

DURING AN EVENT



Courtesy of Johnson Creek Watershed Council

During an event

When you finally hold your event, the benefits of all the preparing and organizing in the “before” stage pay off. With funding in place, volunteers on board and the site well planned, you’re ready to go.

- ✓ **Coordination.** During your event, having different people in charge of specific tasks will really help. As the coordinator, you just have one head and one pair of hands. Rely on others to do their parts.
- ✓ **Volunteers.** At this stage, your volunteers are critically important. They will help keep customers and material moving throughout the day, keep people in line happy and ensure that all receipts and records are tracked for later reconciliation. If you have a Master Recycler onsite, he or she will help educate your volunteers and the public about recycling and reuse opportunities.
- ✓ **Publicity.** The signs and banners you’ve created will help people put the right material in the right place. You will want to take pictures and gather some comments from customers and volunteers.

DURING AN EVENT

Funding sources and reporting

Collect data

- Use forms and processes that allow you to keep track of information for your sponsors and for planning future events. Examples can be found in the Appendices.
- Keep track of the time that haulers arrive, pick up and deliver containers.
- Collect and organize receipts. It is crucial to get receipts or “weight slips” from any facility accepting materials from your event.
- Recognize sponsors and donors. Include sponsor and donor logos or names on event signage and literature.

WASTE PREVENTION: THE FIRST “R”

While neighborhood events provide great potential to recycle a lot of material, they also present wonderful opportunities to highlight the benefits of waste prevention.

Waste prevention means consuming less and creating less waste. It’s the “reduce” part of “reduce, reuse, recycle.” While recycling provides environmental and economic benefits, waste prevention helps conserve energy and reduce pollution. It is considered the preferred method of managing solid waste.

Adopting waste prevention practices is more important than ever. Statewide statistics show that while Oregonians are recycling more each year, they are also consuming more and creating more garbage. Neighborhood cleanups can offer reuse opportunities, such as a “swap” event, in which one person’s “trash” is another person’s “treasure.” Organizers of civic events can work with vendors to generate less waste, such as choosing to avoid a lot of packaged goods and using compostable utensils.

Including waste prevention opportunities at events provides a visible example of environmental responsibility and sustainability. By calling attention to the waste prevention and recycling efforts of your event, you can educate volunteers and attendees. After the event, they may be motivated to examine and change their individual behaviors.



Courtesy of Jane Rosenstein

Site planning and layout

- If applicable, have the approved permit available onsite the day of the event.
- Use cones, barricades and directional signs to control traffic flow. Check with your neighborhood association or other sponsors to see if they have this equipment available for your use – if not, it can be rented from traffic control equipment suppliers.
- Set up equipment according to your site map.
- Communicate the site plan to volunteers. Have copies of your site map available for volunteers handling customer reception and traffic flow.

Customer reception

Your reception process allows you to:

- collect information that may be required in reporting to your sponsors (such as numbers of customers and materials delivered)
- collect fees
- screen out unacceptable items. If the customer has questions about how to dispose of materials not accepted at your event, provide information about facilities accepting those items (Metro Recycling Information is an ideal resource).
- request contact information from customers for future communications and share information about the organizations sponsoring the event
- let drivers know about any recycling or reuse opportunities. Sorting for reuse and recycling can take longer than disposal. Explain this to drivers, and they will likely have more patience. Your volunteers can also explain the importance of waste prevention and recycling at events such as your own.

Emphasize reuse and recycling

- Use signs or banners to inform both customers and volunteers about what can be left in each container or area.
- If you are offering a recycling opportunity for a specific type of material, such as plastics or electronics, try to provide easy access for customers bringing only those materials. Also, if something is sorted out of a load, consider how customers or volunteers will transport these materials. An excellent approach is to use carts or wheelbarrows, which reduces vehicle traffic within the site, providing a more ergonomic way to transport materials.



Courtesy of Jane Rosenstein

Use signs, banners and printed materials to show where to deliver reusable and recyclable items.

DURING AN EVENT

Volunteers

Volunteer training

Schedule your first shift of volunteers to arrive early enough to hold a training session on the day of the cleanup. Or, if possible, plan a brief volunteer training session during the week before the event. This early training can supplement, but should not replace on-site training. Make sure that your volunteers know that they should arrive prepared for hard and dirty work and for possible bad weather.

Pair up those ending a shift with an arriving volunteer for on-the-job training. Overlapping shifts will make sure there is enough time for those leaving a shift to train and update those beginning a shift. Or, assign second-shift training to a particular individual. Second- or third-shift training can be scheduled for a half hour before the previous shift ends. All incoming volunteers should be directed to a designated area for this training.

