

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



56684

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Woodstock Music Festival Site

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Generally West Shore Rd, Hurd Rd. Best Rd, Perry Rd not for publication

city or town Bethel vicinity

state New York code NY county Sullivan code 105 zip code 12720

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Rustan Perpoint DSHPO December 14, 2016
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

2/28/17

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	12	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	1	objects
2	13	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, storage

RECREATION AND CULTURE/festival site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, storage

RECREATION AND CULTURE/festival site; commemorative

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

social history

music

Period of Significance

August 15, 1969-August 18,1969

Significant Dates

August 15, 1969; August 16, 1969; August 17; 1969

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

na

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

Mel Lawrence, site designer

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Museum at Bethel Woods

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 287.33 acres

UTM References SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen LaFrank, National Register Coordinator
organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date November 2016
street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x 3261
city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Woodstock Music Festival Site
Bethel Vicinity, Sullivan County, New York

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LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The Woodstock Music Festival Site is located just north of the hamlet of Bethel, Sullivan County, in the western Catskill Mountain region of New York State. Bethel is located on the north side of NY 17B near the center of Sullivan County. NY 17B, which runs east-west through Sullivan County, is the former Newburgh-Cochecton Turnpike, chartered in 1801. The turnpike was Sullivan County's first and most important cross-county road, initiating settlement in the western part of the county. East and west of Bethel, County Routes 52, 55, and 42 are the major north-south routes through the county. The Mongaup Valley opens to the southwest of the hamlet, while views to the north take in the Catskill Mountains. The festival site is set in a rural region amid farmland and agricultural buildings interspersed with residences and second homes. Several miles to the east, the hamlets of Kauneonga Lake and White Lake (both in proximity to White Lake itself) generally retain their character as a small resort villages typical of the Catskills in the early twentieth century.

The nominated site is spread over nearly 300 acres of flat land mixed with rolling hills.¹ It is generally located between Best Road on the east and Perry Road on the west and is dispersed north and south of West Shore Road and east and west of Hurd Road. The intersection of Hurd Road (north-south) and West Shore Road (east-west) is the "heart" of the festival site, and the most important festival-related activities took place around it. Those two narrow roads provided the only access to the concert in 1969 and they provide the only access to the site today. The site has seen relatively little change in forty-nine years, and topography, views, tree lines, stone walls, field patterns, forests, open space, streams, and ponds present in 1969 can be discerned in the landscape today. The landscape features and scenic components defined the character of the site historically and were

¹ Every single source about the Woodstock Festival notes that it was a 600-acre site. Yet, when the SPHO calculated the acreage of the nominated site, which includes nearly all of the leased site, it totaled only 287.33 acres. The discrepancy was put to Michael Lang, one of the four festival producers, who explained that the 600 acres included other land, at peripheral locations, that was leased for parking. We have not been able to identify these locations, but they are not contiguous to the festival site and they are not included in the nomination. See boundary justification. For ease of reference, the nomination will refer to the site as 300 acres.

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used by festival planners to create spaces for specific activities. Some of these components were deliberately manipulated by festival planners to create spaces for specific activities: fields were mowed; campgrounds were prepared; pathways were laid through wooded areas, and stone walls were breached. In addition to the designated spaces, several adjacent outlying areas were incorporated into the festival site by concert-goers: at least two locations became popular for swimming and other areas were used for camping. The landscape elements were instrumental in creating the environment in which the festival took place. They enabled activity, enhanced the ambiance desired for the festival, and affected the mood of festival guests and performers. They are essential to an understanding of the functional history of the site and the historic events that occurred there and they contribute directly to its significance.

Views within the site vary. In general, the land rises to the north and long views north from many areas of the site take in distant Catskill Mountain peaks. Other, more immediate views to the northeast take in rolling hillsides, some of which are within the nominated site. Other than within the natural amphitheater, most of the nominated site is fairly flat and views are of farmland, pastures, tree lines, groves of trees, narrow roads, and residences both on and adjacent to the nominated site. Views to the south near the eastern edge of the site are compromised by the contemporary museum. The view of the new performing arts center to the southeast (outside the boundary) are screened by a historic tree line.

Most of the structures built specifically for the festival itself were ephemeral, intended to survive only the length of the three-day concert. The site preparation was consistent with that of other period outdoor rock festivals, including the Monterey International Pop Festival (June 1967), Miami Pop Festival II (December 1968), and the Atlantic City Pop Festival (August 1969), which were never intended to be permanent concert sites. Because the unanticipated crowds overwhelmed planned services, some of the structures did not survive even the duration of the concert. A temporary infrastructure system laid over the site included wells, water

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storage tanks and water distribution lines, electric lines, telephone poles, lighting, portable toilets, and trash receptacles. Any of these features that survived were removed or demolished after the concert. Concert related amenities included the stage, performers' bridge, performers' pavilion, staff tents and trailers, infirmaries, free stage, free kitchen, and concession stands, all of which were also either removed or demolished immediately after the show. Rental equipment, such as trailers and sound and light equipment, were removed from the site as soon as the festival ended. All of the locations and designs of these temporary features are well documented through plans, drawings and photos. Although we cannot be absolutely sure that everything on the site was constructed according to plan, this documentation is remarkably consistent with the historic photos, and it enhances our understanding of the site. In addition, some remnants of concert-related structures, such as concrete footings for the stage, have been found scattered on the site (not in original locations) and are being studied for interpretive purposes.

NOMINATION BOUNDARY

The nomination boundary was drawn to include all the land directly associated with the Woodstock Festival that retains sufficient integrity to illustrate the significant events that occurred there between August 15-August 18, 1969. It takes in the acreage leased and laid out by Woodstock Ventures for the concert itself, as well as adjacent areas that are directly associated with the festival because significant amounts of spontaneous concert-related activity occurred on them (such as parking, camping, or swimming). The boundary was established based on a study of historic plans and drawings, historic accounts, and aerial photos showing the actual use of the land during the concert. Boundary lines were based on patterns of historic activity associated with the festival and followed property lines, tree lines, stone walls, farm roads, and/or water features wherever possible because those boundary markers also defined the extent of activity. The boundary excludes one area within the leased land that has lost integrity (museum site, see below), one immediately adjacent area that has lost integrity (Hurd Road Campground, and peripheral areas that are not contiguous to the site, that are a substantial distance

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from the site, and/or that were subject to incidental concert-related traffic jams, informal parking, and road closures. Instead, the boundary encompasses that land most closely associated with the Woodstock Festival: places where one could see or hear the concert, walk to it, socialize with other participants, and, essentially, participate in the unanticipated short-lived community.

PROPERTIES

The entire Woodstock Music Festival Site is counted as one contributing site. Within the site, the landscape can be divided into seven distinctive land use areas:

Main Concert Field
Performers Area, Heliport Site, and Filippini Pond Swimming Site
Bindy Woods
Hog Farm and Perry Road Campgrounds
Information Tree Meeting Site
Best Road Campgrounds
West Shore Road Stream and Dam

Each area has a slightly different character and each served a different function during the festival. Each is identified on a map, and described below. Within each of these areas are many small-scale features that help to define its distinctive character. These features include paths, drives, walls, water features, tree lines, stone walls, ground cover, etc. There are also certain features within each area added after the period of significance that compromise its character slightly but do not constitute intrusions. These include later plantings, roads, paths, etc.

Contributing Properties:

Woodstock Festival Site– 1 site
West Shore Road Dam – 1 structure

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There is 1 non-contributing object, the 1984 Woodstock Monument, which is significant but has been judged not old enough to have achieved significance under criterion consideration F as a commemorative. There are also 12 non-contributing buildings, all small-scale residences built on the farmland since the festival. Each of the latter is also identified on a map and described at the end of item 7.

Non-Contributing Properties:

Woodstock Monument – 1 object
172 Perry Road, 2 buildings
200 Perry Road, 1 building
216 Perry Road, 2 buildings
597 West Shore Road, 2 buildings
532 West Shore Road, 1 building
263 Hurd Road, 2 buildings
270 Hurd Road, 1 building
268 Hurd Road, 1 building

LAND USE AREAS

Main Concert Field

The main concert field was the location of the stage and the primary seating for festival goers. As the actual location of the concert, it is the most important part of the site. The field is said to have held more than 400,000 people during the three days of the concert and offered a nearly unobstructed view of the main stage. The main field is a rectangular parcel defined by West Shore Road on the north, Hurd Road on the west, the former Gabriel Farm on the east and, originally, by flat land at the crest of the hill on the south. The field is a natural, bowl-shaped amphitheater, sloping broadly from its lowest point near the location of the stage (at West Shore Road) to the south, rising to a crest where the Food for Love Concessions were originally located. There are some rock outcroppings near the outer edges, especially to the south. Once planted in alfalfa, the field was mowed for the concert, severely damaged during the concert, later replanted for agricultural use, and is now maintained as a meadow. Views to the north take in the stage location, Filippini Pond, and the Catskill

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Mountains beyond, as they did in 1969. Views to the northwest and northeast (of the mountains, pond, and Best Road Campgrounds) survive to an exceptional degree. Due to the location of the stage and the slope of the hill, these are among the most important views from the site. Views to the south, from the lower points on the field and from the location of the stage into the “audience,” still show the majority of the field; however, they are now compromised by the Bethel Museum, which was constructed on the flat land at the top of the crest (where the Food for Love Concessions were located). The site of Bethel Museum does not retain any integrity from 1969 and has been excluded from the boundary. The surviving field retains its original topography, except for a slightly flattened section, which was created for a later concert, to the west.

Physical features planned, built, and/or installed for the concert itself on the field included the original stage, which was the most important feature. This was located near the northeast corner of the field and was a platform built of planks of wood covered with two layers of plywood and fastened with nails; it was eighteen feet off the ground, resting on metal scaffolding, and approximately eighty-feet wide by eighty-feet deep surmounted by five wood roof trusses supported on telephone poles and topped by strips of canvas forming a canopy. Bands were intended to play on a round platform (thirty-feet across and about nine-inches high) that was divided in half and set on wheels. The ingenious intent was that one band could set up while another played. As the first band finished, the platform would be turned and the next band would be ready to start. Unfortunately, the first time it was used, all the wheels fell off and it never turned again.² Leading directly from the stage, a narrow (approximately four-foot wide) wood footbridge spanned West Shore Road, connecting the stage with the performers’ area on the north side of the road.

² Eddie Harper, recording engineer, in Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, ed. *Woodstock: Three Days that Rocked the World* (New York: Sterling, 2009), 61.

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The stage was flanked by six enormous sound and light towers (each sixty-four-feet tall, built of metal scaffolding). A large area (at least eight-feet deep) around the stage, towers, and bridge was enclosed by a six-foot-tall, vertical-board wood fence on the audience side and a chain link fence on the other three sides that created a buffer zone around the stage. Inside the buffer were equipment trucks and other service vehicles. The buffer somewhat resembled a butterfly in shape and apparently worked well because even though numerous fans climbed the sound and light towers, the buffer zone appears virtually empty of people in most aerial views. The area under the stage also remained relatively empty because it was crowded with the scaffolding foundation and almost inaccessible to fans. Performers either remained backstage or returned to the performers' area across the road via the bridge.

At the south end of the field (in the area now excluded from the nomination) were fourteen Food for Love Concessions (small wood-pole structures with canvas coverings and colorful panels) and three large water storage tanks (for the water pumped from Filippini Pond). A system of portable water lines (plastic piping and elbow joints) was laid across the entire site and connected to spigots for public access to drinking water, which had been treated according to instructions from the New York State Health Department to make it potable; pumps from the tanks that ran through the field also connected to the tanks; rows of port-a-johns were near the southwest corner of Hurd and West Shore Roads. Other items on the field included a trailer for Mel Lawrence, director of operations, tall poles supporting lights and electrical lines, and some chain link fencing lining the east, south, north, and a portion of the west edges of the field (although set in concrete footings, not all of the fencing was finished and some was torn down by the audience). None of these features survives.

There is one built feature that post-dates the festival, a sloped, stone, rubble pad, 165 feet long and 15 feet deep, located at the bottom of the bowl near West Shore Road that was built for a later concert. A gravel path that cuts across the southwest portion of the site appears to be in the same location as an old farm road predating the festival that was used to bring equipment and supplies to the site during festival preparation. There is also a

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peace sign, 70 feet in diameter, that was mowed into the grass to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the festival. The peace sign is an ephemeral feature that must be maintained every time the grass is cut.

The main field (which was once open on the edges) is now lined on three sides with split rail fences and Colorado blue spruce trees planted by the current owner. The trees were planted in order to create a screen but not to keep people out; however, they have not yet grown to the point that they form a dense wood. Therefore, although the field is somewhat screened from the view from the road, it remains completely accessible to the public, who are free to walk through the still loosely spaced trees at all points. Despite the field's somewhat manicured, "suburban" look, due to the closely cropped grass and trees, its most important features, natural shape, amphitheater qualities, orientation to the stage, and views of the rural landscape, are undiminished by later changes. A comparison view of the profile of the field today with that of the same view prior to the concert shows near perfect alignment. The bowl stands out as an iconic, unmistakably recognizable feature that is symbolic of the festival itself. It is the most important character-defining feature on the festival site.

Information Tree

A large red maple tree (at the corner of West Shore Road and Hurd Road), the tallest object in the festival landscape, became an unplanned but important landscape component. It is visible in many historic photos of the concert. Due to its central location and visibility, the tree became an important meeting place and communication venue for concertgoers. "As the most prominent feature on the land, the tree is a witness and a symbol of the 1969 festival. Staples and wire embedded in the bark indicate its festival use as a place to post messages."³ Although in poor health, the tree survives and retains numerous staples that are remnants of concert-related messages.

³ Heritage Landscapes, *Woodstock Festival Grounds Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*, CLR Part 1: Site Assessment, Current Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation (Bethel: The Museum at Bethel Woods, 2015), 109.

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Performers' Area, Heliport Site and Filippini Pond Swimming Site

The performers' area was specifically set apart from the main field for the use of performers and festival staff. It was protected by chain link fencing as well as by the bridge spanning West Shore Road that allowed performers and staff to pass over the road when traveling from the restricted area to and from the stage. The performers' area is located immediately north of the main field, on the north side of West Shore Road. It is defined by West Shore Road on the south, Filippini Pond on the north, and trees and property lines on the east. It extends slightly west of Hurd Road to take in the location of a helicopter pad, which became a crucial transportation center during the three days of the concert. The performers' area is a generally flat site that slopes slightly north toward Filippini Pond, where the shore is outlined with dense vegetation. The shoreline of Filippini Pond, the northern boundary of this section, was the site of bathing and swimming during the festival and remains accessible, though overgrown. At the time of the festival, a semi-circular gravel access road was constructed from Hurd Road around the inside of the perimeter. Today, a paved road follows the same general drive and continues on to exit on West Shore Road. Sited within the circle during the festival were a wooden performers' pavilion and a crew mess hall (later a medical tent), numerous dressing room tents for performers, a number of trailers for festival staff, security, lighting and sound staff, medical staff, provisioning staff, promotions staff, and staging staff, all arranged in a circle around the access road. The space was also used for informal vehicle parking. None of these ephemeral features survives, except for the drive itself. Four non-historic residences have been built on the periphery of the performers' area, and one storage barn has been constructed within the performers' area. The majority of the land inside the performers' area is open, as it was historically; however, non-historic Colorado blue spruce ornamental trees have been planted along the access road. During the concert, the performers' area was a working landscape in which important support functions for the stage took place. It retains its basic open and undistinguished character today. The helicopter pad site is located on a parcel to the west that is also included. The landing site itself was created by repeatedly mowing

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the grass until it had the consistency of a golf green and then outlining it with Christmas lights. After the festival, it was no longer maintained and it has returned to indistinguishable grass today.

Bindy Woods

Bindy Woods (also called Bindy Bazaar or Enchanted Forest) is a generally square-shaped parcel southwest of the intersection of West Shore Road and Hurd Road and north of the Gemplar Farm (a dry-laid stone wall marks the farm property line). It is immediately west of the main field, across Hurd Road. During the festival it was supposed to be bordered on the west and north by chain link fences. These were at least partially installed, as photos document them being trampled down. There is no evidence of these fences today. The Bindy Woods area is flat and grassy around its borders and wooded in the center and generally retains the topography and division into spaces that it had at the time of the concert although it is greatly overgrown and there are fallen trees and deteriorated fences.

This area was specifically designed by festival planners for active uses (as opposed to the passive activity intended for the main field). The edge along West Shore Road was the location of security trailers and first aid tents. Further west, southwest of the tents, was a playground consisting of seesaws, swings, a maze, and a latticework climber. In the grassy space along Hurd Road the "Indian Pavilion," a special pavilion constructed for a group of Hopi Indian artists from New Mexico who wished to remain independent of other craft artists, was constructed.⁴ Another large, temporary sign on a tall pole identified Bindy as a destination for concert goers. There was also a designated art fair, which was installed on the fences that enclosed the northwest corner of the woods near the main gate and in the open pasture area beyond, and there were colorful signs and street signs throughout the space. The original main gate for the festival was located in the chain link fence along the

⁴ The pavilion was of wood construction but no historic photo has been found to document what it looked like. The planned installation was later cancelled due to the size of the crowd.

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west edge of Bindy Woods. The gate was approached via an access road from West Shore Road called Ticia's Trace. A portion of the roadway can be identified today, but it is not passable via auto. The planned location for the gates is indicated on maps, but there is no physical evidence of them.

The largest portion of Bindy Woods is a wooded grove within which three east-west and two north-south paths were laid out and padded with wood chips, thus dividing the woods into six sections. The paths traversed two north-south dry-laid stone farm walls, which were interrupted to create passages. Several fanciful street signs were posted (Groovy Way, High Way, Gentle Path and Easy Street), and Christmas lights were strung through the treetops. Bindy Woods was intended to serve as a primary circulation route, first, for visitors entering the venue (from the main entrance, on its west side) and, second, for patrons moving between the main field and the main parking and camping areas, which were laid out farther west. These paths also provided access to the Hog Farm, just west of the main gate, which became an important source of food and medical attention. The west edge of Bindy Woods was intended to be fenced with chain link. It is not clear if this fencing was completed.

Bindy Woods was also the location of the planned "Aquarian Crafts Bazaar," where participants were invited to sell memorabilia such as beads, moccasins, posters, T-shirts, etc., distribute reading material such as pamphlets, philosophical and political leaflets, and underground newspapers, and dispense up-to-date festival information. By all accounts, the woods was also the most popular spot for the sale and purchase of drugs. Ten lightweight concession stands and booths were constructed, mostly of found materials, and horizontal ledges were buttressed into walls to hold paper. Some small artifacts thought to be part of the artisan booths have been located on the site.

Bindy Woods retains a high degree of integrity of topography and vegetation with the same exceptions typical of other now manicured areas of the site. The eastern strip, along Hurd Road, is planted with ornamental grass

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and has narrow maintenance paths. One suburban type house (non-contributing; see description below) with entrance drive has been constructed in the northwest quadrant of the area, within an area that was originally open; however, it is well screened from the road and from the woods. The woods themselves are similar in size and density to what they were at the time of the concert and at least one of the two stone walls is extant, with its passages intact. Nevertheless, the stone walls are now entangled in dense undergrowth and barbed wire. Though overgrown, evidence of the paths has been documented as part of a cultural resource study.⁵ A few remnants of the commercial booths, etc. have also been identified by the landscape architects.⁶ The Bindy Woods area possesses the same natural features it had when it was chosen for the concert site; alterations to the landscape for the concert and the concert-related activity that occurred there are understandable and interpretable. Although there is no trace of the fencing or gate today, the main gate had quickly proved ineffective at screening ticketholders or controlling traffic. Vehicles arrived from all directions, primarily via Hurd and West Shore Roads. Patrons were generally unable to reach designated parking areas, and most parked along roadsides wherever they could. Some abandoned their cars miles away and walked to the site. Many concert goers remained unaware that there was a main gate; thus, the loss of the gate location is not significant.

In addition to the space officially leased and planned for festival, two other areas adjacent to the Bindy Woods section of the site are also part of the festival landscape. These include a strip of land in the area between the woods and Hurd Road that was appropriated for parking and a large, square parcel south of the stone wall marking off the Gempler Farm, also appropriated for parking. Because these areas are part of the immediate festival site, associated with its significant themes and retain integrity, they have been included in the nomination. They are undeveloped grassy areas today. Some similar areas along the southern extent of Hurd

⁵ Heritage Landscapes, *Woodstock Festival Grounds Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*.

⁶ Heritage Landscapes, *Woodstock Festival Grounds Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*.

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Road were excluded because they have been developed as parking for the museum and no longer retain integrity.

Hog Farm and Perry Road Campgrounds

The Hog Farm and Main Campgrounds area is located west of Bindy Woods and extends to the far western edge of the site at Perry Road. This is a large, irregular area generally defined by Bindy Woods and the Gempler Farm on the east, West Shore Road on the north, Perry Road on the west, and the extent of cleared land on the south. None of the area west of Bindy Woods was fenced in by concert promoters, as camping was free and encouraged, even for those without tickets. Stone walls interspersed with split rail fences enclose this area along West Shore Road; the Gempler Farm boundary is marked by a historic stone wall. Perry Road is open, while a tree line defines the southwest quadrant of the area. The land is flat and was primarily used as pasture at the time of the festival; agricultural fields still fill the east and west edges and a large wooded area defines the center. A pond marks the northwest corner of this area. The pond was excluded because it was neither leased by festival promoters nor used for festival-related activity.

This area was designated as the main parking area and campground by festival planners and both activities took place throughout it. The official campgrounds were mowed and prepared for camping with water lines and supplied with electricity and lights supported on tall wooden polls. Christmas trees lights were hung in the trees. Fire pits were dug and wood left at campsites. Additional, unauthorized camping occurred in two adjacent fields at the corner of West Shore Road and Perry Road; both of these fields were also owned by Max Yasgur. It is not believed that those fields were prepared in any way; however, both are included in the nomination because of their immediate proximity and related use. Circulation to this area was provided by dirt roads: Penny Lane, a farm road, entered the grounds from Perry Road. A second, constructed road (Jeanne's Turnpike) provided an entrance from West Shore Road and led to the main gate. A third farm road (Ticia's

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Trace) led directly from West Shore Road. The location of Penny Lane is visible on the land today. Some parts of Ticia's Trace remain; others have faded. The historic location and remaining fragments of this road can be identified using the festival photos. Jeanne's Turnpike seems to have faded into near obscurity.

In addition to the campgrounds, the other major elements of this space were the Hog Farm and the Free Stage. The Hog Farm, a communal group that had been hired to cook and serve free food, help with security, and deliver medical attention to people with drug problems, was immediately west of Bindy Woods. The Hog Farm encampment was primarily laid out following a strong tree line that is still evident today. The large open space in the center was reserved for communal activities, such as kitchen preparation, food distribution tents, and medical tents. These took place in relatively large square tents and wooden booths. The medical tent was a tepee near the southern line. Just west of the Hog Farm area was the Free Stage, a small wooden platform (and an adjacent decorated bus) erected as a secondary concert venue for smaller acts. The Free Stage did not appear on the plans, which did show an "outdoor movie" area in the southwestern corner of the site; there is no evidence that the latter was constructed.

This entire section retains a high level of integrity to the period of significance. A comparison of 1969 and current aerial photographs shows that field divisions, tree lines, water bodies, and the extent of forest coverings remain almost identical today, enabling us to understand how the land was used during the festival. The only changes have been the addition or loss of buildings (but not an overall change in the density of development) and the diminishing of some of the circulation paths. Several non-historic residences (described below) are located along the roadways that outline these campgrounds. Some of these residences may have been built by the 1960s; others were erected in the decades following it. Most of the current lots were probably subdivided from Yasgur's holdings after his death. Since the entire site was active farmland rented from farmers in 1969,

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farmers lived in close proximity to the campers and many festival-goers interacted with them. These residences, almost all low one-story buildings, have little to no effect on the integrity of the campgrounds.

West Shore Road Stream and Dam

The stream and waterfall are located east of the intersection of West Shore Road and Hurd Road. The stream crosses West Shore Road at the former west boundary of the Gabriel Farm and runs east paralleling the road through a narrow wooded corridor to a point just east of Best Road, where it is impounded by a stone dam. This was not an official part of the festival site; however, the dam was the site of informal bathing and swimming that was recorded in numerous published photos and has become significantly associated with the festival itself.

Best Road Campgrounds

The Best Road Campgrounds is east of Filippini Pond, north of West Shore Road, and east and west of Best Road. Part of this land was rented as campgrounds by festival managers and the rest became the site of unplanned camping by concert goers. The site is characterized by flat cultivated fields divided by tree lines with forested edges. Camping occurred in the open fields bordered by the forested areas and excluded any land immediately surrounding domestic sites. The land uses and divisions remain the same as during the period of significance; however, several residences located on Best Road at the time of the festival have since been demolished.

SITE INTEGRITY

Overall, the Woodstock Festival Site retains substantial integrity from 1969. The site's only significant change occurred in 2008 with the development of the Museum at Bethel Woods (see above) on the Woodstock Festival Site. At the same time, the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts was constructed on the adjacent Gabriel Farm. The center for the arts, an open-air performing arts venue, was built on adjacent farmland to the east of the site

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that was never associated with the Woodstock Festival and was not used for any concert-related activities. The performing arts venue cannot be seen from the site and does not affect its integrity.

Minor changes to the site as a whole include overgrown paths, paving of roads that were once dirt (but retain their original size and scale), tree growth and/or loss (expected and documented), construction/loss of residential stock that was unrelated to the festival, and changes in land use (exceptionally few). In general, the overall topography of the site, the use of the land, the functional divisions into spaces, the location and integrity of historic stone walls, tree lines, hedge rows, wooded areas, cultivated fields, and water features retain a high degree of integrity to the period of significance. These features are all significant to an understanding of how the site was used during the concert. Due to the enormous size, remote location, outdoor and temporary nature of the event, the way in which organizers prepared the site, and the ways in which participants adapted it, especially after isolation, inclement weather, and shortages of food compromised the meticulous planing of organizers, are significant in illustrating how a small community formed here and adapted to change. As a whole, the Woodstock Festival Site retains an exceptionally strong ability to illustrate the events of August 1969. Further, the survival of original, meticulously drawn site plans and the wealth of original photography enable an accurate interpretation of how the site was used.

NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES

Woodstock Monument

The Woodstock Monument was placed on site in 1984. The monument is located on a rise near the corner of Hurd Road and West Shore Road with a view of the entire concert field. It was deliberately placed where it had a special vantage point overlooking the field. The monument is a 5.5 ton, flat rectangular concrete slab, 46" × 74.25" × 39.5" in size. Two original, painted iron plaques are embedded in the concrete. One notes this location as the site of Woodstock and the other is a high-relief design showing the original bird on a guitar

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design by Arnold Skolnick. Two plaques added later list the performers. The monument was designed and sculpted by local artist Wayne C. Saward and installed by local citizens on land then owned by Ruth Gellish. Although the monument still presents an open view of the field, its setting is now slightly compromised by a grove of trees with an American flag planted behind it and the concealed path the visitor must traverse between the parking area and the monument. The monument site is demarcated with a split rail fence; however, public access is not restricted. There are two stone benches. The monument is important and has been the site of continued commemorative activity since its installation; however, it has been judged too young to have achieved significance as a commemorative under criteria consideration F (see item 8).

In addition to the Woodstock Monument, there are twelve properties within the Woodstock Music Festival Site that do not contribute to its significance because they were not present during the period of significance and they are not related to the concert. All were built after 1969, are less than fifty years old, and have no established significance in any area. The numbers in parenthesis refer to map locations.

172 Perry Road (1, 2, 3)

One-story contemporary manufactured house composed of two rectangular forms end to end with gable roof; behind it is a one-story rectangular wood-frame barn with gable roof, large overhead garage door marks gable end elevation; two-over-two wood-frame windows; shed-roofed side addition with brackets and large equipment door (2 nc building)

200 Perry Road (4)

One-story single-wide contemporary manufactured home; concrete slab foundation, vinyl siding, gable roof (1 nc building)

216 Perry Road (5)

One-story wood-frame contemporary residence; built into a hillside so that the basement story is exposed on the rear elevation; concrete foundation; gable roof, vinyl siding. Adjacent rectangular shed with gable roofs. (2 nc buildings)

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597 West Shore Road (15, 12)

One and one-half story wood-frame cross-gabled contemporary residence; wood clapboard siding; steep overhanging gable roof with dormers and broad overhanging cornices; porches and balconies; cross gable extends north and is built into the hillside so that it has two and one-half exposed stories. Cross gable has large single-pane windows on each elevation flanking a broad stone chimney; smaller one-story wing on west end separated by steep, shed-roofed passageway with a wide stone chimney; adjacent one-story, two-bay wood-frame equipment barn or garage with gable roof, no foundation. (2 nc buildings)

532 West Shore Road (18, 20, 22, 23,24)

Two-story rectangular wood-frame contemporary barn with gambrel roof; vertical board siding; small, rectangular windows line side elevations; end elevation features barn doors on first story and equipment/loft door above; vertical-board trash enclosure and two small wood-frame equipment sheds are too small to count; (1 nc building)

263 Hurd Road (26,27)

One and one-half story wood-frame contemporary residence; horizontal wood siding, steep, off-center gable truss roof enclosing half story that can be seen on side and rear elevations; mostly glass; roof extends over open area at rear to create a porch; small wood-frame shed behind it (2 nc buildings)

270 Hurd Road (28)

one-story wood-frame L-shaped contemporary house; concrete foundation; clapboard siding; irregular fenestration; raised dormer; incorporated garage; built-in planter; deck overlooks Filippini Pond (1 nc building)

268 Hurd Road (29)

one-story wood-frame L-shaped contemporary house; cross-gabled roof; concrete foundation; clapboard siding; irregular fenestration; small entrance porch; incorporated two-car garage (1 nc building)

532 West Shore Road (30, 31, 32)

two-story wood-frame split-level contemporary house; concrete foundation; vertical board wood siding; side-gable roof; exterior chimneys on each end; lower story has glass doors; upper story has picture window; large, contemporary two-story wood-frame barn or equipment shed; rectangular with gambrel roof; first-story garage door; second-story equipment door; small rectangular windows on side elevations; shed too small to count (2 nc buildings)

West Shore Road (33)

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metal and glass ticket booth to Bethel Performing Arts Center; too small to count

Best Road (36)

old foundation wall on Best Rd; unknown date, unevaluated

AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE NOMINATION

Museum Site

The Museum at Bethel Woods, constructed c2008, was built on the south end of the main field, on the crest at the top of the bowl. During the concert this was flat land, at the very back of the concert site, and it was the location of the Food for Love vendors. The sprawling wood and glass museum complex and its extensive contemporary landscaping can be seen from the location of the stage and from other areas of the festival grounds and is an significantly intrusive element. The museum site and related features, such as such as parking lots and lighting on Hurd Road, which also compromised the rural character of this part of the site, have been excluded from the nomination boundary. Although the museum is an intrusive element that can be seen from the stage area, it is also long and low and was built of dark wood so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. Because its site is both high and flat, museum's immediate landscaping is not obvious from the rest of the site. The designer intended to give museum goers a chance to enjoy lunch or other social activities from a large deck overlooking the field and the design accomplishes this without overwhelming the site.

Hurd Road Campgrounds

The Hurd Road Campgrounds is a strip of land on both sides of Hurd Road along the west side of Filippini Pond, northwest of the performers' area, that was the site of unplanned camping during the festival. Although not rented by festival planners, aerial photos show this land as thickly covered with tents. Although still open, these parcels have seen extensive development and contain large non-historic homes set within open, suburban type landscapes that bear no resemblance to the agricultural landscape present in 1969. The Hurd Road campsites have been excluded from the historic district.

