Firefly Arts Collective Survey Results

Firefly Survey Team

2014

Table of Contents

Topic	Slide
Methodology	3
Key Takeaways	4
Demographics	6
Attendance of Regionals and Related Events	8
Year Round Firefly Activity	9
First Years	11
Transparency	12
Perceptions	14
Event Logistics	15
Field	16
Shuttle	17
Carpool	18
Volunteering	19
Propaganda	21
Rangers	22
DPW	23
Placement	24
Art Grants	27
Temple	30
Stage	32
ARTifacts	33

Methodology

- Data Analysis
 - 279 total responses (from ~900 attendees)
 - 236 qualified we have an engaged community that's a 26% response rate!
 - 43 disqualified surveys from people who did not attend Firefly in 2014
 - 100% responses were used to draw correlations in data using the Pearson Chi-squared method
 - Terms like 'majority' or 'most' reflect >60% of responses
 - Comments quoted here are thematically representative
- Channels advertised
 - Announce list
 - Blink list
 - Website
 - Facebook

Overall Key Takeaways

Demographics

- More than half of all respondents have only attended Firefly for 1 to 3 years.
- First years found out about Firefly through word of mouth and largely felt welcomed by the community, though some commented on the cliques within various camps or groups.
- Vast majority of respondents come from Somerville, MA.
- Majority of survey respondents are between 25 and 35 years of age.

Community Activity

- Majority have attended FIGMENT Boston, Boston Decom, Burning Man, and Boston Burner Meet & Greet.
- Year round Firefly events have high awareness and attendance.
- Comments suggested respondents want more activities to build an interactive, connected community.

Transparency

- •Opinions on transparency diverged, with the data suggesting some disconnect between the board and the community, and indicating an overall lack of visibility into what the board does.
- While data indicates that respondents want Firefly to continue to pursue Burning Man regional event status, comments came out strongly against it or indicated a neutral view point, with many respondents wanting more detail.

Perceptions

•Respondents largely felt that Firefly is a well-managed event, felt safe, and did not feel crowded in 2014.

Event Logistics

•In terms of gate, Fireflies were largely aware of the hired security and are mostly split on whether security involvement in gate procedures would negatively impact or have no impact on their Firefly experience.

Field

- Fireflies largely agree that establishing a Center Camp in the field would be a good idea, but a healthy minority disagreed or had no opinion. Commentary about the use of field shows a pretty consistent opinion that if there was more to do in the field, then it might draw more use.
- Discourse over having a Center Camp (whether in the field or elsewhere) indicates a need for a place to post volunteer shifts and events.

Transportation

• The majority chose not to take the shuttle one or both ways to Firefly but carpooling and rideshare logistics seemed to work well, with some comments about creating more visibility for the rideshare page.

Volunteering

- Majority of Fireflies volunteered 4-6 hours, with a healthy percentage volunteering more than that.
- •In terms of barriers to sign-up, many cited that they wanted to do more but there was no straightforward access to sign up on-site.

Key Takeaways for Cores

Rangers

•Less than 30% of respondents experienced a situation where they needed a ranger at Firefly, and almost 100% those who needed a ranger found one and found the interaction to be positive.

Propaganda

- •The 2014 guide was awesome and allowed Firefly to save budget and paper.
- •The export-to-phone function was used and found to be helpful.

DPW

- Majority of respondents thought the drainage ditches worked well.
- Falling/Fallen tree handling was split evenly between people who had no opinion and people who thought it was handled well.

Placement

- Most respondents were part of or associated with a theme camp. In terms of zoning, a current hot issue, Fireflies largely said that this is worth trying out or that it would have a positive impact. However, there was a large minority who said zoning would have a negative impact or had no opinion, so this topic will likely need to be further explored.
- •Generally, respondents who indicated a disinterest in zoning already belong to theme camps.

Art Grants

- Majority of respondents were satisfied with the grant process but there is room for improvement. Funding timetables were clearly communicated and suitable for the scale of the project, though some respondents flagged significant challenges, such as projects being only partially funded.
- •In terms of what Fireflies want to see funded, there were many responses ranging from lasers to fire to workshops and skillshares. Other than grant money, respondents thought that support could be provided for logistics, promotions, community involvement and a cross-community exchange with other regionals.

Temple

• Fireflies largely want the Temple to be a place for reflection and to have a sense of calm.

Stage

•Though under-used, Fireflies want more access to live music and suggestions were made to improve signup visibility, provide better infrastructure, and to have a better overall setup to facilitate performance.

ARTifacts

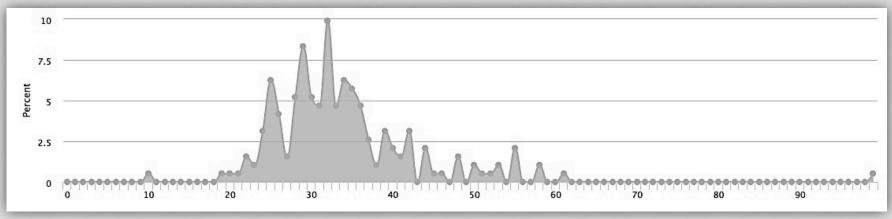
• Fireflies want to see ARTifacts displayed for the community.