On-site volunteer training should include:

- thanks to volunteers for coming
- why your project is important and its goals
- volunteer sign in and release/waiver signing
- schedule for the event, including breaks
- site plan review, including location of drop boxes, reuse and recycling areas, restrooms, refreshments, etc.
- volunteer roles and responsibilities
- distribution of shirts, safety vests, equipment, etc.
- to whom volunteers should go to with questions
- review of safety and emergency procedures.

Incentives

Incentives help thank volunteers and keep them returning. Take every opportunity to thank them.

- Highlight the benefits of volunteering, such as leadership opportunities, connecting with neighbors and working to improve the environment. These often mean more than material gifts to volunteers. Volunteering also can help develop transferable employment skills.
- Show respect and equal status for all volunteers.
- Food and drink for your volunteers may be more important than gifts, in terms of retention and productivity. Provide plenty of drinking water and a timely lunch.
- Offer free disposal and “first choice” from the reuse area. Cleanups that include a reuse/resale area typically offer volunteers free choice from these items.
- Gift certificates or items from local businesses provide a mutual benefit.
- Choose gifts thoughtfully, particularly if one of the goals is reducing waste. Consider whether a volunteer T-shirt or cap will be a useful item after the cleanup is over.

PROFILE: Useful Goods Exchange

The Useful Goods Exchange is part of a larger project, called the **Sunnyside Swap Shop Co-op**, which opened in October 2007 in the Sunnyside neighborhood of Southeast Portland.

The Swap Shop functions as a membership cooperative. It will be a year-round trading hub for members to donate unwanted used goods. Members trade unwanted goods for items of similar value. Swapping operates on an honor system and founder Karen Hery explains that any concerns about fairness are met with a “shop first, swap second” policy.

Hery gained inspiration for the project through her interest in “peak oil” preparedness and climate change issues. She supports the view that effective responses to these concerns must confront patterns of consumption in American society through creation of locally based economies. Hery points out that extending the useful life of consumer goods is a fundamental component of resource efficiency.

Aside from the waste reduction focus, the project revolves around improving social connections among neighbors, families and friends. The Swap Shop space includes an indoor playground, which provides ample opportunities for connection and recreation.

The Swap Shop project began with two events open to all – the Back to School Exchange in the fall, and the Useful Goods Exchange in the spring – and these will be annual events. The 2007 Useful Goods Exchange was funded by neighborhood small grant funds, in partnership with the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association. The event was planned in conjunction with the annual neighborhood cleanup and benefited from sharing resources such as publicity and drop box space. According to the project’s Web site, more than 500 people swapped 5,000 items at the event.

“It is interesting how the project revolves around material things,” says Hery, “but what happens at the Swap Shop has so little to do with materialism. It really is about developing the community.”

For more information visit www.sunnysideswapshop.org.



Courtesy of Jane Rosenstein

DURING AN EVENT

Publicity

Document the event

- Take high resolution photos (assign this duty to a volunteer).
- Gather comments from customers, partners and volunteers, with future publicity in mind.

Materials and haulers

- Train volunteers how to sort all materials.
- Walk the site at the beginning of the day with volunteers and share the site plan, showing what material should be delivered where.
- Use signs, banners and printed materials to reinforce instructions on “what goes where.”
- Have greeters inform customers about material sorting as they arrive. Areas for collection and sale/trade of reusable items should be set away from drop boxes to avoid confusion about what is trash and what is not.
- Load drop boxes safely. Fill back section to the top; middle section to the top; front section to top. Never throw materials over the sides of the drop box.
- Request receipts and weight slips. If possible, have reuse and recycling businesses supply itemized receipts or weight slips.

Special assistance pick-ups

You may need to provide service to residents of the community who are unable to attend your event due to a mental or physical impairment.

- Aim to serve five to fifteen customers. Suggest donations instead of charging high fees.
- Connect with existing community and government agency staff that assist seniors and disabled in the area to locate residents and understand needs.
- Trucks are necessary for this type of pick up. Recruit volunteers to help drive, pick up loads and/or loan a vehicle. A truck could be donated or rented if funds are available. All drivers must have proof of insurance.
- When making appointments for special assistance pick up, be sure to ask the location of the materials to be collected (i.e., down or up stairs).
- Volunteers must be properly equipped for transporting heavy items. Send volunteers to smaller jobs first.
- Limit service to items such as furniture, appliances, or other bulky waste. You may want to be flexible if you are offering special reuse and/or recycling services through your event.
- Finalize your scheduled stops at least 24 hours before the event. Set a deadline for scheduling, and mention this deadline when you publicize special assistance efforts.
- Schedule pickups so that last loads will be un-loaded into dumpsters before they are hauled away.

AFTER AN EVENT



After an Event

Your event is over, it was a wild success, and you, your many volunteers and partners have diverted a lot of material from the landfill and created a cleaner community.

