

Event Planning in the Moab Area: Tips to Minimize Waste and Impact

Whether you're planning a large or small event in the Moab area — from a competitive race, to a fundraiser, wedding or other get together — there are numerous ways to reduce the resource impacts. Doing so not only minimizes the amount of material shipped to the Moab landfill, but can also limit materials consumed and related carbon emissions, support the local economy, and allow for the reuse or reprocessing of items leftover from the event. Virtually every aspect of the materials you use, people you employ, and logistics you organize can have less of a negative impact on the Moab community and greater geographic area if you consciously consider the alternatives available to you. What follows is by no means a comprehensive list of all the options available to you, but an initial effort to list some of the most elemental aspects of waste minimization to consider, chronologically, from the beginning to the end of your event planning efforts. If you'd prefer a short resource list, click this link or scroll down to the [Quick Reference List](#).

SUMMARY OF TOPICS DISCUSSED BELOW

PRE-EVENT PLANNING:

- Decide what materials you plan to recycle at your event
- Arrange for recycling, trash and/or compost pick-up/delivery
- Educate event participants ahead of time
- Get enthusiastic volunteers to help with your event, and assign a coordinator
- Gather materials to set up a sufficient number of trash-recycling-compost stations
- Things to think about if you'll be serving food/beverages: Water - Cups, dishes, utensils and napkins - Food - Leftover Food)
- If you plan to give participants t-shirts, hats and other commemorative items/ souvenirs/ premiums/ awards or trophies
- If your event involves shuttling or transporting people from one place to another

DURING THE EVENT

- Tips to maximize volunteer efficiency and happiness
- Sorting station (for recycling-trash-compost)
- Tips for emptying bins most efficiently

AT THE END OF THE EVENT

- Quantifying your waste
- Cleaning up
- Volunteer and participant follow-up

OTHER RESOURCES

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

Decide what materials you plan to recycle at your event. Here's an overview of some of the most commonly recycled items and where you can take them:

- Moab's **Community Recycling Center** accepts the following: plastics #1-#7; aluminum cans; tin/steel cans; office paper; newspaper; corrugated cardboard; and glass. (No plastic wrappers/bags, paperboard, or styrofoam.) (1000 E Sand Flats Rd • 435-259-8640 • recyclemoab@hotmail.com).

- All forms of paper not accepted at the recycling center (including magazines, books and paperboard) — with the exception of plastic-coated paper and food-stained paper — can be recycled through **Moab's Monthly Paper Recycling Drive**, held the 3rd Saturday of every month in front of the Moab Post Office (50 E 100 N) from 9am-1pm. Call **Canyonlands Community Recycling** for more information (435-210-4996).

- Packing materials such as bubble wrap and packing peanuts can be taken to **Canyonlands Copy Center** or **Sore No More** for reuse (Canyonlands Copy Center: www.moabhappenings.com/moab%20services.htm • 375 S Main • 435-259-8432; Sore No More: 1101 S Murphy Lane • 259-5931).

- Plastic and paper grocery bags can go to **City Market** (bin is out front between the propane and pay phones; 425 S Main).

For a **directory of where to recycle other items in Moab**, visit www.moab-solutions.org/RecyclingDirectory.html

Arrange for recycling, trash and/or compost pick-up/delivery

recycling: In terms of items that can be recycled at the Moab recycling center, you can drop them off at the center yourself, or hire **Green Solutions** to do this for you (435-259-1088). If you'll be dropping off a large load, you may want to coordinate with recycling center staff ahead of time as they may want to be on hand to receive it.

trash: To reserve a trash dumpster, contact **Bob's Sanitation** (435-259-6314).

compost: Contact **Sol Food Farms** (www.solfoodfarms.com • 435-260-8287) or the **Youth Garden Project** (www.youthgardenproject.org • 435-259-2326) and inquire if they're willing to accept your compost or have other suggestions of where you might take it. Once you find a willing taker, be sure to ask what can and cannot be included in the compost.

biodegradable/compostable dishes and utensils: Check with whomever you're bringing your compost to and see if they'll accept these. (NB: The *compostable* items can break down fully in compost if processed with sufficient sunlight and moisture; however, the *biodegradable* items may not because they can require substantially higher temperatures to break down.) Please don't buy these items with the intention of simply sending them to the landfill as they likely will not receive sufficient sun and water to decompose there. We'll work on posting more options here in the future, but in the meantime, if you don't have another collector for your biodegradable and compostable items, you can place them in the #3-#7 plastics bin at the **Community Recycling Center** (no utensils please, as they can jam machines) (1000 E Sand Flats Rd • 435-259-8640 • recyclemoab@hotmail.com). In addition, **Mesa County Solid Waste District** may be willing to accept your compostable items for their compost program (can't take biodegradable items); call them at 970-241-6846 to inquire.

