

Firefly Survey 2018

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Basic Overview

We collected 420 respondents, roughly 1/4 of the event. Note that a 25% response rate is more than twice as high as most national survey firms. We asked about 50 questions across several categories:

- 1) Firefly basics
- 2) Demographics
- 3) Safety and Comfort
- 4) Participation
- 5) Experience in 2018
- 6) Looking Forward

As well, we conducted a simple randomized experiment related to perceptions of Conduct Committee which I'll discuss at the end.

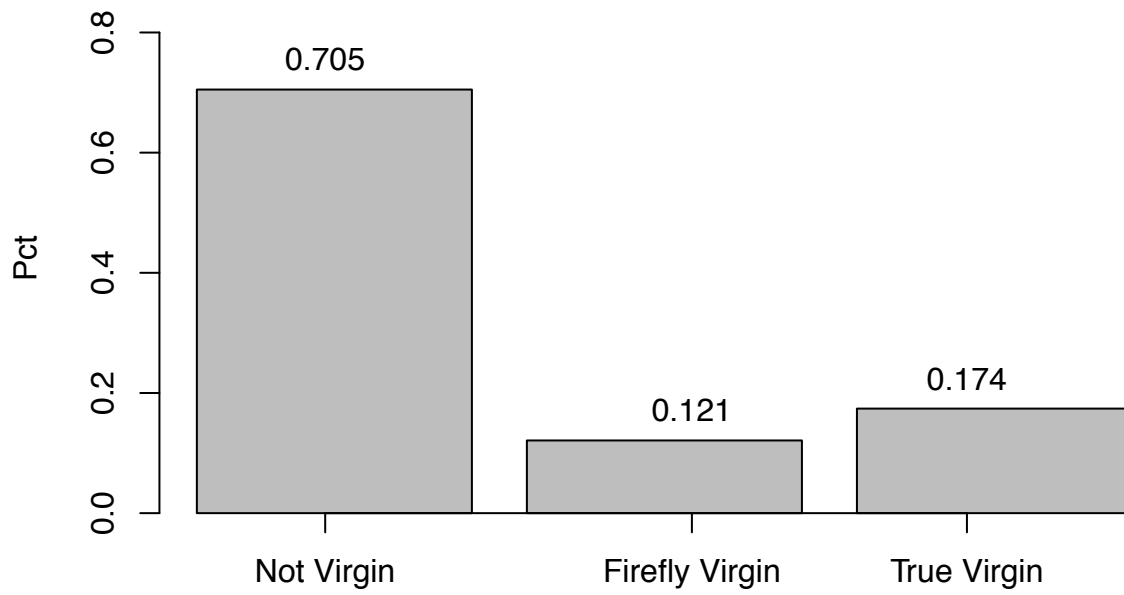
This is the third year I've run the survey, so alongside the 2018 data, I have 475 survey responses from 2016 and 2017 which I incorporate into time series analyses.

In previous years, I've analyzed the Firefly survey as if it were a random sample of the event, which it is not. This year, I implemented entropy balancing weights. Using some of the ticketing information (first name to impute gender, date of birth, and number of previous Fireflies attended) I constructed weights so that overrepresented survey respondents count for less and underrepresented ones count for more. All further analyses include these weights.

