

# ZERO



## SKAGIT COUNTY ZERO-WASTE EVENTS

Guide to Hosting a Zero-Waste Event | Updated April 2011



**Sustainable Skagit**  
[www.skagitcounty.net/sustainability](http://www.skagitcounty.net/sustainability)



# Why Zero-Waste? »



## What does Zero Waste mean?

Zero waste considers the entire life cycle of products and is a new way at look at our waste stream. A resource's life cycle should be designed for reuse similar to the way that nothing in nature goes to waste. A zero-waste event (ZWE) is one that has been designed to reduce, reuse and recycle resources. Zero-waste events plan to mitigate any trash headed to the landfill.

## Why make your event a Zero-Waste Event?

The Skagit County community care about our land and water resources and will be pleased to support an event as patrons and sponsors, where waste minimization is undertaken and promoted. Your environmentally-friendly event will minimize waste going to landfill, increase the volume of materials recycled or biodegraded, and make your event a waste management success!

Your ZWE event will:

- Divert compostable and recyclable materials from your events waste stream which can significantly lower the cost of waste collection
- Reduce your cleanup, purchasing, and materials handling costs
- Make the event attractive to sponsors and provide a unique marketing tool
- Help increase environmental awareness
- Create goodwill in the community
- Provide a clean, safe, and positive environment for patrons



## Gold-Level Events

### We Provide:

- ClearStream® portable recycling, compost, and trash containers and bags
- Large billboard signs for recycling, compost, and trash
- Small signs for recycling and trash containers
- Zero-Waste Events trailer and ClearStream transporters for large events
- Buckets for liquids
- Compost containers for food vendors
- Educational materials for event planning
- Use of the ZWE logo to promote your event

### You Provide:

- Collection and disposal of compost, recyclables, and trash

## Silver-Level Events

### We Provide:

- ClearStream® portable recycling and trash containers and bags
- Small signs for recycle and trash containers
- Containers for food vendors
- Recycle and trash bags
- Educational materials for event planning
- Use of the ZWE logo to promote your event

### You Provide:

- Transportation of loaned materials
- Collection and disposal of recycling and trash

# Getting Started »

## 1 Submit our Event Registration Form

Download the form at [www.skagitcounty.net/zwe](http://www.skagitcounty.net/zwe), fill out, and return via e-mail. The form will help you start planning the waste management elements of your event.

For large or new events, a member of our ZWE staff will contact you to help you coordinate dumpsters and plan bin locations. Get started early so you can integrate ZWE into your waste plan if you need an event permit from your city.



## 2 Prep Your Vendors



If you're hosting a Gold-Level Zero-Waste Event, you'll need to require your vendors to meet our packaging requirements (see page 8). Download sample letters, text, and handouts at [www.skagitcounty.net/zwe/](http://www.skagitcounty.net/zwe/).

## 3 Promote Your Event



Incorporate the Zero-Waste Event logos (available in multiple formats at [www.skagitcounty.net/zwe](http://www.skagitcounty.net/zwe)) into the promotional materials for your event. See page 9 for more green promotional tips.

## 4 Deploy Bins & Signs

Bin positioning is critical to successful waste collection, high rates of sorting, and low contamination.

Use our bin deployment guidelines (page 6) to effectively position your bins.



## 5 Register Your Savings

When you return your bins after your event, fill out the Post-Event Evaluation Form.

Keeping track of compost and recycling diversion rates will help us to measure the success of the program and you can set goals for the next event.

# Bin & Sign Setup »

## Goal

- Maximize collection and reduce contamination of recycle and compost bins.

## Setting Up Waste Stations

- Set up recycling receptacles and stations the day before the event, if possible.
- Use recycling bins that are visually different from other waste receptacles.  
Recycle = Blue, Compost = Green and Trash = Black
- Label recycling and garbage receptacles with clear, large and specific wording. Signage should be placed at eye level. If feasible, attach a physical sample of the acceptable material to its container.

## Locating Waste Stations

- Place recycle, compost, and trash receptacles together to create a Waste Station.
- Waste stations should be highly visible. Put large signs above the receptacles.
- Locate waste stations in convenient and predictable locations. For example, at a street fair, put a waste station in the middle of every intersection. Inside a building, put a waste station near every exit. Place larger stations in areas where high volumes of waste will be generated.

