

# Goose Lake

Fifth Estate Collective

1970

## Peace, love...

Dick Songer looked at us and said, "When I was a kid, we didn't have anywhere to go, so I've always wanted to build a place where everyone could come. This is my 20-year dream come true."

Songer is the 35-year-old owner-developer of this \$1,000,000 dream, Goose Lake Park, which is to be the site of the only major rock festival of the summer to be held in Michigan—on August 7, 8 and 9.

With the Cincinnati and New Orleans fiascos still ringing in our ears, four of us from the Fifth Estate staff trucked on out to a press conference last week at the Park to make certain Songer's dream would not turn out to be another nightmare for the people.

Arriving in a pessimistic mood in the midst of a downpour, we slogged through the mud to the air-conditioned greyhound bus which was waiting to take us on a guided tour of the Park. We sat in the bus, drinking pop and small-talking with the promo people, when suddenly Dick Songer jumped aboard and we began to roll.

Described in his own press release as a "flaming red-headed businessman," Songer looks more like a country-and-western entertainer. He oozes sincerity from his captivating freckles to his sparkling white smile.

As the bus drove on and Songer began to reel off the facts, we became more convinced that he was not the usual rip-off artist, determined to make a fast million and split. Songer's plan is to make Goose Lake into a permanent recreation area, open summer and winter, and he seems determined to make the place as groovy as possible to draw in the people and keep them coming back for more.

Songer (who has been in the construction business for 20 years) has built a permanent 30-acre grass bowl which will easily accommodate 60,000 people. The acts, which include Jethro Tull, Mountain, Ten Years After and many more, will perform on a revolving stage which will allow one act to set up while another is performing. The music will run from 2 p.m. til midnight on August 7, 8 and 9. The \$50,000 sound system has 35-foot speaker towers that Songer says "will rattle your ass" anywhere within the huge grassy bowl.

The price of admission (\$15 for the weekend) includes free use of all park facilities, such as camping areas, a lake (with a 1,000 foot sandy beach front), paved and lighted parking areas (for 15,000 cars plus), cycle scrambling grounds, and even a giant slide that gets you going 40 mph and dumps you in a "Moon Landing."

We got out of the bus to personally inspect one of the 14 rest rooms, which turned out to be a permanent structure that contained plenty of toilet facilities, showers and sinks.

Concession stands and a general store where food and other necessities can be purchased have also been built. Songer assured us prices would be "reasonable" as the park has waived all concession fees to keep the prices low (hot dogs 20 cents, pop and ice cream 10 cents). A free kitchen is being provided by

Open City as well as one by the Park itself, and a complete staff of doctors will be available at all times to provide medical assistance.

Songer told us that no police would be allowed inside the park, which will have its own private security force of young people who will be clearly identifiable by the Goose Lake teeshirts they will be wearing. (But teeshirts or not, a pig is a pig if he acts like one, so if any hassles come down, remember there will be 60,000 brothers and sisters on your side.)

No cars will be allowed outside the designated parking lots—camping grounds are in a separate area. Those with campers and trailers will have to sleep in the parking lots. People should come well-prepared to live outside for three days and two nights. A 20 x 20 foot sheet of waterproof plastic will be given to everyone when they enter the gates to help in case of rain, and free firewood will be provided if the weather should turn cold.

Songer and his crew had only been working on the place for eight weeks when we were there and already the Park seemed very groovy. If everything succeeds as planned, Goose Lake should be a fantastic recreation spot, which will be open all year for camping and even winter sports, as well as occasional festivals like the one this August.

We came away from the press conference with mixed feelings. The existence of Goose Lake Park and its accessibility to the people presents many contradictions. Dick Songer seemed like a pretty honest businessman—an enlightened capitalist out to make a million in the most groovy, honest manner he could think of. Still, he and all the other investors, promoters and entertainers continue to make money off of us by allowing us to buy back what rightfully belongs to all the people—our music, our lakes, our parks.

## ... and electric barbed wire

Goose Lake promises to be a heavy experience, just short of Woodstock. But something is bugging me. So Goose Lake is a good thing, right? What the fuck is the electrified barbed wire for? Is it to keep the people out or in?

Actually, there's a whole set of hassles: the price of the tickets, the way Goose Lake is promoted and the way it will be patrolled.

Fifteen dollars is more than a lot of kids in Detroit can afford. The reason they can't afford it is that there aren't many summer jobs available in the Motor City this year. That has to do with the war, the inflation it caused, and Nixon's austerity program to curb inflation, which has sent the stock market floundering and boosted unemployment.

The guy who's behind Goose Lake, Dick Songer, isn't to blame for that. He's a pleasant, red-haired, freckled guy with a million dollars to spend on his "twenty-year dream come true," namely, building a giant park. The park will be used, not only for rock festivals, but also for winter sports and family camping.

That's nice. It's capitalism, but it isn't a napalm factory. Of course, neither Mike Quatro nor Russ Gibbs (who is employed as a coordinator of the Goose Lake Festival) were into napalm either. They just ripped off youth culture. And they told us that the only way we'd be able to enjoy our own culture was by paying their prices. That "somebody had to put up the money, take the risk, and deserves the profit."

So we paid their prices, because they monopolized the means for putting on rock shows.

And the way they got people to come to their shows was by laying complementary tickets on people who could influence kids around the city. (Uncle Russ, of course, had his show on KNR.) Now, Dick Songer has offered the Fifth Estate 30 complementary tickets.

What are we supposed to do with them? What we're going to do, assuming we can get the tickets before Songer reads this, is to make them available to kids for \$5. The money we get will be set up as a small bail fund for kids who get busted attempting to crash at Goose Lake.

And they will be busted. The fences around this rock-culture concentration camp will be double-strand electrified barbed wire. The surrounding land is owned privately and Songer assures us that the people in

the area are uptight and will be looking to make trouble for freaks who walk on their land. Cars parked outside the park will be towed by the Jackson County Sheriff.

In addition, Songer will have men on horseback, in jeeps and in boats patrolling the perimeters of his park. Inside, he'll be keeping the peace with people wearing Goose Lake teeshirts.

That's the set. The only way you can legally get in is by buying the specially designed admission chips in advance. There will be no gate sales. Crashers will have to contend with a quasi-military tactical situation.

It's chickenshit to run a hard thing on Songer without talking about alternatives to the capitalist promotional setup. One thing we'd like to see done is the creation of a people's committee to coordinate cultural events. This sort of thing has been done in other parts of the country.

It would consist of a non-profit co-operative which would perform all the functions of present producers and yet would charge reasonable prices and channel any returns back into the community.

As for Goose Lake, all power to the brothers and sisters who intend to reclaim their culture by any means necessary. For those of you who will pay to stay high and happy for three days, remember the sisters and brothers back in the city who are unemployed or sweating in the factories. They're getting it together more all the time. One of these days there will be 60,000 people storming those fences at Goose Lake and everywhere else, taking for free what belongs to all the people.

Which side of the electric fence will you be on?



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