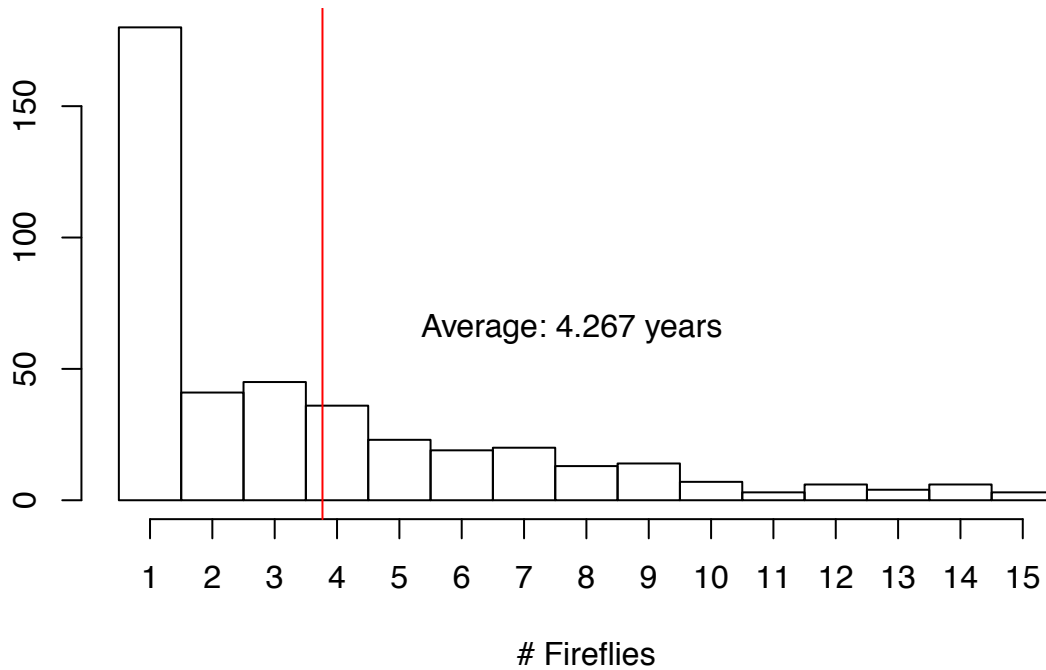
Firefly Basics

Firefly was more than 12.7% newcomers in 2018, despite an average of 4 years of attendance. Some terminology: A Firefly Virgin is someone who has never been to Firefly, but has been to other burns. A True Virgin is someone who has never been to any burn at all.

Firefly Virgins



How many Fireflies have you attended, including this one?

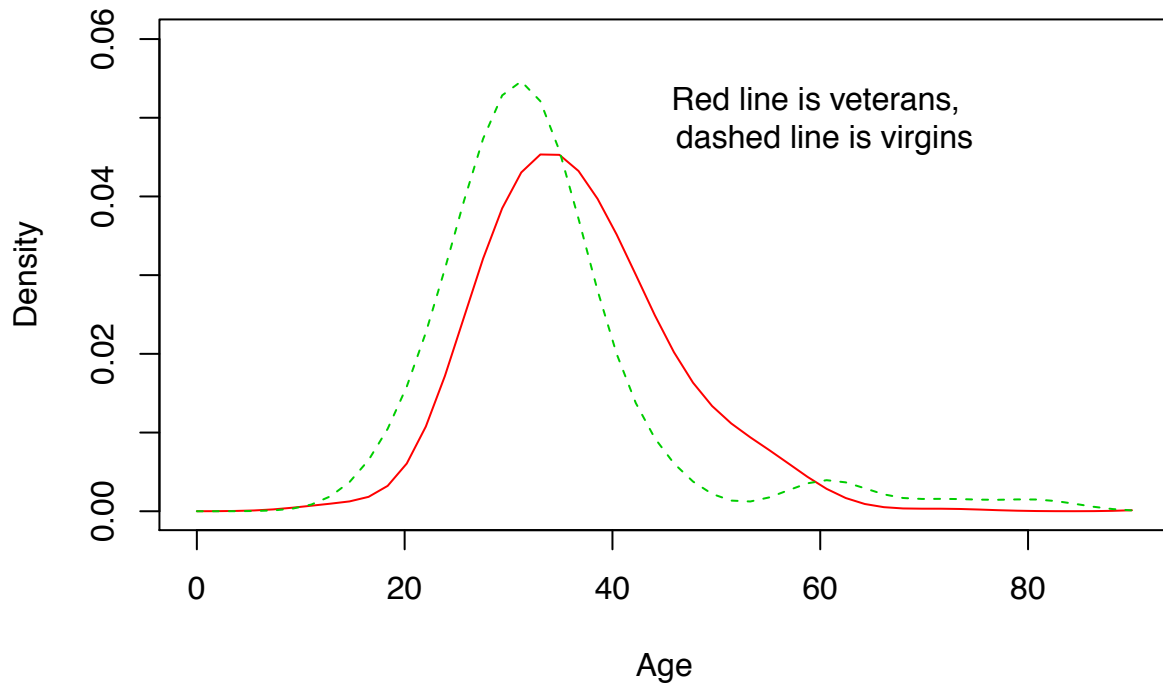


Demographics

Firefly 2018 was 2.4 percent Hispanic, 86.2 percent White, 2.4 percent African-American, 3.3 percent Asian, and 6.2 percent some other category. 7.4 percent identify as belonging to two or more races.

