



# Ethical & Environmentally Conscious Events

Presented by:

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# Why do we care?



- **Sustainability Focused:**
  - Conservation Department
  - Operations Department
  - Purchasing/Procurement Department
  - Community Engagement Department
  - Green Team
- **Lead our local community and individual residents to be environmental stewards.**





# Why do we care?



- **Hold numerous events, large and small, annually**
- **Waste outputs:**
  - Additional fossil fuel burning (generators, increased heating/cooling, transportation)
  - Expendable giveaways
  - Single-use plastics (packaging, containers, cutlery, straws)
  - Decorations
  - Paper Waste
  - Food Waste





# Global Waste Increases



## UN Environment Programme

- Municipal solid waste generation is predicted to grow from 2.1 billion tons in 2023 to 3.8 billion tons by 2050.
- Estimations with hidden cost of pollution, poor health and climate change – rises USD 361 billion.
- Without urgent action on waste management, by 2050 this global annual cost could almost double to USD 640.3 billion

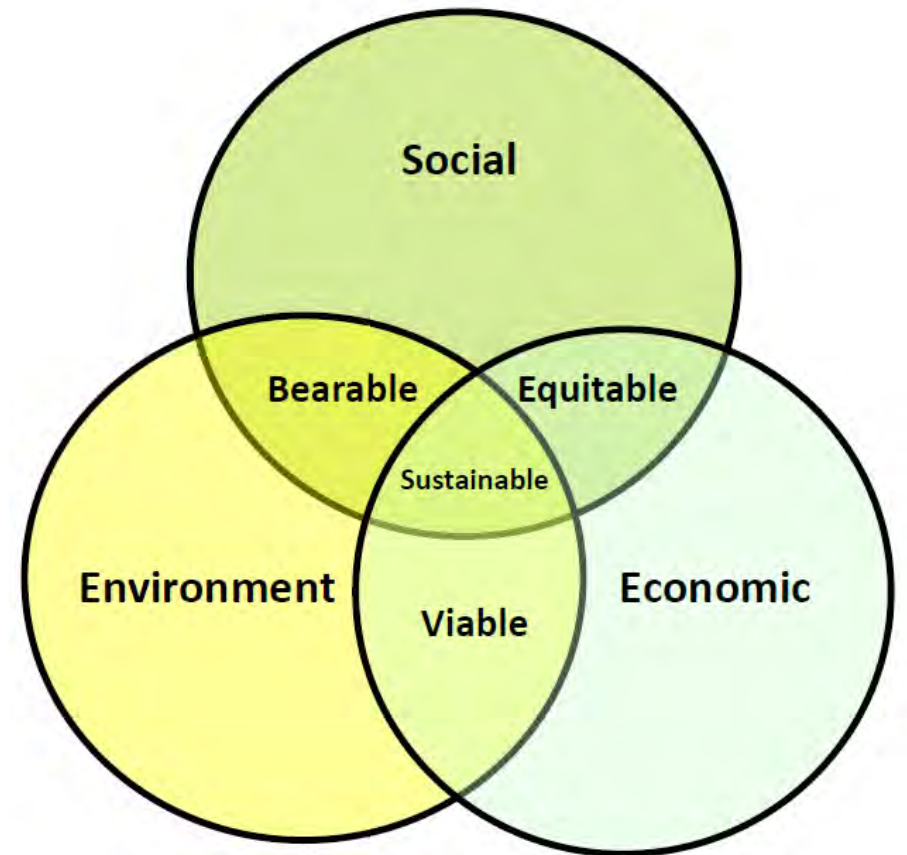


# What is sustainability:



## According to the EPA:

*'Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.'*





# 2022 - 2024 Goals

- All SMP staff and public events to be limited-waste
  - Internal staff buy-in
  - Zero Waste Vendor Guide
  - Training volunteers (Waste Wise)
  - Partnering with recycling/compost agencies
  - Waste stations
  - Green switches/choices when possible



## Zero Waste Vendor Guide

We are pleased to announce that beginning in 2024 all Summit Metro Parks events will be limited- or zero-waste.

