



REDUCE

REUSE

RECYCLE

RECOVER

RESIDUAL

WHAT IS ZERO WASTE?

Zero waste is a visionary goal and practice to guide people in emulating sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are resources for others to use. Zero waste means designing and managing products and processes to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. *Zero Waste Alliance*

ZERO WASTE: AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

Zero waste is an international movement of committed people and best practices for creating positive change, waste reduction, economic development opportunities and resilience by working towards the elimination of waste in all areas of our individual and collective lives. **Getting to zero waste is a goal and a process that poses a fundamental challenge to our current state of functioning that involves individuals, communities, businesses, and local, provincial and federal governments.** The Sunshine Coast is lucky to have several businesses, institutions, community groups, event planners and households who are focusing their efforts on getting to zero waste.

WHY IS ZERO WASTE IMPORTANT?



- Eliminates inefficiencies that can save you money!
- Helps to preserve the environment and its resources for future generations.
- It reduces the need for landfills and other disposal options.

According to the solid waste management plan, the waste diversion target is 60%, which will result in 3,450 tonnes less being landfilled. The average person on the coast still disposes approximately 440 kg of waste per year into local landfills—over 40% of which is likely to be made up of compostable organic material and recyclable paper, cardboard, metal, plastic and glass.

WE ENVISION



WHAT IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

A zero waste event is one that is planned and organized to avoid generating any waste that will be sent to landfill. A zero waste event is also one that minimizes the amount of 'one-time-use stuff' that is required to run the event, bottled water and paper cups are recyclable but, refillable bottles or glass wear are the best choice!

Advance planning is key in making waste-reduction efforts successful for your event. Taking steps to limit waste in the first place will go a long way towards reducing overall event costs, litter and the negative impacts that waste has on our environment. Several Sunshine Coast event and festival planners have taken the steps to make their events zero waste. Their wealth of experience is contained in this guide, making it very easy to take the next steps for your event.

If you are organizing an event, large or small this guide will show you how to host an event that will minimize waste and maximize reuse, composting and recycling.

AN EVENT PLANNER'S ZERO WASTE GUIDE

Reduce the amount of materials that require purchasing, hence reducing quantity of waste produced by your event. **Ask yourself:** Imagine making a choice about what your participants will drink out of, with this choice, can waste be further reduced?

Reuse as much as possible. Consider reusable items such as glasses, mugs, cutlery, plates, and signage from year to year. **Ask yourself:** With this choice, are reusable items an option?

Recycle all one-time-use materials on the Sunshine Coast. Choose these materials carefully. **Ask yourself:** With this choice, can these items be recycled?

Recover any part of the left over materials that are reusable or recyclable? **Ask yourself:** Is there any part of this material that can be recovered for reuse or recycling?

Residual left overs that cannot be reused or recycled must be disposed of, ensure it is properly disposed of at the landfill. **Ask yourself:** How much will go to landfill? Can this be avoided?

WHY HOLD A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

Achieving a successful waste management system at your event can provide a range of benefits:

Save money!

Reduce overall costs for waste management. The more waste you reduce; the more money you save!

Reduce. Reduce. Reduce.

Remember, if you don't buy it in the first place you won't have to dispose of it later, which reduces the impact of your event on the environment.

Walk, cycle, bus, carpool to reduce emissions.

Choose an accessible location and encourage alternative transportation to reduce emissions.

Attract Attention!

Provide more marketing and promotional opportunities for your event. Achieve recognition for being a zero waste event and supporting sustainable waste practices. Is solar or alternative power an option?

Engage & Impress your patrons.

Encourage your patrons to meet the challenge with a fun contest. At the same time you will be creating an environmental feel good factor.

The environmental aspects of sustainability are the conditions necessary to support us indefinitely. The Natural Step™ declares one of these conditions to be a decrease in waste production to a rate at which it can be naturally absorbed without damaging ecological systems.

- Powell River Sustainability Charter

It is estimated that each British Columbian, on average, disposes of over 600kg of waste each year. Waste has become such an everyday part of our lives, it's almost impossible to envision life without it.

HOW TO PLAN A ZERO WASTE EVENT

Planning a zero waste event is easy. The key is to plan ahead and keep it simple. The following are a few tips and suggestions for creating a zero waste event.