Additionally, 83.8 percent identify as either male or female. The rest mostly identify as non-binary or genderqueer.

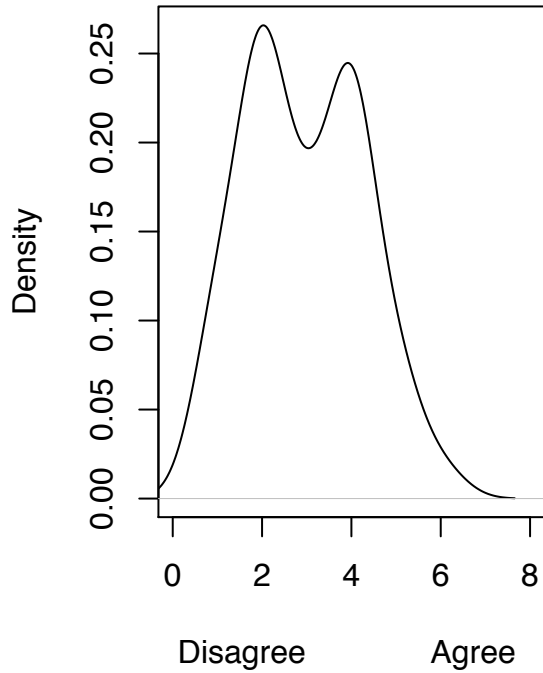
Regarding age, Fireflies have a right-skewed distribution:



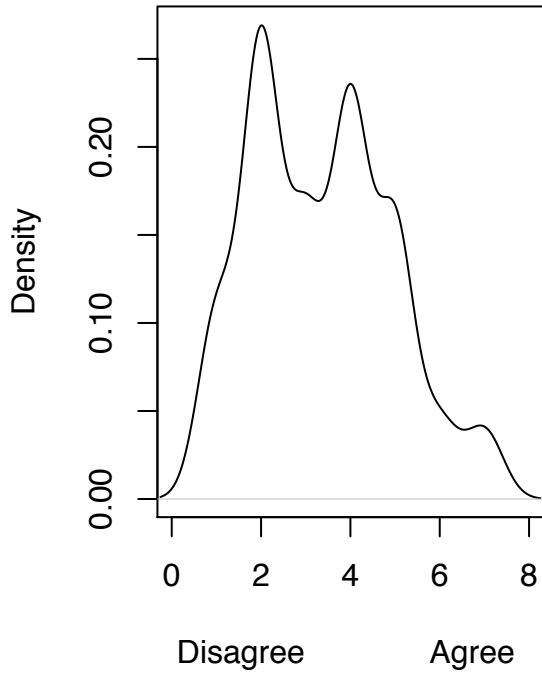
Comfort & Safety

I asked respondents, on a 7-point scale, to tell me how they felt about Firefly. Is it comfortable? Is it safe? Is it well-managed? Is it crowded? Do they plan on coming back? 85.6 percent said that they Agree or Strongly Agree that Firefly is safe; 81.8percent said that they Agree or Strongly Agree that Firefly is comfortable;92.9percent said that they Agree or Strongly Agree that Firefly is well-managed; 86.4percent said that they will probably or definitely return. An interesting side note is that Firefly virgins were, on average, more comfortable than the veterans.