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CRITERIA

The Woodstock Music Festival Site is nationally significant under Criterion A in social history as the site of one of the most important cultural and social events of the second half of the twentieth century. The three-day music and art festival, which took place on nearly 300 acres of rolling farmland in rural Sullivan County, New York, was the definitive expression of the musical, cultural, and political idealism of the 1960s and embodied the ethos of the post-World War II generation.¹ The festival was recognized almost immediately as a watershed event in the transformation of American culture. Although approximately a half million people attended the outdoor festival in person, its effects spread far beyond the audience and profoundly affected a generation who experienced it and identified with it almost immediately through numerous retellings, recordings, a documentary film, an album, newspapers, magazines, and books.

Woodstock is also significant under Criterion A in music history as the site of the largest and most memorable of dozens of outdoor music festivals that took place between 1967 and 1969, an era that began with the widely publicized Monterey Pops Concert, Monterey, California, on June 16-18, 1967, and ended, tragically, with a concert at the Altamont Racetrack, Altamont, California, on December 6, 1969, just three months after Woodstock. Musically, the Woodstock Festival was regarded as a critical success. It was the largest musical event of its kind to that date, the most successful, and the most significant. Today, it is the most well remembered and the most revered. Fourteen of its thirty-two groups or performers have been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Some of the bands (such as Santana) that played there made career breakthroughs and several seminal performances occurred during the festival, most notably Richie Havens's "Freedom" (which he composed on the spot), Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag," and Jimi

¹ Although every reference to the Woodstock Festival holds that it was a 600-acre site, the actual festival grounds were slightly less than 300 acres in size. The other 300 acres were discontinuous parking areas that have not been identified. For ease of reference, I will refer to the site as 300 acres. See maps for exact acreage.

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Hendrix's version of the "Star Spangled Banner," which was said to have "encapsulated both the musical and political spirit of Woodstock with blues-edged poignancy and other-worldly improvisations."²

The site of the Woodstock Festival survives with a high level of integrity. Features include the natural amphitheater within which the concert was held, the backstage area set aside for performers, a wooded area in which paths and booths were constructed, several areas laid out for camping, and a stream and dam that was used by patrons for recreation. The interpretation of these areas is greatly enhanced by the preservation of the original hand-drawn plans for the festival site. The period of significance encompasses the three days over which the festival occurred, from Friday, August 15, 1969, until the early morning hours of Monday, August 18, 1969. Although technically the festival site is not quite 50 years old, Woodstock was an exceptionally noteworthy event and more than enough time has elapsed to assess its significance and impact.

The Woodstock Festival Site may also be locally significant for its effect on commerce, social history, and politics in the Sullivan County town of Bethel and the surrounding region and for the way in which the local battles between festival organizers who sought approval to have the fair and the members of the establishment who fought it mimicked national trends. However, local significance is not documented in this nomination, which evaluates only the national significance of the site.

SUMMARY

The 1960s was the decade in which the baby boom generation formally broke with the past and established its own cultural references. This generation, born after the war, was shaped by the major themes of America's post-war history: prosperity, affluence, the decentralization of cities and the shift to suburban living, the promise of higher education, and the security of a world at peace. However, the prosperity that fostered its

² Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, ed., *Woodstock: Three Days That Rocked the World* (New York: Sterling, 2009), 215.

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lifestyle also allowed this generation to see the stark contrast of their lives with the lives of those who did not enjoy the same advantages and instilled in its members a strong sense of responsibility. Consequently, they were troubled by poverty and injustice and were eager to work towards civil rights, lesbian and gay rights, the elimination of poverty, women's rights, and universal voting rights.³ Brought up to believe that World War II was justly fought to free the world from the madness of the Nazis and usher in world peace, those who came of age in the 1960s were profoundly affected by the indeterminate threat of atomic warfare and the country's deepening involvement in Vietnam, which gradually revealed itself to be a war with far less noble aims fought by American youth, many of whom could not yet vote, who had no clear idea of what they were fighting for. This radical break with trust in authority led the '60s generation to question all aspects of mainstream culture and to experiment with personal freedoms such as sex, birth control, unconventional religions, drugs, and, of

³ In just one example of how these movements were linked, George Chauncey, a professor of history at Yale University and the author of *Gay New York*, argues that the "African American civil rights movement was really the wellspring of all great movements for social justice and equality in the United States. It certainly had a profound effect on the lesbian and gay rights movement. Back in the '60s, at the time when the march happened, gays were regarded as mentally ill or people addicted to immoral behavior. And the civil rights movement really pioneered the concept as a powerful political concept of minority rights and made it easier for gays to begin to depict themselves as a minority who deserved the same civil rights that other Americans and other minorities did." "How the Civil Rights Movement Launched the Fight for LGBT, Women's Equality, *PBS NEWSHOUR*, PBS, September 2, 2013.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/nation-july-dec13-civilrights_09-02/

Another quote, from author Eric Marcus, provides more context on the struggle for LGBT rights in the 1960s: "Beginning in the early 1960s, as new gay organizations formed, like the boldly independent Washington, D.C., chapter of the Mattachine Society, and old organization[s] changed leadership, the struggle for gay dignity and equal right began to shift direction. A new generation of believers, as well as some veterans of the movement dismissed the 'sickness' label. They began actively and publicly working for equal rights and an end to governmental discrimination, rather than focusing on personal problems and soliciting morale-boosting professional opinions...Press coverage, although still scant and often negative, increased as gay organizations, following the example of the black civil rights movement, organized public demonstrations. In 1965, gay men and lesbians took to the streets in a handful of cities, including the nation's capital, where they demonstrated in front of the White House, Pentagon, and State Department to protest antigay federal policies...During this time, gay and lesbian organizations also discovered the value of building coalitions with other gay organizations, first through an affiliation of East Coast groups and then through a national association called the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations, or NACHO. In 1968, delegates from twenty-six organizations from around the country endorsed the then-radical slogan, "Gay Is Good," in effect adopting pride as a goal in itself. The conferees also adopted a five-point Homosexual Bill of Rights, which spelled out the immediate goals of the homophile movement...Eric Marcus, *Making History: The Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945-1990: An Oral History* (New York: Harpercollins, 1992), 89-92.

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course, new music, such as rock and roll, an art form expressed in a language that seemed radically eccentric to their parents' generation but through which the children of the '60s formed strong emotional bonds with each other and attained lasting comfort. By the late 1960s a strong counterculture had emerged that challenged some of the moral and political foundations of the establishment. Its supporters expressed themselves variously in leftist student political organizations that protested American involvement in the war and in hippie cultures, which focused on a more liberal lifestyle. In 1967, thousands who wished to experiment in the latter came together in San Francisco for the so-called "Summer of Love," an exercise in a lifestyle of unparalleled freedoms, nurtured by drugs, sex, and the developing San Francisco music scene music. The year 1968, marked by a major escalation of the war in Vietnam, the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (April) and Robert F. Kennedy (June), riots in major urban areas, the collapse of the antiwar presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy, antiwar protests and unheard of violence by authorities at the Democratic National Convention in August, and the election of Richard M. Nixon as president in November, has been called the "most turbulent twelve months of the postwar period and one of the most disturbing intervals we have lived through since the Civil War."⁴ However, the following summer was marked by three extraordinary cultural events: in June, the Stonewall Riots marked the beginning of the struggle for civil rights by lesbian and gay Americans; in July, the Apollo moon landing awed Americans and provided the entire country with a dose of optimism; and in August, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, a three-day gathering of approximately 450,000 people on a dairy farm in rural Sullivan County, became a symbol of the fellowship and faith of a generation.⁵ As Michael Lang, who recalled the festival as a respite for a world weary generation, expressed it:

Woodstock came to symbolize our solidarity....the connection to one another felt by all of us who worked on the festival, all of those who came to it, and the millions who couldn't be there but were touched by it. On that August weekend, during a very tumultuous time in our country, we showed the best of ourselves, and, in the process created the kind of society

⁴ Charles Kaiser, *1968 In America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), xv.

⁵ Stonewall is a New York City Landmark, a New York State Historic Site, and a National Historic Landmark.

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we all aspired to, even if for only a brief moment. The time was right, the place was right, the spirit was right, and we were right. What resulted was a celebration and confirmation of our humanity....”

On Max Yasgur’s six hundred acres, everyone dropped their defenses and became a huge extended Family. Joining together, getting into the music and each other, being part of so many people when calamity struck—the traffic jams, the rainstorms—was a life-changing experience. None of the problems damaged our spirit. In fact they drew us closer. We recognized one another for what we were at the core, as brothers and sisters, and we embraced one another in that knowledge. We shared everything, we applauded everyone, we survived together.⁶

The three-day festival was an economic and business venture advanced by two sets of unlikely associates who formed a partnership known as “Woodstock Ventures” in February 1969.⁷ They included financial investors Joel Rosenman and John Roberts and creative partners Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang. Lang and Kornfield originally sought out Rosenman and Roberts as financial backers for a recording studio in Woodstock; however, it was the latter two who proposed holding a festival as a means to raise money to build the studio. The festival soon grew to enormous proportions, consuming both all the energy and all the finances of the quartet, and the studio was never built. All four of the partners made essential contributions to the success of the venture. John Roberts personally underwrote the entire festival, and Kornfeld and Rosenman played crucial roles in development and operations. Lang hired a team of highly skilled and talented professionals in the music industry to design and implement the various technical and practical aspects of the event; however, as the plan for the festival evolved, the vision for an idyllic Arcadian happening was his alone.

⁶ Michael Lang, *The Road to Woodstock*, with Holly George-Warren (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 4.

⁷ The assessment that they were “unlikely associates” is based on Joel Rosenman’s description of their initial meeting. Rosenman described his astonishment at the contrast in clothing and style between the visitors and his impression that Lang and Kornfield could not possibly be businessmen. Joel Rosenman, John Roberts and Robert Pilpel, *Young Men With Unlimited Capital: The Inside story of the Legendary Woodstock Festival Told By The Two Who Paid For It* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 10-12. Michael Lang’s recollection is similar. “Upon meeting them we realized we were from two different worlds.” Lang, *Road to Woodstock*, 45. Numerous other sources consulted for this nomination reiterated differences in class, upbringing, dress, musical taste, and cultural orientation among the partners.

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The festival began on Friday, August 15, 1969, and extended into the early morning hours of Monday, August 18, 1969. During that time, thirty-two individual performers, blues, and rock and roll bands, including some of the most well-known and well-regarded performers of the era (and some newcomers whose careers received an immeasurable boost at Woodstock), played to an audience that was estimated at more than 450,000, most of whom camped on the site.⁸ Although nearly seven months had been invested in planning every aspect of the festival's infrastructure and design, the actual venue was secured only six weeks before the event, after festival organizers were denied permits for the original site leased in Wallkill, Orange County, which they were forced to vacate by angry officials and intolerant residents. However, the new site, Max Yasgur's dairy farm in rural Sullivan County, characterized by rolling pastoral farmland and forests, dotted with streams and ponds, and nestled within the surrounding Catskill Mountains, was infinitely more suited to Lang's original vision. Although they had only five weeks to prepare, ideas conceptualized by the organizers and design team and planned for the Wallkill site were easily transferred to Yasgur's farm. The layout and design were meticulously calculated to lay a safe, secure, and sophisticated infrastructure, soundstage, and camping venue over cultivated farm fields and within wooded enclaves. Nevertheless, the inadequate time to complete these preparations forced the coordinators to prioritize the most important tasks for completion. In addition, festival organizers failed to anticipate the mammoth size of the crowd, which proved to be at least triple the number expected (150,000). The immense crush of patrons, who began to arrive days before the festival began, utterly overwhelmed all transportation, food, sanitation, security, and medical facilities, and in the process effected the near complete isolation of the already secluded rural site. These difficulties were compounded by inclement weather, including intermittent thunder storms. Yet, to the immense credit of organizers, festival goers, performers, security, medical personal, and local residents, there was no disaster. Rather, a temporary and transitory community formed bound by site, atmosphere, music, and fellowship. Enormous credit was due to

⁸ Since the festival occurred, people have been trying to estimate the number of attendees. The Museum at Bethel Woods uses the number 450,000 and notes that some estimates place it at over a half-million. For consistency, this nomination will use 450,000.

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the creative and thoughtful way that the security plan had been conceived and carried out, which placed Woodstock in contrast to most other rock festivals of the period. A so-called “peace force” was schooled to help rather than to punish. Peacekeepers were selected for their tolerance rather than their righteousness, and they were trained to keep people safe and the site secure rather than to enforce drug laws. In particular, they were not allowed to carry weapons, ensuring that any escalation would not end in tragedy. Not one violent incident was reported during the festival, and no medical personnel treated a wound resulting from violence.

The festival was recognized almost immediately as a watershed event in the transformation of American culture. Although approximately 450,000 people attended the outdoor festival in person, its effects spread far beyond the audience and profoundly affected a generation which identified with it almost immediately through numerous retellings, recordings, a documentary film, an album, newspapers, magazines, and books.

Woodstock was the largest and most memorable of dozens of outdoor music festivals that took place between 1967 and 1969, an era that began with the widely publicized Monterey Pops Concert, Monterey, California, on June 16-18, 1967, and ended, tragically, with a concert at the Altamont Racetrack, Altamont, California, on December 6, 1969, just three months after Woodstock. The last, a one-day concert, organized at the request of the Rolling Stones to cap their 1969 North American tour, was so poorly organized that the venue was secured fewer than twenty-four hours before the bands were scheduled to play. The event was marred by the promoters’ complete lack of attention to safety, poor stage design, the fact that large segments of the audience had taken or been dosed with toxic drugs, the lack of a unified audience identity, and the delegation of security to a small chapter of drunken and drug-crazed Hells Angels who assaulted bands on the stage and murdered one fan just a few feet from where the Rolling Stones were playing. The drug and alcohol inflamed mayhem was out of control before it started, and the peaceful aura generated by Woodstock was tarnished in the eyes of the establishment a mere three months after it was created. While Altamont gave music festivals a bad name, the

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ideals of the Woodstock generation were shattered on May 4, 1970, when four students were killed by members of the Ohio National Guard at a protest on the campus of Kent State University.⁹ The sixty-seven rounds of ammunition fired at unarmed students, hitting some in the back, felling others while they were walking to class, was shocking and shattering, all but ending the optimism of the 1960s. In 1970, John Lennon wrote that he no longer believed in Elvis, Zimmerman, or Beatles; “the dream is over,” and perhaps it was.¹⁰ Within a decade, Lennon himself joined the ranks of murdered heroes cut down in their prime.

Yet, the memory of Woodstock and the extraordinary community that formed there has never been tarnished. As such, Woodstock has become a symbol of the idealism of those who came of age in the 1960s and believed that they could together challenge oppression and injustice—end the Vietnam war, achieve civil rights, and provide an alternative to corporate America. Woodstock remains a symbol of what was thought possible. The Woodstock Music Festival is recognized by cultural historians, music historians, and large numbers of American citizens who came of age in the 1960s as a defining event in the history of the post-World War II era. The long-lasting impact of the festival on American life is attested to by the fact that the Woodstock festival and its aftermath helped shape the world views, social consciences, and musical tastes of thousands of people who are now in leadership roles in every segment of American life.

Musically, the Woodstock festival was regarded as a critical success. It is remembered as the largest musical event of its kind to that date, the most successful, and the most significant. Fourteen of its thirty-two groups or performers have been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Some of the bands (such as Santana) that played there made career breakthroughs and several seminal performances occurred there, most notably Richie Havens’s “Freedom,” Country Joe McDonald’s “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag,” and Jimi Hendrix’s

⁹ The May 4, 1970 Kent State Shooting Site was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 11, 2017.

¹⁰ John Lennon, “God,” *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, 1970.

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version of the “Star Spangled Banner,” which was said to have “encapsulated both the musical and political spirit of Woodstock with blues-edged poignancy and other-worldly improvisations.”¹¹

MAJOR CULTURAL THEMES OF THE WOODSTOCK ERA

From “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” one of the most well-known patriotic songs of the World War II era, to “So it’s one, two, three, what are we fighting for? Don’t ask me, I don’t give a damn,” a line from the antiwar anthem that rang out at Woodstock, these popular songs embodied the seismic shift in American culture in the generations immediately preceding Woodstock.¹² The Woodstock Era really began in the years after World War II. That is when the majority of those who planned, played at, and attended the festival commenced their journey through life. As such, they were shaped by the major social, political, economic, and artistic events and movements that defined the quarter-century between September 2, 1945 and August 16, 1969. If Woodstock marked a transformation in American culture, these events and movements were the milestones marking the transition. Among those most relevant to Woodstock were the character of American life after the war, the extraordinary events of the 1960s, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the development of a counterculture, rock and roll, and the popularity of large-scale outdoor music festivals in the last few years of the decade.

Post-war America

In America, the period after World War II was ushered in by ten million returning veterans, many eager to find jobs, marry, and start families. This immediately triggered a profound housing crisis that compelled government intervention. The flood of new families with urgent needs for shelter combined with the massive amounts of federal money allocated to highway construction virtually forced the development of suburbia,

¹¹ Evans and Kingsbury, 215.

¹² Frank Loesser, “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” Famous Music Corp. 1942; Country Joe McDonald, “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag,” *Rag Baby Talking Issue No.1*, 1965.

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while at the same time decentralizing and destabilizing cities. Between 1948 and 1958, thirteen million homes were built, eleven million of them in the suburbs, and by 1960 the population of the suburbs equaled that of the center cities.¹³ As the middle class—the white, married middle class, that is—followed the wealthy to the suburbs, generating explosive growth there, they left behind people who were more marginalized, poorer, and less able to invest in their neighborhoods and downtowns. At the same time, the GI bill sent many of these veterans to school, following which many of them got good jobs, some in new industries such as nuclear power or aeronautics. Economic growth was generated in part by the demand for roads and houses, schools and consumer goods, as well as by the drive to propel America into leadership in the sciences and dominance in the military, and widespread prosperity ensued.

The post-war period was marked by stability, substantial economic growth, and material wealth. In 1955, 50 percent of all white American families owned at least one car, a television, and a refrigerator. By 1960, the stock market was more than twenty times higher than any year since the Depression; the GNP had increased by 250 percent since the end of World War II, and median family income had doubled. America was the richest nation the world had ever known. Telephones, televisions, refrigerators, electrical appliances, fast cars, and cheap gas were considered part of the American birthright.¹⁴

Yet, not everyone benefitted. In the South, the legacy of slavery, war, reconstruction, and Jim Crow had left widespread poverty and inequality, and legally sanctioned racism was entrenched. About 20 percent of African Americans were poor. And the effects of prosperity that washed over the middle class largely excluded them. New farming technologies had forced small farmers off the land, forcing many to head for urban areas in search of employment. By 1960 about 55 percent of the African American poor lived in cities and 30 percent lived in

¹³David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 11.

¹⁴Farber, 8-9.

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small towns. But new technologies also displaced unskilled workers throughout the country, most of whom were African American, and jobs for this group largely vanished.¹⁵ In the North, poor blacks were especially visible in America's older cities, which began to decline following the exodus of the middle class to the suburbs. This population was replaced with a poorer and less stable one, less able to sustain inner city businesses. Government programs to help declining cities ended up destabilizing them—if not demolishing them altogether.

The 1960s

The 1960s began as a decade of promise with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960. The rise of a youthful president and a gifted speaker who challenged Americans to “ask what they could do for their country” was inspiring to American youth, and if they didn't quite grasp the impact of the Bay of Pigs crisis or the implications of early American involvement in Vietnam, they were nevertheless inspired by the president's vision for a Peace Corps and his stated determination for a moon landing in their time—for these were distinctly modern goals for a new age. In equal measure were they distraught by the president's assassination just three years later, the first—perhaps the most shocking—but certainly not the last disillusionment that this group would bear before it took on the mantle of adulthood.

Like the population and the economy, the magnitude of “youth” itself grew exponentially during the 1960s to include more than 76 million Americans. This was a direct result of the “baby boom” (1946-1964), the dramatic increase in the birth rate in the decades after World War II, as well as post-war affluence, which allowed people to have larger families, gave young people longer and more carefree childhoods and the means to stay in school longer, and the new emphasis on completing higher education. By the mid-1960s, almost half of all students attended college, delaying their entry into the adult workforce. In 1964, 41 percent of the

¹⁵ Farber, 12-18.

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population was under twenty, and the largest age group in America was composed of those who were seventeen years old.¹⁶ Members of the baby boom generation were full participants in the “national culture of prosperity,” which enabled them to engage in self-expression through personal consumption, freely buying clothes and music, and attending concerts; however, they also began to question the values that led to that prosperity and whether it was a morally appropriate goal.¹⁷

Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, who became president following Kennedy’s 1963 assassination, did not lose the confidence of youth immediately. Johnson was dedicated to carrying through the civil rights agenda initiated by the Kennedy administration and fostered a strong belief in the federal government’s responsibility to reduce inequality and protect oppressed minorities. In his first State of the Union message (January 1964), the new president declared a “War on Poverty” and subsequently introduced a broad program designed to fight poverty and promote better health, ensure higher education, protect mass transit, ensure consumer protection, environmental protection, and historic preservation.¹⁸ Johnson’s agenda reflected the liberal ideology of the age. As Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, put it: “We could not accept poverty, ignorance and hunger as intractable, permanent features of American society. There was no child we could not feed, no adult we could not put to work, no disease we could not cure, no toy, food or appliance we could not make safer, no air or water we could not clean.”¹⁹ Johnson succeeded in some of his ambitions to make America a more just and fair place, winning some important civil rights victories and social justice legislation, but his reputation ultimately suffered by his handling of the small foreign war in southeast Asia that he had inherited from Kennedy.

¹⁶ Farber, 57.

¹⁷ Farber, 11.

¹⁸ Johnson’s achievements include the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

¹⁹ In Farber, 105.

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Civil Rights

Years of institutionalized racism and discrimination proved more difficult and complicated to untangle and southern lawmakers more intractable than anticipated. Nevertheless, by the 1960s, years of struggle against the legacy of slavery and civil war, reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, Ku Klux Klan terrorism, and state-sponsored segregation had finally provoked the nation's African American population to begin large-scale organizing to take a stand against the status quo. In addition, by the 1960s, the federal government (particularly under presidents Kennedy and Johnson) also began to take a stronger role in protecting the rights and liberties of every American.²⁰

After several small but symbolic victories, such as the desegregation of the military in 1948 and major league baseball in 1946, radical change to the system itself was necessary. In the mid-1950s, the US Supreme Court finally rejected the notion of "separate but equal," which had been used to justify institutional discrimination for more than a century, in the pivotal decision, *Brown v Board of Education* (1954). The court ruled that the sole purpose of segregation was to isolate and exclude black children and to denigrate and demoralize them and ordered states to end legally mandated segregation.²¹ This led intransigent governors to defy the order, setting up more conflict, and forcing the federal government to send troops across the South to protect small children on their way to school.

Encouraged by leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, Julian Bond, and others, African Americans themselves began to take some of the first assertive steps to organize against oppression. In 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott, during which most of Montgomery's African American citizens refused to ride city busses for over a year. The boycott ended with a

²⁰ Farber, 71.

²¹ Farber, 69-72.

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supreme court order to desegregate the city's busses. In 1960, four black college students held the first "sit in" at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. When they were not served, the four refused to leave until the store closed, returning the following day to repeat the action. This peaceful protest marked the beginning of an organized antidiscrimination tactic that spread to fifty-five cities in a month. Within six months Woolworth's lunch counter had been quietly integrated. In 1963, the March on Washington (organized by Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph) brought 200,000 people to the Washington Mall to demonstrate in support of jobs and freedom and to hear Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his inspiring "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1964, more than 1,000 mostly white, idealistic, out-of-state young people who believed that they could personally confront racism participated in Freedom Summer, a drive sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to register as many Mississippi African Americans to vote as possible. While workers managed to register less than 7 percent of eligible black voters, eighty of the volunteers were attacked or beaten. The tragic legacy of the summer was the brutal murder of three civil rights workers, one black and two whites. Their killers were not brought to justice for forty-one years. However, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibits racial discrimination in voting, was a landmark achievement, considered by some to be the most significant civil rights legislation in history. But none of these victories put an end to segregation and racism—or to the poverty that often accompanies them. After Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April 1968, rioting began and soon spread to as many as 130 cities. Sixty-five thousand National Guard troops were called out to quell the riots, thirty-nine people died, and 20,000 were arrested. The non-violence that King had devoted his life to seemed to vanish, and blacks and whites seemed more polarized than ever.²²

During the same years, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) began to seem ineffective to some after years of polite struggle, and by the late 1960s many African Americans rejected

²² Kaiser, 148.

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the ideal of a “color blind melting pot” and turned instead to black separatist movements.²³ The Black Panther Party was organized in 1966, just a year after Malcolm X was assassinated. Members of the party had grown restless after centuries of oppression, few victories, repeated assassinations of their leaders, and the halting progress of change that often did not include economic gain. Yet, in 1968, mainstream America was surprised and offended when Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their gloved fists in the black power salute on the Olympic podium in Mexico City.

Vietnam

For the average American, the Vietnam conflict began in the mid-1950s, when President Eisenhower sent military advisors to help the South Vietnamese. For the Vietnamese, the conflict had always been about winning control of their country from a colonial power, France, which had held it since the 1880s. When a communist-led faction finally defeated the French in the early 1950s and the Geneva Convention divided the country in two, the United States refused to accept the solution, prompting US officials to start sending military advisors to mentor a poorly led South Vietnam to resist the “communist threat.” Under President Kennedy, the American presence grew, and the draft began to escalate to meet the demand. With the nation in the middle of the Cold War, most Americans perceived a communist takeover as any country’s greatest threat; thus, the Vietnam situation was presented to the American people as an example of the so-called “Domino Theory,” the idea that if South Vietnam fell to the communists, all of southeast Asia would fall behind it—and thus the importance of the conflict was greatly exaggerated. President Johnson’s decision to escalate the war in 1964 and 1965 was presented as a part of the global fight against communism.

So, while many Americans believed that they were fighting to defend an innocent people from tyranny, this was an oversimplification of a number of complicated motivations for war. The North Vietnamese were

²³ Farber, 68.

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characterized as aggressors; however, their actual goal was to reunite their country and to be independent. As war dragged on, no American president wanted to lose a war or to be seen as letting a country fall to communism. This aspect of the war was more about American power and image, especially within the larger context of the Cold War and American-Soviet relations. On the home front, it became more and more difficult for American leaders to hide the cost of war from citizens now that horrifying images of carnage came into American homes on the nightly news. In addition, the loss of student deferments and the increasing reliance on the draft meant that the average age of the American soldier in Vietnam was nineteen, bringing the war directly under the scrutiny of now-engaged college students. As the war went badly wrong and casualties mounted, it became increasingly hard to explain its purpose to the American public or to the young men who were plucked from college campuses to go and fight it. As Americans learned the truth, Vietnam provoked “the most sustained mass resistance to any war in American history.”²⁴ The entire episode gradually undermined faith in government and in authority in general. This was especially true for the American youth who were old enough to be drafted at the age of eighteen but could not vote until they were twenty-one. During the second half of the 1960s, the Vietnam War was the issue that most troubled and concerned American youth.

In 1965, 180,000 US troops were sent to Vietnam. In 1967, 389,000 were sent and in 1969, 540,000. When the thirty-year war finally ended, ingloriously, in 1975, a total of 2,594,000 US troops had fought in Vietnam (of which 25 percent had been drafted), and 58,193 of them had died (and of those 30 percent had been drafted). More than 300,000 American soldiers were wounded and, of those, 75,000 were severely disabled. At least 500,000 civilians had died.²⁵

²⁴ Farber, 119.

²⁵ Evans and Kingsbury, 18-20.

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The Counterculture

Counterculture is a broad term that has been used to describe the generation gap that separated youth culture from that of their parents in the 1960s. While there was certainly a generational component involved, and differences in fashion, musical taste, and other superficial accouterments often kept people at odds, the term refers to a much deeper split between the values, morals, and truths that guided the everyday lives of citizens. The term “counter culture” was apparently first used by sociologist Talcott Parsons in 1951 in *The Social System* without being defined. In 1960, Milton Yinger defined the characteristic element of what he called the “contraculture” as something that was “in value-conflict with the dominant society.”²⁶ However, Roberts noted that such conflicts may exist between cultures that actually have much in common and that “not every value or characteristic of the dominant culture will be rejected.” Rather, the counterculture is focused on the rejection of certain explicit characteristics of the culture from which it arises and that proponents are more interested in changing the culture than replacing it.²⁷

The historical roots of the 1960s counterculture are often traced to the 1950s, when poets of the Beat Generation began to express their rejection of certain aspects of American materialism, living less conservative lifestyles and experimenting with drugs such as marijuana. Yet, although the Beats rejected censorship and conformity, they operated within a distinctive literary tradition, and Bohemian culture was at heart elitist. The hippies admired the Beats for their stand against social conformity and shared their opposition to mainstream politics and culture; however, the hippies were not artists working within an established tradition and did not share the same literary ambitions. Instead, the hippies were motivated by the disillusionment and contradictions of the 1960s, which led privileged young people to question the “capitalistic competitiveness [that] is the fundamental characteristic of American society.”²⁸ Most were fiercely anti-capitalist. They were at heart anti-elitist and

²⁶ Keith A. Roberts, “Towards a Generic Concept of the Counter-Culture,” *Sociological Focus* 11.2 (April, 1978), 111.

²⁷ Roberts, 113-115.

²⁸ Laurence Veysey is apparently the source of “capitalistic competitiveness,” in Roberts, 118.

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focused on actions that specifically rejected those values. Communal living, for example, was a direct rejection of a society that distributes wealth based on a person's intrinsic worth rather than on merit or hard work. Equal rights is the ultimate countercultural goal. The counterculture is interested in creating a better society, not by violent opposition but by providing an alternative so that the establishment may change voluntarily and adopt a more humanistic way of life.²⁹

One early organized group that took a strong stand against capitalist society and also became associated with the symbols of the countercultural lifestyle was the Diggers, named after a group of seventeenth-century English utopians. The Diggers took up residence in the Haight-Ashbury in the mid-1960s, helping to bolster the connotation of San Francisco as the heart of the counterculture. The Diggers operated a free store, a free theater, and free concerts. They fed many of the "flower children" who drifted to the city in the late 1960s.³⁰

They also popularized some of the fashion that came to be seen as the signifier of the counterculture, as they took to wearing colorful outfits that recalled theatrical costumes. However, they weren't the only ones introducing new fashions. Musicians, such as the Beatles and the other groups that made up the British invasion, also had a major influence on hair and fashion. Soon longer hair and new and more provocative ways of dress began to characterize the "hippies," who were the outward manifestation of the counterculture. In addition to new styles of dress, there was radically new music, more sexually expressive dancing, and, of course, sexual freedom. The latter was "at the core of the counterculture's rejection of conventional American morality," as in 1969 "more than two-thirds of all people believed that premarital sex of any kind was wrong." Illegal and experimental drugs were another manifestation of the countercultural lifestyle and one of the reasons the establishment most feared the counterculture.³¹

²⁹ Roberts, 121.

³⁰ Farber, 169-172.

³¹ Farber, 174-183.

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Yet, the essence of the cultural split was always more a questioning of the moral code than the dress code. It involved questioning the moral foundation of the establishment itself: the moral superiority that got the country into a war; the traditions that perpetuated racism; the affluence and economic imbalance that caused poverty; the religious truths that precluded questioning. The counterculture was very much about opposition to the war. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) may have dressed conservatively, but their first student strikes and college takeovers were a bold statement of the counterculture's position. The national debate over Vietnam and racism caused many young people to question who had the legitimate authority to tell them what was right and what was wrong.³² No longer able to trust traditional authorities, young people set out to find their own truths.

