

# GREEN EVENT PLANNING

Sponsored by the Berea College and Sodexo Sustainability Coordinators



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## It's ESE ("easy") Being Green!

Thanks for participating in the "Green Event Planning" workshop at Berea College! We hope that you find the information and resources helpful for making your programs and events more sustainable .

This booklet is designed to provide more detailed information about the basic concepts presented in the workshop and to serve as a handy reference guide for you to use in your office and to share with your colleagues. While this booklet is not a comprehensive green event planning guide, it includes additional resources that you can explore for more information.

Your feedback about the workshop and the contents of this booklet are much appreciated, so feel free to let us know about other types of information that you would find useful as well as any additional information or resources that can enhance the workshop and/or booklet. Contact Tammy

Clemons (986-3610 or clemonst@berea.edu) or Cait McClanahan (985-3229 or caitlin\_mcclanahan@berea.edu) to share your opinions and ideas.

Thanks again for your commitment to sustainability at Berea College. It is the effort of many valuable employees that can truly make a difference in the ecological impact of the College. Continue doing good work, sharing information with your colleagues, and encouraging "plain and sustainable living."

—Tammy Clemons & Cait McClanahan



## Making the Most of What You Already Know...

As an event planner, you have an enormous wealth of knowledge about what it takes to organize the numerous details that an event of any size entails. Therefore, the purpose of the Green Event workshop and booklet is not to tell you what you already know but rather to help you think about those details in a sus-

tainable way. One aspect of sustainability is about the environmental impact of the energy and materials required for the event. Another equally important and perhaps less obvious aspect is the social energy and budgetary cost of implementing the event. Your knowledge and experience are valuable assets that can

benefit other people and programs on campus. So when you're thinking about the overall sustainability of your event, also consider opportunities for collaboration with other programs and departments. Collaborating is fun as well as cost-effective and energy-efficient (not to mention, it's the "Berea Way")!



**SIERRA  
CLUB**

...offers a series of online "How Green is My \_\_\_?" quizzes that include "...My Destination" and "...My Getaway."

Use this link ([www.sierraclub.org/howgreen](http://www.sierraclub.org/howgreen)) to help select your event venue or to share with participants!

**Always consider the social and environmental impact of the event on the surrounding community of the selected event site.**

**While the event might be bringing in more revenue, it can also create more traffic and trash. Find ways to not only minimize your impact but also to leave it better than you found it!**

# Location & Operation

## Site Selection

- ✦ Research "green cities" that offer recycling, mass transit, green spaces, etc.
- ✦ Support local services and suppliers when possible
- ✦ Provide free exhibit opportunities for local non-profit organizations or other social/environmental causes
- ✦ Seek and take advantage of environmental resources in the surrounding community
- ✦ Give back to the host community by donating time, trees, leftover goods, etc.

## Event Venue/Accommodations

- ✦ Seek facilities with energy-efficient lighting and water-saving fixtures
- ✦ Schedule events during the day and use natural light when possible
- ✦ Ensure that recycling is available and visible for all program activities
- ✦ Ask about green purchasing practices for program materials, equipment, cleaning supplies, etc.
- ✦ Select locations that are within walkable distance from one another (i.e., sites for multiple programming events, event venues and lodging, etc.)
- ✦ Choose/recommend hotels that offer minimum services such as:
  - In-house recycling of basic materials (paper, metal, glass, plastic products, etc.)
  - Re-use programs for linens and towels

## Where do you want to go... and How do you want to get there?

There are multiple considerations for choosing an event location and selecting transportation options. The purpose of the event and its target audience for participation will determine whether the event takes place on or off campus as well as whether domestic or international travel might be required. Therefore, the meeting site and how you get there can have a greater or lesser impact on the environment depending on the scale of the event. For example, a lunch presentation on campus will not demand the transportation resources of an international trip or even an on-campus conference designed for off-campus guests. The purpose, location, and audience for the event will also affect the amount of planning required as well as the amount of information that you need to share with participants. As you know, attention to detail is the single most important skill for successfully planning and implementing events. The next page includes transportation tips and resources that are relevant for various event types and settings.



## Communication & Publicity



- ⇒ Plan via telephone and email when possible, and include an email signature encouraging recipients to think twice before printing

- ⇒ Post information and downloads online and offer online registration/RSVP
- ⇒ Use paper sparingly for correspondence/publicity
- ⇒ When using paper, use 100% post-consumer recycled content and print 2-sided
- ⇒ Use postcards/brochures with self-mailer panels to eliminate envelopes

- ⇒ Ensure that recycling bins are accessible and clearly labeled wherever paper materials are distributed
- ⇒ If paper materials are reusable, place recycling receptacles for collecting unwanted materials
- ⇒ For recurring events, print banners and posters without dates so they can be reused

