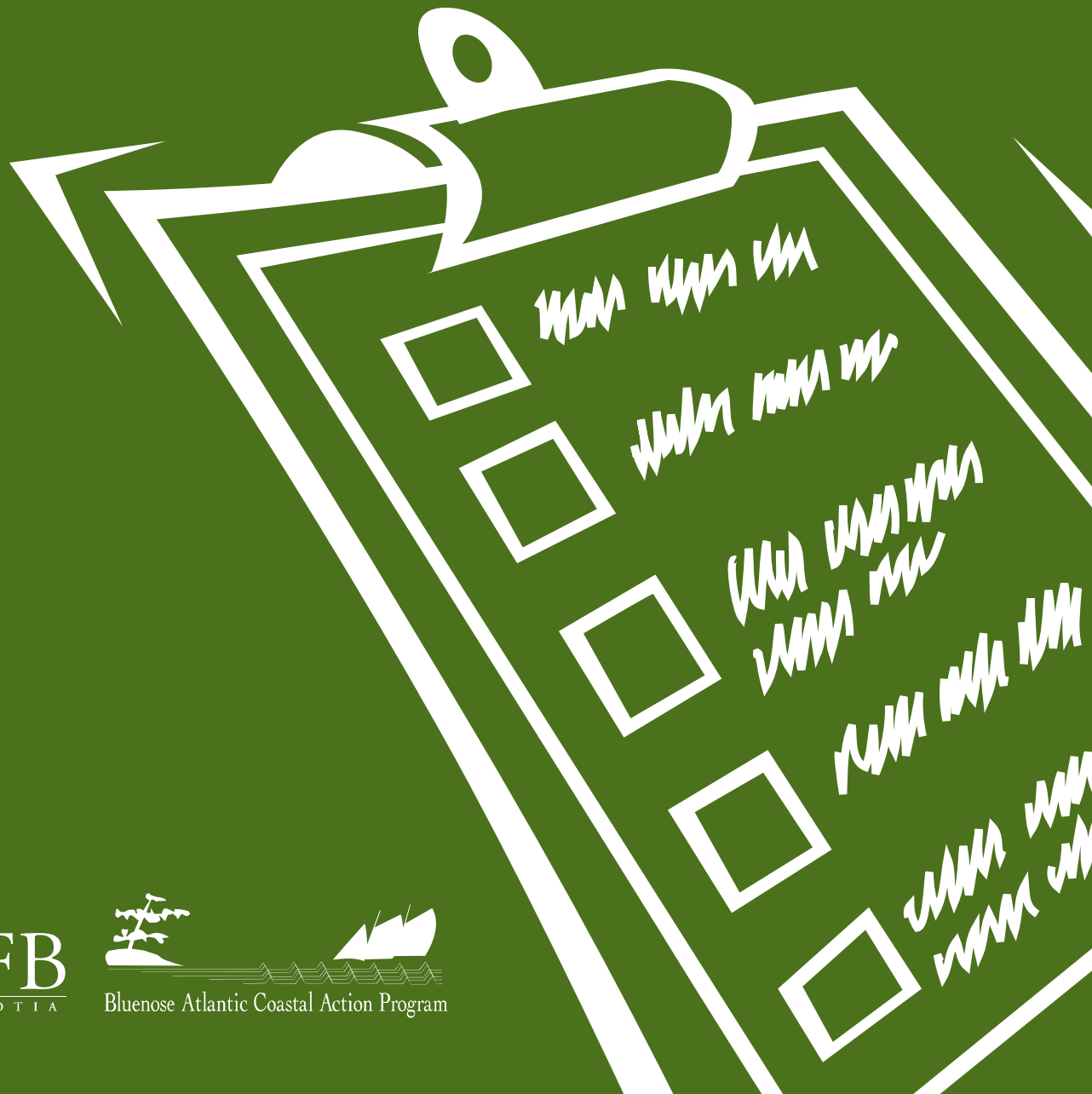


Event Greening

MANAGING WASTE,
RECYCLABLES, & ORGANICS
AT EVENTS & FESTIVALS



Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of government at both the provincial and municipal level and the dedicated participation of residents, Nova Scotia is a world leader in recycling and composting.

