you've Learned

Credits System

Your camp will earn “credits” towards BLAST certification by achieving objectives listed in the [2025 BLAST Criteria List](#). In addition, you’ll have the opportunity to earn “extra credits” for creative initiatives we haven’t thought of before. Credits will be awarded across 6 focus areas (see below), and your percentage score out of the total possible credits will determine which certification level you earn. We encourage you to start with the basics, and challenge yourself to earn more credits and a higher level of certification each year!

Certification Levels

Level 1	0 - 40 %
Level 2	40 - 59 %
Level 3	60 - 79 %
Level 4	80 - 99 %
Level 5	99 % +

Focus Areas

The 6 BLAST focus areas are:

- **Food** - purchasing, serving, and promoting sustainable food and food systems
- **Power** - migrating towards more efficient power usage and renewable energy generation
- **Shelter** - efficient structure designs that require fewer resources to transport, store, build, heat, and cool
- **Transport** - reducing and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions due to travel, to and from the event
- **Waste** - reducing, reusing, recycling, pre-cycling, upcycling, and composting
- **Water** - closed-loop water management systems, for efficient water usage and disposal

BLAST Criteria

For the current list of BLAST criteria, see the [2025 BLAST Criteria List](#). This list is by no means exhaustive - you’ll have plenty of opportunity to tell the story of your camp’s sustainability initiatives and come up with your own innovative solutions.

BLAST criteria are split into 3 categories:

- **Measurement**
- **Objectives**
- **Acculturation Objectives**

Measurement

“What gets measured gets managed” - the first step towards reducing your environmental footprint.

Objectives

Most criteria will be measured with a simple, “yes we accomplished this” or “no we didn’t accomplish this.”

Acculturation Objectives

These are “yes” / “no” objectives specifically related to education or ecological acculturation. See the section on [Ecological Acculturation](#) for more details.

Ecological Acculturation

The effort to build a sustainable culture, both within theme camps and throughout the greater Burning Man community, is a key focus of BLAST. We encourage you to think about how you might acculturate camp members to make sustainable decisions individually, provide educational opportunities, and promote a culture of environmental awareness. Credits towards certification can be earned for acculturation projects in any of the 6 focus areas, and these are often some of the quickest and easiest initiatives to implement. Here are some examples of what acculturation might look like:

- **Pre-event** - encouraging camp members to plan their burn for sustainability
- **Participation / Communal Effort** - encouraging camp-wide participation in building sustainable infrastructure
- **Workshops** - holding sustainability-related workshops and talks on playa
- **Showcasing Projects** - being available to show off your sustainability projects to other Burners on playa
- **Post-event** - measuring and evaluating how campers bring their new, sustainable habits into the default world

Prerequisites

To apply for BLAST certification, you should take these steps first:

- Appoint a **Sustainability Lead**
- Be a [Placed](#) camp

- Agree to [Data Sharing](#) and documentation of projects

Sustainability Lead

You should have a designated Sustainability Lead who we can reach out to before, during, and after the event. This person is responsible for submitting the BLAST application and communicating with the BLAST team, although of course they shouldn't be the only one working on sustainability! The more camp members you can engage in green camp projects, the better (see [Ecological Acculturation](#)).

Placement

Please participate in the placement process as usual. BLAST applications will be due later than the placement deadline for returning camps.

Application Form

Here's a link to the [BLAST Application Form](#)! We ask that you fill this out by August 1st. If you need additional help, please reach out to blast@greentheme.camp.

Green Camp Support

We want to make sure you have the support you need to bring your sustainability projects to play! And also, it benefits us all to share knowledge and learn from each other as we plan for a greener burn. As you go about your planning, here are some bullet points to consider for each new project or green initiative:

- **Resources** - what materials will you need? how many people? what's your budget?
- **Implementation** - what does the implementation process look like?
- **Measurement** - how will you determine whether it was a success?
- **Acculturation** - how will you educate and acculturate campmates and other Burners?

You might be wondering, what does the "ideal" green theme camp actually look like? The answer is, we don't really know! We anticipate camps becoming greener every year, so it's up to you as innovators and creatives to help us dream up the regenerative theme camps of the future. After all, Burning Man is all about expanding our concept of what's possible! That said, we've come up with the following aspirational goals for each focus area:

- **Food** - campers consume food sourced entirely from the most local, direct, responsible, and regenerative producers possible in appropriate quantities to eliminate food waste
- **Power** - camps generate 100% of power needs from renewable energy systems that can be deployed back into the default world

- **Shelter** - camps maximize the use of space and minimize the use of resources to create safe, comfortable, multi-purpose shelter solutions that meet emerging default world needs
- **Transport** - camps reduce the environmental impact of their travel and equipment transportation as much as possible, and offset the impact they do have through supporting regenerative activities in the default world
- **Waste** - camps utilize reusable items whenever possible, creating closed-loop resource management systems that contribute zero waste to landfills and support environmentally regenerative activities
- **Water** - camps take efforts to reduce their fresh water usage as much as possible while implementing safe, closed-loop water systems to meet their remaining needs

Camp Visits

We plan to visit as many BLAST camps as we can on Tuesday and Wednesday of burn week. However, we're limited by the size of our volunteer team, so we prioritize new BLAST camps, and camps doing something particularly interesting or creative around sustainability.

If we visit your camp, you'll have the opportunity to give 2-3 of our BLAST volunteers a tour of your green infrastructure projects, and inspire them with your amazing sustainability efforts. We'll help you document your work - with photos, video - whatever you prefer - so you have a record for yourself and to share with other camps. Come up with something that didn't fit neatly on our application form? Now's your chance to tell us the whole story!

The on-playa BLAST visit is also a chance to reflect - What went well? What went according to plan, and what didn't? Did you implement the projects you said you were going to? Were your estimates or predictions correct, or a bit off? What would you like to improve upon next year?

Receiving Your Certification

After the burn, we'll review all the data we've gathered about your camp, and calculate the [certification levels](#) you've reached in each focus area. BLAST Radius results will be posted online as soon as we've finalized them.

Data Sharing

When it comes to creating a fully sustainable and regenerative Black Rock City, communal effort is the name of the game. We'll all need to share ideas, learn from each other, experiment, and iterate on each other's work. To that end, please share data generated by your camp, and open source your sustainability projects by contributing to the [Resource Guide](#)!