

What is a Zero Waste Philosophy?

Zero Waste promotes “ethical, economic, and efficient” (Zero Waste Alliance, 2004)

“Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.

Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them.

Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”

This definition is the internationally accepted and peer-reviewed definition adopted by the Zero Waste Alliance. 29 Nov 2004

Simplifying the Philosophy

Zero Waste philosophy reminds us that there are steps we can take beyond recycling to achieve our sustainability goals.

It promotes:

- Minimizing waste
- Recycling products
- Reducing consumption
- Creating products that are reusable
- Creating products that can be recycled back to nature or the market

Zero Waste seeks to copy nature’s design. In the environment, life is cyclical. Natural products are created, consumed, and returned. It may be helpful to think about how a food chain works. (Insert picture of food chain? Delete this part?)

Energy is constantly transferred between producers, consumers, and decomposers. Of course this is an oversimplification of the process, but this gist of what Zero Waste Philosophy builds itself upon.

I would delete these last two paragraphs and instead maybe talk about how we’re all familiar with the 3 R’s and zero waste aims to set the goal higher by combining all three (plus Rot). And either here or elsewhere in the guide mention that the key fact to keep in mind when aiming for zero waste is that those 3 R’s are in that order for a reason: reduce should always be the first tactic, and recycling should be thought of more as a last resort.

Maybe also mention how energy/carbon emissions relate to Zero Waste, or at least mention that they are included in this guide as they are an essential component of sustainability.

To get you thinking about how to host a Zero Waste event we have created a small guide with tips and questions to ask yourself as you plan! (re-word?) We encourage you to use this guide as a starting point for your own research and we hope that it proves to be a beneficial resource while you plan your event.

Waste:

When it comes to waste at your event we encourage you to focus on these basics:

Consumption is waste. For every ONE curbside garbage can that contains properly sorted disposable or recyclable products there are SEVENTY-ONE cans of industrial waste that go unseen by the consumer. (properly cite, but for now <http://archive.grrn.org/zerowaste/kit/briefing/faq1.pdf> & <http://www.grrn.org/page/what-zero-waste>)

- Avoid over-consumption
- Think of alternatives to buying **Ask yourself if you really need this product: can you do without it? Or is there alternative solution- maybe a reuse option already exists in your possessions.**
- Avoid single-use items and items that are disposable
- Consider the best way to dispose of any waste that is generated
- **Be mindful of what will happen to your products when you are done with them (there is no “away” when you throw away → landfill reminder)**

Alternatives to prevent waste:

Consider your dishes

- Use Slugware (depending on the size of your event) [click here](#) to find out more ***check to see if they update the form and then update link**
- Invest in your own reusable dishware and provide them at your event
 - Consider second hand stores before buying new dishware
- Provide your guests with reusable dishware as favors for the event (see favors section)
- Ask guests to bring their own reusable dishware such as cups, plates, cutlery, and napkins.
- Use compostable dishware and cutlery
 - Here are a few US manufacturers that sell compostable items: [GreenLine Paper Company](#) , [Stalk Market](#), [Eco-Products](#)
 - **Be mindful that most compostable plastics require commercial composting and won't breakdown in your backyard compost pile**

Consider your decorations

- Stay away from items that are single use or require heavy and unnecessary packaging/ buy in bulk
- Think local
- Consider second hand stores before buying entirely new items
- Donate your decorations to the venue, a second hand store, your guests or re-sell your decorations online – never throw them away!
- Make the decorations yourself using recycled or low impact art materials
 - Materials made from recycled or post consumer material
 - Materials that are marked non-toxic
 - Materials that come from second hand stores (fabrics, beads/jewelry, old records, old magazines/post cards/pictures)
 - Check out this pinterest page on up-cycling to help you get creative!

Consider your Invitations & favors

- Invitations/ Thank You cards

- Use recycled paper or seed paper for your invitations/ thank you cards
[Green Field Paper Company](#): offers plantable seed paper and hemp paper
- Make your and send invitations digitally
 - There are many ways to do this, here are a few ideas:
 - [Facebook Events](#)
 - Email Invites ([Gmail event](#), [Yahoo event](#))
 - [Evites](#)
 - [Event planning using Social Media](#)

- Favors/ Thank You items

- Stay away from items that are single use or require heavy and unnecessary packaging/ buy in bulk
- Think local
- Ask yourself this: If you were the guest at this event, would you use the favor being given away?
- Consider these following ideas and look at our Pinterest for more!
 - Potted succulents, herbs, flowers (can be used as thank you items or even place cards)
 - Seed packets with personalized note on them
 - Reusable dishware
 - Click here to go to the [UCSC Arboretum Pinterest](#) page for more ideas

Diverting waste:

UCSC Zero Waste infrastructure

- For a fee you can have UCSC Ground Services provide you with 3 different waste receptacles (recycling, compost, trash) which will help divert unnecessary waste from the landfill

- Trash talkers can be added for a fee and will help to educate you and your guests about what goes where (make clear that Trash Talkers are mandatory, regardless of fee vs. volunteers)
 - If you would prefer to not pay the fee, volunteer trash talkers can be trained by the Zero Waste Team
- Interested? Click here(this will link to other gmail doc about it)

Energy:

- Hold your event during the day and utilize natural daylight/ eliminate the need for heaters
 - Indoor tips
 - During your event be aware of equipment plugged in and make a plan to unplug equipment when it's not in use
 - If you plan to host part of the event outside turn off the lights when not using the indoor portion of the venue
 - Encourage guests to turn off the lights in the bathroom(s)
 - Keep your eye on the thermostat. Energy.gov recommends these efficient thermostat temperatures
 - Heat: 68°F is considered efficient
 - A/C: 78°F is considered efficient
 - If your event will be both indoor/outdoor be extra mindful of windows and doors left open and adjust the thermostat as necessary or consider turning it off
 - Having the windows/doors open during your event while using the Central Air and Heating is inefficient and causes the system to work harder and use more energy

Transportation:

- Ask your guests to carpool or use other efficient modes such as public transport and biking
- Create a carpool Facebook group specifically for your event to allow guests a platform to make their own arrangements
- Consider how far items for your event have traveled:
 - Buying anything local, from food to the décor, reduces your carbon emissions – the less it travels, the more sustainable it is!