More than 700 festivals and events are held in Nova Scotia every year, and much of the waste from these public gatherings is composed of materials that are banned from disposal. Just as residents already do in their homes, waste-resources from public events should be managed under the principles of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.

This guide will help event organizers get a handle on waste management. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to reproduce this guide; however, the content cannot be modified and/or republished without the written permission of RRFB Nova Scotia.

Acknowledgments

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RRFB Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit organization that administers certain components of the province's Solid Waste-Resource Management Strategy. RRFB Nova Scotia works with municipalities, government, and industry to ensure that Nova Scotians receive the maximum environmental and economic benefits associated with waste management and resource recovery. Contact RRFB Nova Scotia at 1-877-313-RRFB (7732) or visit www.rrfb.com.

Bluenose ACAP is a non-profit charitable organization that promotes restoration, enhancement, and conservation of the ecosystem through research, education, and action.



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Nova Scotia is proud to host a wide variety of festivals and events throughout the year, from neighbourhood suppers at community halls and churches to larger celebrations for residents and tourists. Regardless of the size of your event, following these 5 steps to “green” your event can provide a better environment for the public to enjoy.

For the purpose of this guide, event greening shall be defined as integrating waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting principles and programs into the event.

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We hope that you will find this guide useful as you work on making your own event an example to the rest of the province and the world!

RESEARCH & PLANNING

Successful events are generally the result of careful research and planning that begins long before the event is scheduled. The fact that you are reading this guide shows that you are aware of this important principle. The following are some considerations to help you put the decision to green your event into action.

Identify your Stakeholders and the Role they can Play

Stakeholders are individuals, organizations, businesses or community groups that might have an interest in your event. Your stakeholders can help with the organization of a green event, so you should determine early on who they are and identify what role they might be able to play. Your stakeholders may include the following: local waste/recycling/organics hauler(s), municipal/regional waste reduction coordinators, event sponsors, local citizens, vendors, service providers and local environmental organizations or community groups. Identifying your stakeholders early will help you establish priorities for greening your event and make the job easier.

Identify Composting and Recycling Programs in your Region

All municipalities in Nova Scotia have composting and recycling programs in place, but programs can vary in terms of what materials are accepted, how materials are collected, and how waste from special events is managed.

RRFB NOVA SCOTIA CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED!

Call the toll-free Recycling Help Line at 1-877-313-RRFB (7732) for the name and number of a Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator serving your municipality. Regional Coordinators can provide you with important information about recycling and composting programs in your area and help you find composting and recycling facilities and haulers.

Establish a Waste - Resource Management Committee

Establishing a Waste-Resource Management Committee to coordinate the greening of your event allows for responsibilities to be shared according to strengths and interests and will help to generate ideas and solutions. To determine the size of your committee, consider the size of your event and the tasks you plan to undertake.

Tips for a Successful Waste Management Committee

- All committee members should have a good understanding of the waste management goals of the event and of the waste management practices of the host community.
- All major stakeholders should be invited to have a representative on the committee.

Assign a Waste Reduction Coordinator

One individual should be assigned the role of Waste Reduction Coordinator for the event. This individual should have strong organizational and communication skills, a solid understanding of local area waste management programs and practices, and be committed to the goals of the Waste-Resource Management Committee.

For Smaller Events/Festivals

Community suppers, garden parties, weddings and other small gatherings can also benefit from event greening. Although you may not need to establish a committee, you still need the support of those involved to successfully reduce waste at your event. There may be less waste to manage at smaller events, but it still takes planning.

