

Green Event Guide



Easy and Practical Ways to Host
Environmentally-friendly Events for your
NOAA Office



Guide to a Greener Event

Living up to NOAA's Environmental Mission

The National Ocean Service (NOS) has opportunities to lead by example through demonstration of sustainable practices. NOS is an organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the nation's coastal and marine resources. Therefore, implementing environmental responsibility across all of NOS' activities is necessary. These guidelines were developed in response to this need and serve as a framework for all NOS program offices across the country.

Why is it important to “green” NOS events?

- Large amount of waste is generated at events
- Recycling programs at events are often absent
- Production of “give-aways” has become standard versus unique
- Impact of energy usage during events can be significant
- Food and Beverage selection is designed for “throw away”
- Involvement of the local community enhances local stewardship
- Demonstrates additional leadership for staff of an environmental organization

Simple Steps towards a Greener Event

Facility

- Research the environmental policies of the venue choices for events.
- Ensure recycling receptacles are visible and functional.
- Hold events close to public transportation to reduce the amount of driving necessary.
- Consider an on-site location to avoid people having to take transportation outside of their normal work commute.

Food & Beverage

- Support Fair Trade food and beverage items, particularly from local vendors where possible.
- Do not support a “throw-away” mentality by supplying single-use materials.
- Support local, organic produce to reduce the transportation impact, educate event attendees, and demonstrate community leadership.
- Consider donating un-used food to local food banks.



Supplies

- Suggest an incentive for participants to bring their own mug or cup to events.
- Each program office should inventory supplies, as several offices have items such as industrial coffee urns that can be shared.
- Procure Post-consumer recycled paper products or use cloth.
- Procure compostable products, including utensils made from potato starch, plates from sugarcane, and beverage containers from cornstarch.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning supplies at the conclusion of events.

Carbon Offsetting

- Offset the footprint of all associated activities, including energy usage, which cannot be eliminated.
- Invest in carbon offsets pertinent to NOS.

Information

- Share information explaining why NOS advocates for green events.
- Use recycled paper if posters or handouts are absolutely necessary.
- Empower others to embrace sustainability principles in their personal lives.

Contributing to the larger NOAA Goal of Environmental Compliance:

- Comply with Federal, state, and local environmental regulations.
- Increase employee and interested party knowledge of NOAA's and Department of Commerce's environmental administrative orders, policies, and goals.
- Enhance recycling, pollution prevention, energy efficiency, and water conservation programs to reduce operating costs and preserve natural resources (Exec. Order 13423).
- Foster cooperation with surrounding communities by publicizing NOAA's environmental initiatives and supporting community-based environmental programs.
- Strive for continual environmental program improvement by establishing environmental goals, tracking progress, taking corrective action, and sharing results with NOAA management, staff, regulators, and the public.