Crowded: Firefly Virgins



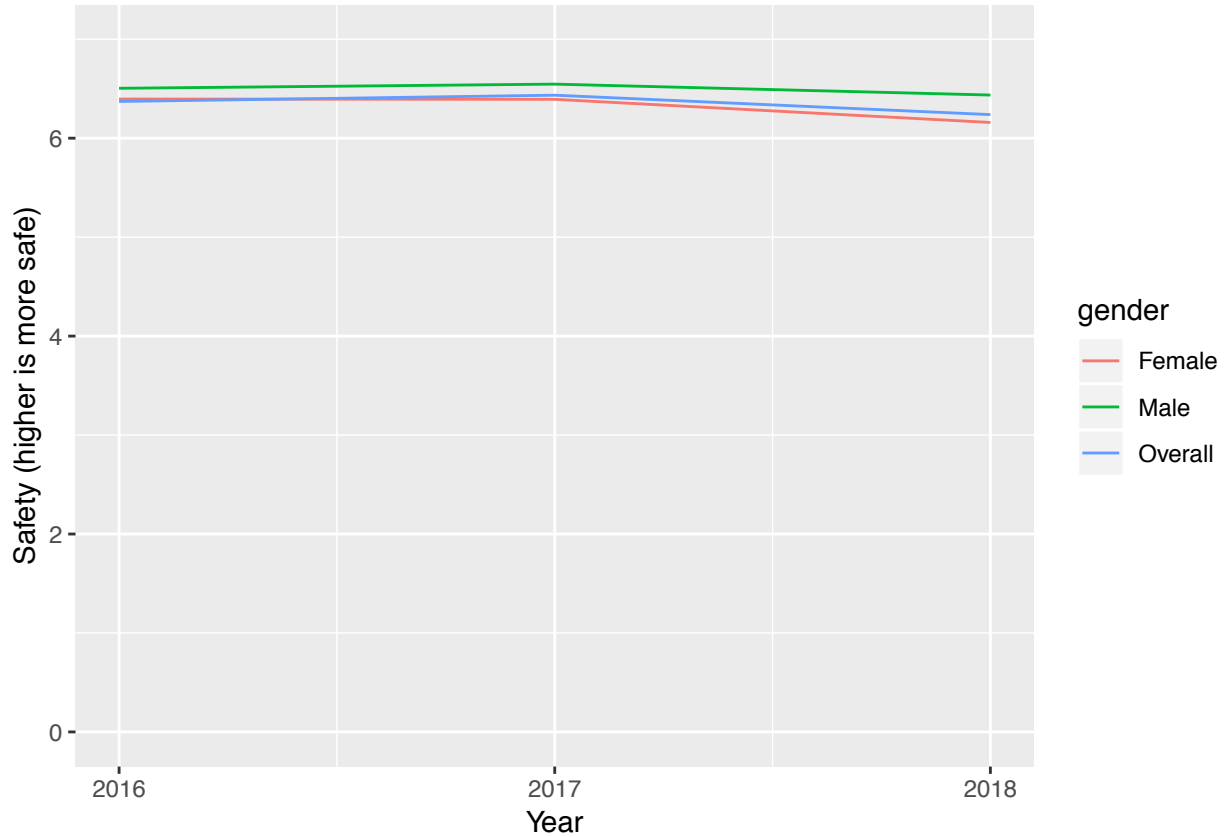
Crowded: Firefly Veterans



I also asked two questions related to health and first aid. 74.4 percent said that they Agree or Strongly Agree that they feel prepared to deal with health problems at Firefly, and 77.4 percent said that they Agree or Strongly Agree that they know how and whom to find regarding help with first aid.

We can look at how safety and comfort vary by gender as well, and note that those who identify as female are slightly but not significantly less likely to describe Firefly as safe than those who identify as male.

Finally, we can explore how safety, and safety by gender, have changed over time.



Participation: How much money did we spend in Bethel?

I asked respondents to estimate how much money they spent in Bethel, then I did some statistical adjustments to account for survey nonresponse.

I estimate that we spent 60507 in Bethel and environs.

In comparison, in 2016 we spent 33455 and in 2017 we spent 69656.

We might be concerned that by expanding the event cap, we are diluting the participatory nature of Firefly. To examine this, we can look at how much virgins are spending on Firefly compared to veterans, and whether the big increase in size in 2018 resulted in more virgins who spent little on Firefly.

On average, 2018 Firefly virgins spent 36 in Bethel, compared to 17 in 2016 and 49 in 2017.

Participation: Taking the Bus

This year, 0.148 took the bus at least once. Of those, 0.952 will either probably or definitely take the bus again. Of the people who did not take the bus, the most common reasons were Early Arrival, or the need to haul gear. A smaller number of people come from an area not serviced by the bus. Two helpful suggests from the comments are: 1) Add a bus stop somewhere in between Boston and Bethel; 2) More widely publicize the bus cargo truck (and subsequently get a bigger one). Of the people who do not intend to take the bus again, the need to bring more gear was the most common reason. Side note: while true virgins were more likely to take the bus, Firefly virgins who have been to other burns were much less likely to do so.