Demographics

> 80% of survey respondents live in MA, the vast majority of them in Somerville.



➤ 62% of survey respondents are between 25 and 35 years of age.



Demographics (continued)

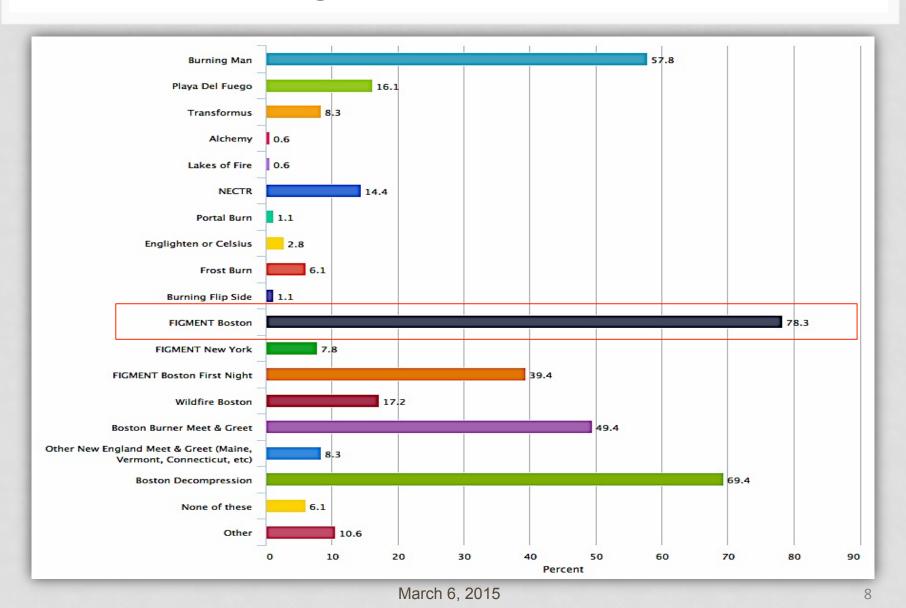
Newer Fireflies (1-3yrs)

- 59% of all respondents have attended Firefly for 1 to 3 years. After 3 years, we see a diminishing rate of return.
- Heard about the event through Word of Mouth.
- Don't know who is on the board or that there are meeting minutes and policies posted online, but are well aware of the online events guide and found it useful.
- Took the shuttle.
- · Camped in the area past Diode.
- · Could use help signing up to volunteer

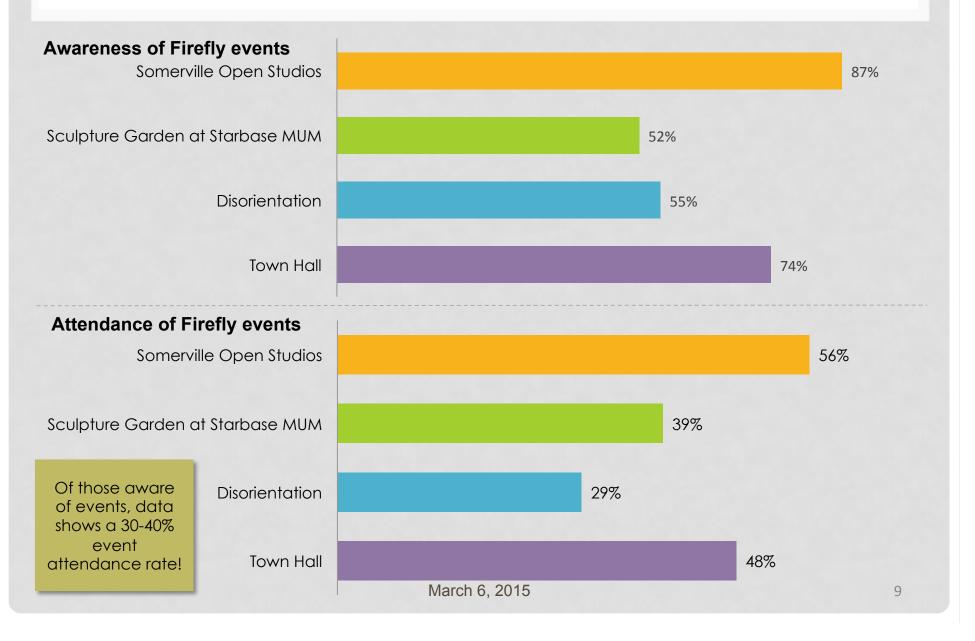
Returning Fireflies (8+yrs)

- 9% of all respondents have attended Firefly for 8 or more years, with 6% of them having attended for 10+ years.
- Felt that the board was representative of the community and that their voices were heard by the board.
- Felt Firefly was a well managed event.
- Felt that having hired security involved in gate process would negatively impact their experience.
- Thought that Firefly would benefit from a Center Camp.
- Did not take the shuttle.
- · Volunteered on a core or the board.
- Were aware of the camping area past diode but did not camp there.
- · Had no issues with art placement.
- Felt the art grants funding timetables were clearly communicated and suitable.