BEFORE THE EVENT

CHOOSE A VENUE

When choosing a venue find a location that allows for convenient use of alternative transportation; walking, cycling, carpooling, or bus. Also look for venues that offer a comprehensive recycling program to simplify some of the planning.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

Having an event that diverts waste from landfills is something of which you will be proud. It helps attract both patrons and sponsors so it is worth telling the world!

- **Press release:** Issue a press release and advertise your zero waste goal.
- **Endorsement:** Speak with elected officials and municipal employees to see what support is available.
- **Website:** Use online registration to reduce paper. Use the website and social media to advertise your zero waste goal.
- **Promotional items:** Free giveaways

should be sustainable, for example, organic clothing, BPA free water bottles.

- **Advertising:** Where paper must be used, minimize its use and use paper made with recycled content.
- **Marketing Materials:** Make attempts to reduce the amount of paper used when advertising, printing brochures, pamphlets, schedules, program highlights or tickets.
If some printing is necessary, try to use 100% post-consumer recycled paper.
- Don't forget **word of mouth** and the power of volunteers.

Promoting an eco-tourism event as Zero Waste is a great way to sustain our natural environment and encourage visitors to respect our region. The Leave No Trace program is a great place to get started.

- www.leavenotrace.ca



ENGAGE VENDORS

When booking vendors let them know right away that you are planning a zero waste event and what this means to them. Make sure that you:

- Specify in vendor contracts that they may only sell or use products that are recyclable, biodegradable or reusable.
- Provide a list of products acceptable for use at the event with the product supplier contact details.
- Consider providing a separate list of materials that are not acceptable and should not be brought into the event.
- Give vendors as much lead-time as possible.



ZERO WASTE SUCCESS STORY

The Powell River Fall Fair provides reusable mugs, plates and utensils for all patrons at their event. Volunteers staffed two central collection stations where dirty dishes were collected then transported to a dishwashing station.

Cleaned dishes were then re-circulated to the vendors' stations. This resulted in a significant decrease in disposable food containers and overall waste.



SMART PURCHASING

Your focus should be on reducing the amount of material brought to the event site. This is a key component of minimizing waste during the event:

- Purchase from local suppliers. **This reduces greenhouse gas emissions, supports local business and limits waste.**
- Check out green supply stores or contact the municipality for assistance in ordering these suppliers.
- Avoid non-recyclable goods. If you have a choice, choose the product that can be recycled (product as well as packaging).
- Use decorations and props that are made of reused or recycled material and can be reused or recycled after the event. Avoid using balloons if possible.
- Sell food and beverages at the event only in serving ware and packaging that can be reused, recycled or composted. Most paper and raw wood food ware are compostable.
- Purchase in bulk. Avoid individual packages for condiments, drinks etc.
- Use reusable containers and serving ware. For example, urns, pitchers, large bowls.
- Take some time to research what is recyclable on the Sunshine Coast.

OUR SURVIVAL DEMANDS NEW THINKING AND NEW ACTIONS.

Adopting a Zero Waste approach has the potential to create positive change which will affect future generations.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead



Purchasing over-packaged material goods leads to unnecessary waste production. In turn, the waste thus generated pollutes our soils, air and waters and increases our greenhouse gas emissions. To be a more sustainable community, we need to strive for zero waste.

EDUCATE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The more information you share with your staff and green team volunteers the more success you will see. You must focus on educating staff and green team volunteers about the importance of recycling and proper recycling procedures. Make sure each volunteer knows which materials will be recycled. These individuals will be able to direct event attendees to recycling stations.

Now that your staff and green team volunteers are educated you need to create a schedule for event day. Make sure that each person is assigned a duty that will assist in the success of zero waste efforts.

If you don't know where to start looking for volunteers contact Volunteer Powell River, "matching volunteers to organizations" for support at www.volunteerpowellriver.com.

WASTE MANAGEMENT SITE PLAN

Don't forget to include waste management on your site plan! When determining locations, try to ensure that your visitors don't have to search for bins. The more effort visitors have to go through to find a your disposal bins, the less they will be willing to follow the disposal instructions.

- Identify the location of food and beverage vendors and services that will require recyclable, compostable, or waste collection. Ensure proper receptacles are available inside and outside those areas.
- Bins should also be placed in food preparation areas, washrooms, event entry points and other high traffic areas (i.e. stage, sports field, courtyard etc...). Above all, bins should be accessible and conveniently located.
- Calculate the number and type of bins required. Make arrangements to ensure they are at the site and placed in the most effective locations, with adequate signage.