The goal of a zero-waste event is to have less than 10% of event waste end up in landfills and at least 90% diverted from the landfill. To reach this goal, SMP will only distribute materials that are recyclable, compostable, or reusable. We are asking you, [vendor], to minimize the use of single service items wrapped individually in plastic or foil. As one of our valued partners, we need your help to accomplish this goal. By agreeing to participate in our events, you are committing to recycling, composting or reusing all materials.

### All Vendors:

- Flatten and recycle cardboard. Recycle bins will be available at the event.
- Properly recycle plastic bags/film/ink wrap. This can be done outside at local stores: Giant Eagle, Kohl's or Meijer's. Or find a closer recycling center at [metro-parks.com/recycling](https://www.metro-parks.com/recycling).
- Details on what types of plastic film can be recycled can be found [here](https://www.metro-parks.com/recycling).

Food Vendors: (a list of recommended BPI-certified product vendors is listed in Appendix I pg. 2)

- All drinks should be in recyclable aluminum cans, uncoated paper cups or BPI-certified compostable cups.
- Use wooden or BPI-certified compostable serviceware and utensils.
- Compost your own food waste and other compostable materials.
  - Remove all produce stickers before putting in compost.
  - Compost uncoated paper towels and napkins that did not have chemical disinfectants on them.
  - Remove all tape and stickers, compost paper boxes that have grease or food material on them and render them unable to be recycled.
- Uncoated paper napkins, paper towels, paper plates and paper cups can be composted, these do not need to state that they are compostable. Uncoated paper is compostable, but if it does not have residue on it, it is better to recycle.
- Serve condiments/sauces in bulk or BPI-certified compostable containers.

### Exhibit Vendors:

- Ensure all giveaways are recyclable, compostable, or reusable keepsakes.
- All parts of the table display should be reusable (i.e. tablecloth or signage display).

## Appendix I

### BPI Certified Product Vendors\*

Green Paper Products 93 Alpha Park | Highland Heights, OH 44143 | 877-341-5464 | <https://www.greenpaperproducts.com>

Vegware 1554 Thomas Road, S.E. | Warren, OH 44484 | 330-369-1192 | <https://www.vegware.com>

TrueChoicePack 1285 Lyons Road, Bldg. H | Dayton, OH 45458 | <https://www.truechoicepack.com>

WebstaurantStore Compostable | <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/search/compostable.html>

**Disclaimer:** Vendor inclusion in the SMP Zero Waste Vendor Guide should not be construed as an endorsement of any vendor or organization. This list was put together based on selection/availability of BPI-compostable certified products and their location. Ohio based companies were chosen since local businesses often employ members of the community, which translates to shorter commutes, less highway congestion and less fuel consumption. Shopping locally reduces your carbon footprint; it's also helping members of your community reduce their own potentially negative impact on the environment. However, you are welcome to choose any company with BPI-compostable certifications that best aligns with your needs.

\*Please note that not all items labeled compostable are BPI-certified. Look for the BPI logo.





# Limited/Zero-Waste Goals



The **goal** of a zero-waste event is to have less than 10% of event waste end up in landfills and at least 90% diverted from the landfill.

It's not an easy task and it does take time!





# The logistics are not simple...



- Extra time & effort, especially for Operations
- Education of staff and volunteers (including us)
- Reality of limited vs zero-waste
- How to find valid partners for both recycling and composting.
- The more you learn...the less you know.

