



# SUSTAINABLE TALLAHASSEE: GREENING THE COMMUNITY

# INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Tallahassee (ST) takes the lead on implementing sustainable practices, or “greening,” the Tallahassee community through programs, events, and festivals. However, our efforts could not be actualized without the help of community partnerships including large entities, such as Leon County and the City of Tallahassee; local organizations, like Green Party Events; and even passionate individuals, who volunteer their time to improve their community.

For this presentation we would like to focus on our greening efforts to reduce waste at large local festivals and events, including the LeMoyne Chain of Parks Art Festival (COPAF), which saw an estimated 35,000 attendees; the Tallahassee PrideFest: Pride in the Plaza event (5,000 attendees); and Southern Shakespeare Festival (10,000 attendees). We enjoy representing environmental awareness at these events because we are able to reach new audiences unaware of sustainable practices. Our goal is to increase sustainability on an individual and community level, but we can't accomplish this if we are “preaching to the choir”: we need everyone on board.

# RECYCLING: ADVOCACY

When we partner with organizations to “green” their festivals through different sustainability efforts, recycling advocacy is always at the core.



We depend on generous volunteers to patrol recycle bins at festivals like COPAF, educating attendees on Leon County's recycling policies and resources.



# RECYCLING: EDUCATION

To ensure that our 75 plus volunteers are well-versed in recycling, we partner with Leon County's Office of Sustainability to provide training sessions.

We also created a Recycle Guide that is posted throughout the grounds of the festivals and events we work at.

Through such efforts, 1380 pounds of cardboard were collected and recycled at COPAF.



# RECYCLING: RECYCLED CONTENT AWARD AT COPAF

One of ST's recycling initiatives, unique to COPAF, was our sponsorship of the Recycled Content Award, given to an exhibiting artist for a singular piece of original work that was created using at least 75% post-consumer use/recycled/reused materials. We wanted to jump start the conversation about reusing materials and bring an awareness to the reality of the amount of waste we send to the landfills every day.



**2017 Recycled Content Award Recipient:**  
Brenda Flynn

# REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE: RAGS 2 BAGS COMMITTEE

Sustainable Tallahassee's Rags 2 Bags Committee crafted and donated 1,000 reusable bags at COPAF, and were used in place of plastic bags with every purchase at the festival's souvenir tent. These bags are made with donated sewing machines, fabric, space, and labor, and divert unwanted fabric from landfills. This committee's goal is to encourage people to refuse plastic bags, which can take up to 1,000 years to break down into toxic particles and kill an estimated 1 million birds, 100,000 turtles, and countless other sea animals each year.

# REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE: RAGS 2 BAGS COMMITTEE



## these bags...

- are sewn using **donated** sewing machines, fabric, space, and labor.
  - require ~1 hr to make (valued at \$25/hr in labor)
  - divert unwanted fabric from the landfill
- So, for every 1,000 bags made, as was done for the Chain of Parks Art Festival 2017...
- 450 yards and 250 pounds of fabric was diverted
  - \$25,000 was donated in 1,000 hours of labor

## why?

- The U.S. uses ~100 billion plastic bags (from 12 million barrels of oil) per year, with the average adult using ~350-500.
- Plastic bags take ~15-1,000 years to break down into toxic particles.
- An estimated 1 million birds, 100,000 turtles, and countless other sea animals die each year from ingesting plastic.

Metrics from <https://www.reusethisbag.com/25-reasons-to-go-reusable.php>



# REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE: KICK BOTTLED WATER CAMPAIGN

One of our committees focuses on the “Kick the Water Bottle Campaign,” which urges people to not use plastic water bottles by educating them on the harm wasted plastic does to animals and our natural resources.

**Right:** Our resident Water Bottle Monster, providing a dramatic example of the pollution from single-use plastic water bottles in our oceans.



# REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE: KICK BOTTLED WATER CAMPAIGN



## Pledge to Kick Bottled Water

Take the pledge to choose tap over bottled water.  
Make every drink count toward protecting the environment – and saving you money!

- Bottled water is not safer than tap water.  
*In fact, the federal government requires rigorous and frequent safety testing and monitoring of municipal drinking water – but not for commercially bottled water.*
- Our municipal water tastes great.  
*Most commercial water is bottled from municipal water systems elsewhere. Why drink it when City of Tallahassee water has been awarded as the best tasting in Florida?*
- Bottled water is thousands of times more expensive than tap water.  
*Compare \$0.002 per gallon for most tap water to a range of \$0.89 to \$8.26 per gallon for bottled waters.*
- Bottled water hurts the environment.  
*After millions of barrels of oil are used to produce and ship plastic water bottles, 75% end up in the garbage or our waterways instead of the recycle bin.*

[www.SustainableTallahassee.org](http://www.SustainableTallahassee.org)

**YOUR INFORMATION** *(please print)* \*Required fields

\*First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, keep me updated by email from Sustainable Tallahassee.

