

Green Best Practices for Events in Regional Parks

Many large and small events and activities are held in our regional parks every year. Incorporating environmentally friendly or “green” best practices in the planning and execution of an event will protect our natural areas and help keep regional parks places where people can experience, enjoy and connect with nature.

Event organizers are encouraged to incorporate these best practices, as well as their own ideas, into the planning of their event and aim to reduce the environmental impact during event delivery.

Before the Event

If possible, select an event site that’s easily accessible by foot, bicycle or transit.

Identify a goal for your event. This can be something as simple as “No refundable beverage containers will go to landfill at our event” or as technical as “We will achieve a 70% diversion rate for our event”. This goal will give you something to work towards. Don’t be afraid to start small!

Ask a committee member to champion environmentally friendly initiatives at your event, or create a position for someone to take the lead on implementing your green event goals.

Involve Stakeholders - let your stakeholders, vendors, and contractors know about your goals to lessen the environmental impact of the event. Invite their input and advise them of any expectations and requirements.

Develop a waste management plan

Special events can create hundreds of pounds of garbage that head straight to a landfill if there is not a proper waste management plan. With careful consideration, you can plan an event that reduces the amount of garbage your event creates by up to 90%! This can be done through reducing, reusing, composting and recycling.

Depending on the size of your event, the waste management plan may include:

- Contracting a waste diversion company (see [resources](#) for a short list of providers).
- A site plan that marks the location and number of waste, recycling and compost (food scrap) bins.
- Training for staff and volunteers to ensure waste is being sorted and handled properly.
- Consider the types of recyclables that will be collected during the event, such as plastic, glass, food scraps and paper.
- Prepare announcements to be made throughout the event reminding people to use the waste and recycling containers provided. Engage your participants to be part of the solution!



For larger events a properly managed **waste station** is one of the most important tools for a green event. There should be one for every 500 attendees at peak attendance.


Each waste station should:

- Include at least one bin for each stream: garbage, recycling (paper and mixed containers) and organics (food scraps).
- Be easily identified in busy areas and within walking distance from where waste is likely to be produced (e.g. near food vendors).
- Have clearly labelled bins.
- Include way-finding signage (visit metrovancover.org and search recycling signage and resources).
- Assign trained staff or volunteers to oversee the station and direct attendees on which item goes in which bin.



Transportation

Limit the impact of car traffic by promoting carpooling, the use of public transit, walking and cycling. Include bike and public transit route links in email and social media.

 For larger events consider providing shuttle service from a transit stop or community centre.

Water

We have some of the best drinking water in the world! By avoiding individually portioned bottled water and identifying water access and fountains at event grounds, you can reduce the environmental impact of your event.



Metro Vancouver promotes tap water at regional events. If necessary, plan to have a bottle filling station where attendees can fill their own water bottles for free; promote this service in advance so that attendees know to bring a refillable water bottle.

For larger events, consider the [Metro Vancouver Water Wagon & Tap Water Team](#).

Communicating your green event

Having a green event is something to be proud of!

- Promote to the public that you are planning a green event.
- Focus event promotion online and through social media and limit the number of printed materials used.
- Increase the lifespan of your signs – avoid the use of dates and prioritize durable materials that can be used multiple times.
- Prepare messaging for announcers, staff and volunteers (e.g. announce green objectives, acknowledge vendors for their support, speak about how event attendees can help).

Food

- Encourage food vendors to serve foods that are local, seasonal and organic.
- Discourage the use of unnecessary disposable items (e.g. straws and stir sticks).
- Use compostable items that are made from recycled content (e.g. plates, cutlery and napkins).
- Use large containers for condiments instead of individual packets.
- Compost food waste, make sure a compost bin is near food vendors and is clearly marked.

TIP! For smaller events, like picnics, consider asking attendees to bring their own reusable cups, plates, and utensils.

Decorations

- Encourage natural decorations for your event (e.g. plants, flowers)
- Encourage recyclable decorations for your event (e.g. recyclable paper)
- Discourage the use of unnecessary single use items (e.g. balloons, plastic disposable tablecloths, gift wrap, theme specific decorations i.e. Happy 8th Birthday)

Power

- Discourage and reduce the need for electric power at your event
- If possible, consider powering food trucks and stages with silent, green electricity using battery systems and solar technology

During the Event

- Designate volunteers to monitor waste and recycling areas to educate attendees on proper waste sorting; ensure garbage and recycling areas are clean and replace bags when full.
- Make announcements about green goals and let attendees know how they can help.

After the Event

Determine if your green event goals were met. Ask staff, volunteers, vendors for feedback on successes and challenges.

Celebrate your achievement of a green event! Thank attendees and other stakeholders for their support!

Resources

This is a short list of local suppliers and service providers that offer waste management and compostable food packaging. We welcome companies not on this list to phone 604 432-6419 to be included.

Local organizations that manage waste:

Green Chair Recycling

Provides a full range of services to assist in greening events, including pre-event consultation with vendors and organizers, set up and staffing of recycling stations throughout the event, and thorough site cleanup after the event.

604-806-0680

greenchairrecycling.com

GrowingCity

Develops a tailor-made waste and recycling management plan from pre-event to post-cleanup in the greenest way possible. Services include all equipment needed for an event (bins, signs, dumpsters, etc.), onsite event support staff who empty bins and keep equipment clean, and a green report of all waste diverted.

1-855-932-6676

growingcity.com

Keep it Green Recycling

KIGR sets up custom zero waste programs to divert event waste from the landfill and reduce the events carbon footprint. Special event services include set up of all recycling bins & compost, maintenance on all bins, Keep It Green employee on site at all times, and a grid of recycled, donated & composted items.

604-341-6495

keepitgreenrecycling.ca

Local suppliers of reusable, recyclable and compostable food service supplies:

BSI Biodegradable Solutions

BSIbio is a local leader in compostable food ware. Our products are backed by research and certification that will help you be more sustainable and impress your customers.

604-630-5115

bsibio.com

Eco Packaging

Using compostable packaging is the greatest choice for all foodservice providers to demonstrate their green practice commitments, but also is the greatest choice to provide healthier practice.

604-451-8876

ecopackaging.ca

Local organizations that provide green energy:

Portable Electric

Powering events and stages with silent, green electricity using state-of-the-art battery systems and solar technology. A variety of rental options available, book online, email or call.

604-901-2500

Portable-electric.com

People Power Productions

People Power Productions was launched in early 2011 as a creative vehicle for bringing renewable energy systems to festivals and events.

604-802-2180

jamesisoutside@gmail.com

Partner municipalities with waste management resources:

City of North Vancouver

Offers a Zero Waste Station for small events. It includes up to 10 collection frames for five disposal streams (beverage containers, mixed paper, mixed containers, compostable materials, and garbage), along with flag banners to increase the visibility.

604-983-6575

[Guide to Creating a Zero Waste Event](#)

events@nvr.ca for details and to book the Zero Waste Station

City of Vancouver

Provides waste and recycling bins and the removal of waste.

Phone 3-1-1

[Green Events Planning Guide](#)

greenevents@vancouver.ca

City of Richmond

Offers tools for event organizers to help plan, produce and deliver more sustainable events.

604-233-3304

[7 Steps to a More Sustainable Event](#)

[Sustainable Event Tool Kit](#)

events@richmond.ca