

Burning Man/Fly Ranch Public Benefit

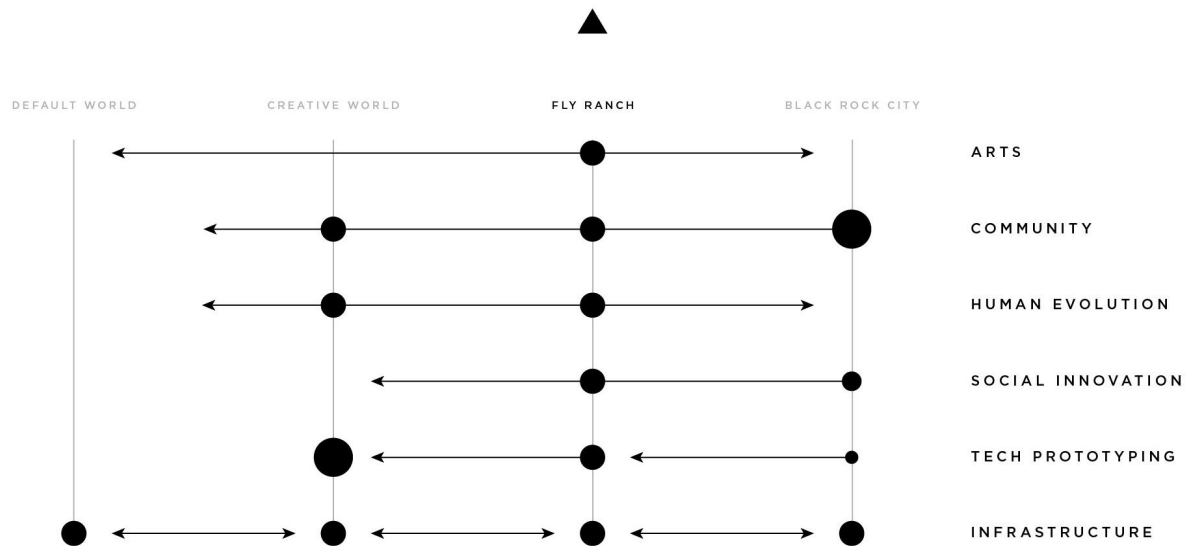


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1) Introduction

Black Rock City has been cited in [academic studies](#) for its benefits and structural novelty. A majority of respondents of the Black Rock City [Census](#) state that they have had a “transformative experience” during the event. Fly Ranch has many of the same benefits as Black Rock City, and others. The [Nevada economic development](#) plan has a summary of public benefit:

- “Boost Nevada’s international representation and relationships”
- “Catalyze innovation in core and emerging industries”
- “Increase opportunity through education and workforce development”

The BLM mentions “Increased capacity for artistic expression” as a public benefit.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has [useful, longer guidelines](#) on public benefit (see page 136). Thus this document assesses the BLM's guidelines and shows how Burning Man Project and Fly Ranch create public benefit. We work with the BLM and neighbor on BLM land. As a proxy, the BLM guidelines make sense.

2) Visitor Experiences

- **Enjoying natural landscapes**

- Fly Ranch is home to geysers, animals, wildlife, 150 pools, 800 acres of marsh, and other delicate ecosystems that over 2,000 people visited in 2018.¹

3) Community Resident Experiences

- **Building community**

- A [study](#) in *Qualitative Sociology* found that storytelling at Burning Man “can combat disenchantment by promoting consideration of agency and meaning-making.”
- [Research in Consumer Behavior](#) found “nomadic spirituality among the citizens of Black Rock City, Nevada.” Fly Ranch has hosted storytelling events.²

- **Nurturing growth**

- [Basic and Applied Social Psychology](#) has found positive benefits at Black Rock City: “Compared to typical emotion regulation use at home, at Burning Man participants reported decreased suppression use and increased reappraisal use.”
- Fly Ranch recreates these benefits in our programming.³

4) Personal Benefits

- **Health improvements**

¹ The BLM notes that “Savoring the total sensory (sight, sound, and smell) experience of a natural landscape” is a public benefit, as is “Enjoying a wide variety of environments within a single park or recreation area.”

² The BLM notes that “feeling like I belong to this community and liking it” and “sharing our cultural heritage with new people” are benefits. Burning Man plans to engage the local community in our decision-making and planning, which is in line with the BLM's public benefit goals of “Greater community involvement in recreation and other land use decisions” and “Improved community integration.”

³ The BLM's handbook notes that public benefit projects should have personal and spiritual benefits such as “Nurturing my own spiritual values and growth” and “Diminished mental anxiety”.

