

The Washington Times

Largest gathering of Libertarians ‘in the world’ now underway in New Hampshire

Jennifer Harper

June 21, 2016

The 13th annual Porcupine Freedom Festival — affectionately known as “PorcFest” — is now underway in the woods of New Hampshire.

Organizers describe the five-day event as “the largest gathering of Libertarians in the world” — a heady mix of the Burning Man festival and a major political rally. The prickly porcupine is their emblem, “don’t tread on anyone” is the motto.

Bearing bedrolls and agenda, some 1,700 Libertarians have descended on a camping area about two hours north of Manchester, primed to participate in hundreds of political, cultural and social events that range from serious policy discussion to family events, bonfire building and a 1980s costume dance party.

“Lovers of liberty from all over the world are enjoying the company and beautiful weather here in northern New Hampshire. Many are talking about the presidential election, and there’s a lot of frustration with the two major party candidates. It’s just more motivation for all of us to offer a glimpse of how a peaceful, voluntary society might work,” said Matt Philips, president of the Free State Project, which organized PorcFest.

The feisty nonprofit is seeking to inspire “freedom movers” to make their homes in the Granite State and underscore a Libertarian lifestyle — and potentially form a solid third party voting bloc.

“The Free State Project is an effort to get 20,000 liberty lovers to move to New Hampshire and build a truly free society. More than 20,000 people have pledged to make the move, and nearly 2,000 have already moved,” the group noted in a recent public outreach.

PorcFest, meanwhile, has an organization presence as well. Americans for Prosperity, the CATO Institute, The Atlas Society, the Charles Koch Institute, Students for Liberty and others are represented at the event.

PorcFest’s lineup of speakers includes author and Fox News contributor Kristin Tate, Atlas Society founder David Kelley, George Mason University economist Christopher Koopman, Reason magazine editor-in-chief Matt Welch and several state lawmakers.