Attendance at regionals and related events



Year Round Firefly Activity



Year Round Firefly Activity (continued)

"Town Hall / Firefly meetings waste attendees' time with boring presentations. People who value their time should bail. I recommend aiming to have this meeting be 100% interactive: focus on good listening skills, facilitation, and minimizing defensive responses. This is your face-to-face opportunity to get feedback from your community; use it wisely: listen, help other people feel good about participating! I want Decompression and other events to have quiet hours where it is possible to see and talk to people. Ask someone who is sensitive to noise what quiet sounds like, not someone who is expecting all dance party. Give live music the stage in early hours. Have breaks. Facilitate communication, build community!"

"Would be nice to have a "decom-like" event in the spring. Music/art/etc. Could be useful to promote principles pre-FF."

"I think a firefly decom or precom could be helpful. As well as an orientation/meet and greet."

"Presentations of process in making large interactive art projects happen."

"What about a drive-by gallery, pop-up experience? We could simply arrive in a neighborhood with a few vans of stuff, Set up some kind of cool art experience for people walking by, then jump back in our vans and do it somewhere else. Obviously this means the art must be as mobile as a M*A*S*H unit, and the stealthiness and surprise adds a really neat element."

"Gallery"

"workshops and teaching experiences; display of our art to wider community audiences"

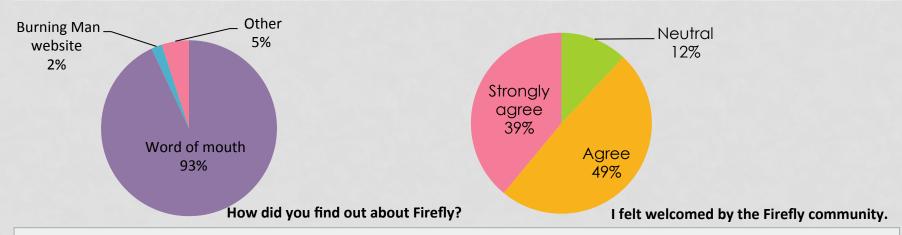
"Parade float in Honk!!"

"Wintertime art/music"

"Meet and greets"

collaboration with figment

First Years



"Though I do feel like some camps were more private and cliquey than others, I personally felt warm and welcome. I have never been in such an open environment before. Many of the people who crossed my path I have known for years, I have been to parties and gone dancing all night but nothing like this. For six days I lived in a fairy tale world where love was abundant and we were all playing together. I've never felt so accepted and so comfortable in my life."

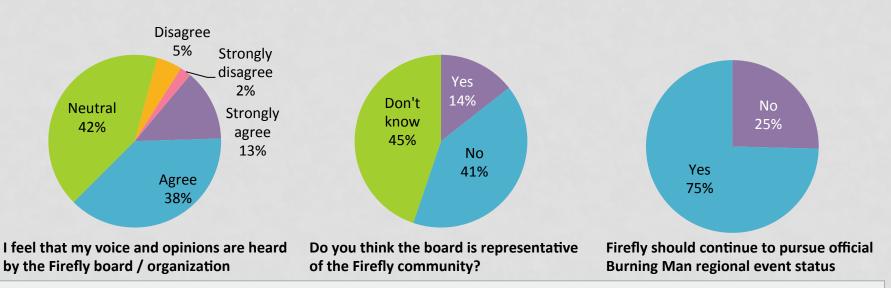
"Honestly, I think most of the groups are pretty cliquey."

"I would have liked to see more interaction between the camps."

"Definitely felt welcomed but **initially felt a bit out of place** because it's a (for a festival) small group of people many of whom also know each other back home."

"There's still a lot of assumed knowledge -- it was hard to get the Rangers to explain what the heck they are there for. I thought they were there to help setting up camps (knots, fire pits, woodcutting, trail clearing, etc.)."

Transparency



"While I'm not familiar with the process, I do think they do a good job with Firefly. There is trust that Firefly will be good without me having to dissect every decision the board makes :D"

"When there were things I didn't know, I was confident that I could have known had I sought the info."

While ¾ of respondents indicated support for official Burning Man status going forward, nearly all who left comments were neutral or against it:

"I don't like the direction of the BMORG. At best, they think they can control the One Ring when they court superrich people. At worst, they're cynical and trying to maximize the sales price of their share of the pie. Either way, the dream died long ago. It's time to go in our own direction. **We're large enough and strong enough to do our own thing.**"

Transparency (continued)