EVENT AND BIN SIGNAGE

This is so important to get right! Your signage must:

- Inform your patron of what a zero waste event is.
- Clarify which materials can be recycled and where to put them.
- Be easy to read and informs visitors of recycling procedures.
- Utilize photos or images and keep the message simple on signage so that attendees of all ages and backgrounds can understand.
- Educates patrons about what products are recyclable or biodegradable.
- Placed at eye-level where possible and on all accessible sides of the bins.
- Weatherproof, reusable, lightweight and portable.

ENGAGE YOUR PATRONS

Let your visitors have fun with making a difference. Encourage patrons to:

- Bring a reusable coffee/tea mug and water bottles. Although plastic water bottles are recyclable, the bottling, packaging and shipping of billions of

litres of bottled water leaves a large environmental burden worldwide.

- Walk, cycle, carpool or bus to your event. Create a buzz before the event with a simple contest.

DURING THE EVENT

MONITOR VENDORS

Connect with your vendors upon arrival to ensure they have met their obligations and are aware of how the bins work and where they are located.

LABEL YOUR BINS

Ensure that recycling bins are well marked to make it easy for people to understand what goes where.

- **Colour Coordinate:** Use different colours for each waste type.
- **Clear Wording:** Make them easy to read.
- **Placement:** Ensure they are positioned where people can see them easily.
- **Photos and Images:** Pictures of what you want to go in the bins is very effective.
- **Reusable:** Make them reusable and use them for your next event!

CLEARLY LABELED BINS

Each washroom had two garbage pails: one was labelled “garbage”; the other was labelled “paper towel”. Used paper towels were then thrown in with the compostable garbage.

The Festival of the Written Arts



AT CURRENT RATES OF POPULATION GROWTH AND WASTE DISPOSAL, LOCAL LANDFILLS ARE QUICKLY REACHING THEIR MAXIMUM CAPACITY.

Humans are the only species that create waste

MONITOR BINS

Designate and schedule your green team. Ensure that they are clearly identifiable to your patrons. Your green team will monitor the recycling station(s) and provide clarity to people with questions. They will also be key in helping reduce contamination and increase the amount of waste that is recycled overall.

RESTRICT USE OF CONVENTIONAL DISPOSAL BINS

Tape shut any existing garbage receptacles and have signs explaining where the recycling station(s) are located. This will help with recyclable items being dumped in the garbage and increases your success of a zero waste event.

ENGAGE WITH GUESTS

Signage is one of the most important factors in a successful zero waste event!

- Effective signage will encourage proper separation of the waste streams.
- Post clear and easy-to-read signs to educate visitors about proper disposal habits.
- Announce throughout the event that this is a zero waste event and how they can participate.
- Have fun! Everyone one loves a contest!

Composting organic waste represents perhaps the single-largest opportunity to reduce waste going to landfills on the coast.

The end of a festival is when many items are carelessly tossed into the garbage instead of being composted or recycled. Have monitors keep a close eye on vendors and patrons near the end of the event.

ZERO WASTE SUCCESS STORY

The BMO Sunshine Coast April Fool's Run has created a Green Team to ensure event success. Their Green Team volunteers will set up and manage recycling of waste at the finish line. Set up receptacles with signs and make sure people put items in the correct receptacle; keep them tidy. Work with refreshment and other finish line volunteers to get waste put into the correct places. Following the race, help with clean up and management of recyclables.

AFTER THE EVENT

MONITOR BINS DURING CLEANUP

It's easy to lose heart after a long event day. Ensure your green team volunteers are still monitoring your bins when patrons are leaving and vendors are tearing down. This will ensure the efforts made throughout the event are not lost during tear down.

- Have a plan for when and how the full bins will be dealt with after the event.
- Take photos!

DONATE UNUSED ITEMS

Donate what you can back to your community.

- Excess food to the local food bank.
- Unused materials to community organizations (e.g. schools, service clubs, youth programs, etc.)



ZERO WASTE SUCCESS STORY

The Lund Shellfish Festival has consistently generated less than half of one grocery store shopping bag of waste for the past two years. Containers were provided for recycling, composting and refundables with proper signage. Volunteer monitors steadily removed all contaminants from these collection vessels.

