



Preface

This booklet was developed through the Greater Leadership Opportunities (GLO) Program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a project by GLO Group #13, **Green Meetings Focus Group**. Focus group members include: Tanya Hill, Headquarters; George Malone, Region 6; Donna Vizian-McCabe, Region 2; Mary Ellen Ryan, Region 5; Ayn Schmidt, Region 8; and Mia Zmud, Headquarters.

This guide provides information gathered from organizers of environmentally aware meetings and special events around the country. In this guidebook, environmentally aware meetings and events are those planned in such a way as to eliminate, reduce, or recycle waste. While focusing on municipal solid waste, this guide also touches on other environmental concerns. It is intended to heighten the environmental consciousness of event planners and demonstrate the advantages of conducting environmentally aware events.

Acknowledgments

This document represents the knowledge gained from numerous people around the country who are involved in planning and conducting a wide variety of events. The creativity and environmental commitment of the following individuals and the organizations they represent is gratefully acknowledged, and their contribution of time and expertise in the development of this guide is appreciated:

William Collier, Jeff Benjamin, and Rick Russon

Environmental Concerns Committee, Cherry Creek Arts Festival

Jack DeBell

Director, University of Colorado Recycling Program

Linda Smith and Sharon Westmoreland

Environmental Resource Specialists, Inc.

Priscilla Lynn

Public Relations Director, Meeting Professionals International

Robert E. Bradley

Consulting Engineer, Boy Scouts of America

Aneli Nuteren

Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

Todd MacFadden

P2 Technical Specialist, Montana P2 Program

Jody Lehner

National Recycling Coalition



Contents



i

Preface

i

Acknowledgments

2

Environmentally Aware Events:
What Are They?

3

Meeting And Event Environmental
Nuts And Bolts

7

Planning Checklist:
Setting Environmental Priorities

9

Resources





Environmentally Aware Events: What Are They?

This guide will help meeting and event planners reduce the amount of municipal solid waste generated by their meeting or event. This guide outlines the key steps in planning and conducting an environmentally aware event, profiles a variety of meetings and events, and provides a checklist that can be used as a planning tool.

Imagine that you are attending a workshop. You arrive by public transportation. The hotel reminds you to turn off the lights in your room to conserve energy. Workshop materials are printed double-sided with soy- or vegetable-based inks. As a name tag, you wear your own business card inserted in a reusable name tag holder, which is collected as you leave. Coffee is served in reusable mugs embossed with the workshop name and sponsors. Sugar and cream are served from a covered sugar

bowl and a small chilled creamer.¹ Bite-sized breakfast snacks and fresh fruit are served on small reusable plates, and you are even asked to throw your discarded food items in a worm composting bin.

This workshop actually took place in April 1992, in Montgomery County, Maryland. EPA, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the Montgomery County Department of Environment invited approximately 50 state and local waste management specialists to attend a workshop on waste prevention. The meeting planners went to great lengths to conserve materials and reduce waste.

The key to planning such an environmentally aware meeting or event is to set environmental priorities early in event planning and incorporate them into as many facets of the event as possible.





Step 1: Gain Management or Sponsor Support

Sell your approach to management by emphasizing the range of environmental benefits, enhanced public image, and potential cost savings that result from incorporating environmental considerations into the planning process. In addition, your environmental leadership may help you obtain new or additional sponsorship and funding.

Preventing or Reducing Waste

The best way to deal with waste is not to create it in the first place. Determine what materials are needed at your event and consider ways to reduce the amount used. For example, conference planners may reduce the amount of paper they distribute by purging duplicate addresses from mailing lists and requiring that all printed materials be double-sided.

Step 2: Set Your Environmental Priorities

First, identify environmental issues that are especially significant to your organization, community, or region. Next, select environmental priorities reflecting those particular issues. Finally, determine the amount of effort your management will dedicate to meeting the priorities.

Clearly defined environmental priorities will help you identify the specific actions you can take to meet these objectives. The planning checklist at the end of this guide can help you set and meet these priorities.