Educate event participants ahead of time through emails or printed programs so they'll know how they can help reduce and recycle at your event and that waste minimization is important to you. You may want to consider asking participants to sign a "sustainability waiver" in which they vow to, eg, consciously place material at the event in the proper collection location, bring

their own reusable water/drink containers, consume only what they need (to reduce food waste).

Get enthusiastic volunteers to help with your event, and assign a coordinator

- If you're running a larger event, you'll want to sign up volunteers to help you gather and sort trash, compost and recycling during your event so bins don't overflow, and so you can minimize the work to be done after the event ends.
- Train volunteers in advance so they're ready to hit the ground running on event day.
- Hiring a volunteer or paid recycling coordinator to lay out your recycling set-up and coordinate volunteers can reduce the time you need to spend yourself overseeing this work/delegating related duties
- Possible things your volunteers may need include: gloves (provide multiple pairs per person if using thin latex/nitrile ones), antibacterial handwash, food and beverages, trash bags (biodegradable if possible), wheelbarrows (critical if moving heavy stuff), markers, tape, scissors/utility knives (good for breaking down boxes and other miscellaneous tasks)

Gather materials to set up a sufficient number of trash-recycling-compost stations

One of the keys to minimizing the amount of trash your event sends to the landfill appears to be making sorting trash from recycling and compost as easy as possible for participants. It should be easy to both find and use trash/compost-/recycling bins.

- What seems to work really well is to set up separate, uniform "stations" where people can do this. At each station, you place three separate bins: one for trash, one for compost (5-gallon buckets work well), and one for recycling. Contamination can be minimized by making it as easy as possible to tell what goes where. Consider color coding: eg, if possible make every trash can/sign black, every compost can/sign green, every recycling can/sign red.
- Depending on the size of your event space and number of participants, decide how many stations you'll need.
- At each station, it's very useful to have a tall — eg 7-foot-high — sign so participants can easily find the station from a distance/over other people's heads.
- When people get to a station, they can get overwhelmed by the multitude of bins before them. To help them, place a sign on each bin — either at eye level, or directly at the level of the bin opening — to indicate which bin is for what. Furthermore, people will do a better job of sorting their items if you can tie or otherwise attach examples (or photos) of what should go in each bin on the bin. (For example, if you're serving apples and oranges, have a picture of an apple and orange on the compost bin sign. If you're giving out waxed milk cartons and bags of potato chips, tie a milk carton and chip bag to the trash sign. If you have paper handouts/programs and are offering beverages in aluminum cans and glass bottles at the event, tie a handout/program, a can, and a bottle on to the recycling bin sign.) This makes for extra prep work, but it'll vastly increase the effectiveness of your waste sorting efforts!

Things to think about if you'll be serving food/beverages

Water

There are a lot of economic and environmental drawbacks to bottled water. Please consider serving tap water. The Canyonlands Half Marathon does a great job of this. They use a potable hose to fill large Gator coolers with water and then provide compostable cups. Water may be available at your venue. If not, [Gearheads](#) (471 S Main • 435-259-4327) may

generously allow you to fill water containers at their shop for free. Don't forget to ask participants to bring their own water bottles and/or cups if possible.

Cups, dishes, utensils and napkins

-If you're serving food, you can minimize your impact most by serving items that don't require utensils, plates and napkins (eg: muffins, rolls, and fruit).

-The second best option is to provide reusable dishes and cloth napkins that you can wash afterwards and then reuse. If you don't own enough of these items yourself, and can't borrow what you need, **WabiSabi's** thrift stores may well have what you need

(www.wabisabimoab.org • 1030 S Bowling Alley Ln • 435- 259-3313). Alternately, **American Rental Specialties** rents flatware and plates (www.americanrentalspecialties.com • 435-259-6699).

-Another option is to use biodegradable or compostable utensils, cups, and dishes. Minimizing the different types of containers will both lessen waste and make your job easier. You can order such items yourself through **Packard Wholesale and Distributing** (435-259-5036).