The establishment, on the other hand, believed that the "traditions and values that made the nation great were under attack by people who did not respect them or their way of life."³³ The nature of any establishment is "to believe itself the only valid expression of human needs. To recognize the legitimacy of an alternative society and culture would be to confess its own inadequacy and failure—an admission which establishments of any sort have always found it virtually impossible to make."³⁴ The success of a counterculture depends upon members of the establishment undertaking a basic change in their way of thinking followed by a real change in their behavior toward other human beings and the world in general. This did not occur. Some segments of society, such as the Weather Underground, believed that only drastic and violent actions, such as the outright destruction of property, were the only way to overthrow establishment culture. This approach ended in failure as well. However, the underground press also recognized the effectiveness of some smaller scale and risk free activities,

³² Farber, 176.

³³ Farber, 168.

³⁴ John Gorman, "The Counter Culture in Crisis," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 555.4 (Winter 1972), 392.

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such as establishing food and legal co-ops, which furnished desperately needed services to communities abandoned by the establishment and provided the basis for new lifestyles that continued to flourish.³⁵

Rock and Roll

The foundation for the rock and roll revolution began in the mid-1950s, when Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" became the first rock and roll record to reach number one. The following year Elvis Presley, who drew on the "race music" of the American South and shocked mainstream audiences with an overtly sensual performance style, scored his first number one hit with "Heartbreak Hotel." Yet, as the 1960s dawned, more mainstream and conservative singers such as Frankie Avalon, Paul Anka, and Connie Francis were still extremely popular with multi-generational audiences.³⁶ Music with a message began with the revival of enthusiasm for folk music in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Groups such as Peter Paul and Mary and Pete Seeger (following in the footsteps of Woody Guthrie) began to sing about some of the more important social issues of the era, such as the civil rights movement. This music began to reach a wider audience with the young after Bob Dylan appeared in New York City, making his first club appearance in 1961. Dylan was at once more eloquent and more compelling. Songs such as "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" or "Masters of War" (1963) addressed racism and war and offered stinging criticisms of the establishment in a more contemporary rhetoric. He and Joan Baez sang "Only a Pawn in Their Game" (about the assassination of Medgar Evers) at the 1963 March on Washington. One of his best known and most didactic songs of the era, "The Times They are a-Changin'," was both a prediction and a stern warning: A new age, an age of great change, was coming; youth would be empowered, and those who couldn't change with it should get out of the way. At the same time, Dylan's bold lyrics were still expressed within the traditional musical language of folk.

³⁵ Gorman, 404.

³⁶ Mikal Gilmore, "Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rock of the Sixties," *Rolling Stone* (August 23, 1990).

http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-the-beatles-and-the-rock-roll-of-the-60s-19900823?utm_source=email

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In the same years, the Beatles, who, like Dylan, also made their first club appearance in 1961, gave fair warning that musical expression itself was also changing in an explosive way. The Beatles introduced a new musical language built on exciting chord progressions and combinations and the ability to synthesize everything that had come before them.³⁷ As *Rolling Stone* critic Greil Marcus put it, “the form of the Beatles contained the forms of rock and roll itself.”³⁸ In the UK, the Beatles had an unprecedented six singles in the top twenty in 1965, just before “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” their first American single, followed by their appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964, marked their conquest of American music. *Rolling Stone* observed that, “their music transfixed and delighted us.”³⁹ Dylan noted that the Beatles were doing things nobody else was, and he observed that “they were pointing the direction that music must go.”⁴⁰

In 1965, influenced in part by the Beatles, Dylan began to experiment with the new language of electric rock. His first electric album, *Bringing It All Back Home*, 1965, was electric on one side and acoustic on the other. His first public appearance using the new form was at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, where he played “Like a Rolling Stone” and “Maggie’s Farm” backed by the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Some of his fans had difficulty following him. Pete Seeger, for example, tried to unplug him during the performance. As Robbie Robertson, who, with other members of The Band, backed Dylan on his 1965-66 world tour, recalls, “at every stop they were greeted by boos from audiences unhappy with Dylan’s switch to electric.”⁴¹ Nevertheless, Dylan persevered and began to use more complex electronic instrumentation to transform and layer his music with additional meanings and complexity, and by enriching the sonic landscape he was able to “[connect]with a

³⁷ Kaiser, 198.

³⁸ In Kaiser, 198.

³⁹ Gilmore, n.p.

⁴⁰ In Gilmore, n.p.

⁴¹ “The Birth of the Band: The True American Journey of Robbie Robertson,” *Rolling Stone* (Nov. 17, 2016), 52; Adapted from Jaime Robbie Robertson, *Testimony* (New York: Penguin, 2016).

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broader and more vital audience.”⁴² Perhaps his greatest song from that era, “Like a Rolling Stone,” released in July 1965, was rated number one on *Rolling Stone*’s “500 Greatest Songs of All Time.”⁴³ Bruce Springsteen discussed the importance of the song when he inducted Dylan into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988:

The way that Elvis freed your body, Dylan freed your mind, and showed us that because the music was innately physical did not mean that it was anti-intellect. He had the vision and talent to make a pop song that contained the whole world. He invented a new way a pop singer could sound, broke through the limitations of what a recording could achieve, and he changed the face of rock’n’roll for ever and ever.⁴⁴

Dylan, who was awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature, has been called “the most important songwriter of the last 50 years.”⁴⁵ He has served as an inspiration and a model for too many other important songwriters to mention. A very brief list includes Paul Simon, Joe Strummer, The Who, David Bowie, Neil Young, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Nick Cave, Patti Smith, Mick Jagger, Tom Waits, Bono, and Ryan Adams.

By the mid-1960s, as the baby boom generation came of age, everything got more serious for American youth. Music began to lose its innocence, generational tensions strained, and teenagers, who no longer shared any musical interests with their parents, began to find a refuge in the joy, fear, and tension that defined rock and roll. By the late 1960s, rock and roll had become an enormously unifying, liberating, and comforting force. The best music embodied the fear, doubt, and terror of the apocalypse along with the consensus of joy and promise.⁴⁶

⁴² Gilmore, n.p.

⁴³ “500 Greatest Songs of All Time,” *Rolling Stone* (April 7, 2011). www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-500-greatst-songs-of-all-time-20110407

⁴⁴ Bruce Springsteen inducts Bob Dylan, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductions, 1988. http://youtu.be/SRu6613Q1_U

⁴⁵ Sean Wilentz, in Eleanor Barkhorn, “How Bob Dylan Changed the ‘60s and American Culture,” *The Atlantic* (Sept. 9, 2010). <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2010/how-bob-dylan-changed-the-60s-and-american-culture/62654>

⁴⁶ Gilmore, n.p.

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Springsteen himself, who was eighteen in 1968, discussed the process of capturing the terror of the era in one of his own greatest songs, “Born to Run,” written a few years later, in 1975:

I was a child of Vietnam-era America, of the Kennedy, King and Malcolm X assassinations. The country no longer felt like the innocent place it was said to be in the Eisenhower fifties. Political murder, economic injustice and institutionalized racism were all powerfully and brutally present. These were issues that had previously been relegated to the margins of American life. Dread – the sense that things might not work out, that the moral high ground had been swept out from underneath us, that the dream we had of ourselves had somehow been tainted and the future would forever be uninsured – was in the air. This was the new lay of the land, and if I was going to put my characters out on *that* highway, I was going to have to put all these things in the car with them. That’s what was due, what the times demanded.⁴⁷

Charles Kaiser has written that 1968 was “the pivotal year of the sixties: the moment when all of a nation’s impulses toward violence, idealism, diversity, and disorder peaked to produce the greatest possible hope and the worst imaginable despair.” At the same time, “the remarkable unity achieved through the music on the radio” was the only place in the history of the US where, for a fleeting moment, we created a world of seemingly genuine racial and sexual equality embraced by everyone under thirty.”⁴⁸ “The songs [rock and roll] produced kept us alive, even a little hopeful, through the most terrifying year of the decade.”⁴⁹

Music Festivals

If music was a near universal expression of countercultural comfort and solidarity, the outdoor music festival became one of the most important sources of cultural expression and mutual support for the ‘60s generation. The American rock music festival had its origins in the successful Newport Jazz Festival and its west coast

⁴⁷ Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 209.

⁴⁸ Kaiser, vii.

⁴⁹ Kaiser, xx.

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counterpart, the Monterey Jazz Festival, both founded in the mid-1950s to showcase the performance of jazz in a relaxed outdoor setting. These festivals helped to broaden the appreciation of jazz by expanding the audience from elite spectators to a more egalitarian crowd, and they also served to popularize the idea of the outdoor festival. With the increasing popularity of folk music, Newport organizers added the Newport Folk Festival in 1959, further broadening the appeal of outdoor festivals, as well as promoting gatherings of musicians with messages. Bob Dylan, who performed at Newport in 1963 and 1964, was especially popular with his early “protest” songs. By the middle of the decade, the Newport Folk Festival was ready to experiment with rock and roll, allowing special rock performances at its 1965 festival. This experiment, which featured the Paul Butterfield Blues Band backing Dylan on electric instruments, was seen by many of the folk fans as a betrayal. Others were thrilled, however, and Dylan’s electric debut ensured his place in the counterculture.

However, the relationship between music and the counterculture that led to Woodstock was forged during the 1967 “Summer of Love.” The Summer of Love was ushered in on January 14, 1967 with the first “Human Be-In” at Golden Gate Park. Part music festival, part poetry festival, and part protest over a new law that criminalized the hallucinogen lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), festival organizers, led by Timothy Leary, served up sandwiches dosed with LSD and urged participants to question authority.⁵⁰ Although this was the first widespread use of the words “Be-In,” the term was derived from the “sit-ins” held throughout the South beginning in 1960. The Human Be-In featured Beat poets, such as Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and some of the early San Francisco bands, such as the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. It was attended by students, hippies, and members of the older counterculture groups. It was widely covered in the

⁵⁰ Ken Kesey had actually pioneered the so-called “acid tests,” big multi-media public gatherings with light shows, rock music, mad dancing and acid dropping, a year earlier. Kesey’s acid tests were important early multimedia happenings combining light shows, tapes, live rock bands, movies, slide projectors, strobe lights and other media – but they were more about art than music. The Grateful Dead was the official event band. The San Francisco Tripps Festival (Jan. 1966), at which the Grateful Dead and Big Brother performed, began staging them at the Fillmore in San Francisco. William L. O’Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (New York: Random House, 1971), 242.

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press and sparked dozens of similar events.⁵¹ The Be-In popularized hippie culture and sparked the Summer of Love, a season fueled by a combination of electric rock and psychedelic drugs, drawing between 50,000 and 70,000 young people to the west coast in search of a new, liberated kind of life.⁵² There, in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, they staked their claim to a community based on questioning traditional values and resisting traditional authorities, a society made manifest in language, dress, sex, drugs, and music that captivated youth but confused authorities.⁵³

Among the reasons that the hippie community gravitated to San Francisco was the increasing popularity of the regional music scene, as well as a tradition of free concerts and other community gatherings in Golden Gate Park. More than 200 bands defined the "San Francisco sound," which was very loosely based on country, blues, and jazz. The music of these bands generally embodied spiritual and pacifist ideals but tended to be less overtly political (at least at first); rather, the San Francisco bands formed social bonds with their audiences and tried to build community out of a mixture of music, drugs, sex, and love.⁵⁴ Among the most important were the Grateful Dead, Hot Tuna, the Jefferson Airplane, the Steve Miller Band, Moby Grape, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Canned Heat, Country Joe and the Fish, Creedance Clearwater Revival, the Doors, Electric Flag, Sly and the Family Stone, Steppenwolf, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and Santana.

The Be-In and the other events in Golden Gate Park became the inspiration for what is thought to be the first important rock music festival in the United States. The little-known Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival was held on June 10-11, 1967 at the Sydney B. Cushing Memorial Amphitheater in Marin County,

⁵¹ Michael William Doyle, "Statement on the Historical and Cultural Significance of the 1969 Woodstock Festival Site" (*Bethel Performing Arts Center Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement*, 2001), 2.

⁵² Joel Selvin, *Altamont: The Rolling Stones, The Hells Angels, and the Inside Story of Rock's Darkest Day* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016), 27.

⁵³ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, rev. (New York: Bantam, 1993), 215.

⁵⁴ Pietro Scaruffi, *The History of Rock Music: The Sixties*. www.scaruffi.com/history/cpt21.pdf

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California. Thirty acts, including the Doors, Jefferson Airplane, the Byrds, Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band, Dionne Warwick, Canned Heat, and Country Joe and the Fish, performed at a two-day festival organized by Tom Rounds, a program director for KFRC radio, and co-produced by Mel Lawrence, who was later significant in producing a number of other festivals, including Woodstock two years later. The concert was a benefit for the Hunters Point Child Care Project. Rounds noted that they relied on the leaders of Haight-Ashbury to help set it up, and Lawrence described himself as handling the logistics and transportation, a job that provided him with valuable experience for later festivals. Apparently, the festival's idea of having a doctor to minister to those with bad trips set an important precedent, and Hells Angels (not formally engaged or paid) provided some kind of security.⁵⁵

The San Francisco sound reached a national audience after the Monterey International Pop Festival, which was held one week later, on June 16-18, 1967. Monterey is recognized as the first large-scale outdoor rock music festival. Approximately 50,000 people attended the event, which was planned by John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas, Lou Adler, a record producer, and publicist Derek Taylor. Their idea was to validate rock music as an art form using the successful Monterey Jazz Festival as a model. The rock festival, which was held at the same venue as the jazz festival, was planned as a free event. All but two of the bands donated their fees, and all the money was donated to charity. This festival popularized the idea of the multi-day rock festival and set the standard for some of the logistics used by numerous other concert organizers. Like the Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival, these organizers had a staff of trained volunteers to deal with bad trips. The Monterey Pop Festival introduced artists such as Jimi Hendrix, the Who, and Janis Joplin to large American audiences; it established San Francisco as the center of America's rock scene; and it bestowed legitimacy on the music of the counterculture.⁵⁶ Monterey also helped to disseminate the less restricted cultural mores of the San

⁵⁵ *Rolling Stone* (June 17, 2014). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-untold-and-deeply-stoned-story-of-the-first-u-s-rock-festival-20140617>

⁵⁶ Selvin, 28.

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Francisco community across the country. As festivals like Monterey proliferated, their forms—crowded gatherings where people camped and bonded under sometimes adverse circumstances—conveyed the sense that they “were sites where the counterculture itself was rehearsed, performed and....consumed, as at the be-ins.”⁵⁷

Other performers at Monterey included the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and the Holding Co., Quicksilver Messenger Service, Moby Grape, Steve Miller Blues Band, Electric Flag, Otis Redding, Jefferson Airplane, the Mamas and the Papas, Janis Joplin, Canned Heat, Laura Nyro, Buffalo Springfield, Ravi Shankar, Booker T and the MGs, Hugh Masakela, the Association, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, the Blues Project, and County Joe and the Fish.⁵⁸ Over the next two years, some of these new “acid rock” groups used state of the art sound and light shows and performance-enhancing psychedelic drugs to significantly expand their popularity in America. All four of the Woodstock organizers were strongly influenced by Monterey. Joel Rosenman recalled that shortly after forming Woodstock Ventures, the four went to see D.A. Pennebaker’s 1968 documentary concert film, *Monterey Pop*. Rosenman recalled that he saw it multiple times.⁵⁹

Following the success of Monterey, there were dozens of large, outdoor, mostly multi-day music festivals throughout the United States between 1967 and the early 1970s. California alone had ten, Florida six and Georgia two. It is estimated that more than two million Americans attended a rock festival in these years.⁶⁰ As a phenomenon, rock festivals were “unique, dynamic and experimental.”⁶¹ They primarily drew youth and they

⁵⁷ Doyle, 3.

⁵⁸ Monterey was documented in a film by D.A. Pennebaker.

⁵⁹ Joel Rosenman, "Notes to BWC Historic Landmark App," 6 February 2017. Roseman's comments were sent to Wade Lawrence, Director, Bethel Woods Museum, via email on 7 February 2017. Lawrence sent them to the author via email on the same date. The nomination was subsequently revised to address some of Roseman's comments, which were also submitted to the NPS with this nomination.

⁶⁰ Bill Mankin, “Peace, Love and...We Can All Join In: How Rock Festivals Helped Change America,” *Like the Dew: A Journal of Southern Culture and Life* (March 4, 2012). http://likethedew.com/author/wmankin/#.WA_EHdUrJEY

⁶¹ Mankin, 8.

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often offered budding counterculturalists the first opportunity to meet others like themselves, as well as those of racial and ethnic diversity, and to experiment with being part of the movement. Many of these young people were on their own for the first time, away from parents and other authorities, free to engage in drinking, drugs, sex, public nudity, and other sorts of personal expression, and the free airing of their political beliefs in a large crowd of people like themselves, all in sync with a unifying and powerfully addicting beat. Instead of clashing with “normal society,” for the first time they *were* normal society. And while they may have appeared to be gathering in the name of fashion and fad, citizens of these experimental “cities” were often testing themselves to see if they could form the kind of community they wanted to see in the world, unified in their views of the social and political concerns of the times.⁶² This was an enormously empowering idea and it partially explains why so many people who attended Woodstock and other festivals say that their lives were changed by them. As Michael Lang said of Woodstock, “we created the kind of society we all aspired to, even if for only a brief moment.”⁶³

The small Miami Pop Festival, May 18-19, 1968, was notable because it was the first concert produced by Michael Lang (with Richard O’Barry). It was held at the Gulfstream Race Track and drew an audience of between 5,000 and 25,000 (sources differ). Bands, staged on flatbed trucks, included John Lee Hooker, Chuck Berry, Mothers of Invention, Blue Cheer, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Blues Image, Evil, Charles Austin Group, and Jimi Hendrix. Although it was scheduled for two days, the second day was all but washed out by rain.⁶⁴

The Newport Pop Festival was held August 4-5, 1968, at the Orange County Fairgrounds in Cosa Mesa, California. This two-day festival, said to be the first festival where attendance topped 100,000, was promoted

⁶² Mankin, 10.

⁶³ Lang, 4.

⁶⁴ Lang, 26-28.

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by “Humble” Harvey Miller, a local disc jockey, and Westco Associates. This concert was beset by poor planning. The event was hurriedly moved from a pavilion to an outdoor space after tickets outsold the original venue, and gates and fences subsequently proved inadequate in holding back the crowds. Seating was provided on bales of hay or piles of sand, and the stage itself was shaded only by a canopy. Unfortunately, it was beastly hot, the field was open and unshaded, and the food and water supply was totally inadequate. People passed out and a number experienced bad trips. Although the police were on high alert, drug use was generally ignored and few arrests were made. Eventually, a water tanker was called in to soak the crowd, creating a muddy mess. Musicians included the Byrds, Illinois Speed Press, Steppenwolf, Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Chambers Brothers Band, Tiny Tim, Iron Butterfly, the James Cotton Blues Band, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Alice Cooper, Canned Heat, Country Joe and the Fish, Electric Flag, Eric Burden and the Animals, the Grateful Dead, and the Jefferson Airplane.⁶⁵

The second festival in that city, Miami Pop Festival II, held December 28-30, 1968, was promoted by Tom Rounds and Mel Lawrence; this was their second event together and it further enhanced Lawrence’s reputation and experience. The festival attracted 100,000 and was the first large concert in which bands were set up on two separate main stages, several hundred yards apart. Those who played included Fleetwood Mac, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Flatt and Scruggs, Steppenwolf, Richie Havens, Sweetwater, Terry Reid, the McCoys, Pacific Gas and Electric, Marvin Gaye, Joni Mitchell, the Box Tops, Iron Butterfly, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, Joe Tex, the Grateful Dead, the Turtles, Ian and Silvia. *Rolling Stone* called it a “monumental success in almost every aspects...”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ “40 Years later, Newport Pop Festival Reverberated,” *The Orange County Register*, August 3, 2008.

<http://www.ocregister.com/news/festival-108932-pop-days.html>

⁶⁶ *Rolling Stone* (February 1, 1969). <http://www.thestriproject.com/dec-1968-jan-1969-miami-pop-festival/>

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The Newport Festival, held at Devonshire Downs, Northridge, California, June 20-22, 1969, had an audience of 150,000 and was promoted by Mark Robinson and Paul Schibe. Promoters apparently spent lavishly to produce this three-day festival; however, visibility was limited, food was scarce, and there was a poor sound system. Performers included Jimi Hendrix, Joe Cocker, Southwind, Ike and Tina Turner, Spirit and Taj Mahal, Buffy Sainte Marie, Creedance Clearwater Revival, Eric Burdon and War, Jethro Tull, Steppenwolf, Sweetwater, Johnny Winter, Marvin Gaye, the Byrds, the Rascals, and Three Dog Night. The poor planning showed and *Rolling Stone* noted that “once again violence has severely mauled the face of rock,” attributing misfortune at the festival to “a small minority of youngsters...initiating the trouble” and police “for reacting too brutally.” *Rolling Stone* writer Jerry Hopkins faulted concert goers for gatecrashing, looting, throwing bottles and rocks, and vandalism; while police were accused of randomly striking patrons with batons. The Street Racers, a bike club hired as security, only made things worse. A total of 300 were injured and 75 arrested.⁶⁷

Denver Pop Festival, Mile High Stadium, June 27-29, 1969. This festival, attended by 50,000, had the support of the city of Denver; however, it was marred by a clash between gatecrashers and police in full riot gear armed with dogs, clubs and tear gas. On the second day, the wind shifted and the tear gas spread over those inside the stadium, causing the crowd to surge for the gates. Chip Monck, who was the announcer, urged the crowd to stay calm and put their clothing over their faces. Michael Lang, who attended, recalled that the festival was everything he wanted to avoid (kids rushing gates, cops wielding clubs, mace spraying) and vowed that there would be no uniformed police at Woodstock.⁶⁸ Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix Experience, Johnny Winter, Three Dog Night, Tim Buckley, Joe Cocker, and Creedance Clearwater Revival played.

⁶⁷ Jerry Hopkins, “Crashers, Cops, Producers Spoil Newport ’69,” *Rolling Stone* (July 26, 1969).

<https://www.rollingstone.com/coverwall/1969>

⁶⁸ Lang, 102-3.

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Newport Jazz Festival (Rock), Newport, Rhode Island, July 3-6, 1969. The concert was promoted by George Wain and drew 78,000. Performers included Jeff Beck, Led Zeppelin, Ten Years After, Blood, Sweat and Tears, James Brown, and Jethro Tull. After Friday night was devoted entirely to heavy rock, authorities demanded that Led Zeppelin's Sunday performance be cancelled. Tension and trouble ensued; however, Led Zeppelin showed up on Sunday and played anyway.

The Atlanta International Pop Festival occurred on July 4th weekend, 1969, at the Atlantic International Speedway, Hampton, Georgia. This festival was promoted by Chris Cowing, Robin Conan, and Alex Cooley. Cooley later promoted the Texas International Festival, a month later, on August 30-Sept 1, 1969, and others. Temperatures were near 100 degrees in Atlanta and the crowd topped 100,000. The local fire departments used hoses to create sprinklers to cool off the crowd. Performers included Led Zeppelin, Delany, Bonnie and Friends, Blood Sweat and Tears, Canned Heat, Joe Cocker, Creedance Clearwater Revival, Janis Joplin, Al Kooper, Spirit, and Santana. The following Monday, July 7, the promoters sponsored a free concert in Atlanta's Piedmont Park to thank local patrons. Some of the bands who had played at the festival appeared, as did the Grateful Dead, who had not.

The Atlantic City Pop Festival was held August 1-3, 1969, only two weeks before Woodstock, at the Atlantic City Race Course and had an audience of 110,000. Larry Magid and Herb and Alan Spivak produced this three-day festival, which boasted a rotating stage created by Buckmaster Fuller that allowed one band to set up while another was performing. A stage with a similar capability was constructed at Woodstock but it malfunctioned almost immediately. This concert had a slightly different mix, including rock, jazz, soul, and blues and, although there was an abundance of drugs, there were no arrests. This concert had tight security and was guarded by police working twelve-hour shifts, 100 private security guards at the race track, and state troopers near the high school. Performers included Three Dog Night, Canned Heat, Little Richard, Santana, Jefferson

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Airplane, BB King, Booker T. and the MG's, Joni Mitchell (who did not complete her set), the Chambers Brothers, Dr. John, Iron Butterfly, Procol Harum, Janis Joplin, and Arthur Brown.⁶⁹

The Wild West Festival was scheduled for Golden Gate Park on August 22-24, 1969; however, this festival never took place. It was proposed as a massive outdoor free festival; more than two hundred artists were scheduled to appear on eight stages over three days. Plans for this event were undermined by a dark current of unrest in the community—resistance from the police, the mayor, etc. and also from some of the left and a group of African Americans, who protested the meaning of spending \$300,000 on three days of “grooving” in the parks to ghetto children. Shouting matches and bad vibes created negative energy and escalated attacks from radical elements, leading to cancellation of the event.⁷⁰

Chronologically, the next festival was Woodstock, Bethel, New York, August 15-18, 1969. “Woodstock became an instant, simple symbol of the new community built around rock music....[despite problems] Woodstock instantly took on a larger meaning. The festival came to represent the triumph of the new rock music and the values associated with the rising youth culture.”⁷¹

The Texas International Pop Festival, Lewisville, Texas, was held on August 30-Sept 1, 1969, with 120,000 attendees. The first festival after Woodstock, this was promoted by Angus Wynne and Alex Cooley. The three-day festival was held at the Dallas International Motor Speedway. There was also a small free stage on the shore of Lewisville Lake. Performers included Canned Heat, Chicago Transit Authority, James Cotton, Delany and Bonnie and Friends, Grand Funk Railroad, the Incredible String Band, Janis Joplin, BB King, Freddie King,

⁶⁹ Tom Wilk, “Look Back: 1969’s Atlantic City Pop Festival,” 8.17.11. Internet Archive Wayback machine.

<http://www.atlanticcityweekly.com/news-and-views/waltz-through-time/Atlantic-City-pop-festival-Summer-of-Love-atlantic-city-pop-festival-1969-video-photos-peter-stupar--127947653.html>

⁷⁰ Selvin, 31-33.

⁷¹ Selvin, 29.

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Led Zeppelin, Herbie Mann, Rotary Connection, Sam and Dave, Santana, Sly and the Family Stone, Sweetwater, Ten Years After, and Johnny Winter. Most accounts hold that this festival went off smoothly; however, the conservative local citizens were shocked and offended by the nude bathing in the lake and easily available drugs.⁷²

Altamont, Livermore, California, December 6, 1969, had 300,000 attendees. Although there were rock festivals after Altamont, they lost their association with innocence and idealism, at least until contemporary times. The Altamont Festival was proposed by the Rolling Stones to cap their American tour in Fall 1969. The idea was to put on a massive, free concert in Golden Gate Park, with an appearance by the Rolling Stones as a last minute surprise. It is hard to say with certainty who was responsible for the lack of responsible planning and production for this festival. What can be said is that the event presented a stark contrast with virtually every festival of the era for the depth of its failures. The actual site for the concert was identified fewer than twenty-four hours before the event was to begin. The venue—a remote speedway—was completely inappropriate. The flimsy stage, constructed a mere six inches off the ground, did not allow for a barrier between performers and the audience, allowing undesirable people to gain access to the stage. In addition, a local group of Hells Angels had been offered free beer in return for security and, although the Grateful Dead had a good relationship with the Hells Angels, moving the concert put them in the territory of a different and particularly violent chapter. In addition the Angles drank and dosed themselves with abandon. The audience also ingested vast quantities of drugs – many of them tainted, as it turned out—and many, many people were accidentally dosed with high potency drugs. Only Jefferson Airplane, Flying Burrito Brothers, Santana, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and the Rolling Stones performed, and many of the performers expressed fears for their safety. Several were

⁷² Dave Ferman, “The Forgotten Rock Festival,” 20 June 1997, 97; “Memories of a Rock Fest of Old: ‘Lewd and Loose in Lewisville.’” (Reprint Courtesy of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram). <http://www.cityoflewisville.com/index.aspx?page=896>

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attacked by the Hells Angels. These included Marty Balin, of the Jefferson Airplane, who was knocked unconscious during the band's performance. When the Rolling Stones arrived, Mick Jagger was punched in the face upon exiting the helicopter. The Grateful Dead left without playing.⁷³ The evening culminated with a heinous act. A drugged fan near the stage pulled a gun (for unknown reasons) and a Hells Angel stabbed him and then beat his head in only inches in front of the Rolling Stones as they finished "Under My Thumb." Horrified, the band finished its set with six more songs ("Brown Sugar," "Live with Me," "Gimme Shelter" [as Jagger screamed "rape...murder...it's just a shot away" over and over], "Satisfaction," "Honky Tonk Woman," and "Street Fighting Man") as the fatally injured fan was carried away.⁷⁴ While he was still alive, medical personnel were unable to organize transport to a hospital, and he died at the concert site.⁷⁵ After the show, a drug-fueled hit and run accident killed two more concert-goers on their way home. Altamont changed the outdoor festival scene and the participating bands themselves. Neither the Grateful Dead, nor the Rolling Stones, were ever the same.⁷⁶

WOODSTOCK MUSIC AND ART FAIR

Although the Woodstock Music and Art Festival began when Richie Havens took the stage late on the afternoon of Friday, August 15, 1969, the inspiration for the festival had occurred almost a year before, when Michael Lang moved to Woodstock, New York. Lang began with an idea for building a recording studio in Woodstock, an Ulster County hamlet long known for its association with the arts. In February 1969, Lang and partner Artie Kornfeld, a vice president at Capitol Records, approached venture capitalists John Roberts and Joel Rosenman seeking financial backing for the Woodstock studio. Roberts and Rosenman were not even remotely interested in the studio proposal since they had just completed a similar project in Manhattan; however, the two suggested

⁷³ Many sources list them as playing; however, upon arrival, they took one look around and boarded a helicopter to return home. Selvin, 227-228.

⁷⁴ Selvin, 217-222.

⁷⁵ It is not certain that he could have been saved but without hospital treatment he had no chance. (Selvin)

⁷⁶ Selvin, 275-281; 310-311.

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an outdoor festival instead – as a way to pay for the studio. They can be credited for suggesting the festival idea and putting it into motion. John Roberts, especially, who staked his trust fund on the festival and never wavered in his commitment, was among Woodstock’s unsung heroes.

As executive producer, Lang was the creative genius behind the festival, responsible for its musical, artistic, creative, and social goals. Nevertheless, Lang could not have planned, organized, designed, promoted and funded the enterprise alone. As technical director Chip Monck observed:

[Michael] had a very good idea of what he wanted to do as talent and the feeling that was to be there, the overall control that he wanted the collective mind to exhibit. He had no other idea nor did he necessarily care who was passionate about what shape and what containment, what load bearing capacity any of the structures would be....He was really more interested in the overall feeling and, perhaps, the sense by which or through which everybody would be connected to each other. He was the major purveyor of that type of guideline....There was the money, there were the structuralists, there were the people who were hanging from the rafters and there were folks like myself that were most concerned with the design, the installation, the operation of something....”⁷⁷

Lang assembled a team of people who played pivotal roles in bringing Woodstock to life. Many of them were well known on the music festival circuit or in the concert business. Those with the most important technical expertise were Mel Lawrence, director of operations, Chip Monck, technical designer, and Chris Langhart, technical director. Stan Goldstein lined up technical experts and was partly responsible from bringing in the Hog Farm to assist with security. Wes Pomeroy, chief of security, was essential to that aspect of the event, and John Morris, production coordinator, played a vital role in working with the artists. As for Artie Kornfeld, the fourth of the young men who formed the original partnership, it is difficult to assess his individual contributions. He was Michael Lang’s friend and confidant at the beginning and he was an important part of the early team, helping Lang to develop the original vision and going after the funding. Lang remained ever

⁷⁷ Joel Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History*, 40th Anniversary Edition (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 46.