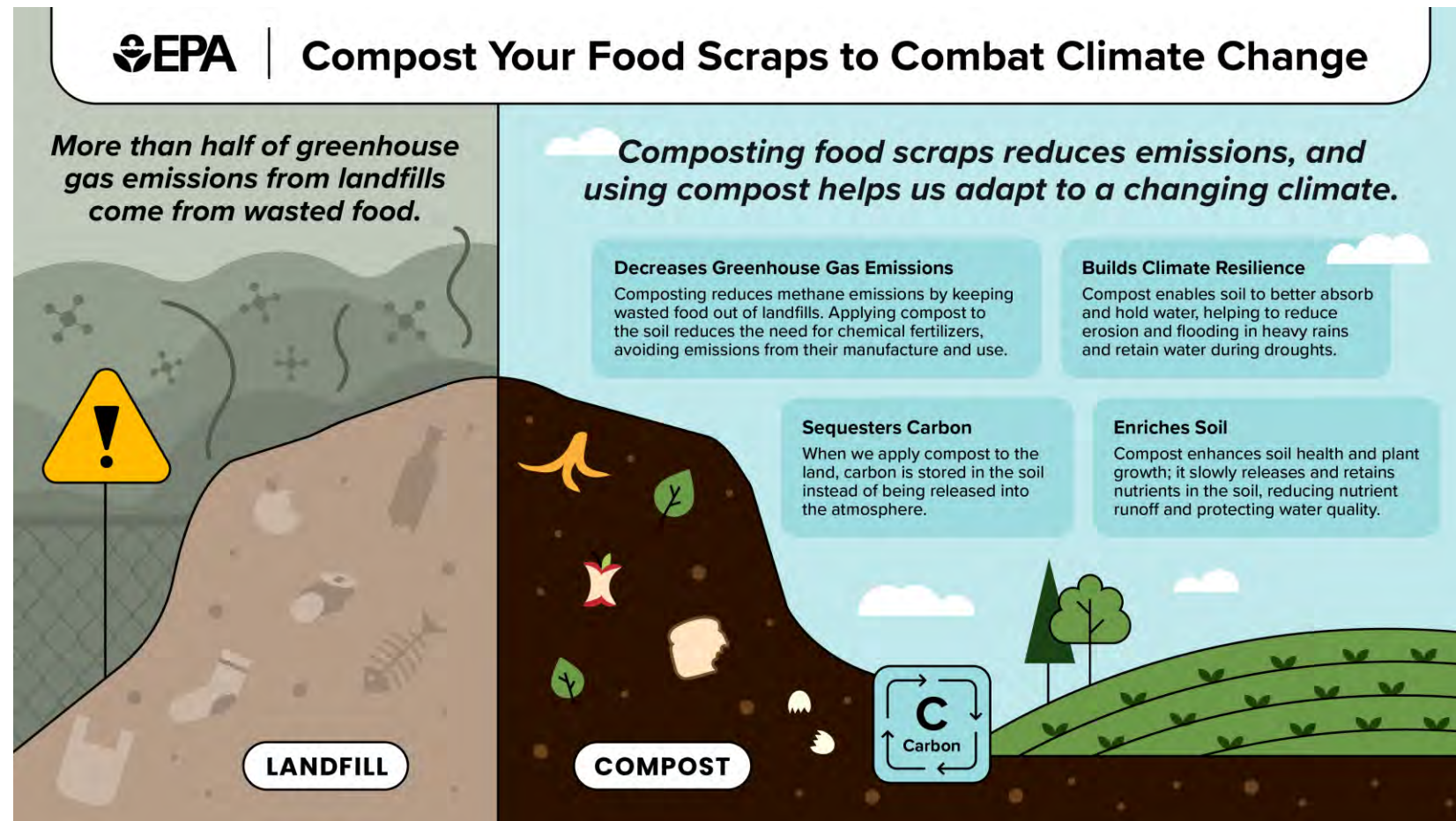




# Composting 101



- Food & garden waste comprise 28% of landfill
- Produced approx 14% of methane emissions in 2021
- Improves soil health & conserves water
- Breaks down organic matter faster than just leaving it





# Event Composting

**What to do with compost after the event**

Can you handle it in-house?

Can you work with a company to pay for it or work out a partnership or sponsorship opportunity?