Food supplier **Sysco** also offers biodegradable and compostable items, but doesn't accept orders from the general public. That said, Susan at **Paradox Pizza** is willing to include you in her Sysco orders (www.paradoxpizza.com • 435-259-9999).

- If you absolutely must use paper products, please use recycled ones that can be composted.

- The options above are preferable to using plastic. If you use plastic, please recycle cups and dishes, but realize that utensils must go in the trash.

- Please avoid styrofoam. (It cannot be recycled anywhere in our area).

Food

Please consider serving food produced and/or prepared locally. Vendors of locally produced food include:

Youth Garden Project/Moab Farmer's Market

(www.youthgardenproject.org/farmersmarket.html • 435-259-2326 or -0242)

Moonflower Market (39 E 100 N • 435-259-5712) (For an article describing local and regional products available see page 6B of the May 2010 issue of Moab Happenings at www.moabhappenings.com)

Ye Ol' Geezer Meat Shop (www.geezermeats.com • 435-259-4378)

Sol Food Farms (www.solfoodfarms.com • 435-260-8287)

Manzana Springs Vegetable Farm (www.manzanasprings.com/farm.htm • 435-259-6467)

Castle Valley Creamery (products available at Moonflower Market, Farmer's Market, Village Market • for special events or bulk orders email eriksecrist@hotmail.com)

Castle Valley Farms (daystar_academy@frontiernet.net • 435-259-7719)

Castle Creek Winery (www.castlecreekwinery.com • 435-259-3332)

Spanish Valley Vineyards & Winery (www.moab-utah.com/spanishvalleywinery • 435-259-8134)

Note that there are many other restaurants and caterers in Moab too numerous to list here.

Leftover Food

If you have food leftover following your event, you may be able to donate it to either the **Grand County Food Bank** (435-259-6456) or **Free Meal** (August Brooks, Coordinator: 435-260-2610).

If you plan to give participants t-shirts, hats and other commemorative items/ souvenirs/ premiums/ awards or trophies

By contacting participants in advance (perhaps when they register/RSVP) and asking up front what items they do/don't want, you'll have a better idea of how much you really need. This will help minimize the number of unwanted items that later get tossed or donated to thrift stores. More importantly, doing this will spare the resources that go into producing the souvenirs in the first place. Please consider having your souvenirs made locally, using materials readily available in Moab. For example, if your event includes giving out awards or trophies, consider reusing ones from **WabiSabi** (www.wabisabimoab.org • 435- 259-3313), or hiring **Earth Studio** to custom make awards for you (view examples at: www.earthstudiomoab.com/home/es2/smartlist_290/awards_trophies.html • 800-764-2433).

If your event involves shuttling or transporting people from one place to another

Encourage walking or biking if at all possible. If you don't want to pedal yourself, consider hiring the **Moab Pedicab Company** to pedal you around (435-210-1382).

If this won't suffice for your event, consider utilizing one of Moab's shuttle companies:

- **RoadRunner Shuttle** (www.roadrunnershuttle.com • 435-259-9402)
- **Coyote Shuttle** (www.coyoteshuttle.com • 435-259-8656)
- **Porcupine Shuttle** (www.poisonspiderbicycles.com/home/moab-information/bike-shuttles/ • 435-260-0896)
- **Acme Bike Shuttle** (www.acmebikeshuttle.com • 435-260-2534)
- **Black Dog Shuttle & Expedition Support** (www.blackdogexpeditionssupport.com • 800-241-2591)

If your group is too small for a shuttle vehicle, carpool. If you aren't in a position to drive yourselves, contact **Moab Taxi** (435-210-4297 • Moabtaxi@aol.com, **Moab Adventure Cab** (435-220-0617 • moabcabbie@yahoo.com or **Moab Luxury Cab** (435-940-4212 •

For other transportation solutions contact the **Moab Area Travel Council's Facility and Event Promoter** (www.moabutah.info • 435-259-1340).

Finally, consider offsetting the carbon produced at your event through **Native Energy** (www.nativeenergy.com).

DURING THE EVENT

Tips to maximize volunteer efficiency and happiness

- Check in at the beginning of the event and make sure volunteers have what they need (eg gloves, antibacterial handwash, trash bags, enough bins and buckets, wheelbarrows, markers, tape, scissors/utility knives).
- Check in with your volunteer crew during the event to resupply them if they need anything.
- Provide your volunteers with healthy food and beverages.

