

BC Rangers 2025 Director's Report

Director's Introduction

2025 has been an important year for BC Rangers. With a big boost of volunteers at Otherworld, we have eclipsed our previous peak for total Rangers from 2019. I take this as a hopeful sign that we have had some success at building back our volunteer base from the challenges experienced in the first few years of the pandemic. With no summer events happening in 2020 and 2021, we unexpectedly launched into 2022 with a need to build a brand-new online training experience while trying to summon new and returning Rangers for Otherworld that summer, and for Burn in the Forest that fall. Since then we've been growing and adapting as best we can to changing circumstances, and 2025 feels like we've finally hit a steady rhythm again.

BC Rangers does not exist without its members and volunteers. Everyone who came to training, walked a shift, helped as an actor, or a trainer, or as Khaki, or as Ranger Lead, or on the Ranger Council, or volunteered in one of the myriad other roles that exist - you have all made BC Rangers what it is, and helped us collectively serve our regional Burner community. While I hope to highlight noteworthy contributions of many of you over these past years, I will undoubtedly miss a few names in the process. **For all of you who have volunteered or supported us in some capacity - thank you.**

2025 marks my fifth *active* year as Director, or my seventh year including 2020 & 2021. When I first volunteered as a regional ranger in 2011 as a way to participate in the local Burner scene - solely because I was already comfortable using a radio - I had no idea that it would become a core part of my personal connection to the community, now spanning 15 years and counting.

This year also marks my final year wearing the Director's hat for BC Rangers. For the continued growth and well-being of the organization, it's time to pass stewardship of BC Rangers to the Ranger Council as a collective. I'll remain involved in 2026, contributing to select side projects and facilitating one or two online training sessions, but not in the same leadership capacity I've held to date.

I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to serve you these past years, and look forward to witnessing BC Rangers' continued impact on our regional events and in our community.

Rangers Background

Rangers 101

Regional Ranger organizations such as BC Rangers & Northwest Rangers are volunteer groups within the regional Burning Man communities, and are modelled after the Black Rock Rangers. Rangers are participants dedicated to preserving the safety, welfare, and quality of experience of the Burning Man community. We volunteer some of our time as non-confrontational peer

mediators, encouraging and facilitating communication. We promote awareness of potential hazards, and carry radios to quickly relay information in case of emergency. We are not security guards, babysitters, nor fun-police, we are simply available to the community, and only assist when needed.

BC Rangers History

BC Rangers (BCR) was formed in 2014 by members of the Vancouver & Victoria regional Burning Man community, to support our regional events, and are supported by the Greater Vancouver Interactive Arts Society and Kindle Arts respectively. As our events grow, so too does the need for rangers. Our mission is to make training more readily available, and to draw together a network of Black Rock and Regional Rangers to support our shared communities and local events. BCR maintains a year-round roster of capable rangers, facilitates regional training, shift scheduling, and communication with ranger volunteers.

After the 2018 event season, the founding Director, Ranger Kazmira, chose to step back and take a well-deserved break from BC Rangers. At the end of 2018, Ranger Bzkrk stepped in to support the organization as Interim Director. As 2019 unfolded and the role naturally evolved, it became clear that BC Rangers would benefit from broader leadership and shared support. In response, Bzkrk formed the BC Rangers Council in late 2019, marking an important step in the organization's growth.

BC Rangers Leadership

Ranger Council

BC Rangers had grown to the point where it was a *lot* for one person to manage: coordinating training, recruiting Ranger Leads, liaising with Kindle and GVIAS, answering emails, setting policies, handling disciplinary situations, and general herding of cats. While working with Kazmira and PolkaDot (who helped facilitate the transition), it became clear that it was no longer a 1-person job.

The first BC Rangers Council (aka the Ranger Council) was created with a group of experienced Rangers, covering both Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, that I knew and trusted from years of rangersing together. The goal was that the Director would be the organization's figurehead and chair the Council, but that we would operate by consensus where possible.