However, it's not quite time to call it a day. There are a number of very important tasks that need to be done before you can wrap things up. The good news is that you've been so well organized all along the way that this stage should go well too.

- ✓ **Recordkeeping.** You'll need receipts and documentation to be reimbursed from the organizations that are funding your event. Good records also will help you plan for next year, since you'll have a sense of how many people came, what they brought and how much publicity you did.
- ✓ **Thank.** You'll want to thank and acknowledge all those invaluable volunteers, sponsors and donors. There are a number of ways to do that, from giving them small gifts, to holding a celebration after the event.
- ✓ **Publicity.** Your publicity efforts will pay off now too. Local newspapers – especially neighborhood association and community newspapers – are hungry for local news involving everyday people.
- ✓ **Celebrate.** This last stage can be the most satisfying. Be sure to celebrate your success, and give yourself – and everyone else who helped – a huge pat on the back.

AFTER AN EVENT

Funding sources and reporting

Complete reporting

- Gather and total receipts. Promptly submit expense reports, with receipts and any other required documentation, to all sponsoring agencies.
- Provide follow-up reports and statistics to sponsors as soon as data is available.
- If a neighborhood association is a sponsor, prepare a brief report for its Board of Directors.
- Acknowledge and thank every sponsor and donor.

Site planning and layout

- Remain on site until all containers have been collected.
- Clean the site thoroughly.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the property owner.

Volunteers

Acknowledge and celebrate volunteers

- Have a post-event debriefing and recognition event, such as a party or a field trip to a Metro transfer station or recycling facility. Ask volunteers for feedback on how to improve event.
- When possible, create a newsletter announcement thanking volunteers.
- Follow up with notes of thanks, by mail or e-mail, including data (if available) on the impact of volunteers' efforts (diversion rates, tonnage) and highlighting memorable aspects of the event.
- Inform volunteers of future/repeat events and ask them to take part as planners and/or onsite volunteers.
- Ask them to refer others to volunteer at future events.

Publicity

Use post-event publicity to celebrate your achievements, to acknowledge your volunteers and to recruit new volunteers for your next event.

- Write articles. Articles for community media outlets should highlight what was accomplished. If your event is annual, use articles to discuss planned improvements and to begin to recruit volunteers for next year. Also include information about where collected materials were sent, how much was diverted from the landfill and other examples of the event's achievements in minimizing its environmental impact.
- Thank sponsors, partners and volunteers. Take every opportunity to express appreciation for those who made it possible.

PROFILE: Master Recyclers

The Master Recycler Program started in 1991 to bridge the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to reduce waste in the Portland Metro region. The program is sponsored by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Metro, the Portland Office of Sustainable Development, Clackamas and Washington counties and Recycling Advocates.

Master Recyclers take an eight-week course, led by recycling experts, on waste prevention and recycling topics. These trainees then “pay back” their training by volunteering in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington county communities, educating residents in a variety of different settings.

To date, 750 Master Recycler volunteers have contributed more than 12,000 hours to promoting conservation and sustainability issues throughout the region.

Master Recyclers provide great resources for planning and technical assistance. In addition, there are many bilingual Master Recycler volunteers who can assist in providing outreach and education in multiple languages.

For example, a Master Recycler could investigate potential businesses to partner with that accept reusable and recyclable materials, and then coordinate with this partner to handle the recyclable material. The Master Recycler could advise volunteers about which materials are acceptable for reuse. Master Recyclers have provided similar assistance at neighborhood events by coordinating the collection of materials such as electronics and plastics. Civic events, such as Art in the Pearl, have received assistance from Master Recyclers to develop and implement recycling plans.

The day of your event, having one or more Master Recyclers present can provide a wealth of expertise to your customers on how best to handle all kinds of materials, with an emphasis on waste reduction and recycling. Master Recyclers should not be expected to unload vehicles or dismantle materials. Their role should be as technical assistants and waste prevention experts.

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PROFILE: **Master Recyclers** continued

Master Recycler volunteers also can offer an information table at your event on topics such as:

- curbside recycling rules
- ideas and resources for non-toxic cleaning supplies
- waste reduction
- composting and worm composting
- “green” remodeling.



Courtesy of Master Recyclers

For planning assistance, contact Master Recyclers at least two to three months before your event date. For on-site help the day of your event, contact the program at least one month prior. Please note that contacting the Master Recycler program does not ensure a volunteer for your event. The program coordinator will distribute your event information, but assistance for your event isn't guaranteed.



For more information about the Master Recycler program, visit www.masterrecycler.org or call 503-823-7530, or e-mail masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us

Materials and haulers

- Collect and report data. Based on information from reuse and recycling businesses, calculate your “diversion rate,” or how much material you were able to keep out of the landfill. Include this information in post-event publicity and reporting to sponsors and partners.
- Publicize accomplishments.