Recyclers Lead the Way at National Recycling Coalition Congress

During the National Recycling Coalition's (NRC's) 1995 annual congress in Kansas City, Missouri, participants had the opportunity to practice recycling first hand. They welcomed the opportunity to toss cans and bottles into recycling bins, drink coffee from complimentary thermal mugs, and read agendas printed on recycled paper with soy-based inks.

The event site, the Kansas City Convention Center, did not have a recycling program. NRC worked with the center's managers to institute a permanent recycling program—starting 9 months before the actual event—to collect aluminum, corrugated cardboard, mixed paper, clear and colored glass, plastic, and polystyrene. In addition, NRC collected food and food-contaminated paper waste for composting. The Air Force ran a composting pilot project with the NRC's food waste, the compost from which was given back to NRC to donate to charity.

Along with recycling, NRC reduced and reused materials. Reusable name tag holders and mugs, printed with a sponsor's logo, were distributed. Caterers were asked to use reusable dishware, utensils, and napkins as frequently as possible. They provided straws and drink stirrers only upon request. Exhibitors were kept informed of exact attendance levels so that they would bring the correct number of distribution materials, to cut down on the amount of material stored

Recycling and Managing Waste

Arrange for collection of as many recyclables as possible. Work with event site managers and recycling vendors when planning your meeting or event. Waste prevention measures and recycling collection will significantly reduce the amount of trash generated during your meeting or event.

Other Environmental Issues

Other environmental issues important to your community might include water conservation, air quality, or specific natural resource issues. For instance, meeting planners in California might place a high priority on water conservation during water shortages.

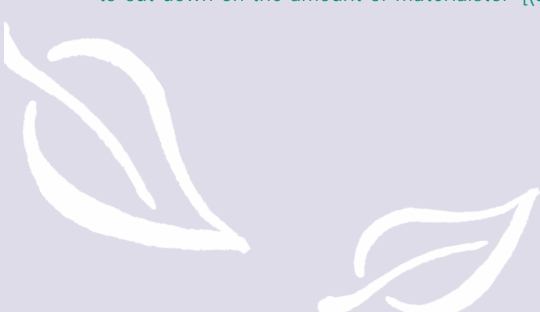
Step 3: Translate Your Priorities Into Actions

Selecting a Site

Look for a site that best addresses your environmental priorities. To meet waste reduction and energy conservation priorities, for example, look for a naturally lit site offering comprehensive recycling collection and mass transit services.

Arranging for Food Service

Select food service providers that use reusable serviceware, or sell products that come in recyclable, little, or no packaging. A careful head count of attendees will reduce preparation of unnecessary meals.



Walking the Walk: National Tribal Pollution Prevention Conference

Participants in the August 1995 National Tribal P2 Conference in Billings, Montana, received more than just lectures and networking opportunities. For three days, they lived a lesson in environmentally aware planning that they could take back to their tribal communities. Conference planners highlighted their “green conference” considerations in conference materials, asking attendees to participate in a full recycling program and reminding them that their personal habits can save energy and reduce waste.

Rather than printing enough conference programs to accommodate any possible attendance, conference planners matched their print run to the number of registered attendees. Speakers agreed not to hand out written resources; instead they provided materials only upon request. This encourages conversations between speakers and members of the audience and ensures that only interested parties receive printed matter. In addition, the hotel food service agreed to use china and glassware in lieu of disposables for indoor events. The hotel, fearful of liability for any injuries caused by broken glass or crockery, wanted to use paper cups and plates for the outdoor buffalo feast. However, conference planners convinced them to at least use ceramic plates.

Mindful that even the most successful waste reduction strategies would not eliminate all trash, conference planners negotiated with their waste hauler to provide recycling services for the event. The hauler supplied containers for recyclable glass, plastic, aluminum, and paper. In exchange for use of the containers and for collecting the recyclables, the hauler received the revenues from the recycled commodities. The conference program urged participants to use the recycling bins and, when possible, to avoid the purchase and use of materials destined for a waste stream.