## During the Event

- Use clear plastic bags as liners for recycling bins for easy identification and removal of contaminants. Use opaque black bags in garbage bins. Clear or opaque bags for compost.
- Ideally, staff your waste stations at all times to help people use the stations properly. If you don't have enough staff, assign a single "floating" staff member to check each area periodically.
- Limit the number of recycling/waste stations to allow for ease of monitoring.
- Remove any "rogue" trash cans—trash cans that are not accompanied by both recycling and composting bins. Rogue cans distort diversion rates and make it easy for people to avoid using the Waste Stations.
- Greet vendors and exhibitors during set-up. Provide clear instructions on how to recycle at the event and who to contact (the recycling coordinator) if they have questions.



# Checklist »

## Pre-Event

- Identify the person who will be responsible for organizing collection.
- Decide how food vendor compost, recycle, and trash will be handled.  
Will vendors dispose or will staff collect them? Ensure that food vendors have enough bins and compostable bags.
- Make a map of where you want to place all of the bins.
- Hold a brief training for staff.
- Assign someone to conduct waste audit at the end of the event.
- Inform staff when and how bins will be taken down.
- Assign a waste monitor if possible—someone who can help attendees sort or identify contamination
- Check-in with vendors.



## During Event

- Make adjustments based on feedback. If signs need to be moved to different locations or attendees need more help with disposal, adjust to their needs.
- Assign someone to periodically check-in with food vendors.

## Post-Event

- Organize a team to breakdown the bins and properly arrange them in Zero-Waste Events trailer.
- Conduct inventory of bins, signs and bags.
- Conduct waste audit and report.



# Food & Drink Packaging »

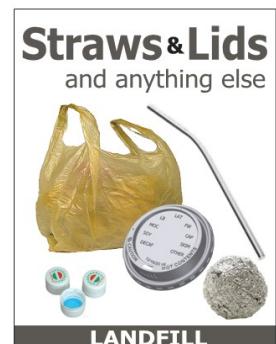
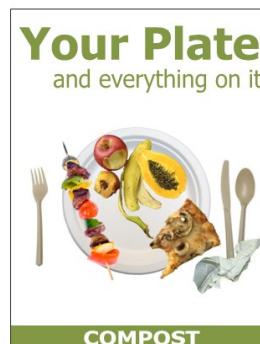
for Gold-Level events

## Control Packaging

- Ensuring food packaging conforms to our guidelines is vital to making your Zero-Waste Event successful.
- The Zero-Waste Events gold-level signs communicate a specific message about what items are allowed in each bin.
- We group items by function (plate or drink) rather than material, so that event attendees don't have to know or think about what types of materials are recyclable or compostable.
- Be sure to write packaging rules into food vendor applications and contracts and send all food vendors the Vendor Packaging Letter (available on the Zero-Waste Events website).

## Concepts

- Everything on your plate—all food and condiment packaging and utensils—must be compostable.
- All drink bottles, cans, and cups must be recyclable.
- That means you should not distribute compostable cups.**



## How Should You Package Food?

Provide your food products in **compostable** packaging and containers, for example:

- Uncoated paper plates, boats, or bowls
- Paper napkins, bags, clamshells
- Compostable utensils
- Wax paper
- Compostable condiment cups & lids
- Large condiment dispenser



**Do not use** Styrofoam, foil, saran wrap, plastic utensils, plastic condiment cups or lids, or individual condiment packages.

## How Should You Provide Drinks?

Provide drinks in **recyclable** containers, for example:

- Plastic or glass bottles
- Aluminum cans
- Juice boxes
- Clear or red plastic cups (P 1 or P 2)
  - Paper coffee cups (e.g. Starbucks cups)
  - Paper cartons (e.g. milk cartons)



**Do not use** compostable cups or Styrofoam cups. You may distribute plastic straws and lids.

# Go Farther >>

## Promote Your Event

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

- Incorporate the Zero-Waste Event logos (available in multiple formats at [www.skagitcounty.net/zwe](http://www.skagitcounty.net/zwe)) into the promotional materials for your event. See page 9 for more green promotional tips.
- Issue media releases and advertising about your waste minimization goals.
- Obtain the endorsement of a well-known member of the community or local celebrity who will promote the event mentioning its environmental credentials.
- Include information in official programs and relevant magazines and journals. You may also want to include recycling locations on any event maps.
- Promote your environmental objectives using word of mouth, volunteers and multimedia avenues, including your own website.
- Use recycling as a theme for event and press promotion. For example, allow free entrance if they bring a pound of aluminum cans or have participants compete to set a new recycling record at the site.
- Go paperless! Use social media tools and ban flyers.