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devoted to him. As time went on, his drug use placed him outside the “inner circle.” However, it was Kornfeld who negotiated the film deal with Warner Brothers. Without the film, Woodstock would have remained a much less well known and certainly less influential event. The last essential member of the team was Max Yasgur. Although not part of the financial or creative team, Yasgur’s role in leasing his farm and serving as a local booster for the festival cannot be overstated.

Michael Lang (b.1941)

Michael Lang was born in Bensonhurst, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. His parents were middle class and of Eastern European descent. His father owned an engineering business, for which his mother kept the books; however, they were also entrepreneurs, opening a Latin nightclub on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the 1950s. The family summered in the Catskills and took road trips to Miami and Canada in the winter. Lang learned the drums and played in a band; he studied at NYU but was eager to start a business and so left before graduation. In 1965, he moved to Coconut Grove, Florida, where opened a head shop.⁷⁸ In May 1968, Lang co-produced the small Miami Pop Festival at the Gulfstream Racetrack for an audience of between 5,000 and 25,000. Scheduled for two days, the concert had to be cancelled on the second day due to rain. The most notable performer was Jimi Hendrix, who composed a song, “Rainy Day, Dream Away,” about the experience.”⁷⁹ The key to Lang’s business sense was a combination of optimism and opportunism. He was a visionary, unconcerned with conventional business skills, but he had a way of getting things done. Miriam Yasgur, Max’s wife, called him a born conman, but she noted that he was a conman that you couldn’t help but like.⁸⁰ Numerous people involved with planning the festival have described him as attractive and charming, the man who held the vision but not the guy who worried about the details. Nevertheless, his commitment to the festival was unshakable; there would have been no Woodstock without Michael Lang.

⁷⁸ Lang, 7-10.

⁷⁹ Lang, 32.

⁸⁰ In Makower, 118.

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In late summer, 1968, Lang moved to the small community of Woodstock, New York, where he found solace from the deeply troubling events of that year. He wrote that in comparison to events such as the escalation of the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, race riots in urban areas, the beating and jailing of antiwar demonstrators and student protestors, and the violence at the Democratic National Convention in August, the mountainous, Ulster County hamlet, long a haven for artists and musicians, seemed to offer him “Shelter from the Storm.”⁸¹ In particular he found a sense of peace in a weekly series of open air concerts known as the “Saturday Soundouts,” held on the Pan Copeland Farm, about ten minutes from the village. He described these gatherings as three or four artists, local or national, playing on a low, makeshift stage, in a former cornfield and noted that “the rural setting was the key.”⁸²

Lang’s acquaintance with the artistic community gave him the idea for a new business venture: a recording studio in Woodstock. Although the studio was never built, the concert series played a direct role in inspiring his vision for the Woodstock festival. Keenly attuned to the cultural climate of the country, Lang extrapolated his own sense of relief and serenity during these rural evening concerts to envisioning a kind of cultural catharsis for a generation that might be possible if such an environment could be reproduced on a large scale. Once the idea was proposed for holding a large outdoor concert in Woodstock, Lang had strong feelings about the kind of atmosphere that he wished to create: what environmental factors would be key to generating it, what feelings it would induce in the audience, and what it would symbolize for society.

Artie Kornfeld (b.1942)

Arthur Lawrence Kornfeld was a native of Brooklyn and the son of a New York City policeman; he was raised in Levittown. In 1967 he became vice president and director of rock music at Capitol Records, the first such

⁸¹ Bob Dylan, “Shelter from the Storm,” *Blood on the Tracks*, 1975.

⁸² Lang, 35-39.

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position created by any record company. His position attracted Michael Lang, who approached him with the idea for a recording studio. The two shared an immediate affinity because Kornfeld was also from Bensonhurst, “the neighborhood.” According to Kornfeld, the two talked and dreamed of both a studio and a festival:

We talked endlessly about putting on this show where we'd have every act and that maybe 100,00 people would show up, or at least 50,000. My wife Linda thought maybe a half a million because those love-ins were getting 10,000 people and if we had all those acts... I would say we dreamt about this for months and never realized that this group fantasy could become reality.⁸³

Lang tells the same story, recalling that “during one of [their] midnight musings” they hit upon an idea: “Let’s really do something big. Let’s invite everyone and put it all together out in the country where people can camp!”⁸⁴ Early in the new year, Lang identified a potential site for the festival in the town of Saugerties owned by a Mr. Schaller (of Schaller and Weber meats) that seemed promising.⁸⁵ Lang also knew an entertainment lawyer, Miles Lourie, through his work on the Miami festival, and Lourie knew John Roberts and Joel Rosenman, the oft-described “young men with unlimited capital.”⁸⁶

John Roberts (1945-2001)

John Roberts was a native of Long Island, one of three brothers, and heir to the Block Drug Company, founded in 1909. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a major in history and studied at the Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia before going into business. He received his inheritance at twenty-one, met Rosenman through Joel’s brother Douglas, and six months later they were roommates and partners. Most of those involved with Woodstock described John Roberts as an open, sincere, and generous

⁸³ Artie Kornfeld, The Woodstock Music & Art Fair, An Aquarian Exposition, August 15, 15 & 16, 1969 <https://www.artiekornfeld-woodstock.com/woodstock.htm>

⁸⁴ Lang, 44.

⁸⁵ Lang, 44.

⁸⁶ From the ad placed in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, March 22, 1967, “Young Men with Unlimited Capital looking for interesting, legitimate investment opportunities and business propositions.”

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man. Roberts bankrolled the festival with his trust fund and he worked extremely hard to keep the festival financially solvent to the very end. He did this by writing over one million dollars in bad checks, and then he took responsibility for it by paying the creditors (backed by his family) rather than declaring bankruptcy. Although the vision and thrust of the festival were Lang's Roberts's "patience, persistence, and, obviously, money made the idea a reality despite huge initial losses."⁸⁷

Joel Rosenman (b.1942)

Joel Rosenman was a native of Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island. He was the son of a dentist and the second of three children. He graduated from Huntington High School at age sixteen and earned a BA in English from Princeton. After graduation from Yale Law School he passed the bar but found that he had little interest in the law; his musical background landed him a few nightclub jobs and a steady job singing at the Holiday Inn in New Haven. After he met John, the two hit it off, became roommates, and then partners in a venture capitalist firm. They worked hard for a deal to get started before finally connecting with Media Sound Recording Studios to build a large recording studio on the west side of Manhattan.⁸⁸

With an introduction from Miles Laurie, Lang and Kornfeld pitched an idea for a music studio in Woodstock to Rosenman and Roberts. Although frankly uninterested in investing in another studio, Lang and Kornfeld were drawn to another idea – a festival to support building the studio. There is some dispute about who actually voiced the idea for the festival first. Joel Rosenman states unequivocally that it was he and John Roberts who put forward the idea of using the proceeds from a concert to fund a studio, thereby prioritizing the concert to the exclusion of the studio, which was never built.⁸⁹ Michael Lang, on the other hand, holds fast to the belief that

⁸⁷*The Woodstock Whisperer* <http://woodstockwhisperer.info/2015/10/27/john-roberts/>

⁸⁸Joel Rosenman, John Roberts and Robert Pilpel, *Young Men With Unlimited Capital: The inside Story of the legendary Woodstock Festival told by the two who paid for it.* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 14-16.

⁸⁹ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 11-12; Rosenman, "Notes to BWC Historic Landmark App."

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he and Artie Kornfeld had been working on a concert proposal before they met Rosenman and Roberts.⁹⁰ Both of these statements may be true without contradicting each other. Rosenman and Roberts were the first to suggest a festival to the four soon-to-be partners, while Lang and Kornfeld may also have sat around and dreamed of the kind of festival they would like to have. Resolving this point is important to the individuals involved, but it is not crucial to the significance of the event. What is important to the significance of the Woodstock Festival Site is that these four people found each other and put their business, financial, and creative skills together in such a way that the festival occurred.

Despite their differences in class and culture, dress and lifestyle, the foursome were almost the exact same ages and they were intrigued enough by each other that they agreed to both proposals (a concert in Saugerties *and* a studio in Woodstock), forming the unlikely partnership, “Woodstock Ventures,” on February 28, 1969. The terms called for an investment of \$575,000. As John Roberts described the terms, he and Joel would provide seed money and be responsible for all the business of putting the thing together, up to and including ticket sales, advertising, procuring equipment, etc. Meanwhile, Lang and Kornfeld would handle site planning, promotion, set up, and production, “most of the work,” as Roberts recalled. They would split the profits 50/50 or invest them in the studio. Roberts noted that the festival called for a modest gathering of 25,000 people; at \$6 a day per person; that would yield \$400,000, for \$200,000 in costs.⁹¹ It seemed to all four of the partners – businessmen and dreamers – that a fortune was theirs to be made.

Although all four of the partners brought something to the arrangement, it was never exactly an association of colleagues, and an uneasy truce always prevailed between the pairs. There was continuing confusion over roles and authority, generating an underlying mistrust. Lang produced, while Roberts and Rosenman were the

⁹⁰ Lang, 44-48.

⁹¹ In Makower, 36-37.

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financial partners and handled many aspects of the business. Lang seldom consulted them before making decisions that they would have to support financially. Kornfeld could not officially participate in Woodstock Ventures while an employee of Capitol Records, so he gave up the Capitol job in May. Once officially onboard, Kornfield was responsible for publicity and press, for which he hired a six person team.⁹² John Roberts recalled that they soon realized that he “wasn’t much of a performer” and that when he was assigned to do something it didn’t get done.⁹³ Later Kornfeld developed drug problems and his role diminished over the months leading up to the festival. Nevertheless, he remained Lang’s friend and Lang was deeply protective of him.⁹⁴ More important, he played a critical role in securing the film deal with Warner Brothers, which was crucial to the festival’s long-term success. No matter the size or importance of any partner’s practical contribution, the vision for the festival remained Lang’s, who admitted his inability to communicate or collaborate on his evolving idea:

My vision for the festival had evolved into a complex, three-dimensional picture encompassing multiple elements: physical and emotional, spiritual and practical, artistic and commercial. The interplay between them all was hard for some to grasp.... I hoped John and Joel would come to see, beyond the money, what the festival could be. Artie got it completely but didn’t know how to attain it. So I devoted myself to the task of staying true to the ideals Artie and I had developed at the beginning of this adventure. I made sure senior staff like Mel, Chip, John, Chris and Joyce were all on the same page as far as production and design. But in terms of the big picture, I knew that everyone would get it when it all came together at the end.⁹⁵

The festival was named “An Aquarian Exposition: The Woodstock Music and Art Fair.” According to Lang, “Woodstock” was chosen to symbolize the rural, natural setting he envisioned, a nod to the Sing Out concerts. “Exposition” signified that the festival would encompass all the arts, and “Aquarian” was an allusion to the age

⁹² Kornfeld, <https://www.artiekornfeld-woodstock.com/concertsite.htm>

⁹³ In Makower, 38.

⁹⁴ Despite coming from different worlds and having little in common, Lang and Roberts became close friends and remained so until Roberts’s death from cancer in 2001.

⁹⁵ Lang, 79-80.

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of great harmony predicted by astrologers, a time when the stars and planets would align to promote greater compassion and understanding. Even though the Age of Aquarius wasn't expected for perhaps eons, the idea had great currency in the countercultural community in the late 1960s, and it was popularized to the general public by the musical *Hair*. In this spirit, Lang stated his belief that the festival would be a place where people could come together to celebrate the coming of a new age, a chance to see "if we could create the kind of world for which we'd been striving throughout the sixties....proving that peace and understanding were possible and creating a testament to the value of the counterculture."⁹⁶

Planning the Festival

In the early months of 1969 all four partners visited the Winston Farm near Saugerties, Ulster County, and agreed that it was a suitable site for the festival. Not only was the 600-acre farm easily accessible from the New York State Thruway but it was already developed with drainage, plumbing, wells, and electricity. Further, the land formed a natural amphitheater that looked like it could accommodate 100,000 concert goers. The group offered to rent it for \$40,000 for twelve weeks, but despite the caretaker's encouragement, by early March the partners learned that the owner had no intention of renting it to them.⁹⁷ In spite of this disappointment, they chose August 15th as the date for the festival in order to allow them to begin booking acts.

The next site, in the village of Wallkill, Orange County, was far less desirable. John Roberts and Joel Rosenman had found it on the last Sunday in March as they drove around looking for another venue. Only 200 acres in size, the Mills Industrial Park, advertised for rent for \$10,000, was former family farmland owned by Howard Mills, who seemed amenable to the deal. Although the land was flat and less than ideal, time was short and they decided they could make it work. At that point members of the group, such as Stanley Goldstein,

⁹⁶ Lang, 52-53.

⁹⁷ Spitz, 43-44.

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began to meet with local officials to see what permits, etc., were required. They thought they were successful on April 18, 1969, when Joel Rosenman and John Roberts appeared before the zoning board and described a music, art, and drama festival they proposed to hold. When asked about the number of attendees, Roberts said they would be lucky to attract 40,000 to 50,000, spread over a few days. In response to a question about what type of music would be played, Rosenman responded: “Basically folk. A little swing, too maybe. A little jazz. You know.”⁹⁸ The Wallkill Zoning Board of Appeals gave the proposal a cursory review and then approved it.

In the spring of 1969, even before they lost the Saugerties site, Woodstock Ventures began to hire experts to plan the details of the festival. Lang was determined to get the very best people available for the team.⁹⁹ Stanley Goldstein was the first person hired, in March. Goldstein had worked for Criteria Recording Studios in Miami when Lang was there, and he had served as a technical director on Lang’s Miami festival. Goldstein was not thrilled by the opportunity to produce a festival; however, Lang convinced him to help with the initial design and staffing, promising that he would later be released to concentrate on building the studio, a project that did interest him.¹⁰⁰ Over the course of the summer, the studio plans became ever more distant; however, Goldstein remained an invaluable asset to the Woodstock team through and beyond the concert dates. At one point, when someone questioned his title, he said he was the festival’s “Holy Ghost.”¹⁰¹

In their early discussions, Lang and Goldstein began to frame out the idea for a three-day festival: Friday would start late in the day with “gentle music” and Saturday and Sunday would feature the headliners. The slogan “Three days of peace and music” was formulated at this time and, according to Stanley Goldstein, “Lang came up with the idea of having a guitar and a dove as the logo” (later drawn by Arnold Skolnick).¹⁰² They also

⁹⁸ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 39-41; Spitz, 73-74.

⁹⁹ Lang, 56.

¹⁰⁰ Makower, 40-41; Lang, 55.

¹⁰¹ Makower, 45.

¹⁰² Lang, 55-57. Goldstein is quoted in Lang, 56.

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began to discuss the symbolic concepts that Lang envisioned for the festival and to explore how to translate these ideas to the site. The goal was “to convey to kids across the country that their festival was to be a place to escape the burdens of conventional society.” Goldstein felt that “the name had to convey a sense of freedom, both of thought and physical presence.” Lang insisted that the name Woodstock be used to convey a sense of the community of Woodstock, which, he noted, had “a mystical feeling,” explaining that he was referring to “everything that’s in The Band’s music, y’know – country, woodsy feelings.”¹⁰³ In the same vein, Lang also wanted a “rustic stage.” While they were talking about how to translate the vision into a site plan, Goldstein also began to research the logistics of such a large proposition. He studied the bathrooms at Yankee Stadium and read US Army handbooks looking for clues on siting temporary cities.¹⁰⁴

Mel Lawrence, who had worked with Lang on the first Miami Festival, came up in April, after Goldstein reached out to him. Lawrence had designed grounds for a number of other festivals, including the pioneering Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Festival and the second Miami Pop Festival in 1968. Lawrence recalled that the “festival business was a small business and [that he] had been involved with most of them.”¹⁰⁵ Lang knew Lawrence to be a “practical, get it done guy,” who had the right skill set and shared the same vision.¹⁰⁶ Lawrence liked both Goldstein and Lang and he liked the Wallkill site; he was excited about the opportunity to do the festival. As director of operations, Lawrence was responsible for overall planning and site design for the festival grounds. He described his assignment as “to design, operate, plan for all of the functions of the festival aside from the actual show, but that included sort of a coordination of all the things that got built, and that basically was it.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Spitz, 75.

¹⁰⁴ Lang, 55-57.

¹⁰⁵ Makower, 147.

¹⁰⁶ Lang, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Makower, 44-45.

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During the same few months, Chip Monck, a well-known lighting designer, was also hired. Monck, who had served as lighting designer at both the Fillmore East and Fillmore West, heard about the festival and approached Lang, who hired him, as Monck described it, “to look over a design to be generated by a number of different people for the stage house and the load bearing roof, to cause that to be erected, to be basic production manager, to be the lighting designer, to be the operator, and to find out at seven in the morning that they were shy a master of ceremonies. That was the mission....I think he got what he paid for.”¹⁰⁸ Lang wanted Monck to lay out a lighting design for a 600-acre city that would be very colorful, like an acid trip.¹⁰⁹ He allocated money for Monck to hire a stage manager, and Monck chose Steve Cohen, a Carnegie Tech grad who had worked at Fillmore.

Monck also introduced his friend, John Morris, a production assistant who also worked at the Fillmore East. Lang realized that Morris was familiar with the business in a way that he wasn't, that Morris knew how to work with agencies and the industry, and that he knew about the logistics of bringing in talent. Morris was hired as a production coordinator and he was responsible for functions pertaining to the area around the stage: coordinating performances, performer and production facilities, driving the bands back and forth, and backstage security. He would also be responsible for the materials, method, and crew to build the stage.¹¹⁰ Both Monck and Morris recommended Chris Langhart as technical director. Langhart taught theater design at New York University and had done plumbing and engineering at Fillmore East.¹¹¹ Langhart said his skill was that he could “fix things.” He would deal with all the parts of the festival that no one else wanted to: toilets, communication, power. Monck, Langhart, and Cohen became the core of the production crew.

¹⁰⁸ Makower, 47.

¹⁰⁹ Spitz, 99.

¹¹⁰ Spitz, 105.

¹¹¹ Lang, 61.

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Lang held a competition for the design of the stage. He continued to develop the idea that it should be rustic, to complement the surroundings, and familiar, yet also organic and substantial; he wanted it to be big and sturdy enough to give everyone confidence.¹¹² He also wanted a technically sophisticated machine that would rotate, so that it could accommodate two bands at a time: one playing and one setting up. Various staff members built small-scale models of their submissions. The finalists were Bert Cohen (who had designed the Woodstock Ventures offices in New York), Chris Langhart, and Steve Cohen; Cohen won. Jay Devers was hired as the foreman in charge of stage construction. Langhart was asked to design the performers' pavilion, where the artists could hang out and socialize before and after their sets. Lang hired Bill Hanley, said to be the best live soundman in the business, to *build* a sound system for the festival because no system for a crowd that size existed.¹¹³ Hanley was a pioneer in the field of really large sound systems. He had done sound systems at Fillmore East, the Newport jazz and folk festivals, and the inauguration of Lyndon Johnson.¹¹⁴

Three other essential members of the team were Joyce Mitchell, overall administrator; Penny Stallings, Lawrence's assistant; and Ticia Bernuth, assistant to Lang. Bernuth got the job after a successful trial run picking up security chief Wes Pomeroy from the airport. Pomeroy had been recommended for the job by the Association of the Chiefs of Police. Although not a typical police officer, he had worked in law enforcement at high levels in the Johnson and Nixon administrations.¹¹⁵ Pomeroy then recommended Don Ganoung, a priest and colleague, to handle community relations with Goldstein.¹¹⁶ Goldstein and Ganoung later became the advance men in Wallkill, going up to introduce themselves around town and meet with local officials such as the town supervisor.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Lang, 80-81.

¹¹³ Lang, 61-62.

¹¹⁴ Makower, 146.

¹¹⁵ Lang, 71.

¹¹⁶ Lang, 73.

¹¹⁷ Lang, 65.

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The first week in June, a small staff moved to Wallkill to start preparing the site. Lang and Lawrence walked the Wallkill site discussing the model city they would build. Their intent was to create smaller communities where people would sleep, eat, and entertain themselves. They used aerial photos to divide the site into smaller parcels, indicate proposed paths and locations for planned structures.¹¹⁸ They wanted to “improve” the landscape while also maintaining the natural beauty of the site. As part of preparing for the Miami II festival, Mel Lawrence had worked with the art department of the University of Miami to create a naturalistic environment that included stone formation sculptures and playgrounds made with wood debris.¹¹⁹ Lawrence now suggested hiring Bill Ward from the University of Miami and his wife, Jean, to supervise ground cleaning and beautification, as well as to create art from old machinery on the site. Boyd Elder was hired to create giant sculptures along paths and supervise a playground constructed from fallen trees—swings, see saws, monkey bars, and “environmental rides.”¹²⁰ Lawrence started landscaping and development, but, fortuitously, he saved stage construction, piping, and plumbing for last. He later noted that he had made a checklist of everything with a tremendous amount of detail right down to types of water hoses.¹²¹

Near the end of May, Lang hired Peter Goodrich to handle concessions. By far the most difficult task was procuring food. Most of the well-known large-scale vendors did not want to take on an assignment of this magnitude because they did not want to invest in all the equipment needed and the cost of transporting it upstate.¹²² As it turned out, only one company, a group with little experience called Food for Love, would take the job. Although it was probably a mistake to hire Food for Love, there seemed no other choice at the time. The company’s inexperienced and underprepared managers threatened to pull out the Tuesday before the festival because its booths were not completed. Food for Love ended up demanding 100 percent of its profits

¹¹⁸ Spitz, 140.

¹¹⁹ Spitz, 65-69.

¹²⁰ Spitz, 109.

¹²¹ Makower, 49.

¹²² Lang, 78-79.

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(another blow to the festival's solvency), was inefficient and had long lines, raised its prices as supplies got shorter, and had its booths burned by patrons outraged at the high prices.¹²³

On the last weekend of June, Lang went to Denver to attend that city's three-day pop festival. He complained that it was everything he wanted to avoid: police in riot gear, kids rushing gates, cops wielding clubs, and, finally, mace spraying on Sunday. He vowed that there would be no uniformed police at Woodstock.¹²⁴

Trouble in Wallkill

Because the concert took place on another site, the full saga of what took place in Wallkill in the spring of 1969 is outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, it reveals the deeply perceived cultural divide that separated generations and cultures in the more conservative regions of the Catskills—if not the country—in this turbulent era. As word got out that there was to be a large-scale gathering of “hippies” in Wallkill, it unleashed a tidal wave of social prejudice and fear of the unknown. Local opposition coalesced rapidly, as people sought to stop the event in two different ways. First, a Concerned Citizens Committee formed and obtained the signatures of 2,000 locals who opposed a festival. This group worked on denying the organizers the required permits.

Although the organizers had obtained a permit, soon all sorts of additional documents were requested, and a long and bitter legal battle ensued, during which Woodstock Ventures tried to meet every request, while local authorities tried to find every reason to deny or revoke any required permits or approvals.

However, at the same time, the townspeople felt free to engage in outright bullying and threats in an attempt to frighten the organizers and staff away—or at least make them feel unwelcome and unwanted. The following is

¹²³ Lang, 168, 199-200, 226.

¹²⁴ Lang, 102-3.

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only a sample of some of the invectives hurled at the hippie invaders, either directly, at public meetings, in newspapers, or in threatening phone calls:

“I just want you to know that you’re not welcome in this community, and I’m going to do everything in my power to see that you don’t remain here.”

“If you hippies don’t get the hell out of our town you’ll be sorry.”

“We don’t want you filthy pigs in Walkill.”

“You’ve got two days to move out of here or we’re going to burn that barn down with your people locked inside.”

“If you don’t clear out you’re going to die.”

“First we ought shave those hippies’ heads so we can tell whether they’re boys or girls we’re dealing with. Then we ought to rub their noses in the dirt for what they’re doing to this country.”

“I can’t tell you how much we fear the kind of hippie-yippie crowd this thing’ll attract.

“We don’t want your kind here! Get out of our town!”

“You goddamn hippies aren’t coming anywhere near our people!”

“They don’t fool me....I’ll tell you this: I’m going to be sitting on my front porch with a loaded shotgun, and the first hippie that sets foot on my land – I’m gonna shoot to kill.”¹²⁵

And threats to locals who aided and abetted the concert promoters, including the family of the landowner who rented to them, increased as well: “Listen carefully, Mrs. Mills (landowner’s wife). You’ve got two days to get those slobs off your land and out of town before we start throwing rocks through your picture window.....understand?” And later, “They’re still there Mrs. Mills. Those goddam hippies are still in your field. You’re not taking us seriously enough. You’d believe us if you woke up in the middle of the night and found your house on fire...your beautiful children...”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Spitz, 143-155.

¹²⁶ Spitz, 187.

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On July 15, 1969, thirty-one days before the festival was to commence, the Wallkill Zoning Board of Appeals issued a four-page decision rejecting Woodstock Ventures' application for a permit, calling the plans "indefinite, vague, and uncertain." The board also added that "problems of fire, police protection, and health would be contrary to the health and safety of the public."¹²⁷ At that point the team had invested over a half million dollars and sold more than 50,000 tickets. Although lawyers advised the team that they could eventually win a lawsuit, it could not be done in time to save the concert. It was imperative that Woodstock Ventures find another site immediately.

Moving to Bethel

Within a day, Ticia Bernuth received a call from an Elliott Tiber offering his land in White Lake, a small resort hamlet in the town of Bethel, Sullivan County.¹²⁸ Lang, Lawrence, and Goldstein went to investigate, and while Tiber claimed no permits were necessary, the land turned out to be an unusable swamp behind the El Monaco, his parents' motel. However, Tiber became an essential middle man who introduced them to local real estate broker Morris Abraham.¹²⁹

Abraham took them to look at some other properties, including farmland about three miles west of White Lake that belonged to Max Yasgur. The large field was southeast of the corner of West Shore Road and Hurd Road, and, according to Lang, they approached it from the south, via Hurd Road. As they reached the crest of the hill,

¹²⁷ In Lang, 113.

¹²⁸ Lang, 115-116. Other sources report that Mel Lawrence received the call from Tiber and that he and Goldstein had been looking at sites in Sullivan County via helicopter even before the Wallkill site fell through. As reported by Ronald Helfrich, the Minutes of the Bethel Town Board from July 1, 1969 indicate that Tiber had met with the board to discuss bringing the festival to Bethel in August or September. This may have been done without the knowledge of Woodstock Ventures. All sources seem to agree that Lawrence, Goldstein and Lang were together when they saw Yasgur's land for the first time. See Makower, 113; Ronald Helfrich, "What Can a Hippie Contribute to our Community?" Culture Wars, Moral Pains, and The Woodstock Festival," *New York History* 91.3 (Summer 2010), 221-244. The latter article was based on local newspaper articles and government records.

¹²⁹ Makower, 115.

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there, spread out before them, was a natural amphitheater. According to Lang, who shouted, “stop the car,” it was the “field of [his] dream.” He described “a perfect green bowl, “what he had hoped from the beginning.”¹³⁰ Abraham immediately phoned property owner Max Yasgur to set up a meeting, which occurred the same day. Upon meeting them, farmer Max Yasgur remarked, “You’re the people who lost your site in Wallkill, aren’t you....I think that you young folks were done a grave injustice over there. Yes, I’ll show you my land—we might be able to strike a deal.” As they toured the area, Yasgur pointing out what he owned, Lang steered him to the amphitheater, explaining that it had the right size and shape, sight lines and great vibes: “It feels like we were meant to be here.”¹³¹ Lang later admitted that he might have been slightly disingenuous when he told Yasgur that the expected crowd would be 150,000 over three days and that they expected only 50,000 on site at any one time.¹³²

John Roberts came up the next day to see the site and meet the Yasgurs. Roberts agreed with Lang’s assessment of the site and recalled that there was a moment when he crested the hill (he called it the “Moment from Max”) and that after that he didn’t care about profit or loss; he just wanted to get the festival going.¹³³ The lease was signed at 10 pm on July 16, 1969. Yasgur was paid \$50,000 plus a \$75,0000 escrow. With everyone in agreement, they moved to get the required permits right away. Clearly, none of them wanted to risk another catastrophe. As John Roberts recalled, “We were excited about this site, but we didn’t want to risk another debacle so we paid attention to the politics of the site.”¹³⁴

Thanks to Yasgur’s influence, the Bethel town board and zoning boards held a special meeting on July 21, 1969 to review the proposal. Mel Lawrence filed the site plan and Yasgur spoke eloquently on behalf of the festival:

¹³⁰ Lang, 118.

¹³¹ Lang, 118-119.

¹³² Lang, 126-127.

¹³³ Makower, 125.

¹³⁴ Makower, 123.

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“All they are asking for is fair play. Once we have formed a barrier against those who want to grow their hair long, we can just as well form a similar barrier against those who wear long coats or go to a different church.”¹³⁵ The zoning board of appeals, however, in a letter to the *Republican Watchman* on August 7, 1969, claimed it had no knowledge of the festival until the July 21st meeting and that no vote was taken. Therefore, board members claimed that they had not approved the festival.¹³⁶ According to Ronald Helfrich, who examined the local politics surrounding the festival for an article in *New York History*, the problem seemed to be a disagreement about authority between the relatively new zoning board and the town board, traditionally the bastion of local power. At a meeting on August 1, 1969, the two parties fought until Frederick Schadt, the town attorney, decided that no permit (and therefore no public meeting) was necessary.¹³⁷ It is worth noting that town supervisor Daniel Amatucci, a festival supporter, was defeated in the November election by eight votes.

On August 4, 1969, as a gesture of good will to the community, Woodstock Ventures donated \$10,000 to the Bethel Medical Center’s building fund.¹³⁸ Following the town board’s approval, organizers also went to work to address concerns about health, sanitation, and safety. At a meeting on July 28, 1969 with officials from the New York State Health Department and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Woodstock Ventures submitted a preliminary plan for water, sewage, trash, and environmental concerns. In addition, Dr. William Abruzzi, a local physician who had been hired as medical director, developed a plan for medical facilities. Following this, the New York State Board of Health Officer for the Oneonta District issued a permit to Woodstock Ventures to operate a “temporary residence” on the Yasgur farm.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ In Lang, 124-125.

¹³⁶ Helfrich, 226.

¹³⁷ Helfrich, 226-226.

¹³⁸ Helfrich, 227.

¹³⁹ Helfrich, 227-228.

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Organizers also tried to allay local concerns about damages to the community. They took out bonding and insurance to protect the town, the public, and the Yasgur farm from costs associated with any potential damage. They had a fully thought out security plan and a rational traffic plan. All of these plans, however, were based on an audience of 50,000 per day.¹⁴⁰ The festival attained the backing of several influential groups, the Catskill Resort Association and the Bethel Board of Business—both arguing in favor of tourism and economic development.¹⁴¹

Max Yasgur

Nearly all of the land leased for the festival itself belonged to Max Yasgur, a successful and well-known local dairy farmer. Yasgur (1919-1973) was among the “Jewish Farmers of the Catskills” who played a dominant role in the economy and settlement of southwest Ulster and northeast Sullivan counties in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁴² Jews, primarily eastern European immigrants escaping political uncertainty and economic decline in their homelands, began arriving in the western Catskills around the turn of the twentieth century. Although few had been farmers in Europe, most arrived in the Catskills pursuing an ideal of agrarian self-sufficiency. The return to a centuries-old agricultural tradition was promoted—both for individuals and collectives—by Jewish resettlement societies in Europe and the United States. Farming was presented as a healthy alternative to the crowded and poor living conditions characteristic of immigrant neighborhoods in large urban cities. Although agricultural communities sprang up in several parts of the United States, the western Catskills region was the largest. During the first decade of the twentieth century, thousands of Jews arrived in the Catskills to take up the agricultural life. In Abraham D. Lavender and Clarence B. Steinberg’s comprehensive study, *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills*, the authors reported that the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society found that by 1908, of the 684 Jewish farms in New York State, 500 of them were in

¹⁴⁰ Helfrich, 228.