Sorting station (for recycling-compost-trash)

Setting up a tarp where co-mingled recyclables can be sorted is a good idea. It helps to locate this station near your trash dumpster. At the sorting station, set up individual bags or other containers to separate various recyclables into (eg a #1 plastics bag, #2 plastics bag, #3-7 plastics bag, an aluminum bag, etc.).

Once bags are filled, you may want to label them with a permanent marker to identify the contents. (This can make dropping off bags at the recycling center easier as you can separate and empty bags quickly.)

Tips for emptying bins most efficiently

If your event is a large one, your trash, compost and recycling containers may fill quickly. You'll be faster at emptying full containers if you designate one or more 2-person teams of volunteers to walk around the event venue pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with extra bags/buckets. They can throw full bags/buckets in the wheelbarrow and set out a new bag/bucket at the same time, heading back to the sorting station/dumpster as necessary to unload. (The wheelbarrows spare your volunteers' backs the burden of carrying heavy bags all the way to your dumpster and/or sorting station.)

AT THE END OF THE EVENT

Quantifying your waste

You may want to somehow quantify both the amount of trash your event yields, and the amounts of recycling, compost and other materials you divert from the landfill. Consider taking photos of — and/or weighing — your recycling, compost, and any items leftover that can be donated for reuse. If your event is a fundraiser, donors often appreciate such information. In addition, if your event is an annual one, quantifying your waste can inspire you to find ways to further reduce this waste next year.

Cleaning up

- Transport recycling, compost and leftover food to appropriate venues.
- You may also end up with a collection of “found” items that people don't claim. Virtually anything that can be reused, from clothing to outdoor gear to electronic equipment, can be taken to WabiSabi to be sold in their thrift stores to help fund local non-profit organizations. Check with them to find out if they can accept your items (www.wabisabimoab.org • 1030 S Bowling Alley Ln • 435- 259-3313).
- Tear down and recycle any signs you may have posted around town to advertise your event so they don't end up as windblown litter or in the landfill.

Volunteer and participant follow-up

- Be sure to thank volunteers after the event.
- Ask volunteers and participants for their feedback, both positive and negative.
- Don't miss the opportunity to gauge volunteers' interest in helping you with future events, if applicable.

OTHER RESOURCES

For additional tips or consultation, contact:

Canyonlands Community Recycling (www.moabrecycles.com • 435-210-4996 • moabrecycles@frontier.com) Our nonprofit organization is dedicated to enhancing sustainability by empowering the Moab community to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Solutions of Moab (www.moab-solutions.org • 435-259-0910)

The all-volunteer organization Solutions is constantly developing ideas about the best way to minimize waste at events and is more than happy to share their thoughts/experience with you.

Moab Area Travel Council Facility and Event Coordinator (www.moabutah.info • 435-259-1340)

This document is a work in progress. Please send any corrections or additions to Canyonlands Community Recycling Program Director Rani Derasary at moabrecycles@frontier.com.

QUICK REFERENCE LIST
for
MINIMIZING WASTE AT MOAB AREA EVENTS

If you need help minimizing waste at your event, contact:

Canyonlands Community Recycling (www.moabrecycles.com) • 435-210-4996 • moabrecycles@frontier.com)

Solutions of Moab (www.moab-solutions.org) • 435-259-0910)

Moab Area Travel Council Facility and Event Coordinator (www.moabutah.info) • 435-259-1340)

Businesses that will pick up your recycling or trash

recycling: **Green Solutions** (435-259-1088)

trash: To reserve a trash dumpster, contact **Bob's Sanitation** (435-259-6314)

Where to drop off recycling

Moab's **Community Recycling Center** accepts: plastics #1-#7; aluminum cans; tin/steel cans; office paper; newspaper; corrugated cardboard; and glass. (No plastic wrappers/bags, paperboard, or styrofoam.) (1000 E Sand Flats Rd • 435-259-8640 • recyclemoab@hotmail.com) Most paper items not accepted at the recycling center can be brought to **Moab's Monthly Paper Recycling Drive**, held the 3rd Saturday of every month in front of the Moab Post Office (50 E 100 N) from 9am-1pm. Accepted items include: phone books, magazines, catalogs, paperboard (cereal boxes etc), brown paper bags, toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls, egg cartons, books (including hardbacks), wrapping paper and other packaging paper. Call **Canyonlands Community Recycling** for more information (435-210-4996).