The intent of the Ranger Council was to be a body of experienced Rangers who would manage the year-round operations of BC Rangers, collectively sharing the responsibility to:

- facilitate training and training resources with our network of trainers
- identify applicants for dirt ranger, khaki, and ranger lead roles, collaborating with production teams and volunteer committees as needed
- handle any rangersing-related issues that arise inside and outside of events

- procure & manage Ranger assets (training radios, Ranger shirts and hoodies, lanyards, laminates)
- maintain the social capital and human resources of our regional Ranger community

The role of Director - in addition to being a member of the Ranger Council - has been to:

- liaise with Kindle Arts and GVIAS
- answer inbound inquiries
- manage funds (which could be handled by a dedicated Treasurer)
- be the public figurehead of BC Rangers
- be the backstop for driving the organization's goals forward
- be the final deciding vote, in cases where consensus could not be reached

The Council first met in September 2019 and began putting ambitious plans in place for the following year - only to have them dashed in March 2020. Two years later, we suddenly had events again to support as best we could, which was a challenge that year. In 2023, Flashpot took over the key role of Registrar, we resumed in-person training sessions, and things began to operate smoothly.

Without the Ranger Council, we would not have BC Rangers functioning as it does today. These folks have ensured that BC Rangers continues to exist, and that we can continue to support our community's events with rangers. Being part of the Ranger Council is *work*, but I always left our meetings feeling full of appreciation for these wonderful humans as they gifted their time and talents to build a community of Rangers. I don't have enough words to properly thank them for the time and energy that they have contributed to BCR, but I want to acknowledge how grateful I am for the thoughtfulness, empathy, and servant leadership that they have demonstrated.

To all of our Ranger Council members, past and present - **THANK YOU.**

2025 Ranger Council members:

- Bzkrk (Director) (2019) 🙌
- Barracuda (Quartermaster) (2019)
- Brodigity (2019)
- Flashpot (Registrar) (2019)
- Flourless Cake (2019)
- Pyka (2024)
- Yonder (2019)

Former Council members:

- PolkaDot
- Steelhead
- Wavelength

At the end of 2025, we reached out to a number of our members to identify potential candidates, and had a great response. Please join me in welcoming our new member additions to the BC Ranger Council for 2026!

- Epoch
- Mochi
- Picklejuice
- Pureheart
- Red-eye
- Spreadsheet
- Tidepod

Other Leadership Roles

Aside from Ranger Leads and Training (in the following sections), I would like to thank the following rangers who have also played important roles in keeping things running:

- Spreadsheet (Comms; 2023+)
- Orange (former Comms)
- Buffy (former Quartermaster)

Ranger Leads

Our Ranger Leads are responsible for coordinating and scheduling ranger volunteers for a particular event, managing Ranger HQ, and working closely with their event's Safety Producer & Production Team. They are assisted by Comms on the email front, by the Ranger Council for overall organization support, and by a cast of OODs (Officer of the Day) at each event. Without Ranger Leads, we don't have anyone to organize Rangers at our community events!

Thank you to the many Ranger Leads and Co-Leads that we've had in recent years:

2019:

- **Otherworld:** Wavelength, Orange, Misterman
- **Burn in the Forest:** Bzkrk & Flourless Cake
- **Dustcovery:** Brodigity
- **Happy Burnday:** Wrangler

2021:

- **Disco Octopus Lounge:** Wednesday & PolkaDot

2022:

- **Otherworld:** Orange
- **Burn in the Forest:** Steelhead

2023:

- **Otherworld:** Mama Bear
- **Burn in the Forest:** Gearshift & Flourless Cake

2024:

- **Otherworld:** Mama Bear
- **Burn in the Forest:** Epoch

2025:

- **Otherworld:** Tiger Lulu (fka Mama Bear) & Flashpot
- **What If:** Epoch

As you can see, we've been fortunate to have many returning Ranger Leads through the years. The depth of experience they bring has been a real gift to the community. At the same time, as we look toward 2026 and beyond, it's important that we bring new Leads in to help carry this work forward in a sustainable way. You don't need to have it all figured out - many of our strongest Leads started by simply being willing to learn and show up.

If you're curious about the role or would like to learn more about what's involved, please don't hesitate to reach out, we'd be happy to share more.