- People volunteering at Fly work, exercise, and soak in the hot springs.
- **Creative development**
 - “[T]he Burning Man organizational form [codified value and practices](#) that relax boundaries on creative potential.” Fly is similarly managed.⁴
- **Natural resource stewardship**
 - Black Rock Solar is a Burning Man affiliate, now known as Black Rock Labs.
 - They put in [112 solar installations](#) around Nevada, creating 7.4 MW of renewable energy, 13 million kWh per year, generating around \$1M in annual electricity purchase savings.
 - This has led to around 6.5K tons of CO2 reductions per year, taking around 2,100 homes off-grid.
 - Fly Ranch uses solar power, and plans to continue in this direction by installing wind, solar, geothermal, agricultural, and water projects.⁵
- **Self-reliance**
 - Burning Man allows [consumers to escape the market](#) with “communal practices that distance consumption from broader rhetorics of efficiency and rationality.”
 - “Although Burning Man’s participants materially support the market, they successfully construct a temporary hypercommunity from which to practice divergent social logics.”
 - Fly Ranch hosts gatherings based on these same components.⁶
- **Artistic expression**
 - Burning Man [creates](#) “beliefs and practices that promote artistic prosumption” (art produced by consumers) and “an inclusive community logic.”⁷
 - Fly Ranch is host to multiple art pieces created by the community.
- **Environmental education**
 - Fly Ranch treats wastewater, compost, and uses composting toilets.

⁴ The BLM lists “Personal development and growth” as a public benefit.

⁵ The BLM supports projects that create a “Greater cultivation of natural resource stewardship ethic.”

⁶ The BLM’s guide lists “Greater self-reliance” as a benefit, which Burning Man embraces.

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- These projects serve as functional, reproducible projects with educational benefits.⁸
- **Leadership development**
 - Burning Man’s medical team treats thousands of people every year, and published [research](#): “Our experience with Burning Man 2011 may aid planners with similar events.”
 - Marines have [attended](#) and [studied](#) Burning Man for logistics leadership development.
 - Fly Ranch has produced collaborative open-source documentation that is relied on by other land management projects.⁹

5) Environmental benefits

- **Ecological operations**
 - Use of the space helps develop a sense of place, promoting a greater understanding of the outdoors, and nurturing individual spiritual values and growth.¹⁰
- **Sustainable ecosystems**
 - Fly Ranch is preserving the landscape for animals and wildlife, and using the space for educational purposes and experiences that support an appreciation of the area.¹¹
- **Reduced human impact**
 - We incorporate and discuss environmental stewardship in everything we do.¹²

⁸ The BLM classifies “Enlarged sense of personal accountability for acting responsibly on public lands” and “Greater environmental awareness and sensitivity” as public benefits.

⁹ The BLM classifies “Improved leadership abilities” and “Improved teamwork and cooperation” as public benefits. Burning Man participants regularly develop teams and cooperate to build hundreds of art cars, theme camps, and art installations. We plan to encourage teamwork and group projects at Fly Ranch as well.

¹⁰ Burning Man Project agrees with the BLM’s aspiration for “Increased ecologically friendly tourism operations”, and aims to invite local organizations, schools, and community groups to use the property for camping, education, and gatherings.

¹¹ In line with the BLM’s support for “Conservation of entire sustainable ecosystems,” we meet the BLM’s goal of “Greater protection of fish, wildlife, and plant habitat from growth, development, and public use impacts.” We manage invasive species, which is in line with the BLM’s public benefit of “Reduced spread of invasive species such as plants, insects, and aquatic organisms.”

¹² The BLM notes that “Reduced looting and vandalism of historic/ prehistoric sites”, “Reduced negative human impacts such as litter, vegetative trampling, and unplanned trails” and “Increased ecologically friendly tourism operations”

6) Household and Community Benefits

- **Cultural exchange**

- Fly Ranch has attracted visitors from dozens of countries in the past year, and will continue to bring in international, multi-disciplinary individuals.¹³

7) Economic Benefits

- **Economic stability**

- [Research](#) in *New Media & Society* found that Burning Man serves “to shape and legitimate the collaborative manufacturing processes...”
- Fast Company [notes](#) that Burning Man “has a thing or two to teach about how to inspire creative people and create a great product.”
- Fly Ranch has hosted innovative discussions on Burning Man’s processes.¹⁴

- **Local economic growth**

- The [WSJ has found](#) that “attendees with money to burn are now eagerly awaited by local businesses.”
- The Reno-Gazette Journal [notes](#) that “The arts add creative and innovative jobs like those at the Generator, where Burning Man art is created and assembled.”
- The Daily Beast [found](#) that “The change in Reno’s relationship to Burning Man is due, in part, to the fact that Burning Man itself helped spark a revitalization of Reno when the city was facing a bleak future.”
- The Reno-Gazette Journal [details](#) how “Burning Man festival ignites Reno’s art scene”.
- Local businesses in Gerlach have reported an increase in spending, as Fly Ranch has at times brought over 200 people through town of 80 in a weekend.¹⁵

- **Increased tax revenue**

¹³ These projects support the BLM’s goal of “Greater interaction with visitors from different cultures” and “Reduced social alienation.”

¹⁴ The BLM has found that “Improved local economic stability” is a public benefit. Fly Ranch could generate hundreds of local jobs.

¹⁵ The BLM has found that “Improved local economic stability” is a public benefit.

- Burning Man Project pays millions of dollars a year in government fees. Any projects on the new property would generate tax revenue.¹⁶
- [This graph](#) shows the mean estimate of reported spending in Nevada per participant multiplied by yearly population numbers.
- The error bars represent a 95% [confidence interval](#). The data comes from the [Burning Man Census](#). Fly Ranch could generate more distributed revenue.

¹⁶ The BLM classifies “Increased local tax revenue” as a public benefit.