Percentage of respondents NOT aware of board-related activities

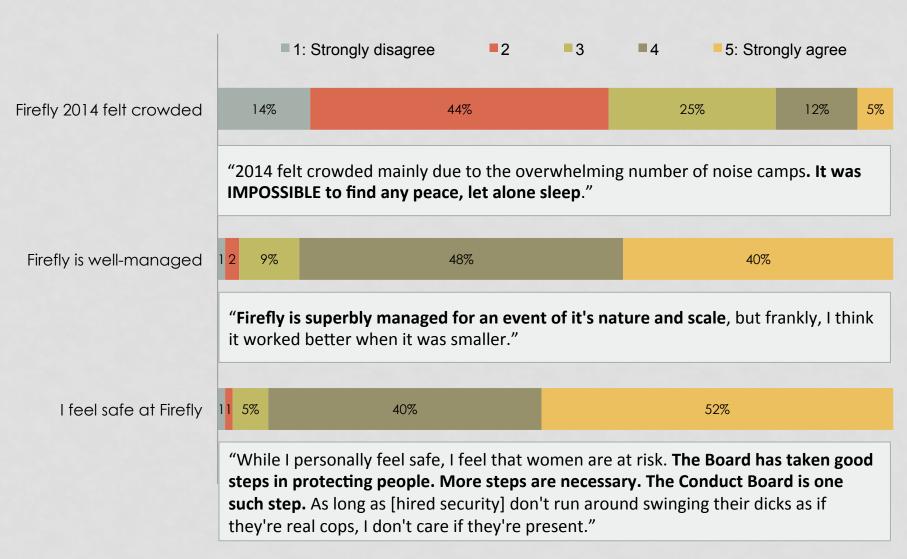


"Website almost always out of date. Communication in general seems slow / last-minute / lacking."

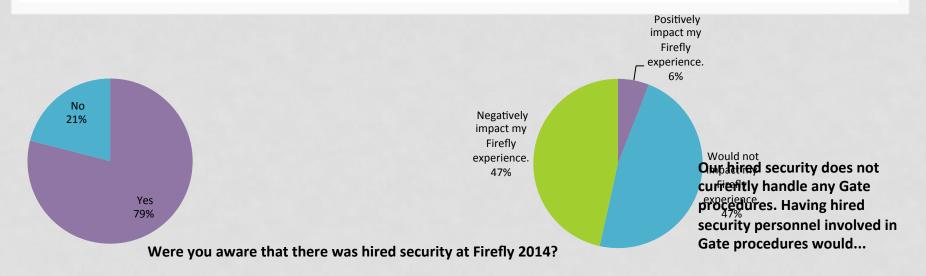
"I was surprised by how little I know about the board, especially given the large number of years I've attended, and my strong involvement with the event. My recommendation is that the board could get more aggressive about teaching people who they are, what they do, and about the relationship between an individual Firefly and the board."

"I would like to see a more formalized process for proposals, including an initial review, chance to respond, and THEN a final decision made by the board. In my experience, it seems some words are spoken with myself and a board member, the board member attempts to discuss (not fully informed or prepared) this with the board, and then the board shoots down what is obviously an incomplete inquiry."

Perceptions



Event Logistics



"I'm happy with the current "outside security" set up. I recognize the necessity, based on insurance implications and the ability to deal with situations which get out of hand. I'm also very happy with the current gate situation. I do volunteer at gate every year. I think it's great to have the first you see be of a friendly fellow firefly. Outsourcing gate would force everyone to have interactions with outside people which could make some feel like the mechanisms which run the event are slightly more removed from the community than they currently are."

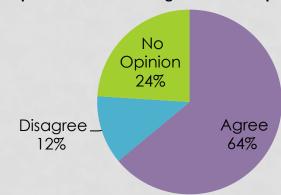
"I really enjoy that gate is staffed by community members but is backed up and by security. I feel in some situations that could arise at the gate, community members could possibly be able to handle them more delicately then hired security, that does not have experience in this environment. That being said I do like that there is hired security to help gate need if the need arises."

Field

Fireflies largely agree that establishing a center camp in the field would be a good idea, but a healthy minority disagreed or had no opinion.

There is a general view that having shade structures and places to sit off the ground would make the field a more hospitable place.

Opinions on Establishing a Center Camp in the Field.



Commentary about the use of field shows a pretty consistent opinion that if there was more to do in the field, then it might draw more use.

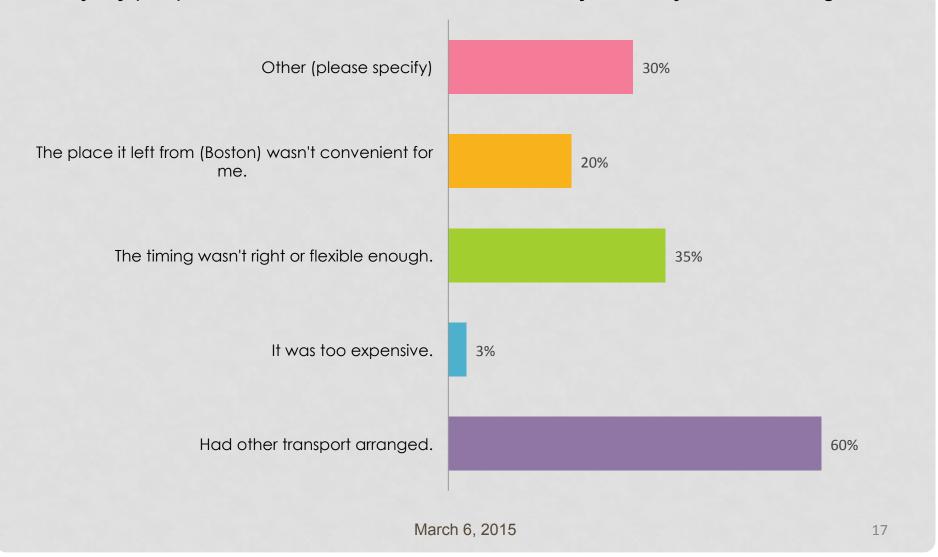
"I would be more likely to spend time in the field if there was more to do in the field. The camps are the draw of firefly, the in the field is nice, but there's not enough of it nor is it impressive enough to really spend a lot of time around. I think that will change with time. Perhaps the process of having art there could be more promoted? A lot of the interesting art was "night themed" it lit up and such, so it was more of a night time space".

