

Monterey County Jazz Festival 2011

Sustainability in action



A case study
by The Offset Project



10-3-'11

Event Description

The annual [Monterey Jazz Festival](#) (in its 54th year) kicks off every September at the Monterey County Fairgrounds in Monterey California, and spotlights the legends of jazz while expanding the genres' boundaries through emerging sounds and innovative productions. The three-day Monterey Jazz Festival also features jazz conversations, panel discussions, workshops, exhibitions, clinics, and an international spectrum of food, shopping and festivities. Founders Jimmy Lyons and Ralph Gleason launched the inaugural Festival in 1958 with artists including Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie. The Monterey Festival — the longest-running jazz festival in the world — also provides year-round jazz education showcased during its annual Next Generation Jazz Festival.

Our Commitment

The Monterey Jazz Festival is committed to environmental sustainability. Set in the heart of the ecologically sensitive and uniquely beautiful Monterey Peninsula, the Jazz Festival has become interested in sustainability initiatives and environmental stewardship as it aspires to design responsible cultural events. The Jazz Festival represents an ideal platform for embedding sustainable programs. The Jazz Festival is committed at the top management level, which lends itself to long-term program development. The venue already has in place several initiatives from which to build on.

Our Actions and Tangible Impacts/Benefits

- [The Offset Project](#) (TOP), an area nonprofit, diverted 2,520 pounds of food from vendor areas in 2011. TOP's zero-waste team educated vendors and volunteers in food waste diversion practices to ease program implementation. Due to the effectiveness and consistency of such small pilot initiatives, [Monterey City Disposal Service](#) has developed a permanent food waste program and has purchased a 20-yard food waste container, used for the first time at the 2011 Festival. The overall cost to facilitate food waste diversion was \$309 for the food waste dumpster and \$1,900 for staffing, funded in part by a [Monterey Regional Waste Management District](#) grant. Food waste produces methane emissions — a potent greenhouse gas roughly 23 times more devastating to the climate than CO₂ emissions.
- In 2007 [Ecology Action](#) of Santa Cruz established a grant-funded program known as the Five Star Recycling partnership. Ecology Action and grant partners have implemented a comprehensive beverage container-recycling program, including hundreds of bins, signage and staff training, at the Monterey County Fairgrounds. The bins are also used during all venue events to reduce waste and reuse scarce natural resources. The recyclables collection program funds are used to purchase tools for the Monterey County Fairgrounds maintenance department.



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- The Jazz Festival, in association with family-owned Marin County business [U.S. Pure Water](#), implemented a self-service filtered water program to eliminate the need for single-use plastic bottles, which produce copious solid waste and guzzle valuable resources like petroleum.
- The Jazz Festival has introduced a vendor food ware policy which states that vendors are prohibited from carrying service ware that cannot be composted or recycled, particularly Styrofoam (banned in Monterey in 2009). Violation may result in up to a \$1,000 fine and/or vendor removal from Festival grounds.
- The Jazz Festival, in cooperation with the Fairgrounds and [Monterey Green Action](#), provided a bike valet parking service to encourage nearby residents and hotel patrons to save carbon emissions through bicycle transit.
- The Monterey County Jazz Festival suggests that Festivalgoers plan the culinary portion of their trip using the Eat Well Everywhere mapping tool (by the [Eat Well Guide](#)), which allows users to search for locally grown and sustainably produced food. This reduces pollution of air, water and soil.



Intangible Impacts and Benefits

The Festival's sustainability initiatives have resulted in several intangible positive impacts throughout the Monterey Bay area. Vendors have learned and adapted to a food waste recycling system while Festival patrons have adopted recycling practices and behaviors. Both groups may carry this education outside the Festival.

Festivalgoers also better understand the negative environmental impacts of bottled water and simple ways to avoid this product. Additionally, the Festival has exposed attendees to more sustainable forms of transit and eating practices — knowledge they can share into the surrounding community as well as to those outside the Monterey Peninsula.

The Festival could also market its practices to improve its reputation as a sustainable event.

Challenges Going Forward

Food waste collected from vendor areas in 2011 is comparable to the amount of food waste collected in 2010. This indicates a need for zero-waste program expansion. Now that food vendors are participating in the waste diversion program, the next step is to reach out to front-of-house festivalgoers. The Offset Project has also documented all materials used by vendors; this information will help The Offset Project advise vendors on more environmentally sustainable purchasing practices in the future. Switching to 100% compostable and recyclable products would facilitate a truly zero-waste event.

In the following years, the Monterey Jazz Festival plans to encourage its venue, the Monterey County Fairgrounds, to develop a permanent food waste collection program. The Jazz Festival is currently collaborating with The Offset Project to develop a strategy. This plan will build a foundation for a program that can serve all events that use the Fairgrounds venue. In the long run, developing waste diversion programs ultimately reduce the costs associated with waste hauling. The Offset Project plans to demonstrate how these savings are tied to a business's triple bottom line.

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Useful Links:

offsetproject.org

ecoact.org

uspw.net

greenpedal.org

eatwellguide.org

sustainablemontereycounty.org

<http://www.mrwmd.org/>