# Transportation: Getting Around Green

- ⇒ Encourage participants to carpool with others from their area by providing a contact list of other attendees...
- ⇒ Or share other ride-share resources such as:
  - ⇒ "Ride Share" Public Folder on the campus Outlook email system
  - ⇒ eRideShare ([www.erideshare.com](http://www.erideshare.com))
- ⇒ GishiGo ([www.gishigo.com](http://www.gishigo.com))
- ⇒ Zimride Facebook application ([www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2549790782](http://www.facebook.com/apps/application.php?id=2549790782))
- ⇒ Rideboard.com (<http://rideboard.com>)
- ⇒ Consider offering an airport shuttle for transporting multiple guests
- ⇒ If using campus motorpool, request a hybrid vehicle
- ⇒ Offer participants tips for maximizing fuel-efficiency:
  - ⇒ abiding by the speed limit
  - ⇒ avoiding major highways in metro areas during rush hour
  - ⇒ turning ignition off if idling more than 20 seconds
- ⇒ Compile informational tip-sheets for participants summarizing:
  - ⇒ Campus shuttles (Campus Life)
  - ⇒ Public transportation (Foothills Bus System)
  - ⇒ Bike rentals (Berea Bikes)
  - ⇒ Walking and biking trails



## Counting and Cutting Carbon

Carbon emissions (or greenhouse gases) are responsible for global climate change, in which the atmospheric temperature of the planet is increasing at an alarming rate. The creation of carbon dioxide results from the burning of fossil fuels for energy use. While carbon dioxide is a natural part of the respiration process for animals and plants, human energy consumption has generated carbon emissions beyond the Earth's natural ability to deal with it.

As noted in the *Green Event Source Book* ([www.greeneventsource.com](http://www.greeneventsource.com)): "For the meeting industry, the primary sources of greenhouse gas emissions are travel to and from the event, cooling and heating the venue and shipping of materials to and from the meeting site."

Carbon offsets or credits can be purchased to "cancel" the effects of burning fossil fuel by creating and sustaining methods to capture carbon emissions, such as planting trees or generating renewable energy.

Consider providing event participants with information about buying carbon offsets for their travel, or including the cost of offsetting the entire event in the overall registration fee. Either way, it is important to do your homework to ensure that the company's methods are reputable, transparent, and cost-effective.

Of course, the best way to cut carbon is the reduction of fossil fuel use. Most online maps include an "Avoid Highways" feature to navigate around major cities and busy highways. GreenPleasures ([www.GreenPleasures.org](http://www.GreenPleasures.org)) is a tool for choosing sustainable options for making airline and hotel reservations. There are also "Green Passports" and pledges that include tips for minimizing the social and environmental impact of international travel ([www.unep.fr/greenpassport/](http://www.unep.fr/greenpassport/) or [www.abroadview.org/green/passport.htm](http://www.abroadview.org/green/passport.htm)).

The key is to educate yourself and event participants about available options for cutting carbon and cost while travelling!

Most carbon offset providers include "carbon calculators" on their websites. Check out the *Green Events Source Book* for more information!

## Finding Green Contract Services

Transportation is more complex when planning an off-campus trip that requires domestic or international travel and/or third-party services. Here are some best practices to consider:

- ⇒ Research transportation companies with an existing sustainability commitment... or ask familiar companies about their environmental practices and willingness to accommodate your needs.

- ⇒ Include minimum environmental practices in your request for proposals and/or include a contract clause to make the provider accountable for complying with environmental requests.

- ⇒ Find out if transportation providers are environmentally responsible in their maintenance of vehicles by recycling used oil, batteries, antifreeze, and tires.



- ⇒ Ask providers if drivers are trained to minimize idling and the use of air conditioning, especially when there are no passengers in the vehicle.

- ⇒ Ask airlines if they:
  - \* use fuel-efficient and low-noise aircraft.
  - \* collect recyclables during the flight and recycle them.
  - \* use reusable or biodegradable service ware.

Adapted from the *Green Meetings Report* by the Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC)

# Sustainable Dining/Catering

Food production and consumption are essential, but they also requires a lot of energy and can generate significant waste. Follow these simple guidelines when making dining/catering decisions for your event.

- Choose/specify washable vs. disposable
- If disposable is the only option, avoid styrene or plastic plates
- Choose/specify washable napkins

- Request that food be served on reusable trays
- Avoid single-serving condiments and beverages
- Ensure that food is served in a manner that minimizes waste
- Source local/sustainable food whenever possible
- Always offer vegetarian alternatives
- Inquire about other special dietary needs of participants
- Make recycling bins available and visible
- Compost food/organic waste when possible
- Use live plants for table centerpieces
- Consider serving foods that do not require utensils



Buying locally not only helps local farmers, but also engages people in supporting local economies and thinking about where their food comes from. Local food is fresher and tastier, and reducing the distance from farm to fork reduces energy consumption.



## Berea College Local Food Initiative

The Berea College Local Food Initiative (LFI) began in 2004 as a grassroots effort of students, faculty, and staff to incorporate more locally-produced foods in College dining facilities. LFI has worked closely with Dining Services, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Sustainability and Environmental Studies (SENS) to serve College-grown produce and meat products at College Dining

Services and Boone Tavern. LFI has also collaborated with other local farmers and the Berea Farmers' Market.