The resultant waste consisted of cigarette butts, bagged animal droppings, and plastic-lined to-go coffee cups.

COLLECT YOUR DATA

It is important to collect a few numbers in order to celebrate your success. Designate green team volunteers to collect the following data:

- Number of patrons at the event.
- Amount of recyclables (glass, plastic, aluminum, cardboard, other).
- Amount of biodegradable material sent to a composting facility.
- Amount of waste sent to landfill.

REPORT ON YOUR SUCCESS

Sponsors, vendors, patrons and the public will be interested in the success of the event—let them know how much waste was diverted from the landfill. This will help secure support for future events.

RECOGNIZE VENDORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Don't forget to publicly thank your amazing team of staff, contractors, vendors, and volunteers for all working together to create a successful zero waste event.



ZERO WASTE SUCCESS STORY

The Sunshine Music Festival hosted two Zero Waste stations in cooperation with the Let's Talk Trash team to significantly decrease waste generated at this event. Station monitors were visible and regularly removed contaminants from containers. Monitors were often found at Zero Waste stations helping patrons to properly dispose of their items.

A dishwashing station was available for staff and performers that proved so successful the Sunshine Music Festival is planning to expand this service to all patrons in 2012. Promotional materials will encourage event-goers to bring their own re-usable eating supplies (mug, tiffins and utensils) and the event coordinators are purchasing bulk dishware that will be available to all vendors for distribution, dishwashing and recirculation throughout the weekend.

Event Checklist

Prior to event

- Identify service providers for garbage, recycling and compost
- Identify zero waste goals
- Determine purchasing plan
- Research local procurement opportunities
- Identify education and outreach opportunities
- Purchase recycled, recyclable or compostable products
- Require vendors to purchase recycled, recyclable and compostable items
- Meet with vendors and contractors to discuss recycling and waste reduction opportunities
- Source local food
- Select and order equipment (bins, stickers, etc.)
- Research donation opportunities
- Identify staff person to assist in implementing recycling procedures
- Organize education and outreach components (i.e. information in event program and vendor packets, press release, signage, etc.)

Two months prior to event

- Publicize your zero waste event through displays, media, and promotions
- Inform media of zero waste program
- Order recycling/waste services and stations
- Determine who will be collecting and transporting recyclables on the event day
- Include recycling procedures in vendor packet
- Train staff and volunteers on recycling procedures
- Develop a site plan to determine the placement and number of bins needed

Week prior to event

- Confirm donation pick-up
- Confirm hauler/recycler schedule
- Create signage for recycling bins, if not provided by service provider

▶ Event Checklist

Day before event

- Train staff and volunteers (can be done day of event)
- Distribute recycling procedures to vendors
- Strategically place trash and recycling bins as per site plan

Day of event

- Monitor waste and recycling stations regularly
- Empty containers as needed
- Publicize recycling throughout day with announcements

After to event

- Ensure containers are picked up on time
- Collect weight tickets and receipts from haulers
- Complete a post-event worksheet
- Review what procedures did and did not work
- Evaluate results
- Write-up recommendations for your next event
- Publicize your results
- Work with local non-profits who will take your donations

Thank you for using this guide!

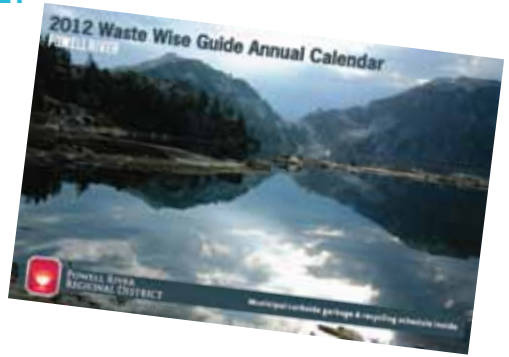


▶ What does the qathet Regional District offer to support **ZERO WASTE?**

Waste Wise **GUIDE**

The qRD maintains a recycling directory which can be found at the back of the Waste Wise Guide Annual Calendar. Visit to get an online copy at qathet.ca

or pick one up at the Regional District office.



The qathet Regional District Waste Management Education Program is intended to support our Solid Waste Management Plan.

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