Training

Over the past few years, BCR has been adapting its training method to best meet the needs of our community and our trainees. In 2022, we moved from our only-in-person model (from 2019 and earlier) to an only-online one. Leveraging existing Ranger training videos from the Love Burn - courtesy of Ranger Jelly Doughnut - and supplementing with additional videos of our own has mostly replaced the in-person speaking content of our prior training format. Zoom has proven to be an invaluable tool as well, allowing us to do a rough version of the scenario practice that is a vitally important component of the training experience.

In 2023, we began adding in-person training sessions back to the calendar, and now do training in Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo as well as over Zoom. We've found that in-person scenario practice is far superior to Zoom, and we want to direct folks to those sessions wherever practical. However, not everyone is able to travel to an in-person training, and we do plan to continue offering one or two online training sessions each year.

For 2025, we updated our training registration process and refreshed our in-person training sessions. Rather than limiting online materials to virtual training(s) while keeping a lecture-style approach for in-person sessions, all Rangers are now asked to complete the online materials and a short quiz before registering for any training. This shift has created more consistent coverage of core material and allowed both Zoom-based and in-person training(s) to focus more heavily on real-world scenarios. It also strengthened commitment to the training process overall,

while significantly reducing the need for constant follow-up and reminder emails from our trainers.

2019: Vancouver x 3, Victoria x 2

2022: Zoom x 4

2023: Vancouver x 1, Victoria x 2, Nanaimo x 1, Zoom x 3

2024: Vancouver x 1, Victoria x 1, Nanaimo x 1, Zoom x 4

2025: Vancouver x 1, Victoria x 1, Nanaimo x 2, Zoom x 2

We've also had occasional Khaki training sessions and discussions for folks interested or new to the role to learn more about what it entails. Black Rock Rangers often offers an annual BRR training in Vancouver as well.

Two years of training disruptions during the pandemic, followed by a necessary shift to Zoom-only training in 2022, interrupted BC Rangers' usual rhythm of bringing on new trainers and mentoring them into training-lead roles through in-person sessions. It also took time to refine the balance required for effective Zoom training(s) - particularly the planning and flow of participants through breakout scenarios.

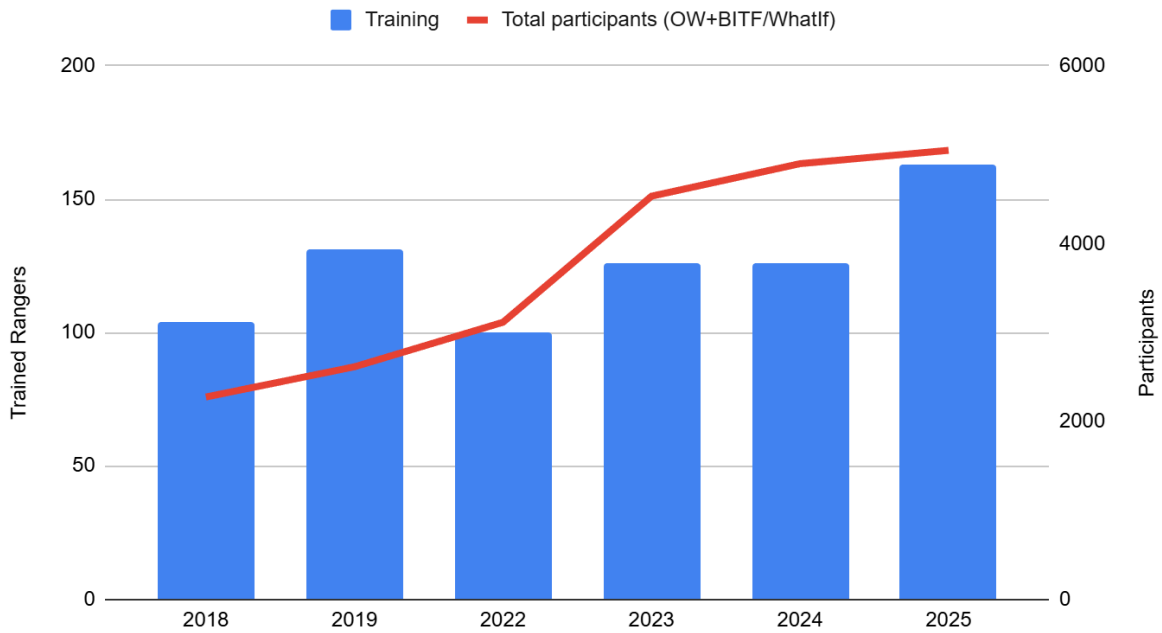
As a result, we're now looking to welcome additional trainers into both in-person and online training. Support is needed across coordination and planning, as well as facilitating discussion and scenario practice. Potential trainers won't be stepping into this alone as our experienced and generous trainers are ready to show you the ropes and mentor you in the role.