# How it began...



- **2022 – Small, in-house events**
  - Employee Holiday Luncheon
  - Retiree Employee Event
- **2023 – Large, public events (before RCR)**
  - Mother's Day 5K
  - Touch-a-Truck





# Waste Wise Volunteers



- ***Let's Grow Akron* volunteer training template**
- **2 in-person volunteer training**
  - Plus created a virtual training
- **Focused on education, not waste sorting**
- **SMP Volunteers are conservation focused**





# Waste Stations



- **Partnering with a compost and recycling companies**
  - Rust Belt Riders
  - Kurtz Brothers
  - Rubber City Reuse
  - Tansy Recycling
  - Legacy Polymers
- **Remove trash cans from event**





# Internal Buy-In/Operations



- **The challenge**

- Heavy workload of the "No" Department
- Crucial behind the scenes contributions

- **The Idea**

- Initial apprehension about pitching the idea that might add to Ops workload
- Surprising support from Ops supervisors and park managers
- Keep Operations involved for logistics





# Operations



- **Implementation Year 1**

Idea

Supervisor Support

Park Manager Agreement

Operations Execution

SUPERVISOR SUPPORT





# Operations

- **Adapting the Process**
  - Evolving for Efficiency
- **Positive Outcomes**





# Educating ourselves



- [Solids Waste District](#) (Summit ReWorks)
- Free Webinars and Conferences
- [Summit of Sustainability Alliance \(SOSA\)](#) Partners
- Attending limited-waste events & talking to their event staff



THE SUMMIT OF  
Sustainability  
ALLIANCE



ReWOrKS



# Vendor Guide



## Led by the 8 R's (Circular Economy)

- Refuse, Rethink & Reduce (Source Reduction)
- Reuse (Donating, Reusable Table Displays & Reusable Giveaways)
- Recycle (Paper, Glass, Metal)
- Rot (Composting)





# Event Green Options/Switches

- Generators to Power Banks
- Encourage Water Bottle Refilling
- Encourage visitor carpooling
- Unique Recycling Opportunities
- Reuse vinyl banners or opt for [Tyvek](#) (recyclable)
- Summit ReWorks offers coroplast sign recycling





# Community Messaging

- Monthly E-news
- Social Media
- Sustainability Webpage
- Green Islands Magazine
- Blog
- News releases

## Sustainability snapshot: A limited-waste Mother's Day 5K

Summit Metro Parks · Follow  
5 min read · Apr 5, 2023

Jen Harvey, Chief of Philanthropy; Julie Haumschild, Donor Relations Coordinator; Katelyn Freil, Marketing Specialist; & Claire Merrick, Marketing & Public Relations Manager



How can you support a limited-waste Mother's Day 5K? Bring a reusable water bottle to receive a free, all-weather Mother's Day 5K sticker, and consider carpooling to prevent unnecessary carbon emissions. If you bring your own snack or beverage in a single-use package or bottle, remember to recycle if possible.

Join a free, naturalist-led program this Earth Month to learn how you can practice sustainability in your own life, and check out Wild Back Yards for resources to aid you in creating a welcoming habitat for local wildlife at home.

Please note: This article was updated to reflect that participants have the option of receiving a general Ohio native tree sapling, rather than specifically receiving a

Summit Metro Parks  
May 16 ·

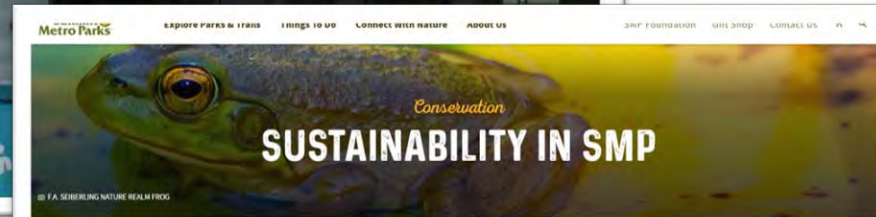
Are you planning to work up an appetite browsing for native plants? We've got you covered! Pick up refreshments from [Bereka Coffee & Kitchen](#) - Ethiopian Cuisine & Coffee Ceremony, [D-Bo's Grill, LLC](#) and [Henry's Creamery](#) at this Saturday's Native Plant Festival.