Identify Goals

One of the first activities of the Waste-Resource Management Committee is to identify overall goals and objectives for the greening of the event. What does the Committee hope to achieve by greening the event? It is important to include all stakeholders in developing a policy to ensure that all needs are addressed. Goals might include financial, environmental, and political considerations.

SAMPLE GOALS

The Mahone Bay Wooden Boat Festival set the following goals as part of its event greening policy:

- Use education, reuse, recycling and composting to reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal.
- Ask food and beverage vendors to use compostable, reusable or recyclable containers, or provide appropriate supplies to them.
- Raise the awareness of organizers and participants about waste management issues and the establishment of a green event through displays, flyers and promotions.
- Provide a 3-stream waste station for compostables, recyclables, and garbage.

The Mahone Bay Wooden Boat Festival is an annual celebration of the community's history of ship building that attracts thousands of visitors to the South Shore of Nova Scotia every year. In 2000, the Festival Committee hired an Event Greening Coordinator to help make the event as waste-free as possible. As a result of cooperation between municipal representatives, festival organizers, and the public, the Festival successfully recycled or composted over 80% of the waste generated at the event by using the principles in this guide.

RESEARCH & PLANNING

Identify Potential Waste Materials

Another important task of the Waste–Resource Management Committee/ Coordinator is to determine what waste materials will be generated at the event and what other waste might arrive at the event from surrounding businesses or activities. Establish a list of waste products, and if possible, identify each material and the quantity that will be produced.

You might consider contacting organizers of other similar-sized events for advice. Vendors attending your event may also be able to help estimate waste quantities by providing estimates of expected sales of food and beverages.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Will food or beverages be served? If so, what type of beverage containers and utensils will be used?
- What types of containers/packaging are likely to arrive at your site?
- Are there other businesses in the area that may inadvertently contribute waste to your site?
- What activities will occur at your event and what waste products will be produced?

Identify Disposal Options and Alternatives

Once you have identified potential waste materials, consider each one individually to determine disposal options and possible alternatives. Your Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator will be able to help you assemble this vital information. Contact RRFB Nova Scotia for the name of a Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator serving your area.

THINK ABOUT:

- Is the material banned from disposal?
- Is the material recyclable? Compostable? Reusable? Subject to a deposit/refund?
- Could a recyclable, compostable, or reusable product be used instead of a disposable product?
- Could packaging be reduced or eliminated by changing how a particular product is served?
- Could a particular waste item be eliminated from the event through an event policy?

To view a wide variety of waste receptacles, visit RRFB Nova Scotia's website at www.rrfb.com, and click 'resources'.

Determine the Waste Separation System for the Event

The Waste–Resource Management Committee/Coordinator will need to research and determine what type of waste separation system will be appropriate for the event. Waste receptacles can be purchased, rented, borrowed, or constructed and can range from complex designs to a simple row of individual containers. When planning a waste station for your event, be sure to consider your budget, anticipated quantities and types of waste, and the durability of the system.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Each waste stream should be represented by a specific colour: blue for recycling, green for organics, and black for garbage.
- The shape of each slot is key: narrow for paper, round for recycling, square for garbage and rectangle for organics.
- A lid on the organics container will prevent contamination.
- Containers should have slanted tops so that waste will not be left on top.
- Place recycling, composting and garbage containers side by side. This will lessen the likelihood of all material getting thrown into the same container.

Signage For Waste Stations

- Use simple and clear signs that show people what goes in each container. Use graphics with minimal text.
- Signs should be located at eye-level, preferably on the top (back) of the container.
- For larger events, you should consider training volunteers to educate visitors about proper waste separation and the system your event is using. This will help reduce contamination in the different containers.
- RRFB Nova Scotia sells colourful bilingual signage for public waste containers. The signs are suitable for indoor and outdoor use and are available at cost. Contact RRFB Nova Scotia for more information.

Cost Recovery

If budgets are tight, here are a couple of ideas for recovering some of the costs associated with greening your event.