¹⁴¹ Helfrich, 229.

¹⁴² Abraham Lavender and Clarence Steinberg, *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 37.

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Sullivan and Ulster counties.¹⁴³ This estimate is considered low because it was based only on the number of second mortgages the society issued and most financing was arranged privately. Lavender and Steinberg proposed a higher estimate based on the number of Jews located within a polygonal area, with sides of twenty miles each, between Ellenville and Kerhonkson (Ulster County), Woodridge, and Mountindale (Sullivan County). They estimate that this area supported 1,000 Jewish farm households. With an additional 500 families in the area to the northwest, in the area around Monticello, Liberty, Hurleyville, Loch Sheldrake, and Parksville (all Sullivan County), on the Ontario & Western main line, it has been estimated that in 1911, nearly three-tenths of all the Jewish farmer households in the United States were located in Sullivan and Ulster Counties.¹⁴⁴

For the most part, these new settlers acquired existing farms. Although there were many farms throughout the district during the nineteenth century, the region's stony, hilly landscape did not make ideal farmland and much of the agricultural land had already been exhausted. Jews often acquired farms from Christians who had either abandoned their farms or given up on farming. Most of the Jewish farmers established dairy or poultry farms, which were best suited to local environmental and economic conditions. However, most had to supplement their incomes. Many Jews continued to return to the city to work during the week, while others began to take in summer boarders. Some constructed hotels or bungalow colonies on their farms and/or abandoned their farms to become full-time resort operators. Jews also found employment in the commercial activities that supported the rural and summer populations. For the most part, these Jews were socially progressive people who strongly identified with their heritage and held values such as tolerance and justice.

¹⁴³ Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, *Annual Report for the Year 1908*, in Lavender 37.

¹⁴⁴ Edward A. Goodwin and H.J. Levine, "A Historical Review of Farming by Jews in New York," in *Report of the General Manager*, 1956, ed. by the Jewish Agricultural Society, (New York: Jewish Agricultural Society, 1957), 10-31; Leonard Robinson, "Agricultural Activities of the Jews in America," in *The American Jewish Year Book*, ed. Herbert Friedenwald (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of American, 1910), 3-89, in Lavender and Steinberg, 38.

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The Yasgur family was among this demographic. Max's father, a butcher by trade, had migrated to Sullivan County before Max was born and acquired a small farm near Maplewood, outside Monticello. Like many Jews who acquired unproductive farmland, the family made only a modest living and decided to supplement its income by building a boardinghouse on the farm. Max grew up on the Maplewood farm, and in 1936 he took over crop management and helped to run the boardinghouse. However, he also studied real estate at New York University. In 1947, Yasgur decided to become a farmer, purchasing the first of at least nine nearly adjacent farms in the town of Bethel. Max's wife, Miriam Yasgur, recalled that Max decided to go back to the farm rather than work in real estate in the city.¹⁴⁵ After a decade of work the Yasgurs finally received a license to purify and bottle milk and built a pasteurization plant on NY Rte. 17b.¹⁴⁶ Yasgur's Dairy became a very well-known and successful business, delivering to some of the large hotels such as Grossinger's.¹⁴⁷ In temperament, Yasgur was a conservative Republican with a strong sense of righteousness. He was offended at the treatment that the concert promoters had received in Wallkill. Goldstein noted that Yasgur's decision to allow the festival was a moral one, that he felt it was the right thing to do.¹⁴⁸

The Land

According to Stanley Goldstein, Max Yasgur was "a farmer who cared about his land." Goldstein described Yasgur's land as "manicured." Agricultural historians would probably describe him as "Farmer Snug," alluding to a metaphoric drawing used to illustrate "the moral virtue of tidiness meets agriculture" in Solon Robinson's 1864 "Facts for Farmers," one of many visions of the model farm.¹⁴⁹ According to Goldstein, "Yasgur's fences

¹⁴⁵ Makower, 118.

¹⁴⁶ Spitz, 278.

¹⁴⁷ Makower, 118.

¹⁴⁸ Makower, 121-122.

¹⁴⁹ Solon Robinson, "Facts for farmers; also for the family circle. A compost of rich materials for all land-owners, about domestic animals and domestic economy; farm buildings; gardens, orchards, and vineyards; and all farm crops, tools, fences, fertilization, draining, and irrigation" (New York: Johnson and Ward, 1864), 275. <http://openvalley.org/exhibits/show/farm-to-table/item/184>

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were painted” and everything was in good repair; there were no pebbles, no rocks; everything was tilled and turned, and all obstructions had been removed. He described the Yasgur property as a “gorgeous lovely farm surrounded by other farms.” Goldstein noted that Yasgur grew hay (or, more precisely, alfalfa) and his neighbor to the east (Gabriel) grew corn.¹⁵⁰ Gempler, his neighbor to the south and west, also grew corn.

Planning and Site Design

It is one of the great myths of Woodstock that a quarter-million young people descended onto the fields of an unsuspecting farmer for a three-day concert for which no preparation had been made and met with disaster. In reality, every aspect of the festival—from infrastructure to sound quality to security—was meticulously planned by experts with experience in planning previous festivals, in sound and lighting technology, and in security, and the majority of those plans were carried out. Detailed drawings survive that document the extent to which the site was prepared to ensure the comfort and safety of festival goers. (See Supplemental Photos and Maps.) However, it is also true that not all of the carefully laid plans worked out as intended and that the festival was marred by massive overcrowding, inadequate parking and sanitation, regional traffic jams and road blocks, and severe weather. Most of those problems can be attributed to three unforeseen circumstances: after months of planning and site work, the planners were forced to move the festival to another location less than a month before the event; the enormous underestimate of the expected crowd size; and the seriously bad weather.

On Tuesday, July 22, 1969, the festival staff officially took up residence on Yasgur’s farm. Michael Lang noted that once Yasgur entered the picture it freed up spending, but now they had twenty-three days to build what would normally take three months. They immediately arranged for trucks to bring materials and equipment from Wallkill to the new site and Chip Monck and Steve Cohen arrived with blueprints and designs. Despite the shortened schedule and inconvenience, it was immediately clear to all the production staff that the natural

¹⁵⁰ Makower, 116.

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amphitheater was far superior to any previous site that had been considered and that the overall concept for the Wallkill site could be easily transferred and improved. The stage could be constructed at the bottom of a gentle hill, which offered unobstructed views to an almost unlimited number of audience members ranged across the hillside. Yet, the concert site was also contained by roads on two sides and a plateau at the top of the hill (south end), which could define the back of the “house” and be used for food concessions. On the east, a field road separated Yasgur’s farm from that of Royden William Gabriel and a strong tree line would prevent concert goers from venturing onto the Gabriel farm, where they were not welcome. From the top of the hill, audience members could view their compatriots spread out before them, the stage, and beyond that a pond framed by the Catskill Mountains. The sound engineers thought the site offered the possibility of excellent acoustics. A secure area for performers to gather could be isolated north of the stage, across West Shore Road, and a bridge could be built over the road, allowing the performers to travel to and from the stage safely. The performers’ area also had space for trailers for the production crew, a large performers’ pavilion, to be built as a gathering space, and smaller tents for dressing rooms.

In addition to the concert field and performers area, the other parts of the large expanse could be marked off as sites for camping, parking, and commerce. Each use could be demarcated and contained by field lines, tree lines, stone walls, forests, swamps, and hedgerows that were already part of the farm. The existing agricultural landscape offered an excellent way to organize space, orient people, divide the group into management sections, and allow for infrastructure to be installed.

Back in April, Lawrence had begun with a checklist so detailed that it “blew everybody’s minds.” According to him, it was pages and pages, listing everything from roads to fences to people to transportation, fire access, security...headquarters, communications systems, lines of communication, and more.¹⁵¹ (See Supplemental

¹⁵¹ Makower, 50.

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Photos and Maps.) Now it all had to be fitted to this specific site. Lawrence noted that they did a lot of walking to find the best areas to locate different activities: “We started to lay out what the grounds would be, where the concessions would go, where the art park would go, where the camping areas would be. We’d do a lot of walking around, finding the best areas.”¹⁵² Bill Ward recalled that Lawrence “did everything in the field—kept everything together. He was the one who made the whole thing work—other than maybe god.”¹⁵³ They also set up an employment office to hire a crew, including laborers, guides, parking guards, and garbage cleaners. By August 7, they employed 1,500 workers, and by August 15 they had doubled that number.¹⁵⁴

The original lease included 600 acres of Yasgur’s land. A little less than 300 acres of this land was the actual festival site (virtually all included in the nomination) and the other 300 was in peripheral lots that were rented for parking. The peripheral lots have not been identified; however, they were not contiguous with the festival site and it is not certain that they were actually used during the festival. As for the 300-acre festival site, as staff began to prepare the grounds, Woodstock Ventures learned that some of the parcels they were counting on were not actually owned by Yasgur. The land directly north of the concert field, for example, marked out for the performers’ area, was owned by another farmer. Thus, the promoters leased additional land from four adjacent farmers. In addition, during the festival itself, important concert-related activity (primarily camping and swimming) took place on several parcels of contiguous land that was never leased. The following list describes all the land considered part of the festival site:

- Max Yasgur’s land included all the land on south side of West Shore Road from the Gabriel Farm to Perry Road as well as additional land on the north side of West Shore Road, west of Hurd Road.

¹⁵² Makower, 124.

¹⁵³ Makower, 130.

¹⁵⁴ Spitz, 329.

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- Walter Hoeft owned the parcel directly across the road from the main stage that had been identified as the performers' area. Hoeft's ownership had gone unnoticed until after the performers' pavilion had already been constructed on his land. Joel Rosenman noted that they gave him whatever he wanted to rent it.¹⁵⁵
- Bruno Feldman owned one small parcel within Hoeft's holdings bordering Filippini Pond; whether or not it was actually leased, it was considered part of the performers' area and is included in the nomination.
- William Filippini: One of the key components of the infrastructure plan was to draw water from the pond north of the festival site and transport it to the site, where it would be stored in large containers and then distributed throughout the site via plastic pipes. It was not until construction was underway that organizers realized that they would need permission from William Filippini to use the pond. "We [found that we] had to acquire... that property next to the lake. Mister Filippini – that was the guy we worked with."¹⁵⁶ The transactions with William Filippini are reported differently in different sources. Maps from the period are clear about what he owned, and it is possible that memories are hazy. At least one source noted that Filippini was paid \$5,000 for the rights to pump water out of the pond.¹⁵⁷ Another source reported that the pond was owned collectively by a group of farmers and, on behalf of the farmers' association, William Filippini signed over the rights to pump water out of the pond for \$5,000.¹⁵⁸ If this were true, it might clear up some of the inconsistencies about who owned what. William Filippini also owned campgrounds leased on both sides of Best Road, north of West Shore Road, and camping areas that were used but not leased in the same area. On the Wednesday before the festival, Lang told John Roberts that they had to "see Filippini about his pond and people camping on

¹⁵⁵ Makower, 178.

¹⁵⁶ Mel Lawrence, in Makower, 125.

¹⁵⁷ Evans and Kingsbury, 186.

¹⁵⁸ In Evans and Kingsbury, 186.

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his land.”¹⁵⁹ It was Joel Rosenman who went to negotiate with Filippini over the camping issue.

Rosenman knew that the crowds would not respect “no trespassing” signs and he was anxious that farmers like Filippini received compensation and the assurance that Woodstock Ventures would handle the cleanup. Filippini eventually agreed to rent part but not all of his lands for \$2500. Of course, his entire property was overrun with campers, and the terrified farmer kept his entire family inside for the duration of the concert. Rosenman made sure that the crew cleaned up all of his lands, even those not leased.¹⁶⁰

- Benjamin Leon owned land on the west side of Filippini Pond on both sides of Hurd Road. This land was not leased by festival organizers, but photos show extensive camping activity in this area. Of all the land once associated with the festival, this area alone has lost substantial integrity with the development of large homes and contemporary landscaping and it is not included in the nomination.
- Royden Charles Gabriel: Gabriel owned the farm immediately east of Yasgur’s, adjacent to the main field where the performances were held. A strong tree line separated the two farms, as it does today. Gabriel was vehemently opposed to the concert, and he later claimed that campers had severely damaged his fields. It’s difficult to assess the significance of Gabriel’s farmland. Undoubtedly, some campers probably wandered over; however, there were not enough to be prominent in the historic aerial photos, in which the Gabriel farm fields look nearly empty. The only spot on the Gabriel farm where festival goers did congregate was along the stream that parallels the north edge of his property, paralleling West Shore Road. The stream, which terminates at a stone dam across from Best Road, was one of the popular places festival goers went to swim and bathe, and there are numerous photos

¹⁵⁹ Makower, 177.

¹⁶⁰ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 122-125.

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documenting skinny dipping around the dam. At least one was published in *Life* magazine. No land was leased from Roy Gabriel; however, the stream and dam are included in the nomination boundary.¹⁶¹

- Adolf Wagner and John Gempler: The Gempler Farm boarded Yasgur's on the south and west. Most of the Gempler Farm was not used by festival goers; however a lot in the southwest corner was leased for camping and is included in the nomination. In addition, a bit of Gempler land along Hurd Road became part of the festival when it became an unauthorized parking area; a tiny portion of this land that retains integrity is included in the nomination.

Site Plan

Detailed site plans were devised by Mel Lawrence and drawn up by Tom Jablonka. Jablonka had worked as a volunteer at the Monterey Pop Festival, apparently winning free admission for doing so, in 1967. He was twenty-three years old in 1969 and his role at Woodstock was to draw up the plans at Lawrence's direction and to lead a crew building the wood fence in front of the stage. Now a resident of Tucson, Arizona, Jablonka donated a set of hand-drawn festival plans to the Museum at Bethel Woods in 2013 with a letter explaining their provenance. According to Jablonka, the plans were "generated for rational function. And not for astetics [sic] or promotion." They were never hung on a wall but always stored rolled in a tube. He explained that the roads and paths on the plan were named after the wives and girlfriends of contractors on the site and noted that the imaginative flowers that decorate the plans were drawn by his assistant, Denise Lawrence, a teacher from New Paltz. He lived on site that summer, in a trailer, and had a ten-person crew of volunteers to help him build the six-foot wall in front of the stage. He was responsible for feeding his crew and they received free admission to the festival as compensation.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ The Gabriel farm was purchased by the Gerry Foundation in c2001 and the Bethel Performing Arts Center was built on Gabriel farmland. It cannot be seen from the Woodstock site. The Gabriel farm outbuildings, also outside the nomination, can be seen along West Shore Road.

¹⁶² Thomas Jablonka to Robin Green, July 17, 2013. Archives, Museum at Bethel Woods.

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The plans are extremely detailed and specific. (See Supplemental Photos and Maps.) They cover the entire leased area, from Best Road to Perry Road and both sides of West Shore Road. They also show one of the non-leased areas that is included in the nomination: the stream and dam south of West Shore Road, between the Gabriel Farm and Best Road. There are both overall plans for the entire site and details of specific areas. A site plan key denotes all existing conditions, both natural and constructed, including streams, swamps, trees, water features, stone walls, planted fields, roads (public, private, and state), property lines, stone fences, barbed wire fences, trails, blaze posts, outhouses, and telephone poles. Symbols denote features to be added, such as wells, pumps, porta potties of two types (porta sans and johnnys on the spot), water storage tanks, security fences, and gates. Numbers show each trailer and to whom it was assigned. Existing buildings are sketched in, showing their representative shapes, as are planted crops on adjacent farms. The detail used to render the Gempler Farm's corn crop is impressive.

The plans show—apparently to fairly exact detail and scale—the locations for all planned temporary construction, such as the stage, performers' area, and tents, the concession area with each of its proposed booths, parking lots, and information booths, the free stage, free kitchen, puppet and movie stages, playground, and infirmaries. They also show those areas indicated for camping, camp check-in locations, proposed road entrances, security fencing, and the location of the main gate. Not everything shown on these plans was constructed exactly as shown (for example, it is not known what “movies,” shown in the campground, refers to or if it was ever built); however, most proposed items are confirmed by historic photographs. In general, however, the plans depict the festival grounds as they were planned and developed and they provide a remarkable record of design intent and functional use of the site.

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The overall design can be broken down into four components: main concert field, performers' area, Bindy Woods, and the camping areas (which are in two separate locations), and there is a detailed site plan for each. These four main components can be conceived of as "rooms," as they depict where specific activities were to take place, and they are enclosed by features such as woods, water, tree lines, roads, stone walls, etc. At the same time, there were five categories of site preparation that applied to the site as a whole: infrastructure, (power, water, wells, phones, sanitation, paths), concert production (stage, stage fence, sound, and lights), performers' accommodations (dressing rooms, pavilion, heliport), patrons' accommodations (food vendors, free kitchen, free stage, vendors, campgrounds, playground, infirmaries), and security (parking, fencing, and ticket booths). In creating the plan, designers took advantage of the natural features and topography to site features and activities. Overall, they created a sheltering and protective designed landscape intended to reinforce the intended shared vision and provide a safe and comfortable experience.

Site infrastructure was the highest priority. Each item (garbage, sanitation, power, and roads) had to be contracted from a different provider. Several roads were constructed immediately to provide access to camping areas and the main gate and to allow construction; however, in most cases, workers were encouraged to use existing farm roads to bring in materials in order to cause as little damage to the farm fields as possible. As for water, Chris Langhart developed an especially ingenious solution to distribute water over the large site with as little ground disturbance as possible (something with which Yasgur was especially concerned). Water was drawn from Filippini Pond, the large water body to the north, into four 10,000 gallon tanks installed at the southeast corner of the main field. An additional six or seven wells were dug throughout the site. Plastic tubes connected with elbow joints were laid atop the fields (because Yasgur did not want them buried, creating permanent furrows) through the site and campgrounds. At intervals, spigots were installed to provide patrons with access.¹⁶³ Other than people stepping on the tubing and creating leaks, which required frequent repairs, the

¹⁶³ All water had been treated, as per instructions from the NYS Health Department, to make it potable.

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system worked and there was never a water shortage. Walkie-talkies were installed throughout the site so that breaks could be reported and repaired quickly.

As for electricity, lights and power were essential, and a few hundred telephone poles were installed throughout the site; wire was strung, and large generators were used. Howard Pantel, the electrical contractor, recalled that the Woodstock staff had everything well organized with prints, maps, and projections. About thirty electricians worked steadily. The electrical company was well prepared, having purchased some of the larger equipment from the 1964 New York World's Fair when it ended. Pantel boasted that they produced enough electricity to light up a small city.¹⁶⁴

The phone company initially balked at the request to install so many banks of phones; however, Chris Langhart contacted Tom Grimm, his roommate from Carnegie Tech [now Carnegie Mellon University], now a phone company executive, and soon trucks began arriving in droves. They quickly installed seven or eight miles of phone lines—large panels with sixty to eighty pay phones and more than twenty lines for festival personnel. It cost \$20,000 to install but the company made a substantial profit from the collect calls placed over the festival weekend.¹⁶⁵

Sanitation was perhaps the festival's biggest failure, as no one really knew how to compute the appropriate number of toilets, despite the massive amount of research members of the team did at bus stations, stadiums, concert halls, in army manuals, etc. Langhart observed that the health department later set a standard of one toilet per every hundred persons; but, at the time, no one had ever done an event of this magnitude, and thus no one could accurately predict the required number. In addition, the size of the crowd itself was seriously

¹⁶⁴ Makower, 14.

¹⁶⁵ Makower, 141-142.

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underestimated. Woodstock Ventures ordered as many porta potties as could be found from two different providers; however, it proved an insufficient number. Goldstein also noted that portable toilets had to be pumped out regularly and the waste dumped after it was removed. So, although there were not enough toilets, the larger problem was that the trucks could not access the site to pump them due to traffic jams.¹⁶⁶ Garbage collection was also a failure for the same reason. An extensive plan for trash removal had been devised based on estimates of the numbers of cups, plates, cans, bottles, food wrappers, etc., \times four days \times 200,000 people. Large trash compactors had been rented and placed around the site; these were to be emptied regularly and taken to a dump. Unfortunately, traffic and overcrowding did not allow the trucks to get in and remove them.¹⁶⁷ Locally, the plan called for trash bags on posts, and initially the crowd seemed to do a good job of keeping the site clean. However, rain and crowds that didn't move around (in the main field) overtaxed the system.

Security fencing was planned to enclose that portion of the site reserved for performers and paying patrons. This would be in the form of chain link fencing (set in concrete) and its location was clearly marked on Jablonka's map. The fenced-in areas included Bindy Woods (on three sides), the performers' area (on four sides), and the main field (on the three sides). The area between the main field and Bindy Woods was open because it was within the larger fenced-off area. Patrons' access to the paid area would be from the main gate on the west side of Bindy Woods. The performers' area was off limits to patrons; hence, the bridge over West Shore Road would allow artists to travel to and from the stage securely. The fences failed because of time. As it got closer to the date of the concert, other things took priority, such as completing the stage and sound system. In addition, people started arriving at the site and setting up camp during the week before the concert started. By Wednesday, there were 50,000 people in front of the half-finished stage. Organizers had to decide between completing fences and security or completing the stage. They chose the stage.¹⁶⁸ By noon, Friday, August 15,

¹⁶⁶ Makower, 136-136.

¹⁶⁷ Lang, 196.

¹⁶⁸ Rosenman, "Notes to BWC Historic Landmark App."

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1969, organizers realized that there was no practical way to collect tickets from people on the field awaiting the first act, scheduled for 4 pm. Nor could they ask these people to leave and re-enter. At the same time, new people were arriving, climbing over the unfinished fences faster than they could be erected. The ticket booths were not ready and people—some of whom had abandoned their cars and were on foot—were arriving from all directions rather than from the prescribed parking lots and main entrance. It was at this point, realizing that a wrong move could set off a massive protest, that organizers made the decision to make Woodstock a free festival. There are many different stories about the fences: how they were or were not constructed in time; how they were run down and stepped over by attendees (there is photo documentation supporting this). Others relate that organizers gave certain, more radical groups permission to sneak people in at night, to keep them cooperative. One that is especially appealing comes from Roz Paine, a friend of Abbie Hoffman's, who recalled that as the teams put them up each day, she, Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner, and Jean Jacques Lebel would take the wire down each night—leaving the posts.¹⁶⁹

As for the four main spaces, the most important, of course, was the main field, where the concert itself would take place. The natural bowl-like shape of the field, sloping up from north to south, was already nearly perfect for seating the audience. The field was mowed, of course, and the water lines and electricity were installed. However, the most important preparation involved construction of the stage, sound towers, and barrier fence to protect the stage from the audience. These were built southeast of the intersection of Hurd and South Shore Roads.

Approximately seventy carpenters and laborers were hired to construct the stage, which was about eleven and one-half feet off the ground, seventy feet by eighty feet in size, with a sixty-foot turntable. They were supervised by Jay Devers, the foreman in charge. The same crew also built the lighting and sound towers,

¹⁶⁹ Lang, 158.

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which were sixty-four feet tall. A six-foot, butterfly-shaped barrier fence surrounding the stage, keeping the audience at an eight-foot distance from the performers, was constructed by Tom Jablonka and his crew. Camera platforms were sited in front of that. At the summit of the field, a plateau at the southern edge of the site, an area was set aside for food vendors. Here the crew constructed small wooden booths with decorative fabric flags.

The performers' area was located directly north of the main field, across West Shore Road. This was also a secure area, set aside for the performers and festival staff only. In order to protect the performers as they traversed between the performers, area and the stage, Chris Langhart designed a bridge that spanned West Shore Road directly to the stage. The wooden bridge had an eighteen-foot span and was four-feet wide. Langhart also designed a pavilion for artists to hang out and socialize in. Michael Lang described it as beautiful and rough-hewn, "an open, airy sculptural structure made from 34 telephone poles...with a white fabric roof over the crossbeams."¹⁷⁰

Also within the performers' area was a group of trailers assigned to staff and crew members, a group of tents to be used as performers' dressing rooms, and a crew mess hall tent, later turned into an infirmary. Fortuitously, someone had the forethought to plan for a heliport to transport the performers back and forth between their hotel accommodations in nearby Liberty.¹⁷¹ The heliport was built on adjacent land, said to be owned by a neighbor of Max's.¹⁷² The heliport was constructed by repeatedly mowing the grass until it had the texture of a golf course, and the landing area was created by outlining it with Christmas lights. Woodstock Ventures contracted with an aviation company to supply helicopters.

¹⁷⁰ Lang, 81.

¹⁷¹ During the festival itself, the heliport became one of the only means of transportation into or out of the site.

¹⁷² Although several sources, including Michael Lang (Lang, 138), note that the site was leased from a neighbor of Yasgur's, the 1969 map shows the heliport site as owned by Max Yasgur. It is possible that the maps were out of date.

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Bindy Woods was the name given to a grove located southwest of the intersection of West Shore and Hurd Roads. In terms of the plan, Bindy was centrally located between the concert field and the major campgrounds. Bindy Woods was an interesting and important part of the festival site. Remains of stone walls and barbed wire fencing ran through the site, north to south. The main entrance to the festival grounds was located on the west edge of Bindy Woods; it was sited at a distance from the concert field to control traffic and crowds. Everything to the east was a secured area, to be enclosed by chain link fencing. The festival goers were to check into the camping or parking areas to the west of Bindy, walk to the gate, show their tickets, and pass into the restricted area, through the woods, and onto the field. Within Bindy Woods, walls and fences were breached and paths cleared to provide a number of different approaches to the main festival, as well as to create spaces for exhibitors to display and sell their wares (which were to be vetted for quality). Makeshift exhibit spaces were built using only found materials, such as stones and branches. In addition to a location for buying and selling crafts, Bindy was the most popular area for buying and selling drugs. North of Bindy Woods, along West Shore Road, where they were clearly visible, was a playground, medical and hospital facilities, and security.

The Perry Road Campgrounds were located further to the west and included free campgrounds and parking areas dispersed in meadows around a wooded area. A free stage in the area would give those who came without tickets a place to hear music. The plans also show camp check-ins, a camp store, food concessions, a puppet theater, several infirmaries, camp offices, and a free kitchen. It is not known exactly how many of these smaller proposed items were completed; however, the Free Stage and the free kitchen are well documented. A specific area just southwest of Bindy Woods was designated as the location of the Hog Farm, where members of a New Mexico commune had been hired to set up a camp and run a free kitchen.¹⁷³ Two hundred workers and the first group of Hog Farmers to arrive began to work on preparing campgrounds. In addition to mowing and clearing,

¹⁷³ The Hog Farm was a commune founded by Hugh Romney, one of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters. The group was a leading advocate of the "Back to the Land" philosophy and had relocated from California to New Mexico. Evans and Kingsbury, 102.

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these workers dug fire pits and chopped and piled wood for campfires. Hog Farmers would also assist anyone who showed up without camping equipment or experience and show them how to get started.¹⁷⁴ The Hog Farmers laid trails through the woods, built bridges over streams, and created interconnecting paths; other communal groups that showed up were also put to work on the same tasks.¹⁷⁵ The free kitchen proved critical as time went on. The Hog Farmers were very resourceful in buying large quantities of local produce and turning it into nutritious fare for large crowds. After the festival, they were to stay and help restore the natural landscape.¹⁷⁶

The Best Road Campgrounds, another area leased for camping, was located on both side of Best Road, north of West Shore Road. These campgrounds may have been mowed, but the plan does not illustrate as many preparations as for those to the west of Bindy Woods. Nevertheless, they were heavily used. In numerous historic photos of the festival field, they can be seen in the distance, northeast of the stage.

In both camping areas, historic aerial photos show campers siting themselves in relation to fields, streams, crop and tree lines. An examination of contemporary aerial maps (such as the bird's eye views offered by online search engines) for these areas today shows remarkable integrity to the 1969 period. The same field patterns and features seen in the historic views survive today. (See Supplemental Photos and Maps.)

Campers also situated themselves in fields adjacent to the two designated areas when those places became too full. Many campers also refreshed themselves by swimming in Filippini Pond and in a stream with a dam and waterfall paralleling West Shore Road opposite Best Road. These activities are well documented in historic photos.

¹⁷⁴ Lang, 142.

¹⁷⁵ Goldstein, in Makower, 157.

¹⁷⁶ Spitz, 217-222.

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Security

Wes Pomeroy, chief of security, believed that traditional approaches to security at large-scale rock festivals were ineffective. These methods, which included confrontation and force, were based on fear and intended to control behavior and ensure that no laws (mostly relating to illegal drugs) were broken. Pomeroy's ideas meshed with those of Lang, who believed that if security set the right tone and created the right atmosphere audiences would follow. Lang's ideas for security were partially informed by his own ideals and goals for Woodstock and partially by things he'd seen for himself at the Denver festival in June. Lang witnessed police harassing rather than helping festival goers and ultimately resorting to guns, dogs, and tear gas, which ruined the event for the whole crowd, not just the lawbreakers.

Both Lang and Pomeroy sought law enforcement personnel who would not be judgmental of lifestyle, hair, clothing, musical taste, or even drug use. They wanted no open confrontations between youth and law enforcement, and they designed a non-threatening "uniform," consisting of bellbottom jeans and a T-shirt, for security staff so that they could be identifiable but not authoritarian. Most important, there were to be no guns or weapons; this was a crucial component of the plan. Pomeroy agreed with Lang on this strategy and, working with Joe Fink, commander of the 9th Precinct in the East Village, they came up with the idea to hire off-duty New York City beat cops for the job. They first secured unofficial permission from Howard Leary, New York City police commissioner, to put notices up advertising for police to come and work at the festival.¹⁷⁷ Dubbed the "Peace Service Corps," the cops were thoroughly screened and vetted through a series of interviews to weed out any who might be too rigid and/or easily put off by kids with long hair. Jewell Ross, a retired captain from the Berkeley police force and a friend of Pomeroy's, was hired to write a procedural manual and rules for the service corps.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Lang, 136-137.

¹⁷⁸ Makower, 150.

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In addition, Lang also planned to eliminate one source of crowd stress by making the festival open to everyone. Admission prices would be fair; camping would be free for all, and there would be free kitchens. For those who didn't have a ticket or could not afford one, there would be a free stage. There would also be ways to earn a ticket if you came early and helped out or if you agreed to pick up trash. Finally, certain groups and individuals who might be especially sensitive to any "profit motive," such as Abbie Hoffman, would be allowed to "sneak people in," all in the name of easing any possible tension before it escalated. Organizers also developed a pamphlet for attendees that explained what to do if you were arrested, outlined the rights of the arrested, the search and seizure laws, and New York's drug laws.¹⁷⁹

Unfortunately, the security plan was thwarted when a radical confrontational group from Manhattan's 9th Precinct called "Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers" learned about it. Members of this group, which had had numerous run-ins with the police, circulated a brochure in which they advocated that their members go to Woodstock and give a "warm welcome" to the NY fuzz, "who will be unarmed." Joe Fink explained that when word of that veiled threat reached the New York City police commissioner, he reneged on his promise that the officers would be allowed to go, leaving Woodstock with no security staff two days before the concert.¹⁸⁰ Many of the officers went anyway, giving false names, such as Mickey Mouse or Robin Hood.¹⁸¹ Apparently, the fact that festival planners had also hired the Hog Farmers (widely associated with the drug culture) to assist with security did not help relations with the police commissioner.¹⁸² The Hog Farmers reacted with playful surprise when identified by reporters as security. When asked what he planned to use as weapons, leader Hugh Romney (later Wavy Gravy) responded "seltzer bottles and cream pies....and we'll move in with that if anyone

¹⁷⁹ Spitz, 328-329.

