

Playa del Fuego, Board of Directors

June 30, 2017 - FAQ

Over the past few weeks, we've received a lot of questions from the community about our decision to launch a new event, and how doing so fits within the greater mission and vision of Playa del Fuego, Inc. a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

VISION

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.

MISSION

We build an interactive, experiential, sustainable environment that encourages a culture of play, artistic creativity and freedom of expression.

We believe there is no one right way to do fulfill this mission, and as such, we are seeking to build, experiment, and create alongside the broader Community.

Below we try to address some of the many questions we've received. If you do not find answers to your questions below or elsewhere on the Constellation website, we invite you to contact us at bod@playadelfuego.org.

When and why did you cancel the Fall 2017 Playa del Fuego event?

The VVMC property was becoming progressively untenable for an event of our size. This became very apparent in the Fall of 2016, and was reinforced during the Spring 2017 event. During our June 6th board meeting, we discussed input from the community and considered risks to the organization should we continue to host an event on a piece of property inaccessible to emergency vehicles or even golf carts. We considered whether to hold a much smaller event only on the front field, but quickly realized that we couldn't guarantee that even the front field parking lot would be usable. As a result, after a difficult and well debated issue, we chose to cancel the Fall event because the land is not currently suitable for our needs.

Did you tell the Vets you were thinking of canceling the Fall event?

During each Playa del Fuego event, the Treasurer of PDF meets with representatives of the VVMC to pay rent and discuss any important topics of interest that have come up about the event.

At a meeting during the Spring event, which included representatives of the VVMC (Franco, Pineapple, and Pockets) and representatives from the PDF Board (Patty and Ursula), we discussed that PDF was exploring alternative locations for the Fall event. During that conversation, Franco indicated that he would hold the Fall date open for us until we had a final decision. Patty told him that we'd have a final decision by the end of June.

Oh June 15th, when we announced to the community that we were cancelling the Fall event at the VVMC, Patty had a phone call conversation with Franco, during which time she told him that we were cancelling the Fall event at the VVMC and explained our reasoning. During that conversation, Franco and Patty discussed how the VVMC would work on improving the back field to enable better drainage, and how having an entire extra season to let the ground heal would be good for the property.

Why is this event not called Playa del Fuego?

We initially discussed whether the new event could be a Playa del Fuego event, and we decided to experiment with a new event for a number of reasons.

First, we understood from the beginning that the timeline would not mesh with the meeting schedule of the Playa del Fuego Planning Committee structure. As a board, we recognized that we would likely be taking on much of the heavy lifting for a new event and that decisions would need to be made very quickly. We felt it was unreasonable to assume the Coordinators for Playa del Fuego would want to be involved, especially given the new location, and did not feel comfortable pressuring them to do so.

Second, we listened to feedback from members of the mid-Atlantic Regional Burning Man Community. Over the years we have lost theme camps, dependable volunteers, and artists who have felt as though their contribution at PDF was no longer welcomed as a result of current protocols and policies. As a result, we felt as though this new event was an opportunity to pull from best practices from PDF and other Regional Burns and test out new ways of doing things, all while not disrupting the existing PDF planning model.

Will Constellation be a permanent part of the organization's programming?

Constellation 2017 is an experiment. If it works well, we will consider incorporating it into the permanent programming of the organization.

When did you decide to host an event in West Virginia?

The search for an alternate location to hold a Burn has been ongoing, and was revived with the addition of new board members last summer. We identified the location in West Virginia in May

2017, and chose to present the opportunity to the incoming board members after they joined the team in June. We all felt it was the best option for a number of reasons, and was the unanimous choice of the board when it came time for a vote. At this time, we voted to pursue an effort to complete a contract.

Why didn't you tell us about the cancellation right away?

This was a mistake. We should have announced the cancellation of the Fall 2017 event right away. We originally chose to wait because we were hopeful that we'd have a contract in place to announce the new event at the same time. As the days passed, we realized we needed to announce the cancellation on its own.

How will you finance Constellation 2017?

We anticipate that all expenses for Constellation 2017 will be financed through ticket sales. However, as with any new event, we also anticipate that it will require some seed funding. In this case, the organization will use funds currently listed as "unallocated." Playa del Fuego event art grants, funds set aside for the Land Fund, or our organization's Rainy Day Fund will not be touched.

Shouldn't leftover revenue from PDF, the event, only be used for future PDF events or the land fund?

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we have a number of broader goals that we have already begun to explore, and look forward to expanding in the coming years. Among them are Community and Civic Art Grants, which we hope all of you take advantage of in your local areas.

In 2014, we decided as an organization to put a cap on the amount contributed from each PDF event ticket sale to the Land Fund at \$15, after event expenses. As spending for the Playa del Fuego event and administrative costs have oscillated over the years, the amount of funds that were contributed to, or used, from the "unallocated" funds also changed. These "unallocated" funds are where we hope to begin funding additional Community and Civic Art Grants, as well as assist with other organization programming, such as events like Constellation.

In the same way, should revenue from Constellation ticket sales be more than what's needed for the event itself, we will decide as an organization how best to direct those funds. At this time, options include: future Constellation art grants or event infrastructure, building out the Community and Civic Art Grants program, contributing to the Land Fund, improvements to our organization technology infrastructure, and contributions to organizations affiliated with the Burning Man Project, such as Burners Without Borders.

What does the Event Management Structure look like for Constellation 2017?

Please read more about Departments and Event Leadership here:
<http://constellationburn.org/participate/departments-and-leadership/>

Will Constellation use any of the infrastructure from Playa del Fuego?

Possibly. Department Coordinators are currently putting together their list of infrastructure requirements. We are reviewing budgets and comparing against costs of transporting supplies from Delaware against purchasing new items where needed.

I earned a reserve ticket at Spring PDF 2017. Will I be able to use it for Constellation?

Yes. Anyone who is eligible for a volunteer reserve ticket because they volunteered sufficient hours at Spring PDF 2017 may choose whether they would like to use that reserve ticket for Constellation 2017 or for Spring PDF in 2018.

If I earn a reserve ticket at Constellation 2017, will I be able to use it for Spring PDF?

At this time, we do not expect reserve tickets earned at one event to continue to be interchangeable between events.

Will the ticket price for Constellation be the same as PDF?

Unlikely. We are reviewing the budget and finalizing the ticket policy over the next few days, and we expect the ticket price for Constellation to be around \$70. Additional information about the ticket process, prices, schedule, and hardship tickets will be announced soon.

Will I be able to use my Volunteer Reserve Ticket at the \$50 price level?

No.

Is there a "Planning Committee" for Constellation 2017?

The Planning Committee, as used for Playa del Fuego, generally includes anyone who chooses to join a Planning Committee call or participates in the online PONY forum discussion list. At this time, the Constellation Event Planning Team does not hold public planning calls. However, as more Department Coordinators are brought into the mix, we anticipate hosting open conference calls for volunteers who wish to participate and learn more about what's involved.

Will Constellation's event management structure replace the format of the existing PDF planning team?

No. We believe there is a lot to be learned from each event's management model, and we look forward to an ongoing effort within both event management teams to tweak and improve their processes.

*Did we miss anything? Let us know!
Send us your questions at bod@playadelfuego.org.*