- Vendor Stewardship - The majority of waste produced on site often comes from vendors, so have them share the responsibility for some of the expenses related to waste management. Costs could be incorporated into booth/vendor fees or could be calculated as a separate charge based on the quantity of waste generated.
- The provincial Deposit/Refund System applies to all ready-to-serve beverage containers sold in Nova Scotia (excluding milk). Collect redeemable beverage containers separate from other recyclable containers (or separate them after the event) and take them to one of over 87 Enviro-Depots across the province for a 5 cent refund. Nickels can quickly add up to dollars that can be applied to waste management costs. Contact RRFB Nova Scotia for the location of an ENVIRO-DEPOT™ near the event.



The Deposit/Refund System can be used to encourage volunteer organizations to assist with the greening of your event. Community-based clubs and groups may be interested in assisting with your waste management efforts in exchange for the refunds collected on redeemable beverage containers.

PARTNERSHIPS

Volunteers and Staff

Volunteers and staff are important to the overall success of greening your event. Volunteers and staff, who are properly trained in responsible waste management practices, can encourage visitors to participate in greening the event. To be effective, volunteers and staff should understand the Waste-Resource Management Committee's goals and be included in the planning.

For larger events, it may be helpful to provide special shirts for your volunteers so that they are easily recognizable to people looking for waste separation information.

Waste Haulers

Depending on the size of your event, you may have to contract a local hauler to collect recyclables, organics, and garbage from the event. Once you have determined the types and quantities of waste expected, you should contact a hauler to make the necessary arrangements.

As front-line service providers in the waste management industry, haulers have experience that might help you plan the greening of your event. During your discussions with a potential hauler, explain the goals of your initiative. Haulers may be able to provide you with helpful information about the types of collection containers best suited to your event, setting up waste stations, and other related aspects of waste-resource management. Your hauler could be a valuable member on the Waste-Resource Management Committee for the event.

Check out the Directory of Solid Waste, Reuse, Recycling and Composting Contacts on the website of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour (www.gov.ns.ca/enla/emc/wasteman) for information about haulers and facilities serving your area, and/or ask your Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator for some help identifying possible partners. Contact RRFB Nova Scotia for the name of a Regional Coordinator serving your area.

For smaller events, waste volumes may not justify waste pick-up or storage bins. In this case, trucking the recyclables, organics, and waste directly to your local waste management facilities may be more financially feasible. At smaller events you may find that curbside collection is acceptable. In this case, you will need to have a place to store your materials until collection day. Contact your local municipality for details.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- What materials does the hauler collect? Garbage? Recyclables? Organics?
- How does the hauler charge? (It generally costs more to take waste for disposal than it does to take organics to a compost facility, or recyclables to a recycling facility.)
- Will the hauler pick up and transport waste, recyclables, and organics directly from your site?
- Will the hauler empty and/or collect waste, recyclables, and organics after regular working hours?

Vendors and Service Providers

Most festivals or events include participation from food, beverages, and merchandise vendors. Although vendors and service providers may not be confirmed in the early stages of planning, potential suppliers should be told that your event will be green. By communicating your intentions early, you will help develop a constructive partnership and increase the likelihood of getting products and services that will complement the goals of your event greening.

SOME IDEAS FOR ENCOURAGING WASTE REDUCTION AT THE SOURCE:

- Encourage vendors to use dishes and utensils that are compostable, recyclable or reusable (e.g. paper plates instead of foam plates).
- Discourage the use of unnecessary disposable items such as plastic straws and stir sticks.
- Discourage single-serve containers for food and condiments (e.g., milk, cream, sugar, ketchup, mustard). Serve these products in jugs, bowls, or bulk dispensers.
- Purchase and sell beverages in store-bought recyclable/refundable/refillable containers where possible.
- Purchase products with recycled content (e.g., napkins made of recycled paper).