Scoring for the Environment: CU Buffaloes Football Game

Imagine you're at a Big Eight football game with 50,000 other cheering fans. Suddenly the scoreboard flashes an “environmental savings report” telling you how many natural resources have been saved as a result of recycling during the game. This is just one of the ways that the University of Colorado (CU) Recycling Program, called CU Recycling, educates football fans about the environmental impact of their recycling efforts.

CU Recycling promotes active recycling in the stadium in a variety of ways. Before the games, recycling staff with handcarts rove the parking lots to collect recyclables from tailgate parties and inform the partygoers about the environmental savings to which they're contributing, such as saving a gallon and a half of gas by recycling a case of aluminum cans. Other recyclable materials are separated by concessions or stadium staff. CU Recycling runs ads in the game programs and in the game-day edition of the campus newspaper to remind people to recycle. They also sponsor media spots featuring Bufted bymedia spotf8[(and glcasg ef4053(for)-66(is))TJi“T*1”[(clabl. CU Recyclint b)1(clabl. CU Recycliin o(o)0(edove thvo alase anc mosu oict)-3tedl traof dispolhe cors a. Looarkins te thfu8(tees, thycanupes)]TJi“T* pantg for traoy and recyclabls tha2-16(cycan-up [r nesm c ndcar)-2serytd tham.

Buying Products

Encourage your planning team and contractors to look for products that:

- Are reusable (e.g., name tags, binders, grease boards).
- Have recycled content (especially post-consumer).
- Use little or no packaging or packaging that contains recycled or reused materials.
- Are recyclable or compostable on site or in a community program.

Collecting Recyclables

Encourage attendees to recycle with visible signs, written announcements, and opening remarks. Also, inform event contractors, exhibitors, and vendors about

Contracting Food Service and Lodging

- Plan food service needs carefully to avoid unnecessary waste.
- Consider use of durable food service items.
- Donate excess food to charitable organizations.
- Work with hotel on non-replacement of linens, soaps, etc.
- Other actions: _____

Buying Environmentally Aware Products

- Use recycled paper and vegetable- and soy-based inks for promotional materials and handouts.
- Consider selling or providing refillable containers for beverages.
- Provide reusable containers for handouts or samples (pocket or file folders, cloth bags).
- Where reusable items are not feasible, select products that are made from recovered materials and that also can be recycled.
- Other actions: _____

Educating Participants and Exhibitors

- Request the use of recycled and recyclable handouts or giveaways.
- Request that unused items be collected for use at another event.
- Encourage participants to recycle materials at the event.
- Reward participation by communicating environmental savings achieved.
- Other actions: _____

- Block, Valerie. "Trend Is Toward Environmental Correctness." The Business Journal (April 19, 1993): 28.
- Boston, Edison. "Energy Conservation is Good for Business at the Saunders Hotels." OnLine Newsletter (Summer 1994): 1-2.
- Chicago Clean Streak, "Guide to Recycling at Chicago Summer Festivals." Chicago, IL, 1993.
- Farrell, Molly. "Special Diversion Methods for Special Events." BioCycle (September 1995): 38-40.
- Halbrooks, John R. "Do Your Meetings Threaten the Environment?" Corporate Meetings and Incentives (March 1993): 26-31.
- "Have Fun, Recycle 90 Percent." BioCycle (January 1996): 57.
- Lewis, Elenor J. and Eric Weltman. Forty Ways to Make Government Purchasing Green. Washington, DC: Center for Study of Responsive Law, 1993.
- New York City Department of Sanitation. A Guide to Mandatory Recycling at NY City Street Fairs. New York, NY, 1994.
- "Planning Green Meetings." Meeting News (October 1992).
- "Recycling Coalition Stages Green Meeting." Meeting News vol. 4 (March 1992).
- Reider, Martin. "Essex Conference Center: Retreat to Cape Ann." 128 News (December 1992): 41.
- Science Applications International Corporation. "Summary Report of the Super Bowl Recycling Program." (March 24, 1994). Prepared for NFL Properties.
- "The Super Bowl of Recycling." BioCycle (January 1996): 54.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1996 Buy Rairs.

1 EPA

United States
Environmental Protection Agency
(5306W)
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use
\$300