Discourse over having a Center Camp (whether in the field or elsewhere) indicates a need for a place to post volunteer shifts and events.

"I want a Center Camp. The field is not where Center Camp should be. If you want a Center Camp, it should be somewhere more central. At night the field is dark and empty. During the day, it's usually hot and mostly empty. That's not where you go to chat / have coffee / meet. Having it near where the now-central ranger station / stage is might work."

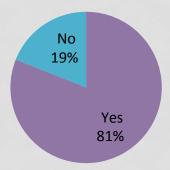
Shuttle

The majority (92%) chose not to take the shuttle one or both ways to Firefly for the following reasons.

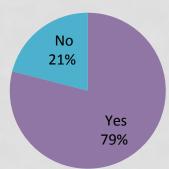


Carpool

Carpooling and rideshare page seem to work well.



Awareness of Rideshare page for carpools



Fireflies who carpooled one or both ways

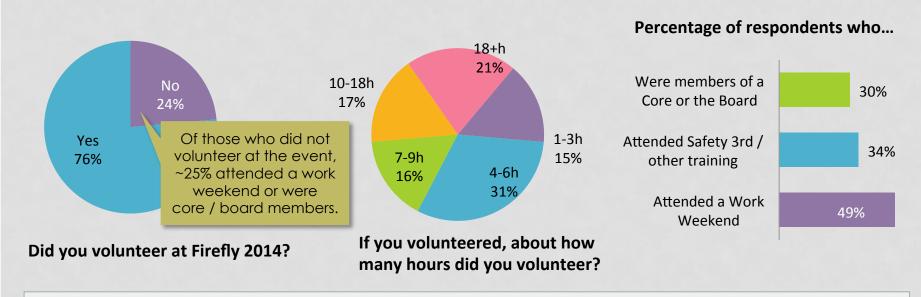
"I think rideshares work great. Also I think the carpooling works - I didn't see anybody arrive alone."

Other than more visibility for the Rideshare page, some comments on ways to improve:

"Could probably be optimized by geography. IE I had people in JP (20-30 minutes south of me) who didn't want to get up to me (north Somerville), so didn't take my rideshare, even when informing them of lyft and how getting to them would add an hour of travel."

"Perhaps a highlighted zone for those who are arriving early and leaving late? Or maybe some way of showing the time spread when different rides are available? The strikes me as an excellent question for one of our local tech geniuses in conversation with Edward Tufte."

Volunteering



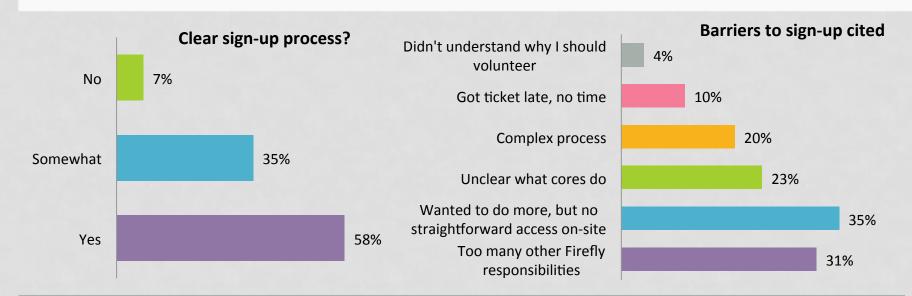
"I was told that firefly newbies didn't have to volunteer. I later found out this was not true."

"We should promote volunteerism to the community more."

"As a complete newbie to Firefly and Burns in general, I had no clue what to expect. I fully intend to volunteer if I get the chance to go this year."

"This was my first year at firefly, so I didn't know much about volunteering etc. I am interested to help out this year, though."

Volunteering (continued)



"One of the biggest barriers to volunteering is that there tend to be very few available shifts that match my preferred time of day."

"A better centralized on site volunteer system would be great."

"I volunteer a lot of time with my theme camp both before and during the event. I don't really know what my obligations are to my camp until I get to FF, so volunteering for the overall event is harder **because I generally can't do so until I get to Vermont**."