COMMUNICATION

Promoting the greening of your event will help gain public participation toward your goals and provide an opportunity to teach others about the importance of waste reduction. As with all aspects of organizing an event, communication must begin early in the planning process and continue throughout the event.

Before the Event

- Make sure that vendors, service providers, and people involved in other aspects of planning the event are aware of your waste reduction goals.
- Inform local and regional media of your intentions. Your efforts to green your event will make a great news story.

Call RRFB Nova Scotia for the name of a Waste Reduction Educator in your area. The educator may be available to set up a display at your event highlighting waste management programs and help visitors understand why you have chosen to green the event.

During the Event

- Make sure that the public is aware of why you are greening the event and what waste separation system has been put in place.
- Encourage participation by acknowledging the support of vendors, service providers, and the general public.

After the Event

- Communicate with vendors, service providers and event organizers about your event greening achievements.
- Communicate with local and regional media about some of the success stories from the greening of your event. How much waste was diverted through recycling and composting? Was public participation high?

Ideas For Promoting the Greening of Your Event

- Send out a news release to local and regional newspapers, and television and radio stations.
- Contact your local radio station and set up a radio interview.
- Produce a special brochure or flyer for the event.
- Design a web page and link it to provincial waste management sites such as www.rrfb.com and www.gov.ns.ca/enla/emcl/wasteman
- Post information on community bulletin boards and at public places.
- Promote your goals - acknowledge public participation by making announcements at the event.
- Put up posters at the event. Laminate signs and posters to ensure durability and to keep them in good condition for future use.

MONITORING

All the effort you put into planning for the event needs to be taken one step further – putting the plan into action! Try to develop a team to share the responsibilities during the event – perhaps members of the Waste-Resource Management Committee or a group of volunteers will be available to help.

Things To Do During the Event

- **Monitor waste stations regularly.** If possible, post volunteers at waste stations to ensure that waste is placed in the right receptacle.
- **Empty waste, recycling, and organics containers as needed.** Emptying containers may be easier and less disruptive if you line containers with bags. Check with your Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator about the types of bags and liners that are accepted by facilities in your region.
- **Keep your event litter free.** Occasional sweeps of the site should be conducted for litter or misplaced waste.
- **Publicize waste management practices at the event.** Encourage participation by making announcements and advertise that the event is “green” on event promotional materials.

On-Site Storage

If you are collecting and storing your waste, recyclables, and organic materials on site, you will need storage bins. Some haulers or municipal waste management authorities will rent carts, bins, or dumpsters. Prior to delivery, the event committee must decide on the best location for the containers. They should be kept close enough to the site so that waste, recyclables, and organics can be transferred easily, but far enough away so that they don't interfere with event activities. It is important that your hauler has easy access to the bins so that, if necessary, they can be emptied during the event with minimal disturbance to participants.

Separate storage containers will be required for the different types of waste. Have the materials separated according to the recycling guidelines of your municipality. There should be at least one large storage bin or cart for every type of material (garbage, recyclables, and organics). The number of bins will vary with the type of event, the amount of waste expected, and the frequency of pick-up.

ALTERNATIVES TO STORAGE BINS:

If your budget is tight, you can use alternative storage bins such as fish tubs, apple crates or steel barrels.

Pick Up and Delivery

For larger events, pick-up and delivery services will need to be arranged in advance. Arrange to have event staff on-site to direct the hauler to the location of the containers. Set a collection schedule and have a contact number in case the bins fill up faster than anticipated.

For smaller events, make arrangements to have recyclables, organics, and waste transported off-site, if necessary, until regular collection day.

*Remember – litter breeds litter!
If waste stations and litter
are not monitored and
managed during the event,
people will be less inclined to
separate their waste.*

CLEAN-UP & EVALUATION

Event sites should be left as clean and undisturbed as they were prior to the event. Conduct a thorough sweep of the event site for litter or misplaced materials. Remove all temporary structures such as waste receptacles and replace any original structures.

