

Eco-Initiatives at The Peterborough Folk Festival

Includes:

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, environmental issues have grown in prominence, both in our ecological realities and the public perception (Dunlap, 2014). Education and knowledge on environmental issues in North America has grown rapidly since the industrial revolution that changed the scale of ecosystem services and functions that humans use as natural resources. The use of natural resources on such a large scale has prompted global climates to shift, causing alarm for many towards the health of planet earth in its present and future state. The concept of sustainability includes the environmental, social, and economic pillars that work together to push towards a goal where resources can currently be used in such a way that still preserves usage for future generations (Ramsey, 2015). Sustainable alternatives have inspired organizations and individuals to act according to the long-term goal of protecting resources, implementing “green” actions into everyday life that put effort towards recognizing environmental impact.

A push towards protecting the use of resources has created a great demand for environmentally sustainable systems at the individual, community and governmental level (Dunlap, 2014). Community events feel these demands in the form of government policy and attendee desires. While policy plays a large role in the establishment of the presentation of community events, others take specific interest towards promoting environmental values voluntarily. Folk Festivals are popular community events that use resources including energy to power stages, lights and sound systems, extending to necessary food and drink stations that can create volumes of food or container waste over a short period of time (Reverb, 2023). Current folk festivals tend to voluntarily incorporate sustainability policies that consider environmental impact into their events as this value aligns strongly with the compassion of folk culture (Cambridge, 2024; Green Gathering, 2022; Harvest, 2023; Hillside, 2023; PFF, 2022; Summerfolk, 2023; Winnipeg, 2024).

Waste management specifically is of great interest, as festivals can generate large volumes of waste (Reverb, 2023). However, waste management options are highly dependent on existing local systems. In Peterborough, Ontario, a new organic waste facility was opened in the fall of 2023 (kawarthaNOW, 2023). This created new opportunities for community events, such as festivals, to implement new practices.

The Peterborough Folk Festival is one such event taking advantage of this opportunity. The Peterborough Folk Festival (PFF) is a free-to-attend music event, held every summer at Nicolls Oval Park. It was first organized in 1989 to provide opportunities for local artists, becoming a Not-For-Profit organization in 2001, and a registered charity as of 2018. It is entirely operated and managed by a board of volunteers. As a folk festival, it aims to uphold values of inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, activism and environmental sustainability. To help meet that final goal, the board recently formed a formal eco-committee (PFF, 2022). The eco-committee contacted Trent University to consult on current sustainability practices, with a specific focus on the improvement of waste management practices through organic waste diversion and strengthening the reusable dish system.

METHODS

The eco-committee identified waste reduction as a major priority and reached out to Trent University's Community Based Research Centre. In an initial matching meeting with student researchers, four deliverables were identified: a list of best practices from other festivals, an assessment of PFF's current practices, recommendations for improving organic waste diversion, and recommendations for increasing usage of reusable dishes.

Best Practices

This deliverable's goal was to identify the common sustainable practices currently used at similar music festivals in Ontario and beyond, with an emphasis on practices applicable to PFF. We began with the creation of a list of Canadian music festivals with notable sustainability practices. This was done by surveying newspaper articles and identifying awards winners. We reviewed the website of each festival and recorded the advertised sustainable practices of each. To follow, we conducted a literature review. We started using academic databases Trent Omni and Google Scholar. Using combinations of targeted keywords such as "music festival", "event", "green", "eco-friendly", "sustainable", etc, we found peer-reviewed articles that evaluated the eco-practices of festivals globally. These articles allowed us to both expand our list of practices and evaluate whether individual practices have been shown to be effective. We then reviewed grey literature, consisting of various green event guides. These were published by governments and non-governmental organizations and used to expand our list of practices and establish an understanding of policy frameworks related to event planning.