## Questions?

**Sustainable Skagit**

[www.skagitcounty.net/zwe](http://www.skagitcounty.net/zwe)  
[zwe@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:zwe@co.skagit.wa.us)

## Maximize Your Waste Reduction

- Don't hand out gifts, flyers, advertisements, or paper handouts. To give attendees more information, hand-out email or website addresses on a small card.
- Buy durable equipment and banners that can be used over and over again. If the item is for a one-time use consider renting it or buying it used. You can even contact local partners about cost/time-sharing on certain large-tickets items.
- If a piece of equipment breaks, invest in its repair. If it's beyond repair, use it for parts and recycle the scrap.
- Partner with other local and zero waste business. This will ensure any outside help is equally committed to reduced packing and waste. You can even add waste reduction compliance to your evaluations of vendors and partners.
- After the event, review the trash bins. How successful was your waste reduction? If non-trash items were thrown away, evaluate why this may have happened. Are there items that could be recycled, but weren't? Thoughtful discussion will allow future events to be even more successful.
- Don't forget to thank your attendees, partners, and vendors for their participation. This is a great time to emphasize the importance of zero waste and encourage future participation.



# Resources & Supplies »

## Waste Haulers

Type of Material Collected	Supplier	Contact Information
Recycle, trash, and compostables collection	Waste Management Kristy Beedle	360-757-4067, kbeedle@wm.com
Commercial recycle collection only	Tri County Recycle	360-707-0439
Drop off, container rental, and recycle collection	Skagit River Steel	360-757-6069, www.skagitriversteel.com
Free grease collection, request online	Standard Biodiesel	206-388-3899, www.standardbiodiesel.com

## Bags

40 x 46 Compostable Bags 40-45 Gallon	40 x 46 Clear Recycle Bags	40 x 46 Black Trash Bags
Cash & Carry (call ahead to check) <a href="http://www.amazon.com">www.amazon.com</a> <a href="http://www.resourceful-1.net">www.resourceful-1.net</a> <a href="http://www.trashbagdepot.com">www.trashbagdepot.com</a>	Cash & Carry <a href="http://www.amazon.com">www.amazon.com</a> <a href="http://www.resourceful-1.net">www.resourceful-1.net</a> <a href="http://www.trashbagdepot.com">www.trashbagdepot.com</a>	Cash & Carry <a href="http://www.amazon.com">www.amazon.com</a> <a href="http://www.resourceful-1.net">www.resourceful-1.net</a> <a href="http://www.trashbagdepot.com">www.trashbagdepot.com</a>

## Packaging

Type of Packaging	Supplier	Notes:
Compostable Utensils	<a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a> <a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a> Party City	Must Say PLA – NO PLANT STARCH Must Say PLA – NO PLANT STARCH Does not sell in bulk
Paper Plates	All grocery stores <a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a> <a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a>	Plates say “compostable” on them
Compostable Portion Cups	<a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a> <a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a>	
Bulk Condiments	Costco Cash & Carry	NO INDIVIDUAL CONDIMENT PACKS Almost always have in stock
Paper Boats & Bowls	<a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a> <a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a> Cash & Carry	Boats say “Compostable” on them NO PLASTIC OR STYROFOAM
Plastic Cups	Costco Cash & Carry	NO COMPOSTABLE CUPS NO COMPOSTABLE CUPS
Coffee Cups	Costco Cash & Carry	NO COMPOSTABLE CUPS NO COMPOSTABLE CUPS
Food Wrap or Deli Sheet	Cash & Carry <a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a>	NO FOIL – ONLY PAPER & WAX PAPER
Compostable Soup Containers	<a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a> <a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a>	MUST BE COMPOSTABLE MUST BE COMPOSTABLE
Compostable Cold Containers	<a href="http://www.ecoproducts.com">www.ecoproducts.com</a> <a href="http://www.cedargrove.com">www.cedargrove.com</a> <a href="http://www.biodegradablestore.com">www.biodegradablestore.com</a>	FOR SALADS, SUSHI, ETC.. TO-GO STYLE TO-GO STYLE MUST SAY PLA – NO PLANT STARCH