

# Zero Waste Events

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# Overview

Having zero waste services at your event is a great way to show your commitment to community environmental stewardship. The key to having a successful zero waste event involves careful planning in advance. This will make sure that event materials are reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Walking Mountains Science Center has the ability to partner with event organizers to provide impactful and effective zero waste services for events. We provide planning support prior to the event as well as a dedicated, enthusiastic staff during the event to ensure success from start to finish.

## Components of Zero Waste include:

### Reducing

Reducing the amount of material at your event should be the first priority. The goal is to reduce the amount of landfill waste and cut back on the need for materials to be recycled or composted.

### Reusing

By reusing items as much as possible, we can decrease the need to produce new items, while also conserving energy and keeping materials out of the landfill.

### Recycling & Composting

Recycling and composting should happen after you've done as much as possible to reduce and reuse materials. A good goal is to have less than 10% of event waste go to the landfill.

# Why Zero Waste?

Helps to minimize waste and resource consumption in order to conserve energy, mitigate climate change, reduce water usage, prevent toxic creation and minimize ecosystem destruction. (EPA)

Landfills release methane, which is 21x more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>. Landfills also pollute groundwater and the land. (EPA)

Zero waste events help meet Eagle County's Climate Action Plan to divert 30% of waste by 2030.

Creating items from raw materials, instead of recycling, uses 60-95% more energy and water, generating 90% more emissions. (EPA)

Landfill space is limited and some haulers must travel long distances to the landfills, burning more fuel and releasing more emissions.

# How It Works

## Event Brand Development

- Reduce the amount of waste that goes to the landfill while reducing your event's carbon footprint
- Educate and empower guests to participate in community sustainability initiatives
- Market your event's "green" image

## Event Waste Management

- We offer trained staff and volunteers to manage waste streams
- Our staff will provide friendly interactions and educational opportunities for event attendees
- You will need to communicate with a waste hauler for the event
- We provide you with waste diversion rates and an event report after your event

## Vendor Education

- Our team will work with event organizers and vendors to procure sustainable options for serviceware and teach vendors proper sorting techniques
- Event organizer(s) must require vendors to follow Walking Mountains' zero waste product guidelines
- All vendor products must be approved by Walking Mountains staff prior to the event



# Volunteers & Staff

Having a volunteer or staff person at every Zero Waste station is crucial to the success of the event. Walking Mountains' volunteers and contract staff help to spread your event's sustainability initiatives while also educating guests on proper waste diversion.



# Signage

Contamination of the recycling and compost streams is a huge issue. Stopping the problem at the source is very important. By having consistent and up-to-date signage at waste stations, we can reduce contamination while educating guests about the appropriate end stream for products. By providing these signs, along with trained staff, Walking Mountains can ensure proper disposal and clean waste streams.



# Products

Walking Mountains requires that all serviceware at your event be either compostable or recyclable. This helps to decrease the amount of material entering the local landfill and makes for a more sustainable event. Our staff will work with event organizers and vendors ahead of time to ensure that serviceware meets the requirements.

## Acceptable Containers & Serviceware

- **Un-coated** paper containers (plates, bowls, cups, etc.)
- **BPI Certified** compostable containers & utensils
- **Paper** napkins & **paper** towels
- **#1 Plastic** Bottles **ONLY**
- **Aluminum** Cans
- **Corrugated Cardboard**



## NON-Acceptable Containers & Serviceware

- **Non-compostable** plastic utensils
- **Plastic** cups
- **Plastic Straws**
- **Plastic-coated** paper products
- **Plastic** clamshells
- **Styrofoam**
- **Glass**
- **Plastic wrap and lids**
- **Single-use** condiment packets
- **Plastic bags/film**





## Food Containers

Food containers such as plates, bowls, trays, and clamshells must be made from plain paper, bamboo, or sugarcane. Check for the "**BPI Certified Compostable**". label when purchasing products. The BPI certification ensures that the product will break down in our commercial compost facilities.

## Utensils

Utensils **MUST** be labeled "**BPI Certified Compostable**" or made from wooden or other natural material. Our local facilities cannot accept utensils made from recycled material or post-consumer recycled content, including "plastarch" (PSM).

## Beverage Containers

Beverage containers, such as aluminum cans, #1 PETE plastic bottles, and compostable #7 PLA cups are accepted at events. Hot and cold beverage cups must be labeled "**BPI Certified Compostable**" to ensure that they break down in our commercial compost facilities.

## Examples of Acceptable Serviceware:



# Recommended Suppliers

Listed below are some websites that carry **BPI Certified Compostable** products. It is important to check all the labels and read descriptions for each product, because not all companies supply only BPI Certified products. This is by no means an extensive list of suppliers. Many websites, like Amazon also carry these brands. When in doubt, it is best to contact the staff at Walking Mountains, or use the BPI Certified Product search bar to help you find an item's certification.

Eco Products

<https://www.ecoproducts.com/>

World Centric

<https://www.worldcentric.com/?>

Green Paper Products

<https://greenpaperproducts.com//>

BPI Certified Products

<https://bpiworld.org>

# Event FAQ's

## 1. Can you compost meat, bones, and dairy?

*Yes! Since we use a commercial composting facility, we can compost **anything** that was once living or was made from something living. Our local commercial compost facility heats up the compost to a higher temperature which allows for these items to be included.*

## 2. What is included with Walking Mountains' services? Is hauling included?

*Walking Mountains provides a coordinator and support staff to handle all source separation and end disposal of each material. This includes set-up and breakdown. While we will be in communication with haulers, we **do not** take the material from the event to be processed. If you are requesting our services, you will also need to work with the town or local hauler to have the proper receptacles on-site.*

## 3. What is a good alternative for plastic cups if our hauler cannot recycle them?

*Consider encouraging guests to bring their own cups for a discount, or provide a refillable water station. Otherwise, we recommend using aluminum cans (which can be recycled infinitely), or **BPI Certified Compostable** cups that will be accepted by a compost hauler.*

# Event FAQ's, cont.

## 4. How can I make sure vendors purchase the correct products?

*We are happy to provide resources for vendors and speak to them directly to determine the best product for them. It also helps for events to put recommended or mandatory rules in place to encourage vendor compliance.*

## 5. What if my event is catered and we have excess food that we do not want to go to waste?

*Reducing food waste is very important! The Eagle River Valley Food Bank is a great resource for catered events with excess food. You may also consider letting your staff bring containers to fill with food and take home with them after the event.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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