

## PART V: GRADUAL GROWTH

In preparing the BM 2006-10 EA, both Burning Man and BLM mutually determined 50,000 the maximum limit for event and site management. This limit was reached or exceeded every year of the EA. Unlike the previous 5-year EA which set a limit of 50,000 for the entire permit period, the exact limit each year will be determined by the authoring officer of the permit.

from Draft EA<sup>43</sup>

*Under the 58,000 to 70,000-Person Maximum Alternative (Proposed Action), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would issue a five-year Special Recreation Permit (2012-2016) for the Burning Man event in Pershing County, Nevada, with a maximum population from 58,000 to 70,000 people. The authorized officer would determine the maximum population within this range for each year of the five-year permit.*

Original press releases reported Burning Man LLC had proposed for 2012 is a population of limit of 55,000 with an annual 6% increase each year<sup>8</sup>. The Preliminary EA references only numbers of 58,000 and 70,000 with set limits 'to be determined.' therefore, number throughout this report vary as do the sources from the which the information is quoted. While the figures for population limits have not been determined, what is clear is that the event will grow gradually from more than the previous 50,000 to nearly 70,000. **The key is gradual growth** which is intended to ease the implementations of any necessary changes.

*Will Roger is one of the board of directors that helps run the event. He spoke about wanting to grow the event recently, but doing so at a slow pace. "For everyone concerned, slow growth is better than big growth"<sup>44</sup>*

### A. TICKET SALES

Ticket sales is the first opportunity to control the city population and currently the largest issue Burning Man LLC has dealt with to date. 2011 was the first year tickets sold out. A supply-and-demand market made the previously assumed 5% no-show/donation rate invalid. The peak population in 2011 was 51,515. In 2012, in an attempt to control demand and scalping, a lottery system was employed. Despite the best intentions, it backfired when many who actively participate to build the city infrastructure and theme camps were left without tickets<sup>45, 46</sup>. The last 10,000 tickets are to be distributed by a

STEP program designed to put tickets in the hands of those who are key to the Black Rock City's very existence <sup>47</sup>.

## **B. CLEAN-UP**

*from 2008 Inspection Memo* <sup>32</sup>

*...There were some aspects of the 2008 cleanup effort that raise concerns about the 2009 event and future events. Specifically:*

- The level of residual debris within the City has risen 100% since 2006 and was at 60% of the standard this year.*
- The number of plots that exceed the standard doubled since 2007 and two plots were more than twice the standard.*
- The number of items for the most used portions of the event area (the City and the Playa) has substantially increased during the past two years.*

*The area occupied by the City has grown by almost 32% in the past two years.*

*The increased population and increased City and Event area continues to lead to substantial increases in the area the cleanup crew is required to cover. While outreach efforts to the population of the Event by Black Rock City, LLC (BRC) have resulted in increased appreciation and effort by individual participants during the event, the data collected over the past several years suggests that future efforts by the "Playa Restoration" crew will need to be increased to keep up with the changes in the event.*

*from 2009 Inspection Memo* <sup>33</sup>

*As the city grows, it is a 'risk that the cleanup effort becomes too large and the standard would be exceeded.*

## **C. OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES**

Past increases were accommodated by expanded streets, more porta-potties and an improved Exodus plan. It remains to be seen what changes will be incorporated into the Burning Man Operating Plan to adapt to a 40% increase over the next 5 years.