Participation: Volunteering

As well, 70.2 percent of people report being on either the board or volunteering for a core, and 20.7 percent of people report attending a work weekend. Among volunteers, the average amount of time spent was 8.165 hours.

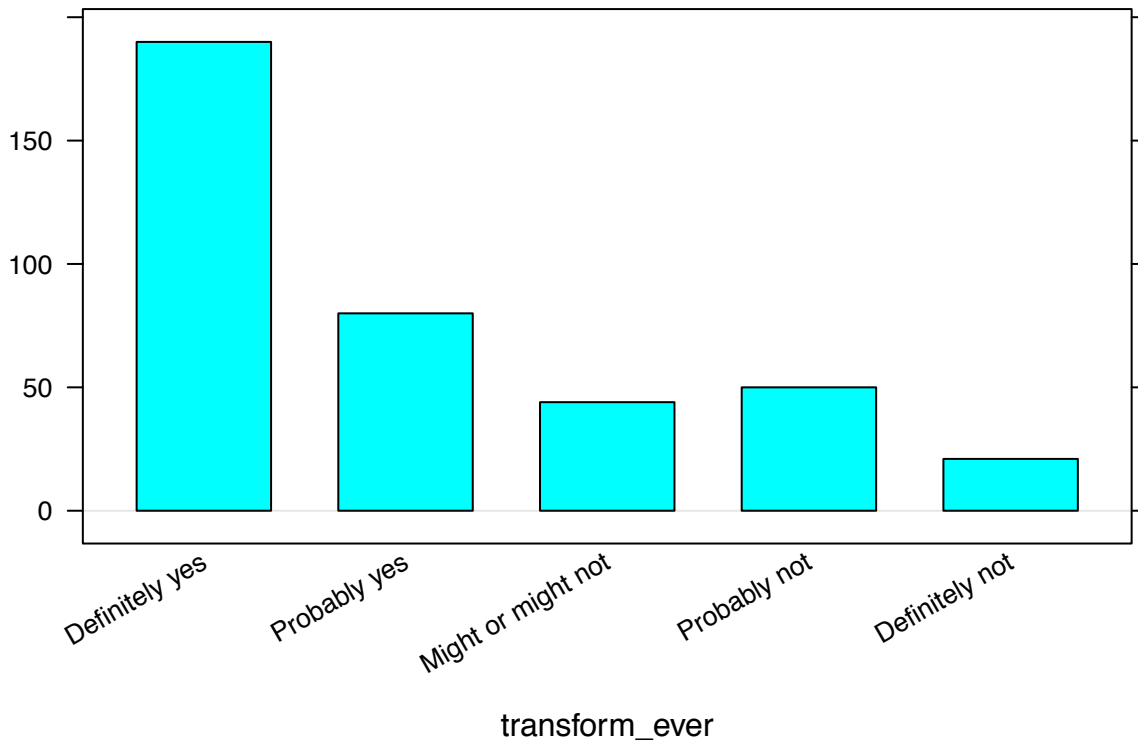
I solicited comments for why people don't volunteer. Among the non-volunteers, 8.8 percent of people cite a complicated online process, 11.4 percent of people don't know what each core does, 12.9 percent of people couldn't figure out how to sign up during the event, 12.6 percent of people didn't have time to sign up after getting a late ticket offer, and 3.6 percent of people were uncomfortable with volunteering. 23.1 percent of people had too many other responsibilities.

I also asked people what would make them volunteer more. Understandably, a common suggestion was to have people walking around offering shifts. Other interesting suggestions included shorter shifts, more shifts during the day. A lot of people would like a better online sign-up system.

