

Hello,

This is about the 1st Big Sky Country Harvest Festival on September 28-30 outside of Hot Springs, Montana. There have been a number of name changes along the way. For a short time it had the long title of Big Sky Country Grassroots Producers' Jamboree.

STATE-WIDE FARMERS' MARKET

From the steppes of Central Asia to Africa to old Europe to the Andean Highlands almost all towns of any size had a weekly market where farmers, fishers and craftspeople brought their wares to barter and sell to each other and the local populace. At longer intervals, larger regional markets were held. Harvest festivals were usually among the largest and most festive of the year's markets. In some parts of the world this system of public markets is still alive and well. In the USA we are re-establishing these markets at various scales. The huge phenomenon of farmers' markets are our new town-scale markets. Consider the Big Sky Country Harvest Festival as the larger, regional farmers' market for Montana. Come and celebrate the harvest! Bring your goodies to sell and show off. Meet producers from other parts of Montana. Members of AERO (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) and MOA (Montana Organic Association) are especially invited as well as farmers in general.

WORK PARTY AT THE SITE

Saturday and Sunday

September 22-23. 10:00 am to 6 pm.

Bring tools and materials.

We will be marking out the barter lanes, access roads, parking and camping areas.

Making signs, putting up structures, filling in holes and other needed work.

CAN YOU LOAN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIES?

Wood stoves

Deep cycle batteries/inverter set ups.

Structures

5-gallon buckets

Propane cooking stove

Additional kitchen gear for the workers' kitchen.

Signboard material

Tipi poles

Hand-held CB radios

STRUCTURES

Can you donate a spare pop-up booth, tarp canopy, tipi or yurt? We could use a few more structures. If yes, can you bring it or would it need to be picked up?

COME EARLY TO HELP SET UP

There is always a lot of prep work going into a gathering. We don't know how many are going to show up but we'd like to be prepared in case there is a good turnout.

PEOPLE WHO COME EARLY TO HELP GET FIRST CHOICE OF VENDING AND CAMPING SPOTS. Vendor spaces on the circle and camping sites are available on a first-come first-served basis. So anyone who comes early to help can pick out a spot early on in the event. This only applies to people who help out. Unless you plan on working don't show up till after 12:00 noon Thursday when the gates open.

FIRE SITUATION

Parts of Montana have just recorded their driest year on record. There was just a forest fire in the Hot Springs area which burned 100,000 acres, Montana's largest fire in recorded history. The area is in a level two fire alert. Unless a lot of rain falls just before the event, no outside fires will be permitted including burn barrels.

CAN YOU BRING A WOOD STOVE? Needs to have stovepipe and a spark-arrester cap. These can be incorporated into private booths or public hospitality areas. If you can bring a stove but can't fit firewood in your load, there will be firewood for sale on site for private use. We will provide firewood for the hospitality stoves. Depending on the size of the event we envision 3 to 5 hospitality areas each with a wood stove for people to warm themselves by. Bales of straw to sit on and some extra space to play music and dance.

WATER

Bring your own potable water. Drinking, cooking, cleaning. We will have to bring in drinking water to the site so the more self-reliant you can be the less we have to haul.

STRAW/MULCH

The Okanogan Family Faire buys in enough straw to cover all the pedestrian walkways with straw plus they sell bales. For this first year the Harvest Festival plans to experiment with a bit of straw and chip mulch, but only part of the circle. We may have straw bales for sale for vendors to cover the floors of their booth or for rustic seating.

EDUCATION PAVILION

We are still looking for people to give talks or classes. You can let us know ahead of time (friendsofthetrees@yahoo.com) or schedule at the festival. The pavilion may double as a music space in the evening.

SOME BACKGROUND

A new barter fair is about to be born. The Big Sky Country Harvest Festival will be held September 28-30, 2007 outside of Hot Spring, Montana. The event will be along the lines of a state-wide farmers market and producers exposition. Grassroots producers of all sorts of goods are invited to barter and sell their wares. This event is modeled on barter fairs and the Maine Common Ground Country Fair. The barter fairs began in the 1970s. The largest and most famous is the Okanogan Family Faire with 10,000 attendees and a million-dollar economy. The Maine Common Ground Fair also started in the 1970s. It now attracts 50,000 to its annual event which includes a state-wide farmers market, a craft fair, lots of education and participation by most of the non-profit organizations in the state. It is organized by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and is the largest organic agriculture event in the US.

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR SPIFFY NEW POSTER?

You can view it at www.friendsofthetrees.net

NEW CHANGE TO OUR WORKER BOOTH FEE.

In our previous publicity a worker booth fee was \$25 (includes one admission) and a 4-hour work shift. We have reduced it to a 3-hour work shift. People can do work trade for admissions for the same rate. 3 hours for a \$25 reduction.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THIS EXCITING NEW GATHERING

How many will attend the 1st Big Sky Country Harvest Festival? No one knows. Come and find out! Be in on the ground floor. Help us spread the word about this exciting new gathering.

CONTACT INFO

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