As the event host, we encourage you to ask yourself some of these questions to get you thinking about how and where you can be more sustainable with your event

Question the **items** you'll use/ or want to use at your event:

Do you know how far they will have traveled to arrive at your event?

Do you know about the manufacturer's policies regarding the environment and its treatment of their employees? **This link is helpful:** <http://www.goodguide.com/>

Are the employees treated fairly? Do they work in a safe and healthy environment? Are they paid properly for their work? **(Does this relate to Zero Waste? Not that it's not important! But want to make sure it's relevant)**

Do any of the products you are considering purchasing have toxins in them/ were created with toxins? (re-word)

Do you need this product at your event? Is there a better alternative?

Can you donate any items after? Keep them? How will you prevent the items/products used from entering the landfill?

Are the items reusable? Will people be likely to reuse them?

When buying an item, look for Ecolabels! [Click here](#) to view all the ecolabels in the United States. These labels help you, the consumer, make better choices when purchasing your items. Browse the different labels and learn what each of them means. Being informed about the products you consume is a great practice in sustainable living

Question the way you can **divert waste** produced:

Can your event afford to pay for UCSC Ground Services waste pickup? If not, how do you think you can encourage waste diversion?

Do you want to have educational signs above recycling and trash receptacles? (The Arboretum will be happy to supply you with waste signage, just ask us how!)

Do you want to incorporate a quick waste diversion information session at the start of your event or prior to the most wasteful part of your event such as a planned meal? If so, please check out these links:

- [City of Santa Cruz Recycling Guide](#): Learn all about recycling in Santa Cruz and be prepared to inform your guests with necessary waste diversion information specific to your event
- [UCSC Sustainability Office Zero Waste Team](#): Explore the page and learn about the Zero Waste Team on UCSC's Campus. Contact zerowasteucsc@gmail.com if you are interested in: having the Zero Waste Team give a talk at your event, or training trash talkers, people who will monitor the trash cans and help properly sort waste, for your event

Question the **amount of energy** your event may use:

Is your event indoors or outdoors? Will it be utilizing natural light? Can you shift the event to utilize natural light?

What are the ways you, as the event host, can make sure your guests keep your event's energy use as efficient as possible? Do you want to include an announcement at the start of the event? Informational notes or posters? (The Arboretum will be happy to supply you with energy signage, just ask us how!)

Do you know if your guests will be traveling far to get to your event? If so, how can you encourage them to take alternate methods of transportation?

How can you help them organize these alternate methods of transportation?

Can you avoid printing out items for your event? If you need to print some, are there other documents that you can cut back on? → **Double-sided, toner saving setting, recycled paper**

Do you know how far your food is traveling to get to your event? [Click here](#) to check out this fantastic link provided by Community Alliance with Family Farmers that lets you see some of the best locally grown food in your area.

Have you considered University Catering provided by UCSC Dining Services? [Click here](#) to learn more about catering options. ([Click here](#) to learn more about UCSC Dining Services sustainability initiatives.)

List of UCSC Contacts: **Make links/add contact info?**

Offices/Units:

[UCSC Arboretum Office](#)

(831) 502-2998

[University Catering](#)

catering@ucsc.edu

(831) 459-4600

(See "Contact" page for more information)

Sustainable Living links

[Earth Resource Foundation](#)

A non-profit, environmental education organization. They believe in empowering the public by providing them the resources they need to make sustainable choices and changes.

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[Eco-Cycle](#)

Based out of Boulder, Colorado this is one of the largest non-profit recyclers in the United States. Check out the "[Eco-Cycle Solutions](#)" tab to learn more information about Zero Waste and how to take action in your own community.

[GrassRoots Recycling Network](#)

A network of activists and recycling professionals. Their website contains valuable information on Zero Waste Ideology. Beyond that they have great information on Zero Waste Businesses, Climate Change & Organics Recycling, and preventing waste burying and burning. They also have ways to get involved!

[Zero Waste International Alliance](#)

This group operates at the international, national and local level, encouraging the world wide community to work towards Zero Waste principles. Their website contains Zero Waste standards, Case Studies and provides a platform for further research and chances to get involved.

[Terracycle](#) recycles many items not usually accepted by city/county recycling programs

Sustainable Wedding links

[Celia-Grace](#)

This website is excellent if you or someone you know is getting married. Offering a FREE E-Book about how to select Ethical Wedding Dresses, this website is a sustainable bride-to-be dream come true! With so much information to offer, it's easy to make a smart choice when choosing a wedding dress.

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pwd/zerowaste/whatiszerowaste/default.asp>

http://www.wri.org/resources/charts_graphs

<http://www.mansfieldct.gov/filestorage/1904/2344/5433/July2013.pdf>

http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/advncng_smm_infogrphc.pdf

<http://www.village.fruitvale.bc.ca/sites/fruitvale.civicwebcms.com/files/media/What%20is%20Zero%20Waste.pdf>

[A User's Guide to Fair Trade Wedding Dresses](#)