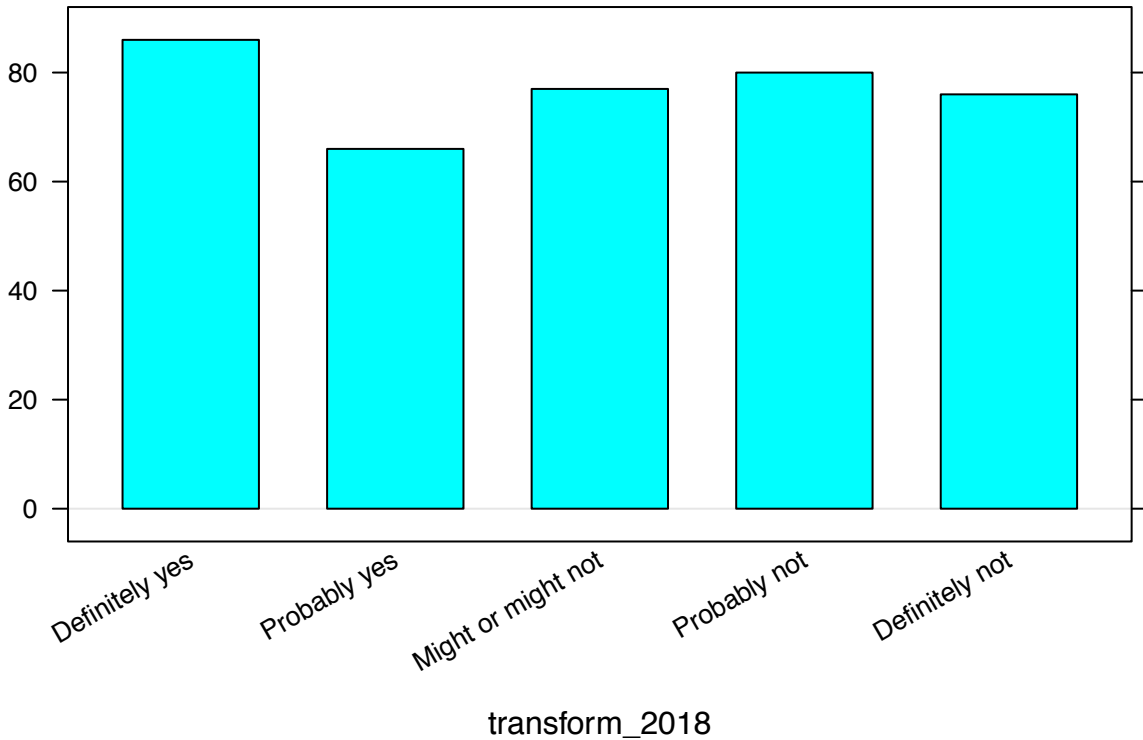
Firefly 2018 Experience: Transformational Experiences

I asked participants if they have had "transformational experiences" at Firefly, or at Burns in general. 0.643 report either definitely or probably having a transformative experience at a Burn at least once, and 0.386 report either definitely or probably having a transformative experience at Firefly 2018.

Transformational Experiences at Burns



Transformational Experiences at Firefly 2018



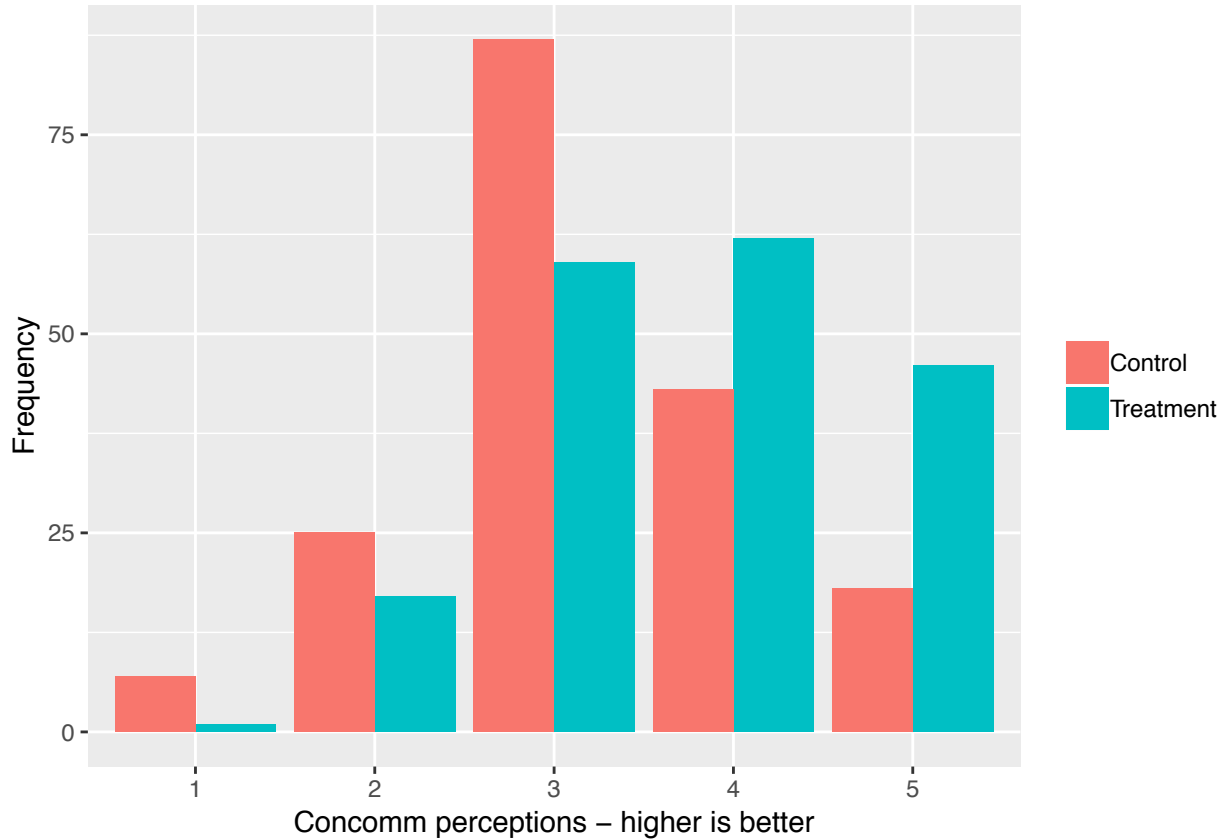
Conduct Committee Experiment & Consent Analysis