From 2007—2008, Dining Services purchased more than \$40,000 worth of locally-produced food, an increase of 63% over the same period last year. The total included more than \$13,000 worth of purchases from the Berea College Farms and Gardens, an

increase of 126% YTD! Dining Services also now serves only Fair-Trade coffee, rice, and tea.

In 2007, Sodexo hired a Sustainability Coordinator for Berea Dining Services, who focuses on the overall sustainability of the food service operation. In addition to recycling paper, cardboard, metal, plastic, Sodexo also collects all food waste for composting at the College Gardens.

## Where to Find Local Food

If you choose to cater your own event, there are several options for sourcing local food that is also sustainably produced.

### Berea Farmers' Market

Tuesdays and Fridays  
4:30–7:00 p.m.

#### Summer Location:

Greenspace behind Berea College Visitors Center

#### Winter Location:

Goldthwait Agriculture Building Pavilion  
Bryce Baumann, President  
bryce@stewardsoftheland.com  
859-986-7627

### Berea College Agriculture Department Online Store

[bereacollege.locallygrown.net](http://bereacollege.locallygrown.net)  
Sarah Paulson, Market Mgr.  
859-985-3591

### Happy Meadow Natural Foods

M–F, 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.  
Sat., 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.  
286 Glades Road, Berea  
859-986-3456

### MERJ Market

Saturdays and Sundays  
1:00–5:00 p.m.  
Battlefield Memorial Highway (McKee Road), Big Hill  
[merjmkt@yahoo.com](mailto:merjmkt@yahoo.com)

### Richmond Farmers' Market

Tuesdays, 3:00–6:00 p.m.  
Saturdays, 8:00a.m.–12:00p.m.  
Lowe's Parking Lot

# Seasonal Produce Kentucky



## What is 'Local'?

Local is defined as production that takes place in Kentucky and/or within 100-mile radius of Berea. For more information about Berea's efforts, visit [www.bereacollege.edu/localfoodinitiative](http://www.bereacollege.edu/localfoodinitiative).



# Reduce \* Reuse \* Recycle!

- ☐ Use electronic media instead of paper whenever possible
- ☐ Eliminate unnecessary waste by limiting the use of disposable containers
- ☐ Encourage presenters/exhibitors to minimize printed materials as well as packaging for shipping materials
- ☐ Maximize fuel-efficiency with environmentally preferable transportation

- ☐ Produce reusable signage from recycled materials
- ☐ Collect nametag holders and other program materials for reuse
- ☐ Offer reusable mugs or bottles for use at the event and at home



- ☐ Collect recyclable materials in well-placed and -labeled bins throughout
- ☐ Print on 100% post-consumer paper when necessary
- ☐ Seek program materials made from recycled materials whenever possible
- ☐ Collect and compost food waste

## Education and Engagement

Educated, engaged participants are absolutely essential for a successful green event of any size.

- ★ Model sustainability throughout all aspects of your event's operation: administration, program materials, waste management, and social interactions
- ★ Inform participants about what you're doing, why, and how they can help in advance and throughout the event
- ★ Choose SWAG ("Stuff We All Get") made from recycled and/or recyclable materials
- ★ Ensure a comfortable indoor environment for program activities
- ★ Provide both visibility and accessibility to outdoor green spaces
- ★ Build in adequate downtime for participants
- ★ Request feedback to assess your event's effectiveness and to invite suggestions for future improvements

## Other Information & Resources

There are numerous other resources available for making meetings and events more sustainable. In addition to this booklet, you can access electronic copies of Green Event planning guides from other organizations in the sustainability network folder (\\Fileshare-nt\Departmental\Sustainability\Public\Green Event Planning). There are also paper copies of some of these key documents for review in the Sustainability Coordinator's resource library.

For additional online resources, check out some of the following websites, many of which include downloadable tip-sheets and questionnaires to help you think about every aspect of planning your event. And don't forget the value of learning from experience and exchanging best practices and new ideas with your colleagues!

And as always... Celebrate Work Well Done! 😊

- 🌐 **Bluegreen Meetings**  
[www.bluegreenmeetings.org](http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org)
- 🌐 **Green Events Source Book**  
[www.greeneventsource.com](http://www.greeneventsource.com)
- 🌐 **Green Hotel Association**  
[www.greenhotels.com](http://www.greenhotels.com)
- 🌐 **Green Meeting Industry Council**  
[www.greenmeetings.info](http://www.greenmeetings.info)
- 🌐 **Green Seal**  
[www.greenseal.org/programs/lodging.cfm](http://www.greenseal.org/programs/lodging.cfm)
- 🌐 **Yale Sustainable Event Guidelines**  
[www.yale.edu/sustainability/sustevents.htm](http://www.yale.edu/sustainability/sustevents.htm)



Did you know that the Ecological Sustainability Education (ESE) Program has electronic and hard copies of other green event guides available for your use? So... check 'em out!