Eco-Initiative Review

This deliverable's goal was to broadly catalogue and evaluate current eco-initiatives at the PFF, allowing us to then identify areas for improvement. The PFF website served as a starting point for familiarizing ourselves with the PFF's advertised sustainability practices. From this site, we created a list of questions we still had. These questions were answered and expanded upon in a semi-structured discussion with PFF eco-committee representatives. This gave us a good general understanding of the practices. Limited photos and documentation from previous years were used to contextualize this. To gain more specific details, a few volunteers were contacted for unstructured discussions on their experience with PFF's sustainability practices. Once the current practices were established, we compared them to our compiled Best Practices list. This allowed us to identify which of the PFF's practices were strong, which could be improved, and which could be introduced.

Recommendations for Diverting Organic Waste

This deliverable's goal was to establish an efficient system for organic waste management, from diversion to disposal. In the eco-review, the current organic waste system was identified and compared with the Best Practices. We used the identified issues and opportunities as a starting point to draft an

idea of what the organic waste management system could look like. From there, a literature review was done to evaluate and build upon the draft system. Omni and Google Scholar were used to find peer-reviewed papers on topics such as festival attendee behavior and effective wastestation setups. Next, a local waste management expert was contacted to advise on the local municipal waste management system. Both municipal and private waste management services were contacted to assess the feasibility and cost of usage for proper organic waste disposal after the festival concludes.

Recommendations for Reusable Dish Usage

This deliverable's goal was to provide recommendations for making the use of reusable dishes more attractive to PFF food vendors, with the objective of reducing disposable dishes going to landfill. This was informed by the current reusable dish practices and relationships with vendors identified in the eco-review. It began with a peer-reviewed literature review conducted through Trent Omni and Google Scholar. Key terms such as "reusable dishes", "music festivals", "compostable dishes", "dish stations", "benefits of reusables", and "implementing reusable dishes" were used. We aimed to identify peer-reviewed papers exploring strategies for incentivizing reusable dish usage by both vendors and attendees. We identified that reusable dishes may not be suitable for every application. As such, we also did a product search for compostable alternatives. A review of scholarly articles was used to identify which materials were suitable, and grey literature was reviewed to identify potential health and safety policy concerns. Next, a product search was conducted through various company websites to identify brands which provided suitable products.

RESULTS

Four areas were examined over the course of the research: a list of best practices from other festivals, an assessment of PFF's current practices, recommendations for improving organic waste diversion, and recommendations for increasing usage of reusable dishes.

Current Best Practices at Festivals

Seven green awarded festivals were chosen to represent the best sustainable practices of music festivals on a variety of levels. Summerfolk, Hillside Festival, and Mariposa Folk Festival are events located throughout Ontario that present similar eco-practices such as volunteer teams, waste tracking, waste management plans, and guides for attendees on how to partake in implemented eco-initiatives (Summerfolk, 2023; Hillside, 2023; Mariposa, 2020) In the United Kingdom, Green Gathering and Cambridge Folk festival were created with an environmental focus that has strict guidelines on food, drink, and waste reduction policies to ensure sustainable practices are followed (Green Gathering, 2022; Cambridge, 2024) Winnipeg Folk Festival in Manitoba and Harvest Festival in New Brunswick are also

similar in the implementation of eco initiatives such as reusable dish programs and attentive waste sorting stations (Winnipeg, 2024; Harvest, 2023).

Table 1: The success of seven green awarded Canadian festivals in a variety of eco-initiative categories are highlighted below. The common best practices are listed across the top of the table with the names of commended festivals listed down the left-hand side. A checkmark (✓) represents a fully successful practice, and a cross-out (✗) represents challenges to implement the practice.