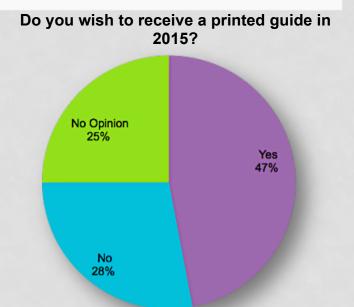
"I got off the wait list very late and didn't manage to claim much volunteer time, but I was strongly moved by the spirit of volunteerism at the event"

Propaganda

Majority of respondents found the online guide extremely useful. There was a preference to have it available earlier, however many still used it, and were able to use the export function to print their own copies.

"The guide was DOPE. HOLY SHIT JESTER GOOD JOB."

Though there were mixed responses when asked if Fireflies wished to receive a printed guide, the overwhelming majority still found the online guide to be useful.



"I like not wasting paper. One person in my camp had a print out. all we needed."

"I exported the guide and imported in to my phone's calendar, which was extremely useful"

"Keep the cost down and I'll be happy to print my own guide again next year, work has free paper. lol"

"I prefer live, editable at-event sign guides. Events often get moved and having ways to communicate that helps"

Rangers

Less than 30% of respondents experienced a situation where they needed a ranger at Firefly, and almost 100% those who needed a ranger found one and found the interaction to be positive.

"FF rangers are top-notch!"

"I found the rangers very helpful while dealing with an unruly firefly."

"We need more people at firefly who are willing to volunteer at least one of their late nights, especially burn nights, to take a Ranger shift. It doesn't have to be every year, but more people should take their turn at volunteering to fill shifts at necessary times." "I was present for a couple major incidences, **very very impressed** with how everyone handled them."

"I didn't have a personal interaction with the rangers, but I witnessed a scenario that involved a man that snuck on to the property. Security and rangers were close on hand to monitor the scenario and ensure he didn't harass anyone. It was handled very professionally."

"I was generally able to find Rangers when needed. Once, no Rangers on shift were available, but an offduty Ranger was walking by and dropped everything to step up and help, which was great."

"I worked sanctuary this year and on one occasion I needed help from medic and a ranger to monitor a firefly attendee as a precaution. **Everything worked out fine**."

DPW

- Majority of respondents thought the drainage ditches worked well.
 - The 30% of respondents who thought the drainage ditches did not function well at Firefly also want the gate to remain open for the whole event and did not volunteer on any cores or the board.
- Falling/Fallen tree handling was split evenly between people who had no opinion and people who thought it was handled well.

Two themes emerged in Feedback for DPW.

Props

"Elle Train was an excellent asset to the DPW crew! The ditches were amazing! Ozx was awesome, helpful and got shit done well."

"john From Maine + chainsaw + 6" heels = Winning"

"DPW IS AMAZING."

"Much better rain drainage in 2014 (than 2013)"

Areas of Improvement

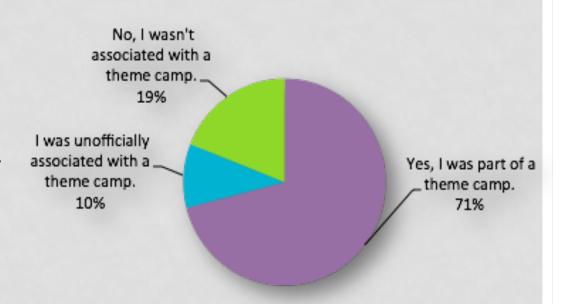
"Great job, except falling trees were a pretty big problem and could have seriously injured someone. I think that since the area is so crowded, an arborist or tree specialist should come in and remove dead or potentially dangerous trees. It felt very unsafe."

"I'd like to look into volunteering with DPW, but have had trouble finding out how."

Placement

Overall Trends

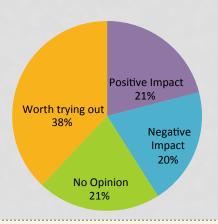
- 19% of respondents said they were not associated with a theme camp, and the majority of them identified as Female.
- 21% of respondents said they were 'very comfortable' entering theme camps that were not their own, the majority of them identified as male.
- Although only a small number (5%)
 of respondents camped in the area
 above diode, 50% of them were
 attending Firefly for their first time,
 the majority of which identified as
 Female.



Feedback for Process Improvement

"It was unclear when placement was happening and felt restrictive to have to be present on the exact day and time [specified]. Would be easier to signify it up on a map online or some other method that avoids unnecessary travel..."

Placement (continued)



How would it impact your experience if Firefly had designated zones for the placement of art [fire art, gallery art, performance, quiet/chill art] and camping [theme camps, adults only, kids camp, open camping] etc.?

We received extremely interesting responses to the topic of Zoning.

How would it impact your experience if Firefly had designated zones for the placement of art [fire art, gallery art, performance, quiet/chill art] and camping [theme camps, adults only, kids camp, open camping] etc.?

- 20% of the respondents who said Negative Impact, of them 86% were part of an official theme camp.
- 38% responded with "worth trying out." Of these respondents, 70% agree that Firefly would benefit from having a Center Camp.

