



## **How can you make your meeting, wedding or event more “green”?**

A “green” event is based on the understanding the event exhibits best practices of environmental sustainability. Selecting reusable materials, using recycled materials and, recycling materials used can significantly lessen the environmental impact an event has on the environment.

Below are guidelines to follow when “green-ing” up your next event!

### **Invitations and Communication**

#### *Recommended Best Practice*

- E-mail event invites.
- Create your own event website for RSVP, updates and photos.

#### *Minimum Best Practice*

- Let your guests know it will be a green event with recycling/composting and other eco-friendly options to divert waste from landfills.
- Print simple invites using minimal amount of paper.
- Use 100% post-consumer recycled paper and double sided copies.
- Use soy-based/vegetable-based ink.
- Use inkjet printers rather than laser printers as they use less energy.

### **Transportation**

#### *Recommended Best Practice*

- Provide your guests with shuttle bus from a central collection point.
- Contract with a company to provide customers with a carbon neutral travel option (i.e. they plant trees to offset the carbon emissions produced by vehicles).

#### *Minimum Best Practice*

- Organize car-pooling for your guests
- Use transit.

## Centrepieces and Flowers

### *Recommended Best Practice*

- Use flowers or plants that are in season
- Use glass containers/vases.
- Use of recycled/vintage vases from family collections
- Donate used floral décor to local non-profits and elder care facilities.

### *Minimum Best Practice*

- Buy flowers as much as possible from local growers and use buyers to find other sustainable growers.
- Use local and sustainably-certified flowers. Support local vendors and farms.
- Avoid floral foam and plastic.

***DID YOU KNOW:*** Flowers make a big impact on how eco-friendly your event is because they often require shipping from very faraway places, and can require dozens of herbicides and pesticides to keep fresh or grow in their non-native environments.

*As a rule of thumb, if you have to store it in the fridge, don't use it. Tie an organic cotton or silk ribbon around the neck of the vase, or add some twigs at the top for interest.*

## Food & Beverages

### *Recommended Best Practice*

- No Styrofoam/polystyrene products please.
- When possible, provide food and beverages that are: locally grown/in-season; organic; fair trade, shade grown and/or appealing vegetarian alternatives. Arrange to have leftover food donated to a local food bank or soup kitchen.
- Use china and flatware.

### *Minimum Best Practices*

- Obtain re-useable linens, dishes and cutlery and environmentally friendly products.
- Eliminate or minimize use of forest-based and petroleum based products, such as paper plates and plastic eating utensils.
- Use cloth instead of paper napkins. If cloth is not available, use high post-consumer products.
- Use china ware and glassware.
- Serve condiments in bulk containers or bowls.
- Serve water and juice in pitchers, and soft drinks in returnable containers.
- Do not ask caterers to pre-fill drinking water – serve upon request.
- Minimize the use of tablecloths, i.e. use single colours instead of overlays.
- Provide signage that tells attendees whether food is locally grown, organic or seasonal.
- Choose seafood from sustainable fisheries. Increased consumer demand for seafood is depleting fish stock around the world and harming the health of the oceans.

***DID YOU KNOW:*** Using 1,000 disposable plastic teaspoons consumes over 10 times more energy and natural resources than manufacturing one stainless steel teaspoon and washing it 1,000 times!

- Consider serving local and/or organic wines.

## **Music**

Sound systems suck up a lot of energy, including lugging them around. Here's how to cut back on energy use and save cash.

### *Recommended Best Practice*

- Support local musicians. Ask your musically-inclined friends to play for your wedding.
- Ask your wedding musicians to go unplugged.

### *Minimal Best Practices*

- Make your own dance mix on your iPod or memory stick, hook it up to the sound system

## **Photography**

### *Recommended Best Practice*

- Consider viewing all your digital images on a DVD first so you only have to print out the really great ones.

### *Minimum Best Practice*

- Print out your photos using vegetable-based inks. Most photos are developed and printed using harsh, harmful chemicals.

*Do you have other ideas on how to make events more sustainable? Please share with us by calling 3-1-1 or share on our Parks Facebook page!*