D-Bo's Grill showcases grilled food, including pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, Italian sausages and vegetarian options, like black bean burgers and portobello mushroom sandwiches.

For a unique sweet treat, Henry's Creamery will offer their small-batch, artisanal ice cream in flavors like malted vanilla, smoked sea salt dark chocolate and cookies and cream. Dairy-free and vegan options will be available, too!

Bereka Coffee takes pride in bringing the authentic Ethiopian coffee ceremony to events, providing a truly unique cultural experience for their customers.

Summit Metro Parks is committed to limiting waste at events. Keep your eyes open for waste stations at this year's event to properly dispose of compostable materials, metal, paper and waste for the landfill. Stations will be located at either end of the event, a map for which can be viewed at [bit.ly/nptvendors](https://bit.ly/nptvendors)



We're seeing green. Your park district prioritizes a sustainable future for us all. Inside Summit Metro Parks, we're working to improve sustainable practices and share ways our visitors can, too.

## SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS

As careful stewards, we're constantly working toward new sustainable practices to save taxpayers money and reduce our ecological footprint. Explore some highlights of recent "green" efforts throughout SMP.





# First Successful Large Event – Mother's Day 5K 2024



- Wrapper-less snacks
- Compost waste station (had over 70 lbs)
- Bib recycling
- T-shirts, trees, or none at all
- Participation flowers
- Tyvek and coroplast banners
- Bring your own water bottle





# 2024 Stats



- **18 SMP events:**

- 321.7 lbs. composted
- 57.7 lbs. recycled

*Approximately 2/3 of waste diverted*

- **Other Waste Diversion:**

- Banner switches from vinyl to Tyvek
- Electric Purchases:
  - Electric Mower
  - (5) 5-gallon buckets of batteries
  - 1591 plastic plant tags (7.1 lbs.), pots and plant tags (3.4 lbs.)
- 5K Bib & Chip Recycling
- Composting invasive tree wood chips
- Cuyahoga River Clean-up
  - 1250 lbs. cleaned up
- Candy Wrapper recycling – 3.7 lbs.
- 350 lbs. composting substrate from animal tanks
- 250 lbs. compost from HQ
- 284 Christmas Trees turned to wood chips
- Over 6,700 lbs of free public compost





# Considerations and Issues

- **Efforts to make events greener, do come with considerations:**
  - Compost labeling not well regulated
  - Recycling labeling confusing
  - BPI Certified items cost more, sometimes manufacture of items is harder on environment than plastic
  - Many require Industrial Composting services to break down
  - Adds to consumer confusion around recycling and composting.
  - Extra effort (money) for staff

## 1 Recyclable

Can be placed in municipal recycling bins for re-processing into new items.



## 2 Biodegradable

Will be broken down by bacteria, fungi, or other microorganisms. No industry standard time frame.



## 3 Industrially Compostable



Will decompose fully in an industrial composting facility. May not be available in all areas.



## 4 Home Compostable

Will decompose fully into compost in a backyard compost bin environment without producing toxic residue as it breaks down.



## 5 Packaging-Free



The most sustainable option is to buy packaging-free items whenever possible, bringing your own reusable bag or container!



**Make informed Choices!**



# Lessons Learned



- Prioritizing planning
- Public cannot self-regulate
- Signage must be simple, clear and with pictures
- Single use plastic
- Vendor Guide
- Not accessible to all communities





# Future Goals



- **Ongoing Waste Wise volunteer recruitment**
- **Expansion of limited waste throughout park district**
  - Limited waste for external rentals
- **Higher percentage of waste diverted**
  - Partner with like-minded vendors
- **2025 SMP Greener Future Campaign**





# THANK YOU!



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## Scan Me!