**I pledge to:**

- ✓ Choose tap water over bottled water whenever possible;
- ✓ Fill a reusable bottle with tap water;
- ✓ Support initiatives that promote clean, affordable tap water for all.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

To remind them of their commitment to avoid single-use plastic water bottles, people can choose to sign a pledge to kick bottled water and choose tap.

# REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE: CITY OF TALLAHASSEE WATER WAGON

Sustainable Tallahassee approached the City of Tallahassee Utilities about providing a refillable water station at events like COPAF, with the idea that people can fill their reusable water bottles and avoid single-use water bottles. The result was the City building a portable water filling station or wagon.



# FOOD VENDORS: FOOD RECOVERY

Environmental issues are often very intersectional, concerning a wide variety of issues and groups of people. The processes by which we get food from an industrial farm to our table are often riddled with pollution: fossil fuel emissions based on food miles, eutrophication from fertilizer run-off, the thousands of gallons of water involved in producing a pound of meat. Therefore, while we encourage individuals to shop locally and we should also make sure that our food, once made, is not going to waste, especially when so many individuals right here in Tallahassee are going hungry. This is why we partner with Florida State University's Food Recovery Network, and strive to recover food that would have otherwise been thrown away and donate it to a food shelter. We are proud to say that we recovered 322 pounds of food at COPAF.

# FOOD VENDORS: FOOD RECOVERY



**Left:** two members of Sustainable Tallahassee collecting leftover food from COPAF

**Right:** tins of collected food from COPAF ready to be taken to a food shelter



# FOOD VENDORS: OIL, STYROFOAM, & PLASTIC BAG POLICY

At COPAF, food vendors were both encouraged to deposit their used cooking oil into the prescribed oil containers (which the City of Tallahassee uses for fuel) and prohibited by contract from bringing any styrofoam or plastic bags. A total of 55 gallons of oil were collected and turned into biodiesel. While these accomplishments stand as laudable goals that we hope to incorporate at all festivals and events that we green, we always at least encourage food vendors to not bring styrofoam or plastic bags by explaining the problems these materials pose to the environment.



# SOCIAL MEDIA EVENT PROMOTION

Below are just some examples of our efforts to engage and inform the public of our organization's events through posts on multiple social networking sites.



# PHYSICAL MEDIA EVENT PROMOTION

We also promoted our participation in festivals and events through newspaper, continuing our efforts to reach those who might not be aware of sustainable practices. This article is part of a regular column called “Greening our Community” in our local newspaper, The Tallahassee Democrat. It is written by rotating members of the Capital Area Sustainability Council, a forum of local sustainability-focused organizations assembled by Sustainable Tallahassee.

## **Greening Our Community – With Two Green Festivals!**

April 6th, 2017 | by Sustainable Tallahassee |  0 Comments

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<http://blogs.tallahassee.com/community/2017/04/06/greening-our-community-with-two-green-festivals/>

# EXHIBIT TABLE

Sustainable Tallahassee is always happy to host one of our exhibit tables at various events. Tabling is where we are able to meet community members one-on-one and talk about their personal sustainability goals, suggest how they can work on behalf of our community, and share what we work on throughout the year to encourage environmental sustainability.



# RESULTS

At Sustainable Tallahassee we feel that our festival efforts are being noticed by our community and its residents. One of the most significant results has been to clear up the confusion as to what can be recycled at our local facility, Marpan. It has been great to hear from attendees at the festivals say that their spouse or child has encouraged recycling in their household, but the attendee now feels more comfortable about becoming engaged in their recycling at their household or business. We firmly feel that to be successful, households or businesses need a “Recycling Champion” and we hope we have encouraged some to take this step. We expect to assist at more events and become participant in keeping items from the landfill.

# RECOGNITION

*From Laura Johnson, Executive Director of the Southern Shakespeare Company*

I just wanted to give a shout out to you both and ALL of the Sustainable Tallahassee folks that joined our Festival this year on site.

You and all of your volunteers were utterly delightful, engaging, and full of GREAT information. I LOVED all of the photos!!!

Thank you for being such fabulous partners. I hope we can continue to grow this partnership into something even bigger and better next year!!!!

Thank you again, Jim and Brenda.

All my best,

Laura