Consent and Conduct Committee have been hot-button issues this past year. I asked several questions related to Firefly’s handling of consent and support for Conduct Committee to capture shifting opinion on these topics.

The first question asks respondents whether Firefly leadership promotes consent as a community value the right amount, or whether it should do so more or less actively. 110 believe that the leadership should promote it more actively, while 13 believe the leadership should promote it less actively and 260 believe the leadership promotes consent the right amount. Looking at how this varies by gender, differences are all within the statistical margin of error.

The second question asks respondents the following question: “Do you think Firefly does a good job, a bad job, or somewhere in between at excluding people who violate the Code of Conduct?” Overall, 365 believe that Conduct Committee does either a somewhat good or extremely good job at excluding people, while 196 believe they do either a somewhat bad or extremely bad job at it.

To assess whether this finding is the result of true perceptions or simply misinformation, I embedded within this question an experiment. Half of the respondents, prior to indicating their beliefs, were given the following informational prompt: “For reference, Conduct Committee fielded reports on 6 unique actionable complaints between Firefly 2017 and Firefly 2018. Firefly issued 1 ban, 1 ticket revocation pending further review, 1 warning, and reached a mediated agreement in 1 case. One report remained under investigation, and 3 people remain indefinitely banned from previous years.”



Cargo Truck proposal

On last year’s survey, a common thread in discussions of carpooling was that people could not carpool more because they needed to haul their stuff in their cars. This year, I asked respondents if they would consider renting space on a cargo truck, available to anyone attending the event, and instead pack their car with passengers.

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##
##           Extremely likely           Extremely unlikely
##                   30                   125
## Neither likely nor unlikely           Somewhat likely
##                   82                   103
##           Somewhat unlikely
##                   61
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I find that 133 respondents report that they are either extremely likely or somewhat likely to reserve space on that truck; since the survey represents less than 1/3, of the event, anticipated demand may be as much as three times that number.

Ticketing improvements?

Ticketing is a perennial source of contention. But how much of this is internet bluster? In fact, 327 people are either extremely or moderately satisfied, which is 0.8627968 percent of the people who answered this question.

My notes from reading comments

I read through a lot of comments and tried to summarize some of the key themes.

- 1) First time Fireflies are uncomfortable volunteering, and DPW/rangers have high barriers to entry
- 2) Year round advice: One official precompression event in the winter to fire up everyone's enthusiasm earlier
- 3) "Those fire safety guys are jerks and won't let me start forest fires."
- 4) "All I can say is thank you. It took me 60 years to experience true freedom. From my perspective you did a wonderful job holding the space and creating a set and setting for which to ^^^^^, to watch a storm breath, and to dance naked around a fire on a starry night without giving a thought to how I looked on the outside while my soul flew to the stars and back."
- 5) People are upset about kids