Speaking of our talented trainers... while I'm bound to miss someone as I'm trying to remember five seasons of training all the way back to 2019, thank you very much to everyone who has helped lead training: Barracuda, Brodigity, Firefly, Flashpot, Flourless Cake, Gearshift, Jedifreckles, Kazmira, McSavage, Misterman, Orange, PolkaDot, Pureheart, Pyka, Rayven Time, Steelhead, Wavelength, and Yonder

Growth

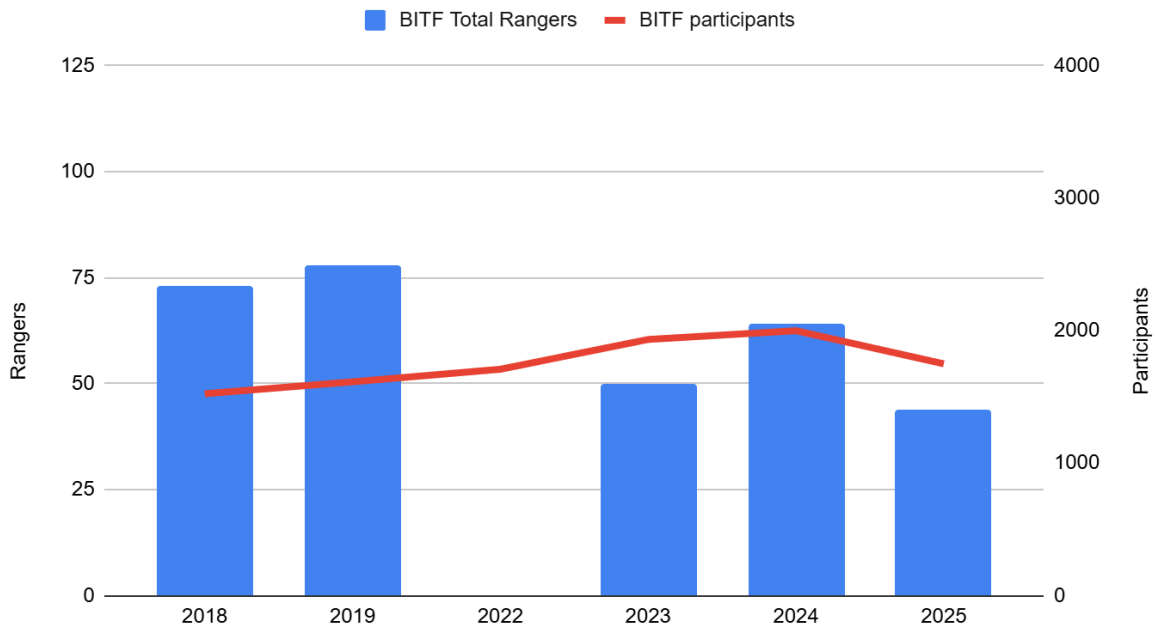
Thanks to the efforts of our Registrar (Flashpot) to organize years worth of training and volunteer data, it was no longer necessary to dig through a dozen spreadsheets and schedules to gather this data.