In short, 59% thought zoning was worth trying at the very least. Though special care will need to be taken with those already belonging to theme camps.

Placement (continued)

Feedback about Zoning

The problem with FF, compared to say 2010, is that sound camps are twice as dense as they use to be. There's no escaping the noise, anywhere, ever. Adding Lions and Lamp in the center of FF plus just about everyone makes sound 24/7 now, and without addition space, makes FF borderline unbearable.

Specific zones may be helpful (keep the kids away from the red light district, for example) but I don't see the need to cluster or place art differently.

I would like to see designated art areas but I also like having art integrated in camps. So as long as there could be both.

Needs better clustering of sound camps so there are more contiguous and clear quieter areas

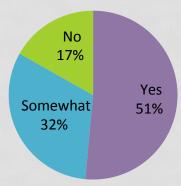
Feedback about Themecamps

"I felt comfortable entering all camps, but was really surprised about how differently the camps acted towards you as you walked in. Some camps, the people were very outgoing and friendly, introducing themselves (Camp Lamp & Tottenkitten) while other camps no one from the Camps made a point of saying hi or introducing themselves to you and didn't really acknowledge you were there. (Lions)."

"The community is amazing and I never felt that I was unwelcome anywhere I went. In counterpoint I was often welcomed to places that I hadn't been aiming to go in the first place."

Art Grants

Majority of respondents were satisfied with the grant process but there is room for improvement.



Overall satisfaction with the art grants process

While the majority of respondents thought the funding timetables were clearly communicated and suitable for the scale of the project, some respondents flagged significant challenges:

"I think far too many projects are partially funded. I had to go into pocket a good deal to make the project a success in 2014 and I know a lot of other people do too...We can do with a few less theme camps, but less art? It already seemed thin this past year. We can't be expected to crowdfund and fundraise for every single project. It is unsustainable for the community as a whole."

We asked what sort of art you would like to see funded, and the responses were varied and enthusiastic...

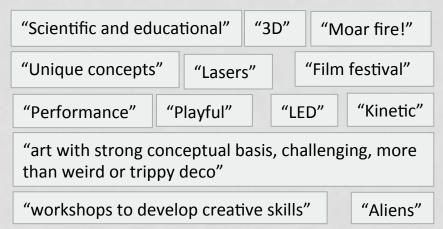
"Art with intention, art that could find a future home somewhere in the greater Boston area."

"Big distributed things, like fancy trail lighting or

"Big distributed things, like fancy trail lighting or badges."

"Fire Art, Interactive art, large scale art, immerse art"

"Small mobile art and large interactive art in the field and art from burners/artists from afar"



Art Grants (continued)

We also asked how Firefly can support artists aside from giving them grant money. Several themes emerged:

Logistics

"Helping allocate volunteers for large projects."

"Access to tools and resources would be nice (shared LED strips or something like that)."

"Offer partial funding for projects/artists after the event (e.g. reimbursement for materials)."

"Publish a directory of art and artists prominently on the website, including links to proposals or existing work."

"Giving them a designated way to transport art."

Community Involvement

"Labor support/apprenticeship program."

"Have firefly artist meeting for newbies."

Connect artists with each other for exchange of ideas and materials.

Promotions

"Maybe helping with gallery space and other participatory art opportunities."

"Feedback, art salons, grant writing, collaborative match-making, pointers to opportunities outside of the FF community."

"Exposure on the website: photos of the installation + artist bio / contact info."

Skillshare

"Perhaps a "maker" sort of monthly meeting."

Training/classes - it's great to see people offering ELwire courses & such. Arduino/breadboard programming/LED crafting courses would be cool."

Cross Community Exchange

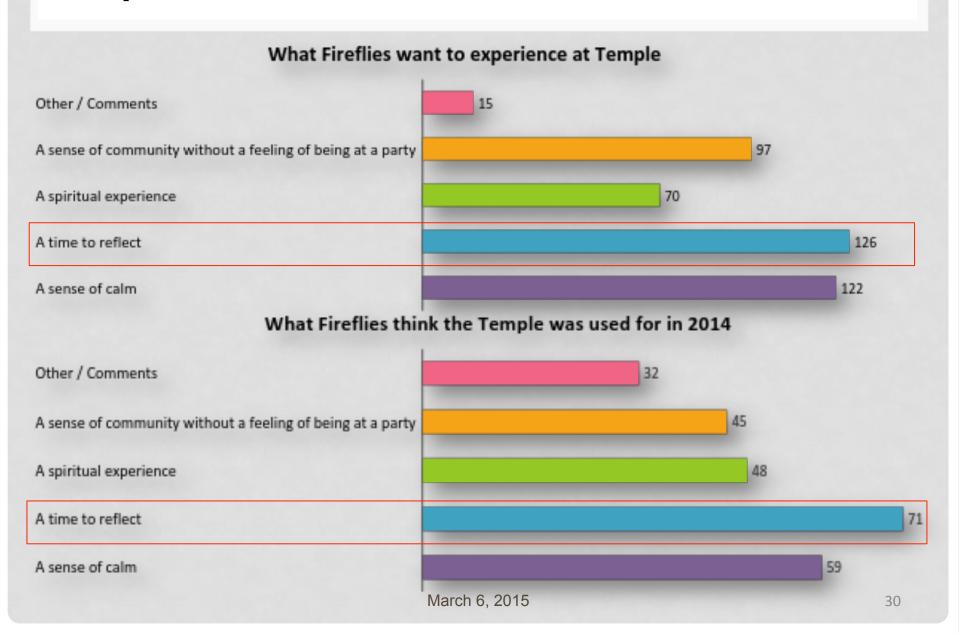
Artist exchange with other regionals

Art Grants (continued)

