

SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA

# Recycling Report

Green Schools National Conference

April 14, 2014

**THINK GREEN:**



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# Zero Waste Goal

The Green Schools National Network is devoted to improving its waste management programs and promoting sustainable business operations. To assist with this agenda, Waste Management (WM), an event sponsor, worked with the 2014 national conference to implement a high waste diversion recycling program.

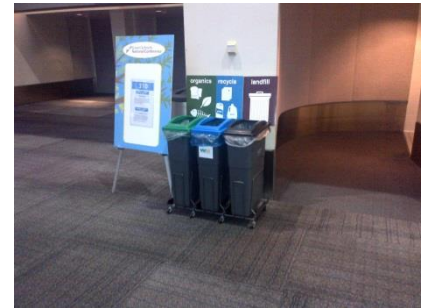
## Program Overview

The waste management plan for the 2014 national conference focused on handling all materials generated by the conference attendees, in the conference center area. This year's data did not include any waste associated with the food preparation. It is worth noting that Classic Catering has a very strong recycling program in place with their food scrapes recycled at a local farm as a part of the area Farm-to-Fork initiative.

### Program Design

#### Receptacle Placement

The convention center has a number of collection systems for landfill and recycling waste streams. These were used during the conference. As the conference center is not currently collecting front of the house organics waste, Waste Management supplied organics collection receptacles for this event in the food service areas.



Waste Management's three-bin collection systems used during the event.



### Implementation

During the event, activities included monitoring collection systems, recycling ambassadors, back of house sorting and weighing of all materials. This began with the initial set up on Thursday and concluded with the end of the conference Saturday afternoon.

### Recycling Ambassadors

Volunteers with the conference assisted Waste Management staff as recycling ambassadors to provide more visibility to the recycling program and to help ensure the conference attendees properly sorted materials. This was a crucial effort during high use times such as session breaks and when meals were served.

### Waste Collection Area



Key to the program was the back of house waste collection area located on the expo floor. This served as the deposit location for all material collected from the designated conference footprint. Here we provided a final sort of all material before going to the dumpster or compactor. Once sorted, all material was weighed before going into the dumpster. This effort allowed us to ensure that all material was weighed for reporting purposes. With the focus on education at this conference, sorting the materials on the expo floor also provided a teaching opportunity for conference attendees.

### Wrapper collection

Due to the high volume of protein bar wrappers and chip bags as supplied by vendors during the event, Waste Management collected these materials to be sent to a third party company that turns them into reusable items.

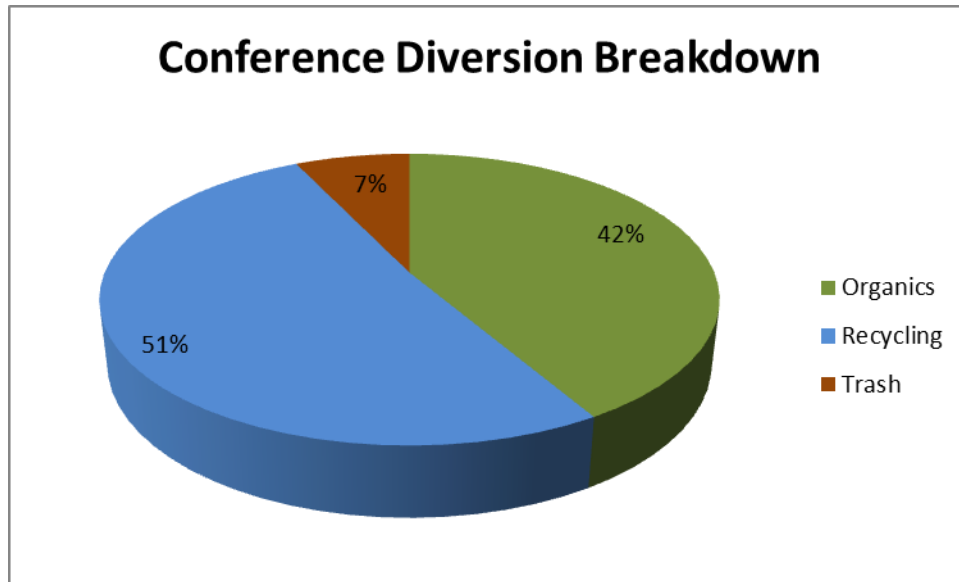
## Overall 2014 Results

Table 1 - 2014 Green Schools National Conference Recycling Results

Total Lbs.	Solid Waste	Organics	Recycling	Diversion
728	52	302	374	93%

This year's Green Schools National Conference was a great success. In total 93% of the conference waste was diverted from the landfill. The conference produced a total of 728 lbs. of waste. From this, 374 lbs. was recycling, 302 lbs. was compostable material and only 52 lbs. went to the landfill. A key part in this effort was the use of compostable and recyclable serving ware and the conference center implementing a full organics collection service with Waste Management during the event.

Table 3 - 2014 Green Schools National Conference Results



## Observations



Wrappers used to cover all sandwiches. Because of the difficulty with recycling plastic films, it is recommended that all sandwiches be served without a wrap.



Wrappers are normally not recyclable. For this years event wrappers were sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party company that up cycles them into useful items such as handbags.





Continue to work with vendors to supply compostable service ware to ensure that food service ware can be composted. This will also require working with the local hauling company to ensure that organics collection for composting is provided.



Work with vendors and conference facility to ensure that single use items are only used when necessary. In the picture, there are a number of creamer cups, which will not get recycled. By avoiding single serve condiments, this non-recyclable waste can be avoided (ketchup/mustard packets, creamer and individual butter are the most common single serve condiments).

## Recommendations

The event this year was a success due to a great collaboration between the parties involved with the high diversion program. The conference center staff was key in supporting and ensuring that the waste was collected in a timely manner and brought to the sorting area. In addition, the exposure provided by the Green School National Network allowed for a great dialogue and awareness about this program and recycling in general among conference attendees.

This collaborative effort will be key in successful future events. We recommend putting together an acceptable materials list for the convention center and vendors encouraging them to only bring items that can be recycled or composted once discarded. As noted in the observations, at this year's conference, we were able to find an outlet for protein bar wrappers; however, this option may not always exist. Having vendors control the material they bring to the event will help to ensure everything can be recycled, thus ensuring a true zero waste event.

Early engagement and coordination with the venue, area waste hauler and a volunteer base will help ensure a successful 2015 event. Planning should begin for the waste diversion and recycling portion of the event as soon as conference preparations begin. This will allow ample time for preparing the venue and all parties involved for an improvement to the 93% achievement of the 2014 conference.