Trained Rangers vs. Event Size



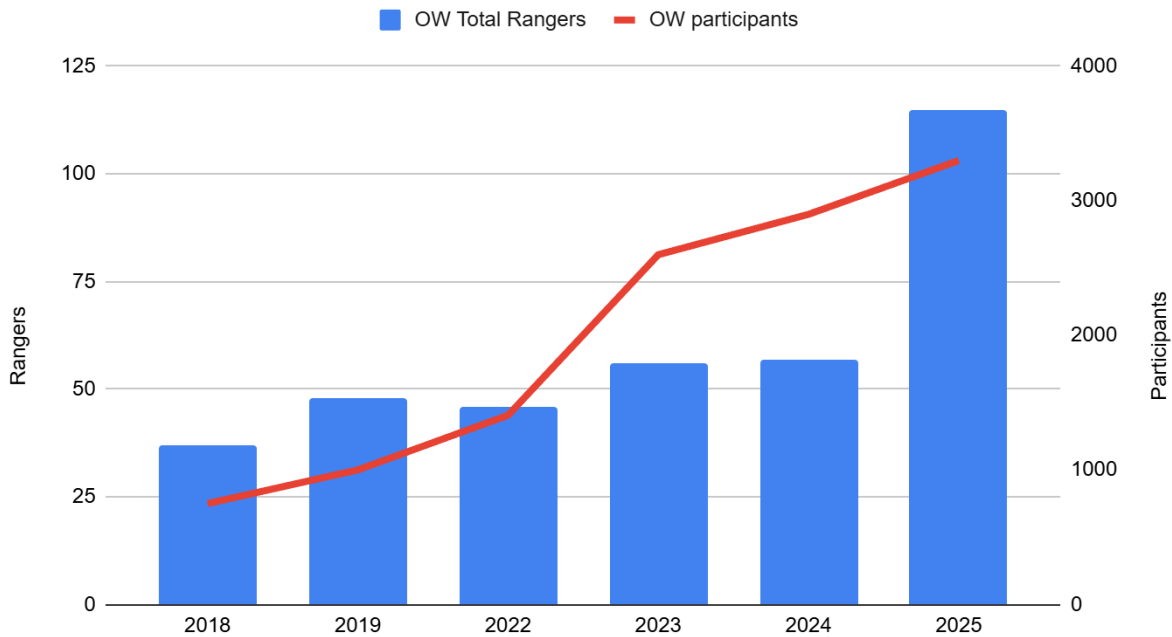
While we haven't yet returned to the trained-Rangers-to-attendance ratio we saw in 2019, 2025 marked the largest number of Rangers we've ever trained in a single season - by a significant margin. Otherworld's growing popularity, resulting in ticket scarcity, combined with the introduction of an up-front directed ticket policy, led to a significant increase in interest and boosted training and volunteering numbers of Rangers for the event.

BITF/WhatIf - Rangers vs. Event Size



Note: data missing from BITF 2022

Otherworld - Rangers vs. Event Size



Neither the Otherworld nor BITF charts quite tells the full story. When Otherworld and later BITF added an additional day to the length of the events, in turn we needed to add 33% more shifts (and Rangers) just to maintain the same level of coverage for the duration. As events increase in the total number of participants, we also need more Rangers to cover the event. When we have fewer Rangers available for an event, the Ranger Lead must prioritize the more critical evening & night shifts and will cancel the quieter dawn, morning and sometimes afternoon shifts if necessary. For a 96-hour event, we need at *least* 124 shifts for thorough coverage around the clock - 1 pair (plus khaki + OOD support) on at all times, ramping up to 2 or 3 pairs at more critical times so that we can cover more of the site.

There are some economies of scale as the event grows in size:

- BITF 2019 was ~72h long, 1614 participants, and had a Ranger-to-attendance rate of 4.8% (4.5% - 5.0% was the ideal amount)
- Otherworld 2025 was ~96h long, ~3300 participants, and had a Ranger-to-attendance rate of 3.5% (3.5% - 4.0% was sufficient)

While the number of Rangers at Otherworld lagged in recent years as the event grew rapidly in size, 2025 was a big turnaround, and this year had about 140 shifts filled. There was a huge cadre of new Rangers and we decided to use trios instead of pairs to group up more of our new volunteers with experienced Rangers. If many of those new Rangers return in 2026 in a similar quantity, I anticipate that we should have solid coverage throughout the event.

Our Ranger numbers at BITF/WhatIf have not rebounded to 2019 levels. While the event is now a full day longer than it was in 2019, unfortunately we were only able to staff about half as many shifts - less than half of what's needed to most effectively support the event.