What Fireflies want to see supported...

assistance collaboration community connect create event festivals funding fundraising gallery grant help ideas installation large large-scale maker map materials money online opportunities outside photos pieces placement portfolio power program projects share skillshares space support theme tools transport travel truck video Volunteers website

Temple



Temple (continued)

Lots of comments made suggestions on what Temple could be.

The Purpose

"Non denominational beauty and meditative reflection."

"Whatever experience you want."

The Experience

"I think silence during the Temple burn is extremely powerful. I'm not sure how we enforce it, beyond community standards and expectations. I would like to hear silence during the Temple burn continue."

"Being able to actually go inside for a more private experience. I liked the design from 2012 a lot."

"Having a **sacred space for all**, respect for others who may be trying to have a particular emotional experience."

Not surprisingly, there are strong opinions on Temple and its need and purpose.

"I don't really go to temple. I don't understand what it is."

"I was **extremely disappointed** in the Temple in 2014, to be perfectly honest. The most underwhelming part of Firefly. It's tough when you can't go inside it. I would support additional funding for the Temple in order to make it more awesome and participatory."

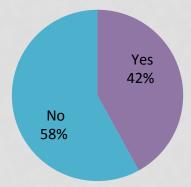
"I'm still having problems with making FF more like BM. I don't particularly like that there is a temple actually and I guess I don't like the Center camp idea either we already have an awesome coffee camp let's just enhance that and make it our own..."

"[In reference to 2014] **Please no Cult activity at the Temple**, I felt it took away from the people who really wanted to reflect on things. If the cult wants to do a burn then let them build their own temple to burn, within reason of course."

Stage

While only a handful of Fireflies performed on the open stage, a large minority of Fireflies watched a performance on the open stage.

Watched performances on the open stage.



Many Fireflies think the space lends itself to easy impromptu performances, but that also makes it hard to get critical mass needed for an audience.

"Open stage was super fun for impromptu karaoke."

Other issues include placement and lack of power, and some lack of overall awareness.

It's pretty clear that Fireflies want more access to live music, so what can we do?

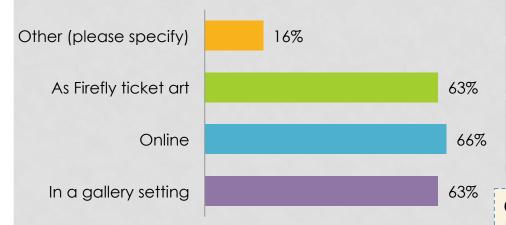
Improve signup visibility: "Impromptu performances sound like fun. But if they're too impromptu, it's hard to know to head over to the stage. Maybe a (more?) visible signup sheet would make sense?"

Better infrastructure: "I personally would love to bring instruments and amplifiers to perform.. If open stage had electricity outlets already set up so musicians could just plug in and perform.. That would be great!"

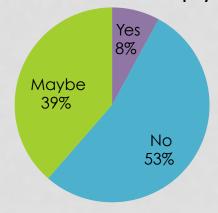
Better overall setup: "It has no chairs / seating / sound equipment / lights / anything. It's not cozy and nothing around it goes with it. It was uncomfortable and dead. I think it would be a good idea to have a camp or group of people supporting the stage... otherwise it's more of a nicely built empty wooden platform surrounded by camps. Firefly should have live music!!"

ARTifacts

How would you like ARTifacts displayed back to the community?



Would Fireflies like to be involved with the display of ARTifacts?



"Yes there needs to be a gallery. People worked on those and the ones I saw mushed together in a folder under a tarp were amazing! They need proper display."

"How about a few artifacts scattered in entirely surprising and unexpected ways to discover?"

Maybe submitters could digitize their own ARTifact & upload if they wish? Seems like the ticketing core digitizing all would be a bit of a monumental task!?

Conversation continues around the purpose of ARTifacts

"The ARTifact was a great idea. People who didn't get it or didn't want to do it missed the point."

"I disagreed with the requirement to send in ticket materials by regular mail only. It was frustrating, and a barrier for some."

"I felt pressured to create an ARTifact which delayed me sending in my form until the last minute when I decided I wouldn't create anything. I would have appreciated it being less pressure-inducing."

Firefly, thanks for all the feels

activities ambiguous anxiety awkward clear cliquey comfortable community diode entering event friendly friends girl groups inclusive inviting issues lamp open others outside personal places positive pretty problem public shy social space talk totenkitten unwelcome walking wander Welcoming