Canyonlands Copy Center and **Sore No More** reuse packing materials such as bubble wrap and packing peanuts (Canyonlands Copy Center: www.moabhappenings.com/moab%20services.htm • 375 S Main • 435-259-8432; Sore No More: 1101 S Murphy Lane • 259-5931).

City Market accepts plastic and paper grocery bags (bin is out front between the propane and pay phones; 425 S Main)

Have other recyclables?: visit www.moab-solutions.org/RecyclingDirectory.html

Where to drop off compost

The following may be willing to accept your compost. Contact them to inquire:

Sol Food Farms (www.solfoodfarms.com) • 435-260-8287)

Youth Garden Project (www.youthgardenproject.org) • 435-259-2326)

Where to take compostable/compostable containers and utensils

- Check with whomever you're bringing your **compost** to and see if they'll accept these.
- **Community Recycling Center** - If you don't have another collector for your biodegradable and compostable items, you can place them in the #3-#7 plastics bin the Moab recycling center (no utensils please, as they can jam machines).
- **Mesa County Solid Waste District** (may be willing to accept compostable items; can't take biodegradable items) - call them at 970-241-6846 to inquire.

Where to purchase or rent cups, dishes, utensils and napkins

used & new: **WabiSabi** (www.wabisabimoab.org • 1030 S Bowling Alley Ln • 435- 259-3313)
rentals (flatware & plates): **American Rental Specialties** (www.americanrentalspecialties.com
• 435-259-6699)

biodegradable or compostable utensils, cups, and dishes: order through **Packard Wholesale and Distributing** (435-259-5036) or **Sysco** (commercial orders only, but if you don't have an account, Susan at **Paradox Pizza** is willing to include you in her Sysco orders (www.paradoxpizza.com • 435-259-9999)

Where to fill up water containers if you don't have another source

Gearheads (471 S Main • 435-259-4327)

Vendors of locally grown/produced food

Youth Garden Project/Moab Farmer's Market

(www.youthgardenproject.org/farmersmarket.html • 435-259-2326 or -0242)

Moonflower Market (39 E 100 N • 435-259-5712) (For an article describing local/regional products available see page 6B of the May 2010 issue of Moab Happenings at www.moabhappenings.com)

Ye Ol' Geezer Meat Shop (www.geezermeats.com • 435-259-4378)

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Manzana Springs Vegetable Farm (www.manzanasprings.com/farm.htm • 435-259-6467)

Castle Valley Creamery (products available at Moonflower Market, Farmer's Market, Village Market • for special events or bulk orders send an email to: eriksecrist@hotmail.com)

Castle Valley Farms (daystar_academy@frontiernet.net • 435-259-7719)

Castle Creek Winery (www.castlecreekwinery.com • 435-259-3332)

Spanish Valley Vineyards & Winery (www.moab-utah.com/spanishvalleywinery • 435-259-8134)

Where to take leftover food

Grand County Food Bank (435-259-6456)

Free Meal (August Brooks, Coordinator: 435-260-2610)

Where to buy and/or donate reusable (non-food) items

WabiSabi (www.wabisabimoab.org • 1030 S Bowling Alley Ln • 435- 259-3313)

Shuttle companies

RoadRunner Shuttle (www.roadrunnershuttle.com • 435-259-9402)

Coyote Shuttle (www.coyoteshuttle.com • 435-259-8656)

Porcupine Shuttle (www.poisonspiderbicycles.com/home/moab-information/bike-shuttles/ • 435-260-0896)

Acme Bike Shuttle (www.acmebikeshuttle.com • 435-260-2534)

Black Dog Shuttle & Expedition Support (www.blackdogexpeditionssupport.com • 800-241-2591)

Taxis/Pedicabs

Moab Pedicab Company (435-210-1382).

Moab Adventure Cab (435-220-0617 • moabcabbie@yahoo.com)
Moab Taxi (435-210-4297 • Moabtaxi@aol.com)
Moab Luxury Cab (435-940-4212)

Carbon offset program

Native Energy (www.nativeenergy.com)

Awards/trophies

used: **WabiSabi** (www.wabisabimoab.org • 435- 259-3313)

new: **Earth Studio** (view examples at:

www.earthstudiomoab.com/home/es2/smartlist_290/awards_trophies.html • 800-764-2433)

This document is a work in progress. Please send any corrections or additions to
Canyonlands Community Recycling Program Director Rani Derasary at moabrecycles@frontier.com.