The reasons for this aren't entirely clear. It may reflect a combination of factors, including location or venue, time of year, shifting demographics, or gaps in recruitment. What we do know is that declining numbers can create a compounding effect: fewer Rangers attending result in fewer shifts, reduced visibility, and over time, less interest in training and joining the community.

BC Rangers will not survive on passive support alone. It requires people who are willing to actively volunteer and help carry the work forward.

Financial Report

Although BC Rangers is not officially an independent legal entity (such as a non-profit society), financial transparency is important. We are very grateful to Kindle and GVIAS for their financial support, without which we would not be able to operate.

Our annual expenses are summarized below, in several categories (with examples):

- supplies - shirts, lanyards, laminate & printing supplies, training radios, swag
- training - venue rental, drinks & snacks, trainer travel
 - in some years we were able to obtain training venues for cheap (or free), and were also able to find enough local trainers that we didn't incur trainer travel costs
- operations - web hosting, domain renewal, software services, leadership summits in some years
- events - HQ supplies, snacks
 - these are typically expensed by the Ranger Lead directly to the event's treasurer for reimbursement instead of BC Rangers, so they may not be included below

Category	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Supplies	-\$1,080.12	-\$1,604.62	-\$1,807.73	-\$1,650.62	-\$1,829.26	-\$7,972.35
Training	-\$661.28	\$0.00	-\$25.47	\$0.00	-\$454.16	-\$1,140.91
Operations	-\$201.66	-\$699.12	-\$718.93	-\$406.82	-\$1,154.65	-\$3,181.19
Events	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$160.44	\$0.00	\$0.00	-\$160.44
GVIAS	\$1,563.00	\$1,492.26	\$1,586.42	\$758.09	\$1,760.63	\$7,160.40
Kindle	\$931.42	\$566.81	\$578.82	\$842.68	\$2,499.26	\$5,418.99
	\$551.36	-\$244.67	-\$547.33	-\$456.67	\$821.82	\$124.50

Note: 2020 & 2021 have been intentionally omitted; operating costs from those years were rolled into 2022.

There are a few outliers to call out:

- training: 2019 and 2025 were higher due to venue rental & trainer travel
- operations:
 - 2022 rolled in domain & web hosting expenses from 2020 & 2021 as well
 - 2023 & 2025 were higher due to venue rental for leadership summits
 - starting in 2024 we began using Airtable as our Registrar records system
- higher Kindle Arts contributions in 2025 were driven by a substantial influx of new Rangers to Otherworld (more shirts & lanyard distributed), as well as better balancing our operating expenditures between Kindle and our annual grant from GVIAS

One challenge is our need to manage inventory in advance of our annual events. For Ranger t-shirts, we're often ordering \$1000+ of inventory to cover us for multiple years as we distribute shirts to new Rangers. For our glow lanyards, for the customization and quality that we need, and due to minimum quantities in the production process, we're doing the same in order to procure a 3-4 year supply. These expenditures have typically been carried by the Director, with reimbursement happening as inventory is used, potentially years later.

Having caught up on our budget this year, we now have a clearer picture of our annualized expenditures and aim to maintain this balance going forward.

Closing Remarks

Former BC Rangers Director Kazmira wrote in her 2017 report, "***If we are to continue sustainably, we need our two-, three-, and four-year Rangers to join our ranger leadership as Trainers, Mentors, Khakis, and Leads.***" This remains just as true today. The long-term existence of BC Rangers depends on newer members stepping into roles of increasing responsibility - both to ensure continuity of service and to prevent overextending the experienced Rangers who have been doing this work for years.

As event attendance continues to grow, so does the need for more Rangers to help cover the grounds effectively. If you have friends who you think would make good Rangers, please encourage them to sign up! Come to training. Walk a dirt shift. And if you've done it before, you already know that it's far less daunting in practice than it might sound.

While Otherworld continues to see strong turnout, What If sorely needs both new and returning Rangers to volunteer next year. If you haven't rangered in a year or two, consider making 2026 your year to return for a shift.

Serving as Director of BC Rangers has been an opportunity to challenge myself and grow in many ways, to learn and practice skills that have helped me personally and professionally, and to give back and support our community of Rangers and our local Burner communities. I'll see you out in the dust - or the mud, or the forest!

- Ranger Bzkrk