Green Awarded Festivals	Green Volunteer Team	No Single Use Plastics	Educational Signage	Waste Sorting Station	Long Term Waste Management Plan
Summerfolk	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Green Gathering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harvest	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Winnipeg Folk	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Hillside	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Cambridge Folk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mariposa	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

The results in table 1 show at all seven selected festivals that a green volunteer team, waste sorting station, and a long-term waste management plan were successfully implemented throughout each festival (Table 1). The least successful category is a single use plastic ban, which is challenging for festivals to fully implement. Table 1 also presents Canadian festivals to participate in the use of single use plastics whereas the two UK festivals found overall success in eliminating single use plastics from the event. Educational signage is another often successful eco-initiative apart from Harvest and Winnipeg Folk who experienced difficulties in less accessible signage that was found to decrease the impact of benefits from sustainable practices put in place.

Eco-Initiatives Review

This deliverable's goal was to broadly catalogue and evaluate current eco-initiatives at the Peterborough Folk Festival (PFF), allowing us to then identify areas for improvement. Focus is given to initiatives regarding waste management. The PFF has a volunteer-run eco-committee which coordinates these eco-initiatives. All initiatives are similarly run by volunteers during the festival.



Figure 1: EcoStation set up at the Peterborough Folk Festival.

EcoStation:

The Green Station/EcoStation (See Fig. 1) is run by the EcoTeam volunteers. The EcoStation is the centre of PFF's reusable dish program. They supply plates, cutlery and mugs to the festival's food vendors, who serve food-truck style. The vendors have the option of using these dishes to serve guests. When done, guests return their dishes to the EcoStation. The EcoStation has signage directing attendees to scrape their dishes into the compost and place them into a bin. The volunteers then run the dirty dishes through a 3-sink system and place them on drying racks, where they are air-dried with electric fans. Once dry, volunteers bring clean dishes back to the vendors. During the washing process, volunteers use reusable cloths, disposable sponges, Clorox bleach and standard detergent in refillable bottles. Dirty dish water is dumped into flush toilets or nearby bushes. Water is pumped from the municipal water lines at the park's bathroom and heated using a small electric heater attached to the pump.

Waste Stations:

The Eco-station is the only supervised waste station: all others are attendee-sorted. Waste bins are scattered around the event in pairs. Each pair has one catch-all landfill waste bin, and one catch-all recycling bin. They are differentiated by recognizable colours, and a mobius loop recycling symbol on the recycling bin. There is no other signage around these bins. The waste stations do not include compost; the only composting is at the Green Station. All alcohol is served in cans, and bins specifically for cans are located near the alcohol tents. Alcohol cans are also partially sorted out of recycling bins.

Vendors produce little waste at the festival and dispose of that little in nearby bins. Attendees are permitted to bring external food on site, as there is no desire or capacity to prevent them. This waste is then deposited into festival bins. Pizza boxes were common in 2023. It was speculated that some Children's Village activities, such as coloring, likely produce some waste.

Waste disposal:

The City of Peterborough picks up the garbage and recycling. However, it is unknown if this is kept separate and recycled. Beer cans are collected and returned to the Beer Store for deposit. Food waste is generally combined with landfill waste, to be collected by the city. In 2023, some food waste was diverted to a local farmer, who picked it up. In 2023, it was estimated that ~6 large household garbage bags of food waste were produced. Landfill and recyclable waste were produced in greater quantities; no better estimates were available. In 2019, only 6 bags of landfill waste were produced, but this does not seem to be the norm.

Environmental Education:

Attendees have the opportunity to be informed on usage of the reusable dish program. They are introduced to the program at the vendors, and the EcoStation is well-marked with clear signage and helpful volunteers for usage. The PFF website highlights prominent eco-initiatives on the About page. More specific details for how attendees can make use of these initiatives are provided on a 2023 FAQ page, which is difficult to navigate to. Presumably an updated version of this page will be made available before the 2024 festival. There is no dedicated page for eco-initiatives. No physical brochures are provided at the festival, with information instead delivered on sandwich boards and digitally. These sandwich boards generally don't include information about eco-initiatives. There is no in-depth eco-initiative information on the festival's Instagram.

