

Sustainability in action

Gentlemen of  
the Road Tour,  
Monterey  
2012

A case study

by The Offset Project

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## Our Commitment

The Gentlemen of the Road Tour is committed to spearheading environmental sustainability initiatives at its events, including at the Monterey County Fairgrounds on August 25, 2012. In August 2012 the event committed to striving toward zero waste through a food waste collection program run in 27 catering and vending areas in the back of house and through a first-time zero-waste and public education effort run in the Fairgrounds public areas using 12 zero-waste stations, each manned by a volunteer. A sorting team inspected all vendor waste as well as zero-waste station bags to ensure maximum waste diversion. Food waste and other compostable items were composted at the Monterey Regional Waste Management District in Marina, California. Food scrap diversion not only reduces waste, but also lowers methane emissions and reduces other environmental impacts, including those created from the production of virgin soil amendments.

## Our Actions and Tangible Impacts

**The Offset Project, an area 501(c)3, and the Fairgrounds stewarding crew diverted 680 pounds of food and compostable products from catering and vending areas as well as 12 public zero-waste stations.** Food scraps and other compostable items not only produce waste at the end of their useful lives, but also release methane emissions — a potent greenhouse gas roughly 23 times more devastating to the climate than CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. **The 680 diverted pounds of food waste avoided approximately 1,700 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent from entering the atmosphere.** Fairgrounds staff also paired each trash bin with a recycling bin, outside of zero-waste stations, to capture the maximum amount of recyclable materials and increase overall waste diversion.



An Offset Project volunteer “womans” a zero-waste station at the GOTR Tour stop in Monterey, August 2012.

## Intangible Impacts

In August 2012, The Offset Project, funded by the GOTR Tour, trained event caterers and vendors in waste diversion practices, and these same vendors and caterers will return to Monterey County Fairgrounds events year after year to use the Fairgrounds’ new back-of-house food waste collection system. The majority of caterers and vendors were receptive to the new food waste and compostable products diversion practices, though the program requires one extra step in sorting. A handful of caterers commented that they have been eager to participate in such a program for years or that they are already accustomed to such practices at events in San Francisco. All caterers were quite proficient at food waste separation by the event’s end. Environmental

education — and specifically waste diversion practices — further spread into the Monterey Peninsula community and beyond. Offset Project staff tied one or two yellow bins to a cart to consolidate food from kitchen areas and steward to the food waste dumpster.

The GOTR Tour emerged as an environmental leader in waste diversion, encouraging environmental programs at the venue on August 25 as well as in the future. In funding The Offset Project's efforts, for the first time ever the Fairgrounds venue adopted zero-waste stations and signage manned by volunteers who not only engaged in thorough source separation but also educated event goers in waste diversion and the importance of such environmental practices. GOTR has acted as environmental educators for similar events and venues, the Monterey Peninsula and beyond.

Monterey County Fairgrounds staff has not yet benchmarked its total waste diversion at any event because trash and recycling dumpsters are not emptied between events. However, because of GOTR's commitment to zero waste, The Offset Project started a conversation with Fairgrounds staff on the feasibility of emptying dumpsters between events in the near future. This would allow The Offset Project to benchmark waste diversion at Fairgrounds events in 2012 and set targets for greater, measurable reductions in 2013.



**Offset Project staff sorts through food waste during the event to pull out any waste contamination.**

### **Useful Links:**

[gentlemenoftheroad.com](http://gentlemenoftheroad.com)  
[theoffsetproject.org](http://theoffsetproject.org)  
[montereycountyfairgrounds.com](http://montereycountyfairgrounds.com)  
[mrwmd.org](http://mrwmd.org)  
[montereydisposal.com](http://montereydisposal.com)