¹⁸⁰ In Makower 153.

¹⁸¹ Makower, 154.

¹⁸² Wes Pomeroy, in Lang, 156.

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gets out of hand.”¹⁸³ Complementing Pomeroy’s “Peace Service Corps,” the Hog Farm dubbed itself the “Please Force.”¹⁸⁴ However, the Hog Farmers had been hired to perform a valuable function. Wes Pomeroy had planned a distinct area of supervision for the members of the New Mexican commune. This semi-official security group was to share its knowledge of psychedelic drugs in order to give first aid to those experiencing bad trips and/or drug overdoses.

Choosing Performers

Lang relied on his experience with the Miami festival to create a list of potential bands for the festival. As he booked one band, he used that to leverage bookings with others. He also avoided huge acts such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones because he didn’t want to overpower the festival. One of his top focuses would be the San Francisco Bay area bands that provided the sound track for the counterculture movement. He strategized that Friday, opening night, would be a night for quiet, calm folk music, to ease people into the festival weekend. Saturday would be reserved primarily for the great west coast bands, and Sunday, the closing night, would feature the bigger international bands.¹⁸⁵ He had always intended to include local artists The Band, with their Woodstock roots and connection to Bob Dylan.¹⁸⁶ Lang also knew that he wanted Jimi Hendrix to conclude the show Sunday evening. He suspected that Hendrix, who was spending the summer in a cottage in nearby West Shokan, wanted to play, as he was stopping in and jamming at area clubs. Lang tried to meet the Hendrix team’s excessive pay requirements by booking Jimi for two sets—an acoustic set for the Friday opening and an electric set for the closing.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Spitz, 331.

¹⁸⁴ Makower, 165.

¹⁸⁵ Lang, 82.

¹⁸⁶ Although no longer Dylan’s backing band, The Band had played with him on his 1966 tour, and he had had a hand in their recent album “Music from Big Pink.” Thus, there was always great anticipation that Dylan would show up at the festival to play with them or alone. Dylan, recovering from a motorcycle accident, was apparently never interested.

¹⁸⁷ Lang, 84-85. For unknown reasons, the acoustic set never happened.

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THE WOODSTOCK FESTIVAL

By August 13, 1969, a full two days before the festival and before the installation of gates and security fencing had been completed, 25,000 patrons had arrived at the site. With no obvious place to gather, they began to assemble on the main field. By Friday, concert planners realized that they would have to dispense with collecting or selling tickets. This meant almost immediate financial ruin for the investors. This was the first of numerous problems that beset the festival. Perhaps the worst was the incredibly bad weather, including several horrific thunder and lightning storms that soaked patrons, caused long delays in the shows, endangered performers, and engendered an almost unavoidable mud bath for all. There were sanitation and transportation issues directly resulting from the unanticipated crowds and food issues—not because there was not enough food but because it was difficult to distribute. There were also medical problems, unavoidable for that number of people, which the crew and the Hog Farmers seemed to deal with heroically. Out of 450,000 people, only one person died of a drug overdose, one more from an appendix, and a third in a tragic accident. Doctors, nurses, and medicines were found when needed. Medical personnel allowed the non-medical experts to deal with the drug problems. Doctors and hippies cooperated smoothly. There was no violence and there were no confrontations between patrons and police. There were, in fact, many more stories of community, sharing, comfort, and life affirming events.

Drugs at Woodstock

Almost every account of Woodstock discusses the easy availability and almost universal use of drugs by organizers, performers, and patrons. Many have also noted that Bindy Woods was the location for many of the drug transactions. Michael Lang recalled that they were sold in the “woody concession stands” and that you could buy “acid, THC, mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, several varieties of grass and hash.” Other booths sold

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“rolling papers, roach clips and cigarettes.”¹⁸⁸ While New York State Police were stopping cars and making arrests for those possessing drugs as they exited the NYS Thruway, there were no drug arrests at the festival, in part due to Lang’s security strategy. Although drugs were widely available, there was only one death from a drug overdose. Many did seek treatment, however, and the Hog Farmers, in particular, provided a valuable service to all by using—and teaching to other medical personnel—a method of “talking down” those having bad trips rather than dosing them with anti-psychotic medication.

August 15, 1969

Michael Lang recalls the last twenty-four hours before the festival as a race against time. In the end there was not enough time to do everything that was planned, so they had to focus on the things that were most important to the success of the festival. For example, the crew worked all night to finish construction of the stage. By Friday morning, people were pouring into the site, and at least 200,000 people had arrived. The crowd was simply pushing over the fences that had been built and walking over them. In the afternoon, the announcement was made that it was a free festival.¹⁸⁹ Traffic from all directions had come to a virtual standstill, and while performances were scheduled to start at 4 pm, the opening act, Sweetwater, was stuck in traffic somewhere and unlikely to make it. Finally, a little after 5 pm, Richie Havens took the stage. The heavy rain and lightning began five hours later, during Ravi Shankar’s performance, and continued after a one-hour delay because the water threatened to short the electrical equipment. The crowd, some of whom huddled around bonfires, remained patient and enthusiastic.¹⁹⁰ The first day ended at 2 am with Joan Baez’s lovely rendering of “We Shall Overcome.”

August 16, 1969

¹⁸⁸ Lang, 178.

¹⁸⁹ Lang, 174-176.

¹⁹⁰ Lang, 189-183.

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Many of the Friday night audience just slept in their spots—unwilling to give them up to return to their tents or even to find food.¹⁹¹ Mel Lawrence made an attempt to clean the place up by passing garbage bags across the rows and it worked well.¹⁹² Goldstein observed that the crowd began to be its own self-policing, self-regulating entity.¹⁹³ Lang toured the site, observing that people were camped in makeshift lean-tos, teepees, pup tents, and shelters made of bales of hay, just as they'd hoped. He was pleased to see small encampments of people sharing everything and believed that the rapidly developing community was more important than politics.¹⁹⁴

As food shortages were reported, particularly at the concessions, which had underestimated demand, Lang observed that the Hog Farm kept several food lines going and that people in Sullivan County gathered thousands of food donations that were then airlifted to the site by local National Guard troops. Campers who walked off the site reported that farmers were sharing food and water from their front lawns and that people of vastly different backgrounds were talking to each other.¹⁹⁵

Saturday's performances started around noon under hot and humid skies as people continued to pack the bowl. One of the highlights of the afternoon was Country Joe McDonald's unplanned solo set, which he was requested to do while the next band was setting up. Although the crowd didn't respond to his folk songs, the energy soared with the FISH cheer followed by "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag." Hundreds of thousands of people sang out passionately that they didn't know what they were fighting for. Meanwhile, Hugh Romney made public service announcements about bad acid, warning patrons which pills not to take.¹⁹⁶ The Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kanter, who had arrived early and was walking around, reported his excitement with people

¹⁹¹ Thus leading to one of the rumors about people starving.

¹⁹² Lang, 195-196.

¹⁹³ Lang, 198.

¹⁹⁴ Lang, 199.

¹⁹⁵ Lang, 200.

¹⁹⁶ Lang, 206-207.

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“setting up tents and campfires, cooking, swimming and dancing, It was like a children’s crusade, a great social experiment. It simply hadn’t happened before.”¹⁹⁷ By the time the Grateful Dead took the stage around 10 pm, a terrible storm was raging. The band continued to play, risking electrocution from the water on the stage. Bob Weir recalls seeing a blue ball and then being lifted off his feet and back ten feet into his amp.¹⁹⁸ One of the show’s highlights was the Who, which performed almost the entire rock opera *Tommy* as dawn broke. Saturday’s show ended at 9 am Sunday morning with Jefferson Airplane.

August 17, 1969

Sunday dawned sunny. One problem that needed to be addressed was that thousands of people packed into the bowl hadn’t budged—not to go to their tents, to the bathroom, or to find food. Goldstein and Hog Famer Hugh Romney devised a plan to round up unused paper products, fill them with granola, and bring massive amounts over to the field on trucks to pass out. Romney made the announcement: “What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for four hundred thousand.”¹⁹⁹ By Sunday, Lang felt that everyone had settled in and that they had devised solutions to the most important problems; situations like food shortages, sanitation, water pipe repair had all sorted themselves out.²⁰⁰ One of the day’s highlights for everyone was the appearance of Max Yasgur, who had decided that he wanted to come over and express his thanks. Yasgur addressed the crowd at 2 pm:

I’m a farmer....I don’t know how to speak to twenty people at one time, let alone a crowd like this. But I think you young people have proven something to the world – not only to the town of Bethel, or Sullivan County or New York. This is the largest group of people ever assembled in one place. We have had no idea that there would be this size group, and because of that you’ve had quite a few inconveniences as far as water, food, and so forth. Your producers have done a mammoth job to see that you’re taken care of...they’d enjoy a vote of thanks. But above that, the important thing that you’ve proven to the world is that half a million kids....a half a million young people

¹⁹⁷ In Lang, 212.

¹⁹⁸ In Lang, 216.

¹⁹⁹ Lang, 225-226.

²⁰⁰ Lang, 226.

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can get together, and have three days of fun and music and have nothing but fun and music, and I God Bless You for it.²⁰¹

The crowd, which had heard the stories about how Yasgur was providing free water and milk and how he had championed their cause, stood up and gave him an amazing round of applause, “for a man that they shouldn’t have been able to relate to.”²⁰²

The music began around 2 pm with Joe Cocker. After that it became clear that another violent storm was imminent. Although by now everyone was more or less used to the rain, staff members began to worry about the electrical cables and the sixty-four-foot sound and light towers. Inspections proved them all safe; however, organizers decided that they did not want to risk using the electrical equipment again during a thunderstorm *and* that they had to get all the kids off the towers and back away from the stage. After deciding to shut down for a few hours, John Morris took the stage to calm the audience, persuade them to move, and assure everyone that they would all get through it. About twenty minutes after they cut the power, the worst was over. However, there was still too much water to risk using the electrical equipment, so there were a few hours of free time and play. At one point a plane flew over and thousands of flowers dropped on the audience.²⁰³

At 6:30 pm the sun came out again and the music continued through the night. Jimi Hendrix, whose manager insisted that, as a “headliner,” he close the show, came on at 8:30 am. He played a two-hour set, the longest in his career. There were only about 40,000 people left in the audience, but when Hendrix commenced the “Star Spangled Banner,” they moved closer together. Mel Lawrence, who awoke to Hendrix playing, said the song’s

²⁰¹ Max Yasgur, in Evans and Kingsbury, 124.

²⁰² Sam Yasgur, in Evans and Kingsbury, 125.

²⁰³ Michael Lang said he had arranged this as a surprise for the audience. Lang, 228-229.

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performance gave him chills. Graham Nash called it “as creative a two minutes as you can probably find in rock and roll.”²⁰⁴

Roberts and Rosenman at the White Lake Office

Immediately after securing the Bethel site, Woodstock Ventures opened an office in a former New York Telephone Building on Main Street in nearby White Lake, only a few miles from the concert site. This was where most of the practical financial and business decisions were made in the weeks right before the concert. It was here that contractors lined up for approval of plans and payment, here that crew requested approval to make purchases or hire new staff, here that deliveries arrived around the clock, and here that a wide variety of solutions to unsolvable problems were brokered. Activity reached a frenzy in the last few days before the concert and continued right through the weekend to the point that Roberts and Rosenman never even came out to the site to experience the concert they had all worked so hard to produce. Lang reflected on this later, during the sad aftermath of the festival when the financial accounting took place:

Still, I could not help thinking about what John must be going through. It tore at me that he and Joel had not had the same amazing experience with Woodstock that Artie and I had. For whatever reasons, they’d spent a miserable three days stuck in the telephone building in White Lake.²⁰⁵

The reasons were fairly easy to understand. Roberts and Rosenman were business men struggling to meet the practical demands that threatened to derail the show itself. There were last minute problems with food, water, electricity and transportation, last minute property rental glitches, problems with outraged landowners dealing with trespassers. There was a last minute need for legal aid lawyers, last minute security hires, and a last minute realization that helicopters would be needed. Once the show started, the two were responsible for

²⁰⁴ Lang, 239.

²⁰⁵ Lang, 248.

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coordinating transportation to get the groups from the hotels to the stage on time when the order of performances was constantly changing. They also handled calls for special supplies from artists and stagehands, problems with payroll, and calls from frantic parents. Rosenman described “business as usual” at the White Lake office as “five frantic phone calls per minute, ten crises per hour, and snap decisions at some undetermined but ulcer-producing rate.”²⁰⁶

The pace of activity and the number of crucial decisions that had to be made were mixed with the duo’s outright fear of disaster. In his and Roberts’s book, Rosenman admitted something that he had never revealed because it was contrary to the Woodstock spirit:

right from the start I was flat-out paranoid about having all those kids as our house guests for the weekend. Every time terrified parents or irate Citizens Committees came pounding on our door with their grievances, I would hang back, secretly agreeing with them. Even after their fears had been calmed by the silver-tongued Michael or the forked-tongued Artie, I, the promoter, remained profoundly uneasy. I thought the weekend was going to be a holocaust...no matter how small the crowd, there would be some primitive outbreak of violence that would smear Woodstock across the history books and the court dockets of New York State.²⁰⁷

John Roberts, for his part, recalled having to reassure numerous frantic parents that their children were alright and take calls from the press, from local law enforcement, from vendors and others. The resulting tension kept them awake most of the night.²⁰⁸

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²⁰⁶ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 170.

²⁰⁷ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 176

²⁰⁸ Rosenman, Roberts and Pilpel, 183-188.

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Thirty-two performers and groups played at Woodstock. They included some of the most well-known and popular period groups, such as the Who, the Jefferson Airplane, and Jimi Hendrix, as well as some, such as Santana, who were still virtually unknown. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, though known individually, were making only their second appearance together, and their debut album had just been released in May.²⁰⁹ Some performances are remembered as career highlights; while others bands were having, as bands do, an off night. Some performers were crippled due to the effects of long waits, weather, drugs, or other circumstances. The planned order of performances had to be repeatedly shuffled because performers were stuck in traffic like everyone else. Some performers appeared who were not scheduled to play, asked to fill in gaps while setups were occurring (the turntable stage did not work). A number of the bands benefitted greatly from playing at Woodstock – these were mainly those captured on film and whose performances appeared in the movie and/or on the soundtrack album. Others were not so fortunate—some excellent performances were not recorded; some groups refused to sign the required waivers; and some footage could not be used. Because of the film, accurate records of who played, what they played, and when they played became confused and only recently the Museum at Bethel Woods has been making an effort to compile the most accurate record of the musical chronology.

Friday evening's performance was planned as the soft, "folk" section of the festival. By mid-afternoon, there were 50,000 people on the field waiting for the concert to begin and more kept arriving. The opening act, Sweetwater, was not yet on the scene. After several attempts to find someone to open the festival, Michael Lang prevailed upon African American folksinger Richie Havens, who took the stage at 5 pm. Havens played until he was out of material and then he improvised the moving song "Freedom," which became one of the festival's signature events. Havens recalled that he thought "the word 'Freedom' came out of my mouth,

²⁰⁹ Crosby, Stills and Nash, *Crosby, Stills and Nash*, 1969. Their first album included just three of the members of this supergroup. Their second, *Déjà vu*, released in March 1970, included all four and Joni Mitchell's song "Woodstock."

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because I saw it in front of me. I saw the freedom we were looking for And every person was sharing it....”²¹⁰ Other highlights from Friday’s show include Ravi Shankar, “who had become a central figure in the counterculture’s appropriation of Indian culture and music.”²¹¹ Melanie, an unscheduled performer, was moved when she looked up to see audience members holding up cigarette lighters in the pitch black sky—she later wrote “Lay Down (Candles in the Wind)” in memory of the experience.²¹² It was Arlo Guthrie who, during his set, memorialized the phrase—and the rumor—that “the New York State Thruway is closed, man” because it was captured on film and found its way into the movie. Unfortunately, it wasn’t true; while a few exits were closed, the road itself never shut down.²¹³ Joan Baez, the beautifully voiced activist folksinger, closed the first day with a memorable performance of “We Shall Overcome,” the anthem of the civil rights movement.

Festival Performances

The list below is arranged to create an accurate sequence of the festival performances. The actual order had been lost over the years lost because performers were shifted around to fill holes in the schedule, because some artists were added who were not scheduled to play, because some performers were not included in the film, and/or because some were not placed in the correct order on the film. Restoration of the sequence is an ongoing project of the Museum at Bethel Woods. An asterisk before an artist’s name denotes a performer/act inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, including 2017 inductees: John Sebastian was inducted in 2000 as part of The Lovin’ Spoonful but not as a solo artist. Neil Young was inducted 1995 and the group Crosby Stills & Nash was inducted in 1997.

²¹⁰ Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, ed., *Woodstock: Three Days That Rocked The World* (New York: Sterling, 2009) 117.

²¹¹ Wade Lawrence, “3 Days of Peace & Music: The Performers of the Woodstock Festival,” exhibit script, The Museum at Bethel Woods, 2016, 10.

²¹² Lawrence, 12.

²¹³ Lawrence, 13.

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Day 1 Performers: Friday–early Saturday

Richie Havens 5:00–5:45 pm

Sweetwater 6:15–7:00 pm

Bert Sommer 7:15–8:00 pm

Tim Hardin 8:45–9:30 pm

Ravi Shankar 10:00–10:45 pm

Melanie 11:00–11:30 pm

Arlo Guthrie 12:00–12:45 am

***Joan Baez** 1:30–2:15 am

On Saturday, music did not begin until noon. The opening band, Quill, a regionally known rock band from Boston, played a notable role in festival history because Michael Lang engaged them to play a “goodwill tour” of local schools, community centers, and even prisons, to gain the support of local citizens for the festival. They also became the “house band,” entertaining the crew itself.²¹⁴ Their festival performance was cited as lackluster, however, and it did not appear in the movie—they received no career bump.²¹⁵

The next performance became one of the festival highlights. Country Joe McDonald, scheduled to take the stage with his full band on Sunday, was asked to play solo during a set change. Even though McDonald repeated the song with his band the following day, his solo performance of the “Fish Cheer” (“Gimme an F...U...C...K”) followed by the “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag” captured the audience’s exasperation with the war, its feeling of strength in numbers, and its camaraderie. This performance, a highpoint in the movie, has become an iconic touchstone of the antiwar movement:

So it’s one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
Don’t ask me, I don’t give a damn
Next stop is Vietnam.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Lawrence, 16.

²¹⁵ Lawrence, 16.

²¹⁶ Country Joe McDonald, “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die-Rag.”

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McDonald was followed by Santana, a Latin fusion band popular in the San Francisco music scene but virtually unknown nationally. Santana, which gave an exceptional performance, became one of the surprise hits of the festival and one of its greatest beneficiaries. When its first album was released just after the festival it was a huge hit. The band's appearance in the movie helped catapult them to fame.

John Sebastian, who had come only as a spectator, was also persuaded to do a solo set during another bit of down time. Critics have cited his performance as flawed, but it was sincere, well received, and included in the movie. He was also remembered for his bright self-tie-dyed outfit.²¹⁷ Other highlights from Saturday included the performance of Canned Heat, which was included in the movie. Canned Heat was a popular band that could have benefitted greatly from this exposure, but, unfortunately, founding member Alan Wilson committed suicide only weeks after the festival.²¹⁸ The Grateful Dead, one of the architects of the San Francisco sound, were felled by weather, equipment problems, and a nearly dark stage.²¹⁹ Several band members received severe electric shocks due to flooding from the rain.²²⁰ They ended with a forty-minute jam of "Turn on Your Lovelight." This band's bad luck would continue through the end of the year—Altamont was only three months in its future. Creedance Clearwater Revival, one of the most popular bands of summer 1969, has been called one of the best of the festival; unfortunately, the bandleader disagreed and refused to allow its performance to be in the movie. They broke up a few years later, in 1972.²²¹

Janis Joplin, playing with a new band, Kozmic Blues Band, was another staple of the San Francisco scene. She sang full of raw energy and emotions and was well received by the crowd, but her Woodstock performance was

²¹⁷ Lawrence, 20.

²¹⁸ Lawrence, 25.

²¹⁹ Lawrence, 27.

²²⁰ Evans and Kingsbury, 143.

²²¹ Lawrence, 30.

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not well reviewed by critics.²²² Her set was also not in the movie. Joplin died tragically from a heroin overdose just a year later. Sly and the Family Stone delivered what was also considered an inspired performance, in particular the call and response of “Higher” during “I Want to Take You Higher.”²²³

The Who didn’t come on until 5:30 am but they played a long, twenty-one song set. Apparently Pete Townsend did not like hippies.²²⁴ He also did not enjoy the Woodstock audience. He thought that “the whole of America had gone mad” and felt that the audience were a bunch of hypocrites for claiming they had started a revolution just because they “took over a field, broke down some fences, imbibed bad acid, and then tried to run out without paying the bills.”²²⁵ In perhaps a more revealing quote, Townsend said that, as a cynic, he wanted to make them realize that nothing had changed and nothing was going to change.²²⁶ He demonstrated his antagonism when Abbie Hoffman provoked him by rushing the stage to deliver a rant about freeing political prisoner John Sinclair. As variously reported, Townsend either whacked him over the head, tapped him on the head, shoved him, or gently pushed him with the neck of his guitar and told him to get off the stage. But Townsend didn’t have to dispense any group hugs to the audience. His connection was entirely through his music. The Who’s rock opera *Tommy*, which the band then went on to play almost in its entirety, fully embodied the fear and alienation that terrified the ‘60s generation. According to reports, the sun rose just as Roger Daltry sang “See Me, Feel Me,” which includes the plaintive line “see me, feel me, touch me, heal me.” The morning concluded with the Jefferson Airplane, a psychedelic rock band and another leader of the San Francisco scene. They were also beset by the rain delays, technical problems, the long wait, and a really tired audience – even their hit “Somebody to Love” failed to rouse.²²⁷ They did not appear in the film, but singer

²²² Lawrence, 31.

²²³ Lawrence, 33.

²²⁴ Lawrence, 35.

²²⁵ Lang, 221.

²²⁶ Evans and Kingsbury, 165.

²²⁷ Evans and Kingsbury, 170; Lawrence, 37.

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Grace Slick observed: "it was unique in that there were a half-million people not stabbing each other to death." Marty Balin, who thought [Woodstock] was the "idealistic high point of the festivals that had been happening," recalled the announcement about the bad acid and how everyone was being careful.²²⁸ He thought that was a good idea. Slick and Balin's opinions were probably reinforced three months later at Altamont, when Balin was knocked out by a drug-crazed Hell's Angel on stage.

Day 2 performers: Saturday–early Sunday

Quill 12:15–12:50 pm

Country Joe McDonald 1:00–1:30 pm

***Santana** 2:00–2:45 pm

***John Sebastian** 3:30–4:00 pm

Keef Hartley Band 4:45–5:30 pm

The Incredible String Band 6:00–6:40 pm

Canned Heat 7:30–8:30 pm

Mountain 9:00–10:00 pm

***Grateful Dead** 10:45 pm–Sunday 12:30 am

Creedance Clearwater Revival* 1:00–1:50 am

***Janis Joplin (Kozmic Blues Band)** 2:30–3:30 am

Sly & The Family Stone 4:00–5:00 am

***The Who** 5:30–6:35 am

Jefferson Airplane* 7:00–8:45 am

Sunday's music began at 2 pm with Joe Cocker, whose set included a powerful version of the Beatles' "With a Little Help From My Friends." Cocker's inclusion in the film gave his career a significant boost. After Cocker's performance, another tremendous rainstorm caused a three-hour delay. One of the key performers on Sunday was The Band. The Band was local, hailing from the very Woodstock that epitomized the spirit of the festival. In addition, at the time the group was Dylan's backup band, leading to speculation that he might show

²²⁸ Evans and Kingsbury, 173.

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up (he did not). The Band played a roots-inspired, country music set. It was well received, but it was not included in the movie because their manager thought the pay was too low. Although they lost an opportunity to become more widely known, the members didn't really care. Robbie Robertson described their set as "a slow haunting set of mountain music." Since they lived near Woodstock, it seemed "kind of appropriate from our point of view."²²⁹

Crosby Stills Nash and Young's performance at Woodstock marked only their second live show as a band. According to numerous stories, the band members were terrified—not of the audience or of playing live—but of playing in front of their peers. "Everyone we respected in the whole goddamn music business was standing in a circle behind us when we went on....We were so happy that it went down well that we could barely handle it."²³⁰ By all accounts their performance was breathtaking and it was used in the movie. Neil Young was not seen, however, because he refused to let them film him.²³¹ The four did not play every song together. They divided into groups and played both acoustic and electric before all joining together.²³²

Woodstock's last performer, Jimi Hendrix, did not go on until 9 am Monday morning. Although organizers had tried to get him on earlier, his manager had insisted that, as the headliner, he close the show. Unfortunately, by the time he started playing, vast numbers of people had left and only about 40,000 remained. Hendrix's performance of the "Star Spangled Banner" was described as epic. Holly George-Warren noted that his use of all the tools of the electric guitar expanded the definition of music: "Hendrix pioneered the use of the instrument as an electronic sound source."²³³ His rendition is said to have evoked the horrors of war.²³⁴ Billy

²²⁹ Evans and Kingsbury, 196.

²³⁰ David Crosby, in Evans and Kingsbury, 204.

²³¹ Evans and Kingsbury, 205.

²³² In early 1970, the four-member supergroup covered the song "Woodstock" by Joni Mitchell in their album *Déjà vu*.

²³³ Holly George-Warren, *Rolling Stone*, in Lawrence, 56.

²³⁴ Lawrence, 56.

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Cox, Hendrix's bass player, summed it up with: "It was just a good gig. The great thing about it was peace and love and harmony, and some buzz, and everybody got along peacefully."²³⁵

Day 3 Performers: Sunday–early Monday

Joe Cocker (The Grease Band) 2:00–3:30 pm

Country Joe & The Fish 6:30–7:50 pm

Ten Years After 8:30–9:30 pm

***The Band** 10:00–10:50 pm

Johnny Winter 12:00–1:10 am

Blood, Sweat & Tears 1:45–2:45 am

***Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young** 3:30–5:00 am

***The Paul Butterfield Blues Band** 6:00–7:15 am

Sha Na Na 7:45–8:15 am

Jimi Hendrix 9:00–11:15 am

RESPONSES TO THE FESTIVAL

Press Coverage

Woodstock was covered by at least six major newspapers, all three major networks, three significant magazines, and many regional and local newspapers. Two magazines, *Rolling Stone* and *Life*, put out special issues.

Overall, early coverage was not favorable. The *New York Times* entitled its editorial of August 16, 1969,

“Nightmare in the Catskills,” noting:

The dreams of marijuana and rock music that drew 300,000 fans and hippies to the Catskills had little more sanity than the impulses that drive the lemmings to march to their deaths in the sea....What kind of culture is it that can produce so colossal a mess?...The sponsors of this event, who apparently had not the slightest concern for the turmoil it would cause, should be made to account for their mismanagement. To try to cram several hundred thousand people into a 600-acre farm with only a few hastily installed sanitary facilities shows a

²³⁵ Billy Cox, Jimi Hendrix bass player, in Evans and Kingsbury, 217.

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complete lack of responsibility.²³⁶

The author had neither tolerance nor sympathy for the festival planners and attendees; it does not appear that he visited the scene, and he had almost certainly not done any research into the facts.²³⁷ An interesting 2012 study by Michael Sheehy posited that many members of what Sheehy termed “the older generation of journalists” did not immediately recognize Woodstock as the “transcendental moment” that it was for youth in the 1960s. What they did recognize and focus on was the logistical and public safety nightmare aspects of the story.²³⁸ Sheehy discussed the effect that a journalist can have when he or she “frames” a story within a certain perspective. In this case, framing the story in terms of the potential public safety issues helped to shape the public’s perception of the event and thus create a biased historic perspective about Woodstock.²³⁹ There were very few interviews with participants and reporters. Most reporters ignored the young people in favor of organizers, public safety officials, local residents, and the business community.²⁴⁰ Some reporters, who were at the site and wanted to use another angle, had to fight with editors who were not at the site. Sheehy also made the point that the youth perspective received little coverage in the mainstream media of the 1960s.²⁴¹ Sheehy suggested that framing the discussion in such a manner privileges a perspective grounded in establishment values. He suggested that framing the event in terms of a public safety story reflects the interests and values of the establishment and can be a way of retaining control of the story, noting that this technique has been used to describe coverage of student activism and the new left movement from the ‘60s in an attempt to marginalize the political power of the students or the new left because older Americans would perceive these groups as threats

²³⁶ “Nightmare in the Catskills, *New York Times*, 18 August 1969. <http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

²³⁷ It is, in fact, somewhat shocking that such a badly researched piece found its way onto the *New York Times*’s editorial page.

²³⁸ Michael Sheehy, “Woodstock: How the Mass Media Missed the Historic Angle of the Breaking Story,” *Journalism History* 37.5 (Winter 2012), 1-2. Proquest LLC.

²³⁹ Sheehy, 2-3.

²⁴⁰ Sheehy, 6.

²⁴¹ Sheehy, 2-3.

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to the social order.²⁴² Those youth quotes that do survive reveal, instead of a nightmare, “an incredible unification.”²⁴³ At one point during the festival, Michael Lang observed that as people called their friends and family, “word started getting out that the picture was quite different from what was being painted by the media.”²⁴⁴ And when Max Yasgur was permitted to weigh in on the topic, he delivered a mild reprimand to the establishment, noting that “if the generation gap is to be closed, we older people have to do more than we have done.”²⁴⁵

Overall, the *New York Times* ran more than twenty articles about Woodstock and, as time passed, they became gentler in tone. There were good reviews of the music and complimentary statements about the crowd. “Yet the young people’s conduct, in the end, earned them a salute from Monticello’s police chief as ‘the most courteous, considerate and well-behaved group of kids’ he had ever dealt with.”²⁴⁶ Still, almost every one mentioned the shocking use of illegal drugs without arrests, and many made a point of mentioning public nudity.

One entire article was devoted to residents suing the town and the producers for damages. These included several members of the zoning board of appeals, who were angry that the town and zoning boards approved the permit without a public hearing. Royden Gabriel, whose farm was adjacent to Woodstock on the east, said his pond was now a swamp; he had no fences; they had picked his corn and camped all over the place. He predicted that “the community will never be the same. We pulled 30 of them out of the hay mow smoking pot”

²⁴² Sheehy, 8.

²⁴³ Bernard L. Collier, “Tired Rock Fans Begin Exodus,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1969. In Sheehy, 8.

²⁴⁴ Lang, 199.

²⁴⁵ “Farmer with Soul, Max Yasgur,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1969, In Sheehy, 9.