Clean all bins and carts prior to storing or returning them. Use a non-toxic environmentally friendly cleaner (dish soap works well) and a long handled brush or mop to clean them.

As with any event or activity, all the hard work you put into it should be assessed to help guide the greening of your next event. A written report should include contact information for everyone involved in planning the event, descriptions of what worked and what did not, and a list of recommendations for improvements. Look at each of the goals the Waste-Resource Management Committee set for the greening of the event. What progress was made towards achieving these goals? How much waste was diverted from disposal through recycling and composting efforts? Was litter successfully managed at your event?

Determining Waste Diversion Rates

If event organizers are interested in quantifying the amount of waste diverted from disposal, you will need to weigh the materials collected.

TO DETERMINE YOUR RATE OF DIVERSION YOU NEED TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Keep an accurate count of the number of bags used during the duration of the event. Keep track of the different waste streams separately (garbage, recycling, organics).
- Record the weight of several bags of each waste material to get an average or approximate weight per bag.
- $\text{Weight per bag} \times \text{total no. of bags} = \text{Total weight of that type of waste.}$
- $\text{Total weight of recyclables} + \text{total weight of organics} = \text{Total waste diverted from disposal.}$

Every 350 kg (770 lbs) diverted is equivalent to the approximate amount of waste disposed of by one Nova Scotia resident in one year!

CHECKLIST

Event Greening Checklist

- Identify stakeholders and the role they can play
- Contact your Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator
(Call RRFB Nova Scotia at 1-877-313-RRFB (7732) for more information)
- Collect information about recycling, composting, and other waste management programs in your area
- Establish a Waste-Resource Management Committee
- Appoint a Waste Reduction Coordinator
- Identify your greening goals
- Identify potential waste materials
- Identify disposal options and alternatives
- Design a waste separation system for the event
- Choose suitable collection containers for garbage, recyclables, and organics
- Communicate with vendors and service providers
- Publicize your plans through local and regional media
- Monitor waste stations and collection during the event
- Evaluate your achievements
- Acknowledge support of all stakeholders and organizers
- Promote your successes.

Quick Tips for Reducing Waste and Litter at Public Events

- Keep signs and posters simple. Do not use logos or dates so that signs can be reused at future events.
- Use graphics with minimal text to illustrate where waste should go.
- Set up a drop-off box for event-related flyers, posters and other paper products, on or near the event site. Flyers can be reused or recycled.
- Use reusable dishes and cutlery or compostable paper plates and cups.
- Borrow equipment and materials if possible.
- Colour code your containers: blue for recycling, green for organics, and black for garbage.
- Use different slot shapes to indicate material types: narrow for paper, round for bottles, square for garbage and rectangle for organics.
- Limit the amount of potential waste at events by adopting purchasing practices that limit packaging.
- Avoid unnecessary services and production of materials.
- Discourage single-serve containers for food and condiments. Serve them in bulk dispensers, or bowls (milk, sugar, ketchup).
- Plan in advance: buy what you need and return what you do not use.
- Avoid materials, supplies or equipment that are hazardous, wasteful and non-recyclable.
- Recycle waste materials such as paper, plastic, and glass through curbside programs or at local recycling facilities.
- Purchase and sell beverages in store-bought recyclable/refillable containers where possible.
- If possible, have your waste stations made out of recycled materials and/or constructed locally.
- Recycle redeemable beverage containers at Enviro-Depots.
- Donate leftover materials to other organizations.
- Call RRFB Nova Scotia for the name and number of a Regional Waste Reduction Coordinator serving your municipality. Regional Coordinators can provide you with important information about recycling and composting programs in your area and help you find composting and recycling facilities and haulers.

For more information about RRFB
Nova Scotia and the programs that
have helped make Nova Scotians
recognized leaders in waste-resource
management, please contact us:



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