Long-Term Management Plan:

As of the beginning of this project, the eco-committee was newly formed with no formal long-term management plan in place. There is little documentation on how eco-initiatives were conducted or received in previous years. Individuals involved in delivering the initiatives are very knowledgeable, but not readily available. After the festival, emails are generally sent out to vendors and attendees requesting feedback. A form is also available on the website. Feedback on eco-initiatives is not specifically requested, aside from a question on the 2023 feedback form regarding methods of transportation used.

Other Initiatives:

The festival has a water station run by Peterborough Utilities Group which provides free drinking water to attendees. Attendees can use their own refillable water bottles, borrow reusable mugs or purchase refillable water bottles on site. No plastic drink containers are sold on site. The festival has a Solar Stage, which is powered by a portable battery. The portable battery is charged by Generation Solar from their solar panels. Other electrical needs are met by generators. The festival encourages green transportation, particularly walking or biking. They encourage this with free valet bike parking and an inherent lack of

car parking. In 2023, a free shuttle was offered between downtown Peterborough and the festival grounds, running twice an hour. Less frequent shuttle service was also provided to Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Alderville First Nations.

Organic Waste Diversion

This deliverable's goal was to establish an efficient system for organic waste management, from diversion to disposal. As noted in the eco-review, the festival currently collects compost only in one place, and has no established system of disposal. The waste diversion management process can be divided into three steps: production, sorting, and collection/disposal.

Waste production:

Compost is produced at the vendor food stations and by attendees. This step focuses on measures to reduce waste destined for landfill, being replaced by waste that will go into the compost or recycling stream instead. This is focused on in detail in the next section on Reusable Dish Usage.

Waste sorting:

Single-stream recycling is more expensive for cities than multi-stream recycling due to increased management costs from sorting and increased contamination (Lakhan, 2015). Peterborough operates on a dual-stream recycling program, having residents sort between paper and plastics (City of Peterborough, 2022). It reports recycling 85-90% of materials entering the recycling stream, with the unrecycled material being contaminated or incorrectly sorted (City of Peterborough, 2022). This is relevant for the PFF as the waste is being diverted to the municipal waste program. Proper sorting is essential for preventing contamination; otherwise, the waste diverted from the festival will go to landfill anyways.

Including multi-stream recycling at events is the first step towards ensuring waste gets to the proper place. Inclusion of composting bins is especially important. Landfills produce large amounts of greenhouse gases, most of its methane from decomposing organic matter (City of Peterborough, 2022). Most green festivals will sort into multiple streams, including compost (Tennant-Wood, 2003). For PFF, this would look like stations including a landfill bin, paper recycling, container recycling, compost bin and potentially an alcohol can bin.

There are many strategies that can be implemented for successful sorting into these bins. The most effective is to have volunteers present at stations to directly assist with sorting efforts, however this requires significant volunteer power (Zelenika et al, 2018). However, the benefit of volunteers would likely persist even if their assistance was not constant (Zelenika et al, 2018). Volunteers can also be effectively supplemented with appropriate signage (Zelenika et al, 2018). According to Zelenika et al (2018) and Verdonk et al (2017) sorting signage should adhere to the following principles:

- It should state, in large and easily read text, what category each bin is.

- It should provide pictures of the most common items sorted into each bin. Additionally, it should provide pictures of any items that may pose confusion (for example, food-soiled pizza boxes should go into the *compostable organics* rather than the *papers*).
- Colours should be high contrast for easy reading and follow commonly understood material categories (i.e. green for compostables, grey/brown for paper, blue for containers, black for landfill). Backgrounds should be plain to avoid clutter.



Fig 2. An example of a well-designed sign (Verdonk et al, 2017).