²⁴⁶ “Morning After at Bethel,” *New York Times*, August 19, 1969. <http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

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and [he] threatened to burn his farm down if they came back.”²⁴⁷ However, Patrick Lydon, a reporter, gave a more generous assessment:

It started on Rte. 17, hip cars passing bread to the cycle riders and waving the “V” signs everywhere. Bethel townspeople gazed in awe at the streams of hippies, but they murmured “peace” to the visitors, offered free water, and returned smiles. Everyone arrived to find the whole show was free. As the weekend went on, the miracles kept coming – the kindness of the scattered police, the “food-drop” by an Army helicopter, and flowers from the sky. Yet faith makes miracles and it was the astonishing peace and joy of the youth masses that brought happy results....What began as a symbolic protest against American society ended as a joyful confirmation that good things *can* happen here, that Army men can raise a “V” sign, that country people can welcome city hippies. ²⁴⁸

The local press reported that some of the feared hippies were found to be “kind, polite and willing to pitch in and help in whatever way they could. Many residents were able to overcome their prejudices about the long-haired, ragged, and ‘peculiarly dressed’ individuals they had heard so much about but rarely seen.”²⁴⁹ Several letters to local newspapers stated that the writers had changed their minds about the group. Others, however, seemed to have had their prejudices confirmed. One person wrote that the festival was a “COLOSSAL BLUNDER,” and several seemed to think the town had agreed—or conspired—to do it in the name of the “Almighty Dollar.” Some thought the festival brought only “filth, drugs, nudity, property damage, and the debasement of town politics.”²⁵⁰ Many objections were made on moral grounds. Politicians condemned drug use, and the Roman Catholic clergy of Sullivan County sent a letter strongly condemning nudity, drug use, alcohol abuse, public sex acts, and the politically subversive aspects of the festival.” They were all for tourism

²⁴⁷ Alfonso A. Narvaez, “Bethel Farmers Call Fair a Plot to ‘Avoid the Law,’” *New York Times*, August 20, 1969.

<http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

²⁴⁸ Patrick Lydon, “A Joyful Confirmation that Good Things Can Happen Here,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1969.

<http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

²⁴⁹ Helfrich, 221.

²⁵⁰ Helfrich, 232.

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but not at the cost of “moral degeneration.”²⁵¹ Another group, including neighbors of the Yasgurs, took out an ad in the *Republican Watchman*, asking:

What can a hippie contribute to our community?

Hypocrisy, Insubordination, Pornography, Pollution, Impudency [sic], and Effusiveness, in short, HIPPIE²⁵²

Interestingly, despite the fears for public health and safety, the population of 450,000, frequently under adverse weather conditions, many experimenting with drugs that they may not have been used to, experienced only three deaths. One was from a drug overdose, one from a medical emergency, and one from a tragic accident when a tractor crushed a sleeping fan. Approximately 5,000 people were treated for a variety of illnesses and injuries—some as small as a cut foot; others more serious—by fewer than 100 doctors and 36 nurses, who were able to evacuate the seriously ill by helicopter to nearby hospitals. There was no mass public health crisis of any sort. And not one gunshot or stab wound—or any wound inflicted by violence—was treated. Nor did any participant commit a crime of violence in the town. In the same vein, certain long held beliefs about the fair are not true. Reports vary, but it appears that there never was a true food shortage—some kids didn’t eat because they were reluctant to leave choice lawn spots. And where there were perceived shortages, neighbors were overly generous in providing all sorts of sandwiches, provisions, and snacks, some of which was delivered by Army National Guard helicopters.

Demographics

It is interesting to consider why more than 450,000 people came to Woodstock. The attendance was larger than that of any other festival of the 1960s.²⁵³ Some have suggested that Lang’s advertising was aimed directly at the counterculture and that from its beginning in the underground, thousands of people “spontaneously decided

²⁵¹ Helfrich, 234-235.

²⁵² In Helfrich, 233.

²⁵³ Altamont had 300,000; however, more of the other large festivals had audiences of between 100,000 – 150,000.

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that this was an event that they wanted and needed to attend.²⁵⁴ In one survey, done a decade later, 3 percent of attendees identified themselves as upper class, 30 percent as upper middle class, 18 percent as lower middle class and 5 percent as lower class. They were just about evenly divided from across the county: 30 percent from the Northeast; 21 percent from the South; 24 percent from the Central/Midwest; and 25 percent from the West. In terms of age, 43 percent were born between 1950 and 1952; 40 percent between 1946 and 1949, and 17 percent between 1940 and 1945. One percent had some high school education; 5 percent were high school graduates; 31 percent had some college; 27 percent were college graduates; and 35 percent had some post-graduate work.²⁵⁵ In other words, the attendees seem to have been exactly who one might suppose they were: middle-to-upper class, well-educated young people.

Why did they come? Some scholars believe that the chief motivation for so many young people to travel from all over the country to spend three days together was the antiwar movement. Many of those—especially college students—who were deeply committed to the antiwar movement shared feelings of the futility of traditional politics and protests, especially after the 1968 presidential campaign.²⁵⁶ The joyous singalong of Country Joe McDonald’s “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin-to-Die-Rag” speaks to their pent up fatigue and frustration. However, the yearning for community was perhaps the overarching motivation. “I’m here for the same reason that Indians used to have tribal gatherings. Just being here with people like me makes it all worthwhile. I guess it will reinforce my life style, my beliefs, from the attacks of my parents and their generation.”²⁵⁷ Paul Krassner, Yippie cofounder and publisher of *The Realist*, who attended the festival, noted that “Woodstock fit our original

²⁵⁴ James E. Perone, *Woodstock: An Encyclopedia of the Music and Art Fair* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 39.

²⁵⁵ Rex Weiner and Deanne Stillman, *Woodstock Census: The Nationwide Survey of the Sixties Generation* (New York: Viking, 1979), in Perone, 40.

²⁵⁶ Lawrence J. Desser, “Woodstock, A Nation At War,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 4.3 (Winter 1970).

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.0022-3840.1971.00769.x/abstract>

²⁵⁷ In William E. Farrell, “19-Hour Concert Ends Bethel Fair,” *New York Times*, August 19, 1969.

<http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

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vision of what the protest at the Chicago DNC should have been the year before: an alternative event with music, a special community with people who shared the same value system where you couldn't separate the idealism from the irreverence."²⁵⁸

A week later, four reporters from the *New York Times* interviewed five young festival goers in an effort to explain the meaning of the concert to their adult readers. The young people ranged in age from 16 to 22 and included five males and one female. Beyond questioning them about the logistics of the festival (food, travel and accommodations), the reporters wanted to know what drew them to Woodstock and what their hopes for the future were. All were drawn to the festival by the music, although not all of them heard it (one never made it to the site). The topic most discussed was the sense of community, the idea that there were so many people who shared everything from a sense of fashion to a worldview. Almost all remarked on the way everyone shared food and drinks, on the overwhelming sense of goodwill, and on the ubiquitous presence of drugs. Some had had experiences in political protests and noted the lack of conflict at Woodstock. Interestingly, although some reflected that the festival would have been a good place to show their political power, the consensus seemed to be that the festival was more important as a place of solace and solidarity. Plans for the future were sketchy. Most of the five were undecided about future plans but expressed little interest in a conventional life. Instead, participants wanted lives filled with new experiences and few responsibilities.²⁵⁹

Another potential draw was the appeal of "Back to the Land Movements," which were another expression of futility with materialism and establishment values. This connection is something that seems evident in some of Michael Lang's descriptions of his goals for the festival. And, as it turned out, due to circumstances both planned and unplanned, Woodstock *was* an experiment in self-sufficiency. So many of those who attended

²⁵⁸ In Lang, 198.

²⁵⁹ Joseph Lelyveld and Michael T. Kaufman, "Woodstock: Like It Was," *New York Times*, August 25, 1969.
<http://woodstockpreservation.org/Gallery/NYTCompilation.html>

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have commented on the effect of seeing so many gathered together who shared the same views and values – of finding out that they were not alone, of getting through challenging times together. They were simply grateful to live for three days in a manner that showed complete rejection of establishment values. Some have commented that seeing so many like-minded in the same place changed their lives.²⁶⁰

Financial Consequences

Woodstock was never intended to be a free festival, but it ended up losing more than \$1 million. When the four partners met on the afternoon of August 18, 1969, it was clear that there were only two choices: declare bankruptcy or John Roberts and his family would have to agree to cover the \$1.4 million in bad checks. Roberts was extremely reluctant to declare bankruptcy, citing his good name and not wanting to stiff their providers. The Roberts family, represented by John's brother, Billy, pledged to cover the checks with personal funds. After a series of painful negotiations among the four principals, the two sides barely on speaking terms, the partnership was dissolved. Lang and Kornfeld sold their shares to Woodstock Ventures, receiving \$31,000 each and giving up all rights to the Woodstock name.²⁶¹ There were multiple creditors to pay, lawsuits to be settled, ticketholders to issue refunds to (those who had paid and not made it to the site). It was several years before the promoters were comfortable talking about the festival.²⁶²

“Woodstock was the most monumental failure in the history of the underground if one measures it in financial terms. But it was a failure caused for the most part by too much success on the artistic side. Essentially, the thirty-two rock and folk groups, the bucolic mountain setting, the proximity to New York City, and the \$200,000 worth of publicity and advertising in both underground and Establishment media resulted in the unexpected turnout of youth that overwhelmed festival promoters.”²⁶³ The movie version of Woodstock was

²⁶⁰ Perone, 40-41.

²⁶¹ Lang, 247-255.

²⁶² Rosenman and Roberts, 206-213; Spitz, 487-491.

²⁶³ Bernard L. Collier, “Woodstock Fair’s Staff Parting in Dispute Over Future Control,” *New York Times*, September 9, 1969.
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9F04E0DE1031EE3BBC4153DFBF668382679EDE&legacy=true>

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released in March 1970 and won the Academy Award for best documentary. To date, Warner Brothers has made well over \$50 million on the film.

Stanley Goldstein stayed in Bethel for about three weeks to clean up. Attendees left an incredible amount of trash, in some cases because it was too waterlogged to carry and in others because their cars were parked up to fifteen miles away. Lisa Law, one of the Hog Farmers, estimated that between 30,000 and 80,000 sleeping bags had been left. They sorted those that could be cleaned and salvaged from those that could not, making giant piles of trash for tow trucks to take away.²⁶⁴ Many of the tools and larger equipment disappeared from the scene – some suspected the Hog Farmers. At least eighty lawsuits were filed; however, most were dropped or settled, especially as Woodstock Ventures began to make good on its promise to restore anything that had been damaged.

AFTER WOODSTOCK

Several smaller and less eventful festivals were held in the last few month of 1969; however, in December, the Altamont Music Festival made world headlines, proving itself the antithesis of the myth and the reality of Woodstock. Altamont—unplanned, unregulated, and unprotected—has been called “rock’s ugliest moment.”²⁶⁵ At the same time, the war in Vietnam continued to tear at the fabric of the country. In October, more than ten million Americans were involved in the largest public protest ever held in America (National Teach In Against The War). Things became even more heated when Nixon started blaming the stalemate in Vietnam not on the warbut on the antiwar movement.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Evans and Kingsbury, 220.

²⁶⁵ Gilmore, n.p.

²⁶⁶ Farber, 230.

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And in the new year, after promising to end the war, Nixon instead expanded it: in April 1970 he ordered American troops to invade North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia, sparking widespread protests throughout the nation. On May 4, 1970, the standoff between student antiwar protestors and their government reached a tragic denouement when Ohio National Guard soldiers called out to disperse a peaceful student protest at Kent State University fired into an unsuspecting crowd, felling thirteen and killing four. Some of those killed or injured were not even part of the protest.²⁶⁷

Only nine months after Woodstock, the incident at Kent State was considered by many to be the defeat of the counterculture. The effects of this ultimate betrayal on young people were devastating. “On the campus of Kent State the government of the “‘Silent Majority’ showed that it had not only the power but also the will to use ultimate force against *white* dissenters.” After the shootings it was obvious that the days of tolerance were over—any significant challenge to the establishment involved risking not only freedom but even life.²⁶⁸ As some realized that the stakes were too high, some withdrew to safer ground while others became more radical, no longer interested in changing society but in overturning it.²⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the American war machine raged on, able to kill and maim without any noticeable interruption, while students looked on terrified and fearful, their confidence in the future replaced by frustration and despair.²⁷⁰ In the next few months, there was a massive outpouring of grief and rage. A full-scale national student strike crippled and shut down universities throughout the nation.²⁷¹ Eventually, a massive disillusionment began to sink in and the age of idealism seemed over. In

²⁶⁷ Laura L. Davis, Mark F. Seeman, Bradley S. Keefer, Mindy J. Farmer, and Lori Boes, “May 4, 1970, Kent State Shooting Site,” National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2017).

²⁶⁸ Gorman, 397.

²⁶⁹ Gorman, 397.

²⁷⁰ Gorman, 397-398.

²⁷¹ Davis, Seeman, Keefer, et al., 52.

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the last years of the '60s, as some of the broken hopes of millions began to erupt into violence, rock music became full of hard options and opposing arguments.²⁷²

In this confused state, the "Woodstock Nation" (as Abbie Hoffman dubbed it) bumbled its way into adulthood. People graduated from college, found jobs, had families.... Some became complacent but many others became deeply involved in causes that furthered social justice or the social contract, from projects as small as running a church food pantry to those as large as working to fight global poverty. The innocence was gone, but the idealism has never faded from the memory of Woodstock. David Crosby perfectly expressed the sentiment:

We felt very encouraged by seeing each other. Everybody was thrilled that there were so many of us. We thought, "Hey, we're going to change everything, We're going to stop the war tomorrow." Well, it didn't work out that way. But at that point we were all thrilled with the idea that our values were triumphant someplace in the world. That, at least for this one small space in this one little town in New York the hippie ethic was the ruling way to do. And it felt great.²⁷³

EPILOGUE

Most of those who experienced Woodstock—directly or indirectly—carry it with them. That remembrance is embodied in the song by Joni Mitchell, who didn't attend the festival but captured its spirit:

I came upon a child of God
He was walking along the road
And I asked him, where are you going
And this he told me
I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm
I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band
I'm going to camp out on the land
I'm going to try an' get my soul free

We are stardust

²⁷² Gilmore, n.p. [Although the author was referring to 1968, the quote applies equally well for the post-Woodstock era.]

²⁷³ In Makower, 285.

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We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden

Then can I walk beside you
I have come here to lose the smog
And I feel to be a cog in something turning
Well maybe it is just the time of year
Or maybe it's the time of man
I don't know who I am
But you know life is for learning

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden²⁷⁴

In preparing this nomination, the New York State Historic Preservation Office conducted a brief survey of colleagues who attended the festival and later work(ed) in historic preservation. Of the five respondents, not all recollected the music, but every one remembered the strong feelings of community, of working together, of sharing.²⁷⁵ Each identified the war in Vietnam as the most important social issue of the day; one recalled a vague uneasiness, while another was active in the SDS. Expressing it in different ways, the five individuals seemed to agree that being among so many like-minded people reaffirmed their anti-establishment identity, that Woodstock was a rite of passage, and that the festival sealed their identities as baby boomers with different values and perspectives than their parents. One attributed his career in public service to the fact that Woodstock took him out of himself and made him realize that we could accomplish things by working together.²⁷⁶ All now

²⁷⁴ Joni Mitchell, "Woodstock," *Ladies of the Canyon*, 1970.

²⁷⁵ One person did remember waking to Jimi Hendrix on Monday morning and the others remembered bits and pieces of different acts.

²⁷⁶ "Hello Woodstock Veterans," Informal Five Question Survey Conducted by Kathleen LaFrank, New York State Historic Preservation Office, 2016. Each anonymous participant has SHPO experience.

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in their mid-sixties, these five people can be paired with the five young people interviewed for the *New York Times* article in 1969. They remember the same things about the festival that the young people commented on; however, none chose a life with no responsibilities.²⁷⁷ Instead, each was drawn to public service and, in particular, to the documentation and protection of historic resources. Interestingly, their careers spanned the period during which the definition of what is historic expanded to include vernacular architecture, resources associated with the lives of ordinary Americans, and resources that represent the history of underrepresented Americans. Without stretching the analogy too much, one could note this as a turning away from the values of the generation of antiquarians that preceded them.

WOODSTOCK REMEMBERED - 1984

In the years after the festival, as the land returned to pasture, no road signs or other markers identified the exact site of the concert. However, by the late 1970s, a small group had started holding reunions at the site; and as the years went on, numerous visitors, many of whom had attended the festival, began to visit the site yearly. In 1984, to mark the fifteenth anniversary, Bethel town historian Bert Feldman and Arthur Schubert, a waiter at Grossinger's (both of whom had worked security at the original festival), conceived the idea of an official monument on the forty-acre main concert field, then owned by Louis Nicky, a Brooklyn auto glass salesman, and June Gellish.²⁷⁸ The site chosen, in the northwest corner of the field, near the intersection of Hurd and West Shore Roads, had a sweeping view of the entire amphitheater. One had only to squint to see the field packed with concert-goers.

The monument was designed and sculpted by local artist Wayne C. Saward (1962-2009), who grew up in nearby Bloomingburg. Saward, who was too young to attend the original festival, was, nevertheless, deeply

²⁷⁷ However, they were not asked about logistics or drugs.

²⁷⁸ Michael Norman, "Our Towns," *New York Times*, August 16, 1984. <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/16/nyregion/our-towns.html?pagewanted=all>

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devoted to its site, camping there for more than thirty years. The monument was his contribution to the site's recognition. As Saward put it, "Since that time, there have been many rock festivals, but not one festival has ever left the impact that Woodstock did, culturally and universally. There were 400,000 hippies gathered in a sea of mud for three days – without any form, whatsoever, of violence—listening to music and having fun. The basis of Woodstock's success surely, and by all means, is owed to each and every person who was involved. They, themselves, made it historical."²⁷⁹ The monument, paid for (\$650) by the land owners, is a 5.5 ton, flat rectangular concrete slab, 46"×74.25"×39.5" in size. Two original, painted iron plaques are embedded in the concrete. One notes this as the original site of Woodstock and the other is a high relief design showing the original bird on a guitar scheme by Arnold Skolnick. Two plaques added later list the performers.

The Woodstock Monument is an important part of the history of Woodstock. Although not associated with the festival itself, it is associated with the sentiments of those who erected it and the value that they placed on Woodstock. It reflects the desire of later generations to memorialize the Woodstock Festival and to have a place to gather for commemorative activity. Groups, mostly of people old enough to have attended the festival, have been stopping to view the field almost daily for the past thirty years. The commemorative marker is a reminder of the enduring significance of Woodstock for later generations and reflects the tremendous esteem with which the festival continues to be held in the hearts of the '60s generation today.

The monument is thirty-three years old; because sufficient time has not elapsed to evaluate its significance the monument does not yet rise to the level of exceptional significance that would afford it status as a contributing resource under criterion consideration F (commemorative properties). This nomination may be amended at a future date to reassess and incorporate the significance of this important element.

²⁷⁹"My View: Wayne Saward," (*Middletown Times Herald Record*, June 12, 1993.
<http://www.recordonline.com/article/20090325/ENTERTAIN/90325030>

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UTM Coordinates – all Zone 18

1. 390182/1047229
2. 390174/1046366
3. 390004/1044564
4. 389750/1044166
5. 387770/1044175
6. 385925/1043618
7. 384563/1043872
8. 383412/1044533
9. 383676/1046834
10. 384217/1046808
11. 389954/1047229

Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification

The nomination boundary was drawn to include the largest area directly associated with the Woodstock Music Festival that retains sufficient integrity to illustrate the significant events that occurred there between Aug 15, 1969 and Aug 18, 1969. The boundary was established based on a study of the original 600-acre site leased for the festival, historic maps showing the proposed festival layout, historic accounts, photos, and, especially, aerial photos, showing the actual layout of concert related features (stage, camping, etc.) and the use of the site by the performers and concert-goers (for playing music, listening, eating, sleeping and other recreational activities); and a study of existing conditions at the site. Boundary lines were based on patterns of historic activity associated with the festival and followed property lines, tree lines, stone walls, farm roads, and water features wherever possible. The survival of numerous historic aerial photos documenting the actual concert provided exceptional documentation and allowed the identification of extremely accurate boundaries.

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In addition to the site leased by festival organizers for the concert and related activities such as performer comfort, camping, and recreation, the boundary also includes adjacent areas that are directly associated with the history of the festival because significant amounts of spontaneous concert-related activity occurred on them, including those makeshift camping areas and adjacent streams and waterfalls that became popular bathing spots. The boundary excludes areas that have lost integrity, including the southernmost portion of the main field, which has been developed with the Museum at Bethel Woods. Although this building can be seen from other parts of the site and does compromise the setting slightly, it was always the less important, secondary view, *away* from the stage and the major scenic views of the mountains. It was originally the site of food concessions.

The boundary also excludes peripheral areas that are not contiguous to the site that were subject to incidental concert-related traffic jams, informal parking, and road closures. Some of these areas are as many as twelve miles from the concert site and it would be difficult to verify the accuracy of their direct connection to the festival. Instead, the boundary encompasses the land most closely associated with the Woodstock Festival: places where one could see or hear the concert, walk to it, socialize with other participants and, essentially, participate in the short-lived experimental community.

Remarkably, despite changes and the evolution of nature over time, numerous elements of the original landscape (e.g., field patterns, stone walls, tree lines, topography, water bodies, etc.) upon which the concert unfolded survive and are enumerated in item 7. Although elements such as the stage and other built features were lost immediately after the festival, their locations are known, evidence of their presence survives, and the activities of the festival can be clearly understood on site. Contemporary changes to the landscape that compromise or obscure the original character of the land (e.g., new trees, fences, and decorative grass) are generally related to the current management of the festival site and the development of the museum. These alterations were well intentioned, helped to preserve the site from development, and are reversible.

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Photographer: Wade Lawrence
Museum at Bethel Woods
Date: 2016
Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.
and
New York State Historic Preservation Office
Waterford, NY

Photo list:

- 0001. Main Concert Field, looking south from West Shore Road
- 0002. Main Concert Field, looking southwest from stage area
- 0003. Main Concert Field, looking northwest toward intersection of Hurd and West Shore Roads; Bindy Woods at left
- 0004. Main Concert Field. Looking north toward performers' area and Filippini Pond in the distance; stage area is at lower right
- 0005. Hurd Road, looking south
- 0006. looking west into Bindy Woods from Hurd Road
- 0007. Bindy Woods, within the wooded area, note nineteenth century stone wall
- 0008. Information Tree, intersection of Hurd and West Shore Roads looking north
- 0009. Stream paralleling West Shore Road
- 0010. West Shore Road Dam, looking southwest
- 0011. West Shore Road Dam, looking west
- 0012. Best Road Campground, looking northeast
- 0013. Best Road Campground, looking northeast
- 0014. Looking north from Main Field toward heliport area
- 0015. Perry Road Campground, looking northeast
- 0016. Perry Road Campground, looking northeast
- 0017. West Shore Road, looking west
- 0018. Looking southwest into concert site; Yasgur barn [outside of boundary] in the distance
- 0019. 172 Perry Road (non-contributing residence)
- 0020. 216 Perry Road (non-contributing residence)
- 0021. 270 Hurd Road (non-contributing residence)
- 0022. 268 Hurd Road (non-contributing residence)
- 0023. 532 West Shore Road (non-contributing barn)
- 0024. 1984 Woodstock Monument, looking southeast over Main Concert Field

See continuation sheet

Perry Road

Perry Road Campings

To 176 / HUCKY HOOVER ROAD

LEGEND

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE
 Symbols used in this
 map to indicate
 various features
 and structures.

--- Dotted line = leased area
 --- Dashed line = land outside of lease
 --- Solid line = boundary line
 --- Thick solid line = fence
 --- Thin solid line = driveway
 --- Double line = road
 --- Single line = path
 --- Dotted line = utility line
 --- Dashed line = water line
 --- Solid line = sewer line
 --- Thick solid line = electric line
 --- Thin solid line = gas line
 --- Dotted line = telephone line
 --- Dashed line = cable TV line
 --- Solid line = irrigation line
 --- Thick solid line = boundary line
 --- Thin solid line = fence
 --- Double line = road
 --- Single line = path
 --- Dotted line = utility line
 --- Dashed line = water line
 --- Solid line = sewer line
 --- Thick solid line = electric line
 --- Thin solid line = gas line
 --- Dotted line = telephone line
 --- Dashed line = cable TV line
 --- Solid line = irrigation line

dotted line = leased area
--- = land outside of lease
included in nomination

Herd Road

CONCESSIONS

EMPLOYEE PARKING LOT

CAMPBELL ROAD

REST & SERVICE BUILDING

RESTROOMS

BAR

RESTAURANT

AMUSEMENT

STAGE

PERFORMANCES

area where
Museum
was
built -
excluded

Gabriel
Farm

MAINT
FIELD

BEST ROAD
DAM

BEST ROAD
CAMPINGS

**WOODSTOCK
MUSIC
&
ART FAIR**

NORTH

1007

**SCHEDULE OF HOTEL
RATES & LITTLE PAGES**

Room Type	Rate	Notes
Single	\$10.00	
Double	\$15.00	
Triple	\$20.00	
Quad	\$25.00	
Family	\$30.00	
Executive	\$35.00	
Deluxe	\$40.00	
Presidential	\$50.00	
Special	\$60.00	
Group	\$70.00	
Event	\$80.00	
Other	\$90.00	

NA



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SUPPLEMENTAL MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

1.) CURRENT AERIAL VIEWS



General aerial view of site – boundary not marked

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

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Main Field, S of West Shore Road; Performers Area, N of West Shore Road; Bindy Woods; SW of intersection

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Name of Property

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Bindy Woods

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State



Hog Farm (U-shaped Area at Lower Right)

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State



Perry Road Campgrounds (Perry Rd is to the left)

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State



West Shore Road Stream and Dam (in trees); dam can be seen at east end

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

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Best Road Campgrounds

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

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County and State

2.) HISTORIC AERIAL VIEWS OF CONCERT



From west boundary of site looking east, shows Perry Road Campgrounds, Hog Farm, Bindy Woods and Filippini Pond

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

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County and State



Looking southeast from Filippini Pond, showing performers area (north of road) and concert field with stage, seating area, and Food for Love Concessions at top [the concessions area is now the site of the museum and has been excluded from the boundary]; to the right is Bindy Woods; to the left is the Best Road Campgrounds

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State



The photo looking due south over performers area, stage and main concert field. The performers bridge over West Shore Road can be seen, as can the security fencing built between the stage and the audience area. You can also see the information tree at the southwest intersection of West Shore and Hurd Roads.

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Woodstock Festival Site

Name of Property

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Close up of stage, security fence and performers bridge

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Woodstock Festival Site

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3.) HISTORIC PHOTOS



Hog Farm Area

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Main Field in post-concert years; profile is exactly the same today

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Infrastructure - water pipes laid over the entire site and accessed via spigots

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Bindy Woods trail markers

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Bindy Woods bridge

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Bindy Woods Concession

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Festival Signs

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National Park Service

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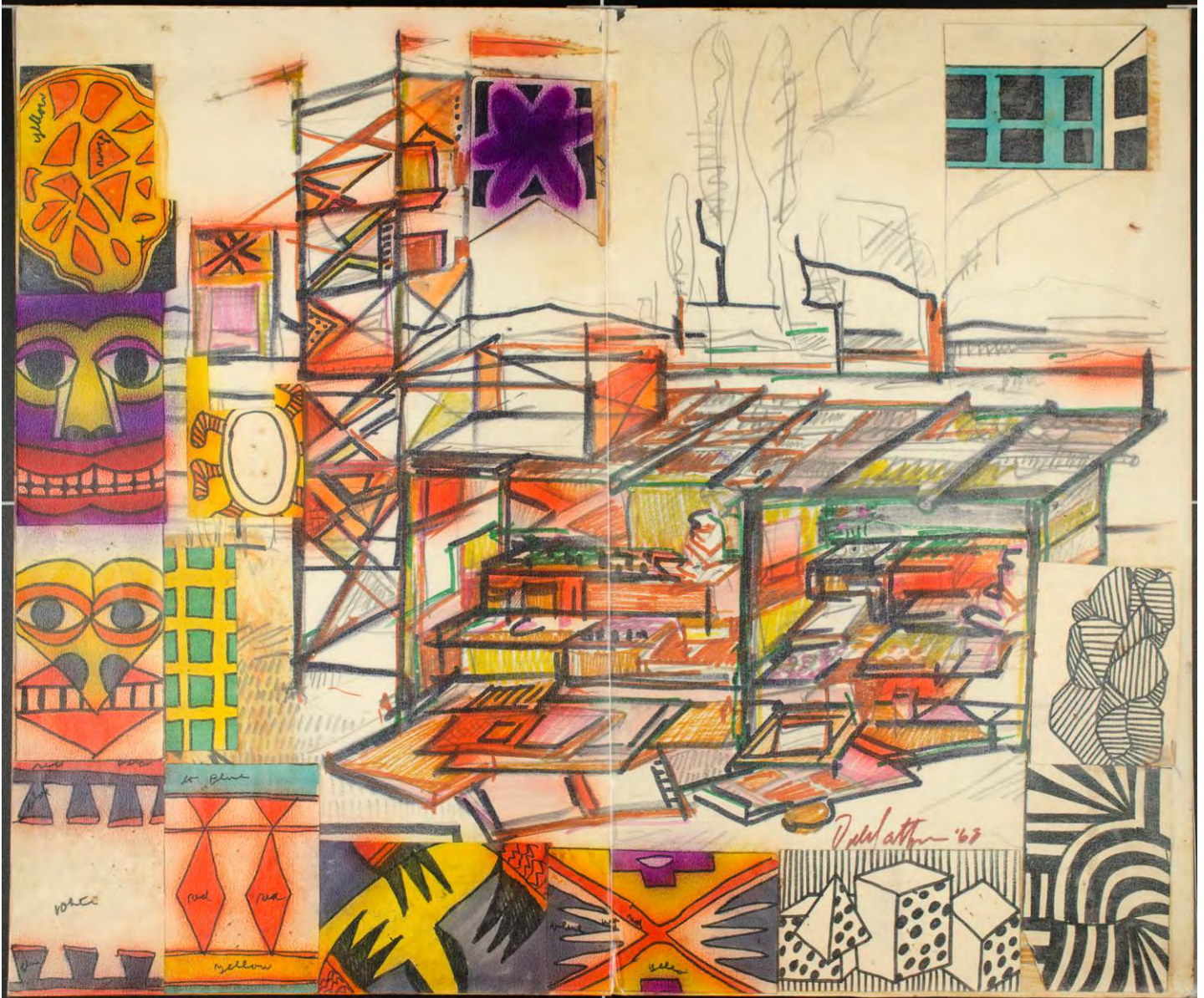
Woodstock Festival Site

