



Greening Festivals and Events

Events across the country are making efforts to reduce their footprint. They are doing this to help improve relations with local communities, reduce costs, and attract green conscious attendees.

Who Cares about Green Events?: According to recent surveys, upwards of 70% of attraction visitors have green on their mind.¹ And as much as 36% of festival attendees say green is important to them when buying a festival ticket.² Even entertainers³ and the NFL⁴ are getting into green. And with many businesses working to green their image, implementing sustainable practices may even help you in retaining or attracting new sponsors.

First Steps to Going Green

The hardest steps to being greener can be the first ones. So before you invest significant amounts of limited resources, follow these steps to make sure you start off on the right track:

- Establish a green committee or task force to examine how best your event can go green.
- Enlist the support of vendors, supporting organizations, and staff early whenever possible.
- Ask festival attendees, sponsors, and vendors their thoughts about what green practices they would or would not like to see at the event.
- Assess the current impact of your event. For help on conducting an environmental assessment of your festival, contact the NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at www.p2pays.org.

Benefiting Local Community



From agricultural products to folklore heroes, festivals celebrate the traditions of the communities in which they are held. Many festivals leave behind a negative impact. But a

number of practices that reduce environmental impacts also have a positive impact on the community:

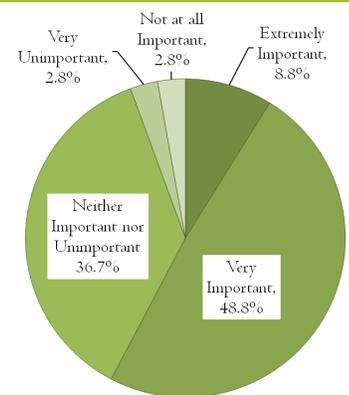
- Improving public transportation to and from your event will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but will also improve traffic flow.
- Using local sources for supplies will not only reduce how far products have to be transported but also support the local economy.

By ensuring the local community is benefited rather than harmed, you will ensure your festival is welcomed back the following year.



How Important is Green to Festival Attendees?

According to a recent study conducted by the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the Business School at East Carolina University, 57.6% of festival attendees think it is either very important or important for festival and events to implement green practices. The same study found that 66.5% are more likely to attend a festival or event that had implemented green practices, and 29.3% attendees would be willing to pay more to attend an event that had implemented green practices.



Energy Conservation

Some festivals have started using portable solar panels, wind turbines, and other sources of renewable energy. Although using onsite renewable energy is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint, it is not always feasible. But there are a number of other ways to be more energy efficient and reduce your event's dependence on fossil fuels.

Before the Event Starts

- Choose a venue with access to public transportation. In North Carolina, for assistance contacting your local public transit office, contact the NC Public Transportation Association www.nctransit.org NC DOT Division of Public Transportation www.ncdot.gov/nctransit. If no public transit is available, help organize and encourage attendees to carpool.
- Encourage vendors to be more energy efficient. Consider providing a maximum power draw per vendor or requiring energy efficient lighting.

During the Event

- Identify who is responsible for turning off equipment when it is not in use, especially diesel generators and lighting.
- Use best idling practices for shuttles. For more information visit www.daq.state.nc.us/motor/idle.
- Use energy efficient audio/visual and stage equipment.
- Arrange to purchase renewable energy or carbon offsets at www.ncgreenpower.org/signup/events.



Waste Reduction and Recycling



The NC Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has developed an Event and Venue Recycling resource center, which can be found at www.p2pays.org/EventVenueRecycling. One of the resources available at the web site is 9 step guide to starting a recycling program. The steps include:

1. Learn about Recycling

- What kind of recyclable could be collected at your venue?
- Can any waste be eliminated even before it gets to trash?
- How do vendors and attendees feel about recycling?

2. Gain Support

Recycling is a team effort To build support for recycling at your venue you might consider creating a recycling team.

3. Identify a Recycling Market

There are many ways recycling can be picked up. You can search for recycling haulers in North Carolina at www.p2pays.org/dmrm/start.aspx.

4. Implementation of Collection

The next step is working on the details of putting a program together. Draft a preliminary budget and plan for material collection.

5. Logistics

Your recycling outlet or service provider will tell you how materials should be separated and what recyclables can be mixed together.

6. Obtain Collection Containers

Sometimes your recycling service contractor may provide collection containers. You can also find suitable containers at local office, janitorial supply, and home improvement stores. Your local government might also have some bins available for use. A comprehensive list of recycling and trash receptacle suppliers can be found at www.p2pays.org/recycleguys/Documents/BinVendors.pdf.

7. Implement Collection Strategy

Discuss the collection process with all the parties that will be involved in material handling and set a date for program implementation.

8. Implement Education Campaign

Everyone should know what and how to recycle, which can be encouraged by clear directions and signage. Reach out to all potential users of your program and maintain a consistent commitment to education and promotion. For ideas on how to promote your recycling program visit www.re3.org/coordinators.htm.

9. Maintain Support

Stay in close contact with your recycling service provider and make sure to regularly check in on how collections are going. Reward those that participate by letting them know how their part helps the environment.



Additional Tips to Help Reduce Waste

- Identify opportunities to eliminate waste at the source, such as using reusable alternatives when possible and working with suppliers to take back packaging materials.
- Include a cleanup clause (with cost attached) for sponsors and vendors to encourage less wasteful products and giveaways
- For information on reducing paper waste at conference and events, visit www.sustainabletourism.org/upload/Tip-Sheet_Reducing-Paper-at-Conf.pdf

Going Local



An irony of many festivals is sometimes local agricultural products the events are named after are not available at the festival. There are many challenges with trying to offer local agricultural products, but there are also a number of great places to get help identifying. The NC Department of Agriculture Marketing Division (www.agr.state.nc.us/markets) or your county NC Cooperative Extension Office (www.ces.ncsu.edu) can help you identify sources of local products. You can also find information about local seasonal products at www.sustainabletourism.org/upload/Tip-Sheet_Seasonal-Eating.pdf

Training and Education

One of the most important parts of going green is communicating your efforts with stakeholders. Proper communication ensures your staff and suppliers work to support your efforts, vendors know what to expect, and attendees know how they can participate. Being transparent and honest about your efforts to go green can also help you avoid any doubt about the sincerity of your commitment to sustainability. Using signage at the event, web site, and on promotional materials is a great way to increase knowledge about your efforts. Contests are also a great and fun way to get stakeholders involved.



Additional Resources

For more information on greening festivals and events, visit

1. [PGAV Destination Consulting \(PDF\)](http://www.p2pays.org/destinationconsulting.pdf)
2. www.agreenerfestival.com
3. <http://greenmusicgroup.org>
4. www.progreensports.com
5. www.theicarusfoundation.com/projects.html
6. www.enoriver.org/Festival/trash.html
7. www.napcor.com/PET/venuerecycling.html
8. www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/rogo/index.htm
9. www.deq.state.va.us/p2/virginiagreen/green_events.html

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