Waste collection and Disposal:

As stated in the eco-review, PFF has suitable arrangements for the City of Peterborough to pick up recyclable and landfill waste. However, they have no such arrangement for organics. The City of Peterborough currently operates an organics facility, having begun collections in fall of 2023. However, they have not yet begun commercial service. As of the time of writing, the city has not been able to confirm whether they can provide annual organics service for PFF, or whether PFF could deposit organics at the facility themselves. However, private companies such as Waste Connections can provide organics pickup and composting services at a reasonable price.

Improving The Reusable Dish Program

The reusable dish program at PFF has found both success and challenge within its implementation. While meeting with the PFF hosts, it was brought to attention that there was difficulty getting the vendors to take advantage of the reusable dish system in place, often due to factors like the size of the dish not aligning with pricing and miscommunication between the PFF, vendors, and attendees. This section looks at avoidance and mitigation strategies found to create a more successful dish program through improvements to the EcoStation, setting vendor expectations, and collecting feedback.

Dishwashing Materials at the EcoStation:

The EcoStation is a large component of sustainable practices at the PFF. Utilizing environmentally conscious products that adhere to the Peterborough public health guidelines on dish washing at special events is found to reduce the amount of waste created. Environmentally friendly products are beneficial to the environment due to the elimination of harsh chemicals that hold potential to harm humans, plants, or wildlife, and can reduce the amount of single use plastics used in dishwashing (Pararoidamis & Tran, 2019; Kellogg, 2022). Popular suggestions that are easily accessible include biodegradable dish

soap bars that eliminate the need to purchase liquid dish soap in plastic bottles, reusable cloths, and compostable sponges made from natural and plant-based materials (Aiteall, 2024; Kellogg, 2022).

Setting Vendor Expectations:

Stakeholder involvement is necessary for the success of green initiatives at events due to the positive impact of a collective group effort (Laing & Frost, 2010). To enhance communication with all parties, it was found that instructions for the reusable dishware program should be communicated to vendors and attendees before and during the event through signage, email, or direct in person discussions (Su et al., 2020; Alonso-Vazquez & Ballico, 2021). This includes emphasizing the vendors' role in the program to make them pre aware of the size and shape of provided dishes. Success for reusable dish stations has been found when there is a mutual understanding or agreement between the festival organization, vendors, and attendees due to clear communication (Su et al., 2020). Festivals that chose to create a green contract with vendors, such as the Cambridge Folk Festival, allow for participants to consider their impact and role in eco-initiatives when agreeing to provide a service (Cambridge, 2024). Feelings of moral obligation to engage in ecofriendly behavior is known to direct participants intent to follow the program (Kim & Kim, 2018; Tolkes & Butzmann, 2018).

Collecting Feedback:

After attending an event, people will convey both positive and negative stories when reflecting on their experience. Negative experiences have a greater impact in the human memory than positive experiences, making attendee satisfaction important (Lade & Jackson, 2004; Pope et al., 2017). Providing a space for feedback about green efforts at festivals through questionnaires highlights key moments about what the festival did well and areas of improvement for future events (Lade & Jackson, 2004). Respondents hold clear views about any complications experienced that can impact the overall success of initiatives at festivals, including vendors, volunteers, and attendees (O'sullivan et al., 2009). Understanding the views of various festival contributors helps illustrate how best to achieve the management goals that are in place. (Clayton, 2016). Providing surveys for vendors, volunteers, and attendees is found to add a new perspective that can improve the overall festival.

Providing Compostable Alternatives:

The development in biodegradable plastics has made significant progress over the past decade. Polylactic Acid (PLA) is made from renewable organics like corn starch or sugar cane, acting similar to oil-based polymers that make up popularly chosen single-use dish items (Song et al., 2009). Without using fossil fuels in PLA production, the material is biodegradable and can be composted, benefiting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing waste (Su et al., 2020). This material can contribute to sustainable dish initiatives and reduce the environmental impact of using oil-based polymers (Naser et al., 2021). However, Peterborough's restrictions on the organics program conflict with the choice of using PLA plastic since no biodegradable or compostable plastics are allowed within the facility (Peterborough County, 2024). Furthermore, other paper products like paper towels, tissues, and napkins are also not allowed (Peterborough County, 2024).

DISCUSSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The seven accredited green festivals chosen to be examined in this paper *show that eco*-initiatives can be complex to implement (*Table 1*). Banning single use plastics from the festival is a challenge for Canadian festivals, although each festival that did not score in that section has taken efforts to reduce single use plastics through created a water bottle refill stations and/or a reusable dish station (Harvest, 2023; Hillside, 2023; PFF, 2022; Summerfolk, 2023; Winnipeg, 2024). Educational signage about the current eco-initiatives also proved to be an important aspect of festival waste management programs. Festivals without clear signage or those who did so electronically were found to decrease the benefits of the initiative since communication from the event to attendees on how to participate was not accessible during the festival (Harvest, 2023; Winnipeg, 2024). The PFF follows the initiatives of other music festivals with a green volunteer team, limited single use plastics, and visible waste sorting stations.

However, there are many improvements that can be made. Recommendations include:

- ❖ Mindfulness of products used at the EcoStation.
 - Current synthetic sponges can be replaced by those made with biodegradable materials, such as the Plantish Ecosponge sold by local organization GreenUp.
 - Continue purchasing dish soap in bulk, using smaller refillable containers to minimize waste. Ensure that new soaps purchased are listed as “phosphate free”. Though the primary component of dish soaps is highly biodegradable, added phosphates have negative impacts when introduced to the environment (Mausner et al, 1969; Van Hoof et al, 2017) Longterm, a system of storing grey water and later adding it to municipal systems would be advisable.

- ❖ Increased sorting at waste stations.
 - Each waste station should include at least three bins: landfill waste, recycling and organic waste. Ideally, recycling should be sorted into ‘paper’ and ‘container’ recycling streams.
 - These bins should be clearly marked to indicate what belongs in each bin (See Fig 3 below). This should follow the discussed principles from Zelenika et al (2018) and Verdonk et al (2017): distinct color coding, clear text and use of photos.
 - As volunteer assisted sorting is most effective at reducing contamination, each waste station should ideally have a dedicated volunteer (Zelenika et al, 2018). This could take the form of the volunteer verbally assisting attendees, or the volunteer being given the waste and independently sorting it. If a dedicated volunteer for each station is not possible, “wandering” volunteers should be tasked with monitoring. It is preferable to have less stations with increased volunteer presence than more stations and decreased volunteer presence (Zelenika et al, 2018).
 - These volunteers could be an expansion of the current eco-team dishwasher role, or a new role altogether.



Fig 3. An example of a well-organized sorting station (Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District, n.d.)

- ❖ Introducing a composting stream.
 - Once sorted, an endpoint for organic waste should be arranged. This can be done commercially, with a company being paid to pickup and deposit the organic waste. Waste Connections of Canada are a good option available to PFF. Alternately, an agreement could be reached with the municipality for a volunteer to directly deposit organic waste at their facility. This would be cheaper, but the City of Peterborough was not clear whether it is an option currently available to PFF.
- ❖ Improved environmental communication with attendees.
 - According to Dodds et al (2020), digital media is an important source of sustainability information for attendees. PFF's website should include a page dedicated to environmental initiatives and expectations for attendees. This should be easy to find, listed either in the top navigation bar or linked on the "About" page. Additionally, social media posts dedicated to highlighting sustainability initiatives should be made.