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Artwork for signs

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People and Cows

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Hog Farm Free Kitchen

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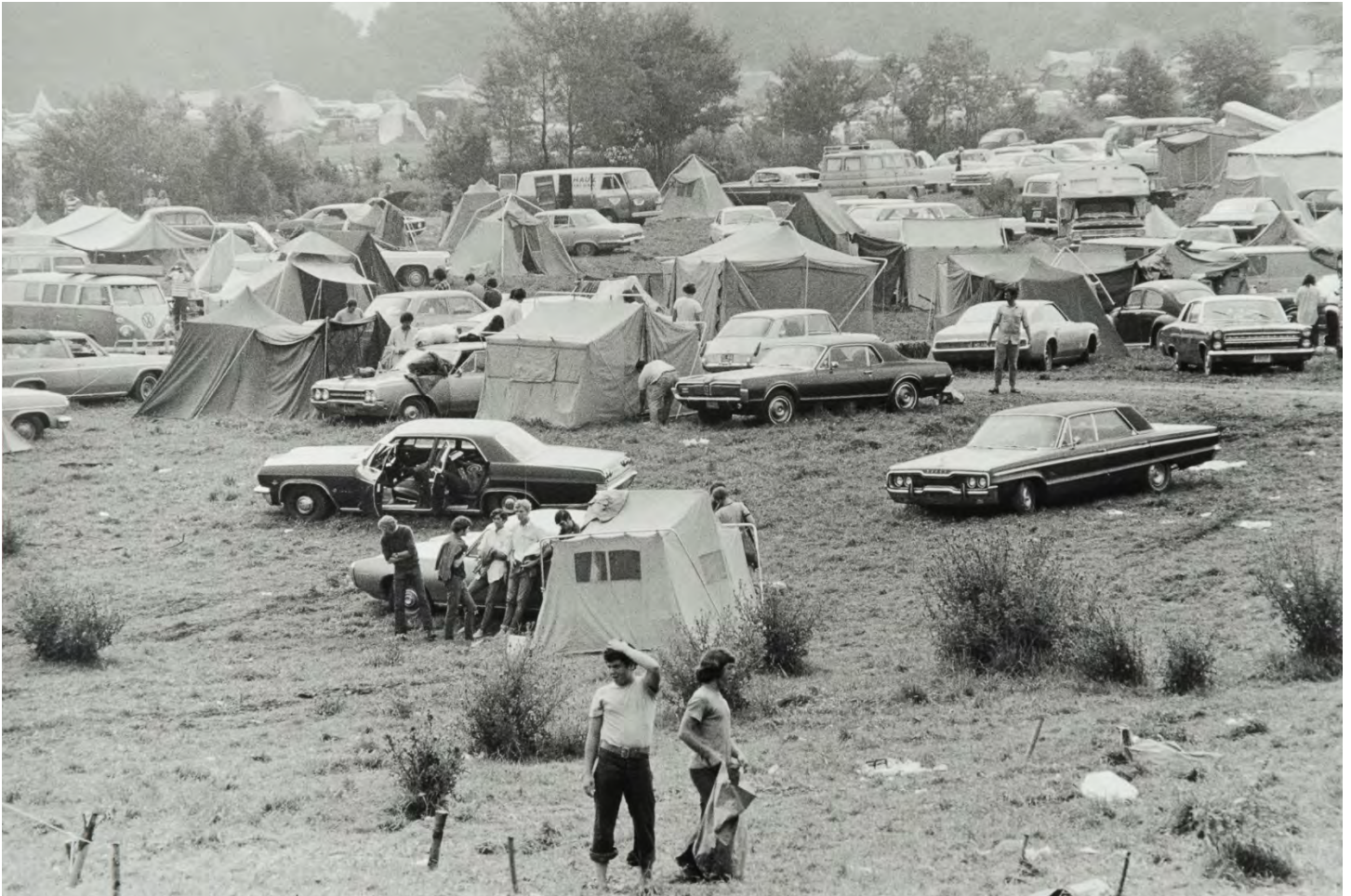
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Woodstock Festival Site

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Perry Road Campground

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4.) ORIGINAL PLANS FOR THE FESTIVAL - Drawn by Tom Jablonka; Designed by Mel Lawrence, Production Coordinator



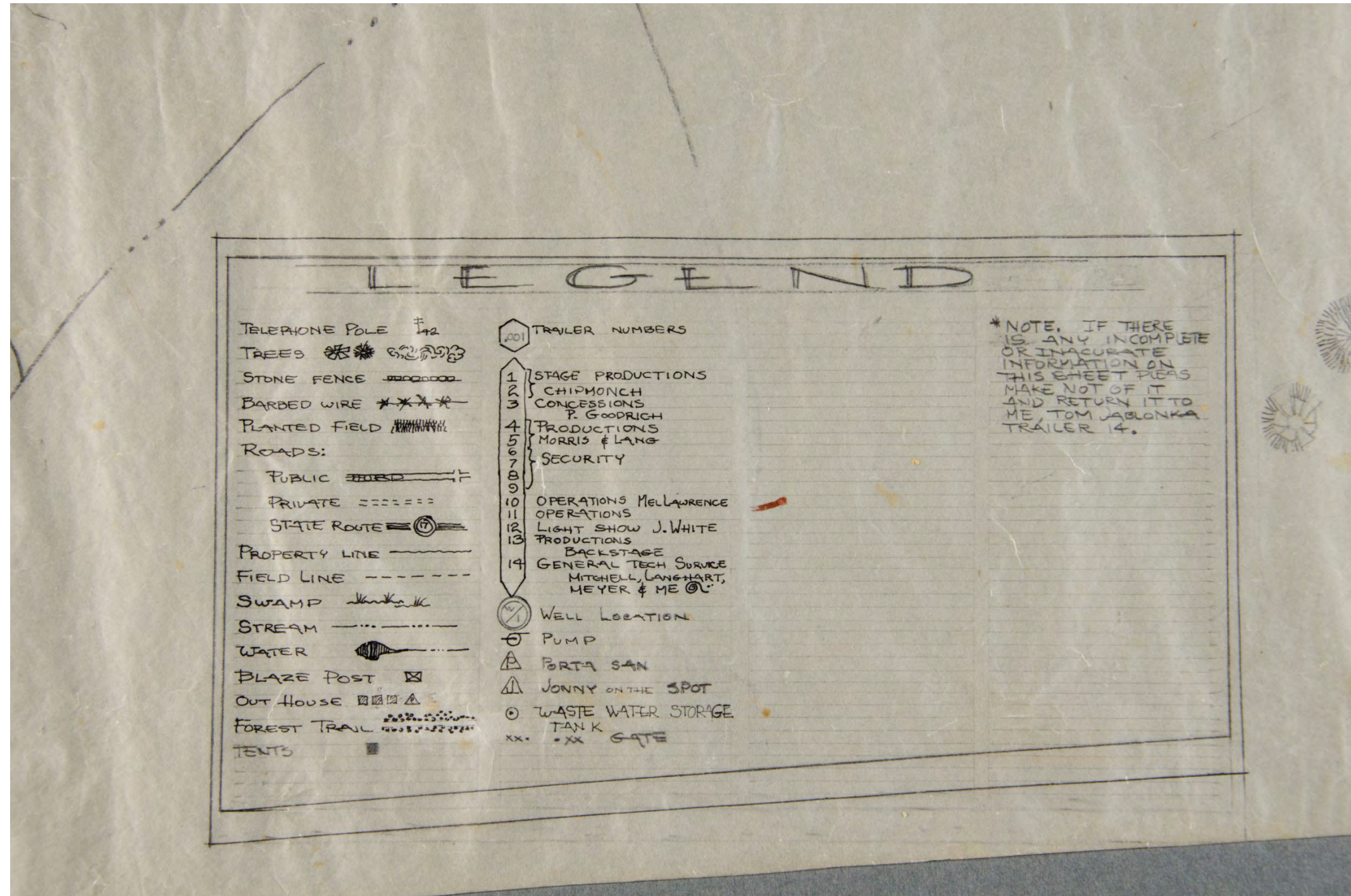
Overall Site Plan

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National Park Service

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Woodstock Festival Site
Name of Property
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Site plan key

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Performers' Area, top, and Stage, bottom

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Detail, Stage Area

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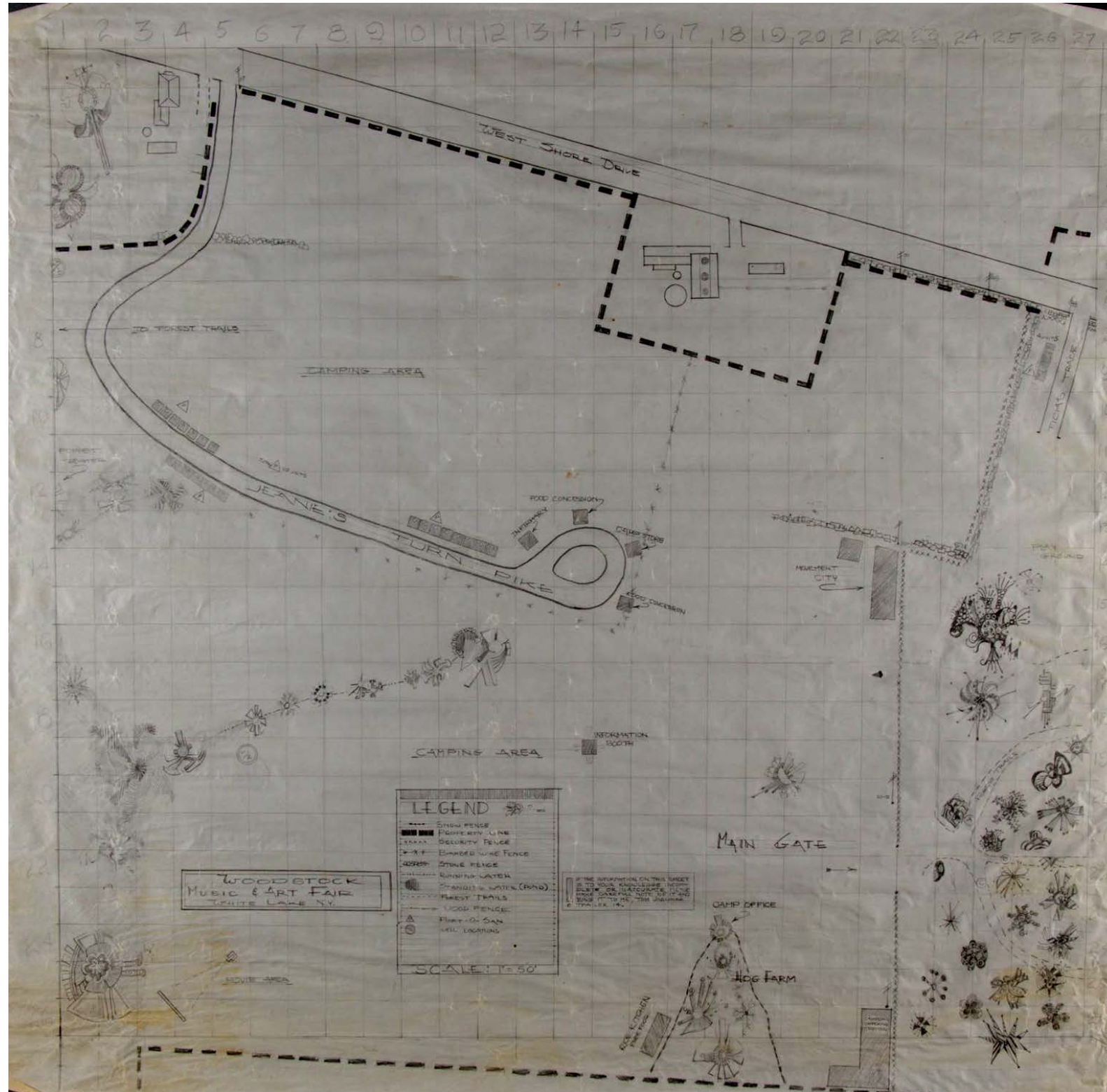
Plan for Bindy Woods (Note: paths, main entrance on the left, Hog Farm in the lower left corner; small squares indicated booths for exhibitors [Ingrid Street is Hurd Road])

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Plan for Hog Farm and Main Gate: Hog Farm is at bottom, center; main gate is just above it; Bindy Woods to the right. Joanne's Turnpike was constructed to provide access to the main entrance. Barn excluded by dotted line was one of Yasgur's barns, not included in the lease or the nomination

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Main Concert Field – looking southeast, 1969 (left) and today (right). Note tree line and farm road separating Gabriel Farm on the east (left), stage location on the lower left corner, farm road curving across upper right (in historic view is indicated by a dark line) and extent of the open field (indicated by the forest growth at the far south end of the site). On the 1969 photo note locations of the Food for Love concessions (indicated by tents at the south end of site). On the current photo, the museum can't be seen but is located behind the red trees. Hurd Road is just out of site on the west (right) side of the photos. Size, pitch, and enclosure of the field remain the same as in 1969.

Numbers indicate locations of non-contributing resources





Σ = 287.33 Acres

1:8,000
1 inch = 660 feet

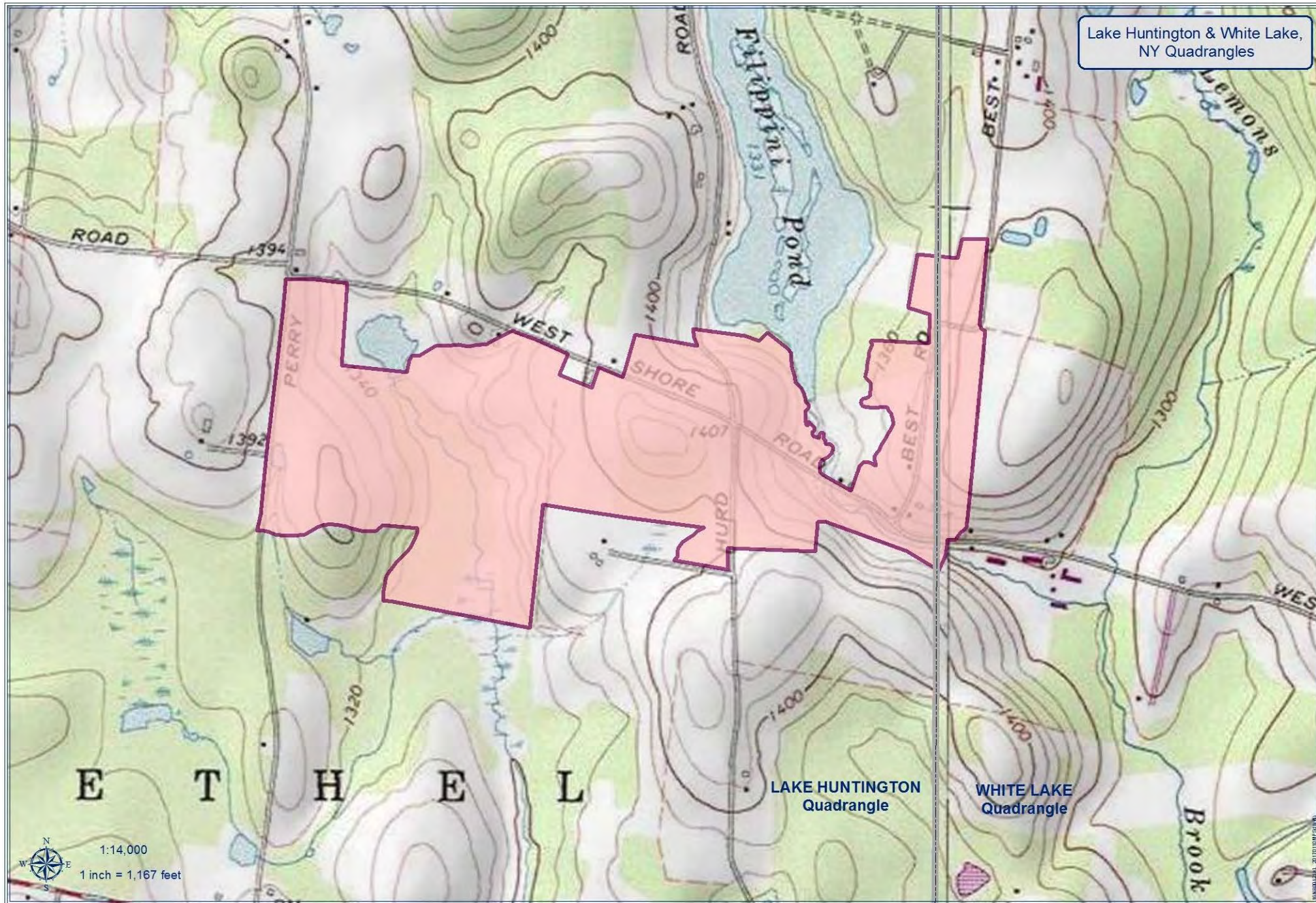
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Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 255 510 1,020 1,530 Feet

 National Register Boundary

 NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

WOODSTOCK, 2010 (TEMPORARY)



Lake Huntington & White Lake, NY Quadrangles

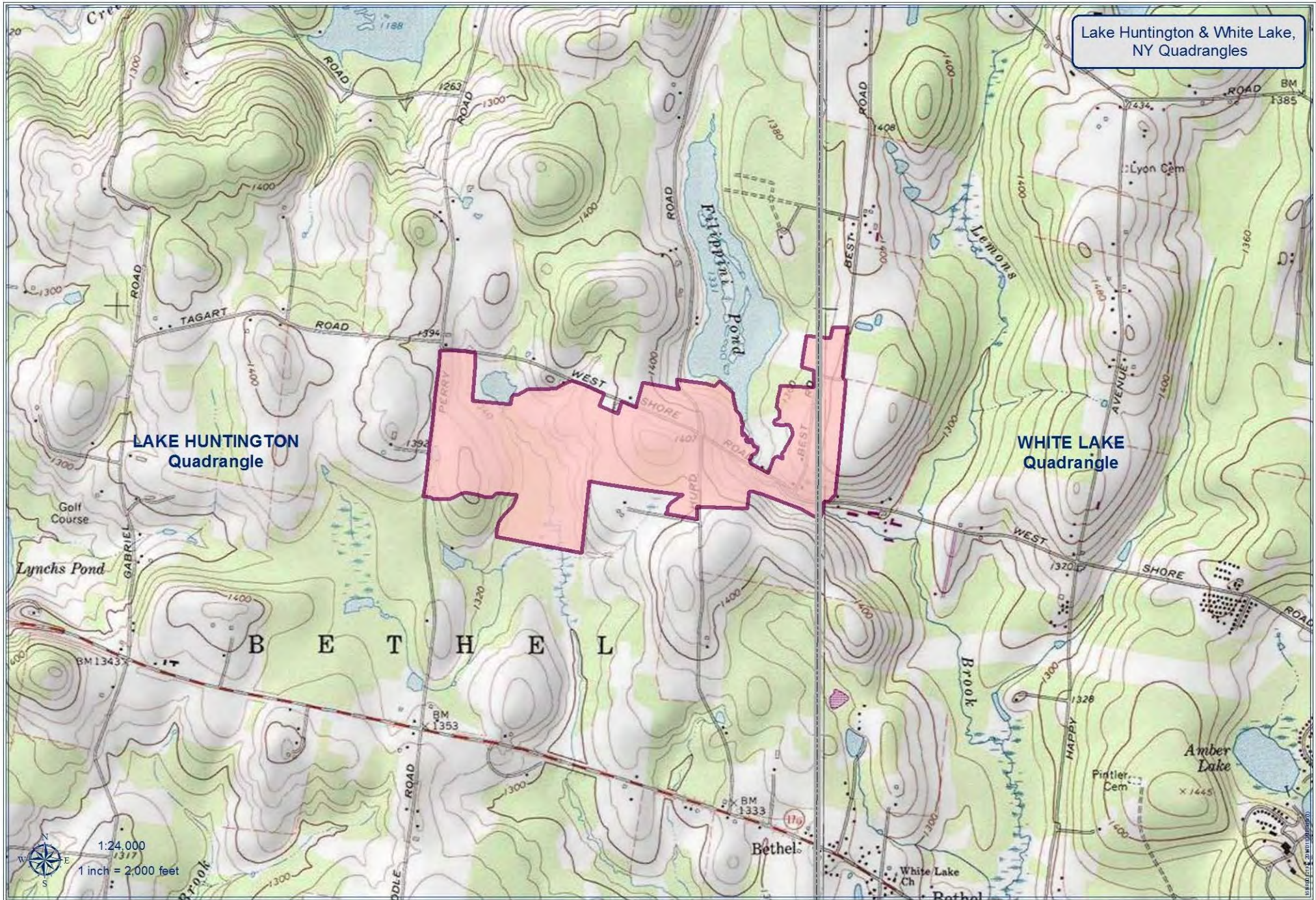
1:14,000
1 inch = 1,167 feet

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



 National Register Boundary
 Quad. Index

 NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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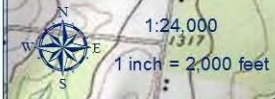


Lake Huntington & White Lake, NY Quadrangles

LAKE HUNTINGTON Quadrangle

WHITE LAKE Quadrangle

B E T H E L



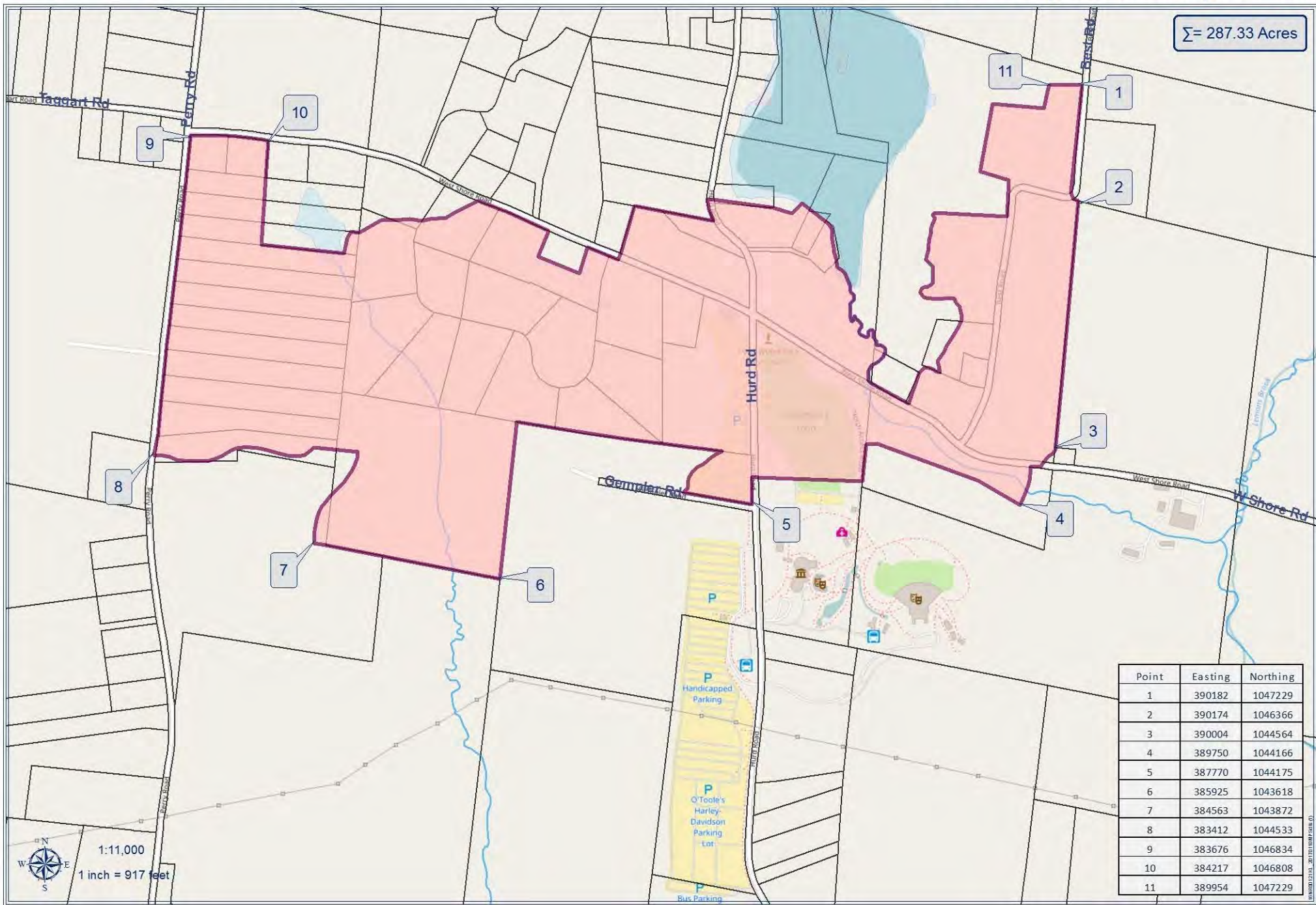
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 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter



 National Register Boundary
 Quad. Index

 NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY
 Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
 Division for Historic Preservation

Σ = 287.33 Acres

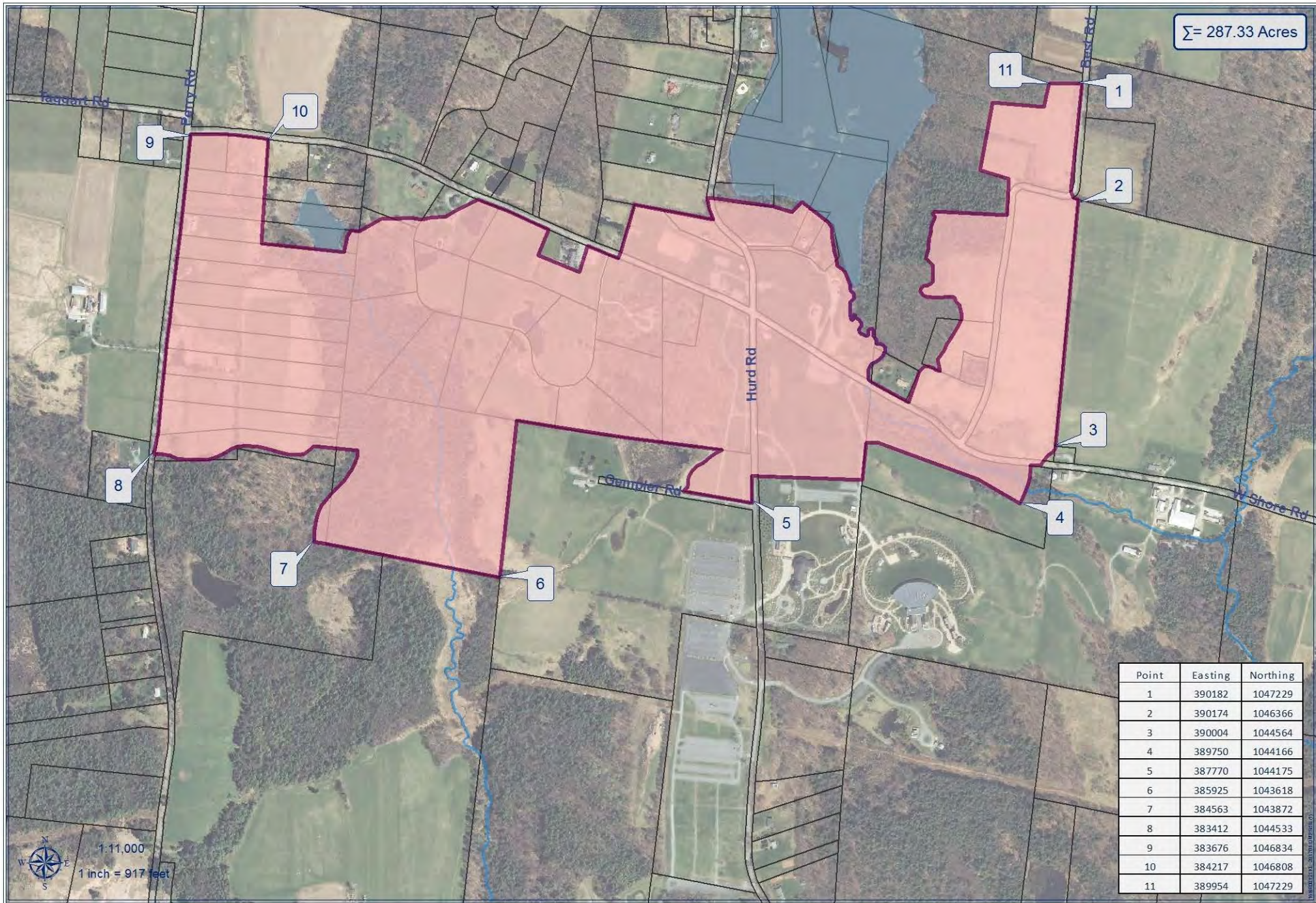


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National Register Boundary

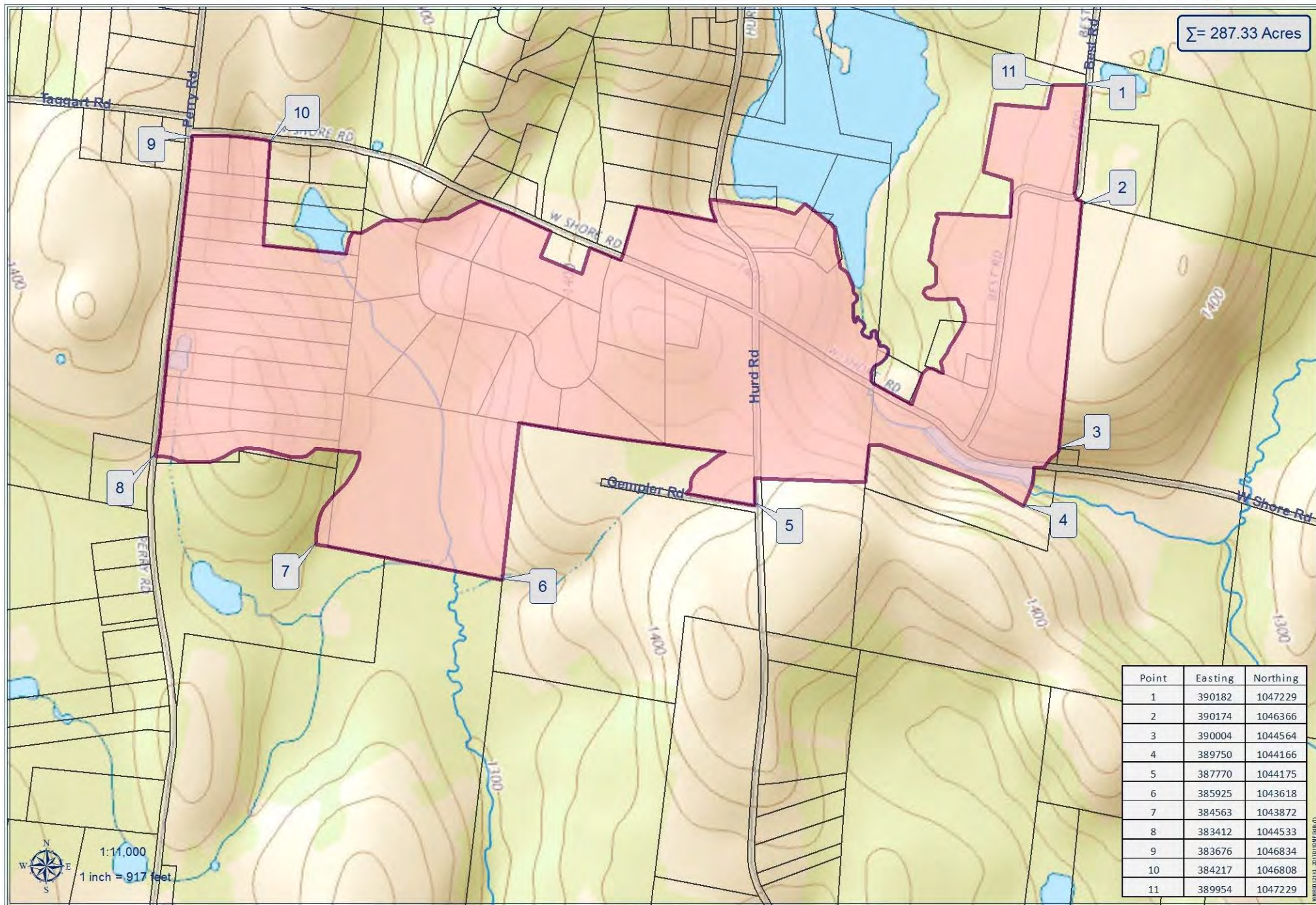
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
 Division for Historic Preservation



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
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 Units: Meter



 National Register Boundary



Σ = 287.33 Acres

Point	Easting	Northing
1	390182	1047229
2	390174	1046366
3	390004	1044564
4	389750	1044166
5	387770	1044175
6	385925	1043618
7	384563	1043872
8	383412	1044533
9	383676	1046834
10	384217	1046808
11	389954	1047229

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter



National Register Boundary

















STOP



































THIS IS THE ORIGINAL SITE
OF THE
WINDSOR TIGER
CLUBHOUSE. THE ORIGINAL
CLUBHOUSE WAS BUILT IN
1928 AND WAS THE FIRST
CLUBHOUSE TO BE BUILT
ON THE COURSE.



Sunlight
Harvested
Here

A vertical banner with a yellow background, featuring a black silhouette of a sun with rays and three wheat stalks below it.