- All volunteers should be made aware of the festival's eco-initiatives and be prepared to explain them to attendees, even if the volunteer role is not directly linked to an eco-initiative.
 - Physical signage describing eco-initiatives, such as a sandwich board, should be made available at the festival. The eco-station would be an appropriate locale. This could serve a dual purpose of informing attendees of less visible initiatives such as the solar stage, and encouraging participation in initiatives such as the water station, waste sorting and reusable dish usage.
- ❖ Introducing long-term monitoring and management.
- To track whether introduced initiatives for waste management are successful, a simple visual waste audit could be undertaken. This could include the following steps, developed by the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (2012). See Appendix A for the associated data sheet.
 - Pre-festival, establish the volume of each bin type at each station.
 - Have volunteers at waste stations note trends in materials entering each bin and which bins appear to be filling faster.
 - Before bags are removed from bins (whether partway through or at the end of the event) mark down how visually full each bin is (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%) and estimated composition of materials (ex. Mostly pizza boxes).
 - After the event, calculate the volume of waste in each bag by multiplying the bin size by the percentage fullness.
 - Calculate the total volume of waste at each station by adding these numbers. Both a gross volume (all bags) and stream volume (all bags for each bin) should be calculated.
 - Collect sheets from individual waste station volunteers and combine information to calculate the total gross volume of the festival and total volume of each waste stream.
 - Lastly, calculate the percentage of waste diverted out of total waste, providing you with a diversion rate.
 - Doing a waste audit has multiple benefits:
 - Allows tracking of progress year-to-year on waste diversion goals.
 - Provides clear statistics that can be used in festival promotion.
 - Informs placement of waste stations, determining which areas of the festival have the greatest waste disposal needs.
 - Provides a record of what volunteers noticed entering the landfill stream, which gives opportunities for reduction of that material.
 - For more subjective data collection, questions specifically on eco-initiatives should be included on feedback forms.
 - After each festival, the eco-committee should review audit and feedback data and incorporate that into plans for the next year.
 - Documentation on eco-initiatives is key. A dedicated folder for each year's audit and feedback information should be kept. Additionally, I recommend the creation of a living document outlining the functioning of all eco-initiatives, to be updated each year. This

not only creates clear expectations, but will allow information to be passed more easily between successive eco-committee members.

Improving the Eco-Station and reusable dish program.

Primary recommendations:

- ❖ Set vendor expectations when forming agreements.
- ❖ Make vendors pre-aware of the shape and size of reusable dishes.
- ❖ Maintain an approved list of compostable paper dish brands for vendors as an alternative.
- ❖ Post-festival, collect vendor feedback.

The ecostation is an initiative to be proud of but to upgrade to an even eco-friendlier ecostation, purchasing materials from local businesses in Peterborough could be a valuable option. Products like reusable sponges and biodegradable dish soap can be found at GreenUp or Sustain Eco Store, both conveniently located in downtown Peterborough.

Encouraging active participation from vendors to use the reusable dish program to its full extent is very likely for the PFF. Communication with all parties can be seen as a foundation towards equal understanding, access, and use of the implemented eco-initiatives. If the PFF formally communicated the goals of the reusable dish program to vendors and asked for their agreement to the program, there would be a common understanding among both parties that is beneficial to the success of the dish program. Those who agree to become vendors at the PFF will become more conscious of the impact their choices have on the environment and festival initiatives.

Collecting further feedback can be a beneficial resource for the PFF to improve upon the festival's efficiency each year. Providing a space for formal vendor feedback can address a variety of experiences and any problems or concerns that can be mitigated for the following year. Providing a survey for volunteers can bring additional feedback on their experience and can be used to make more effective decisions about the reusable dish program and impacts of the eco-initiatives.

As for disposable alternatives to the reusable dish program for special cases, the Peterborough compost polies prevent not just PLA plates from being composted but also paper plates. This suggests that recyclable takeout containers would be the best option in this area, although they do contribute to waste production. Due to the strict policies on composting, the best method to reduce waste would be to not offer any single use items, but this is not always realistic as certain situations may require vendors to use them, hence the importance of communicating dish shapes and sizes before the festival to avoid conflict.

CONCLUSION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Peterborough Folk Festival has done a fantastic job introducing and maintaining a wide swath of eco-initiatives. We hope that these recommendations assist them in improving even further.

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