

**nuun**

**PRESENTS**

**A PRACTICAL  
GUIDE TO  
HOSTING  
RADICALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
EVENTS**



**COUNCIL *for*  
RESPONSIBLE  
SPORT**

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## LETTER OF WELCOME FROM NUUN HYDRATION

Leaders of the Running World,

Imagine a running event that brought joy and health to the community without leaving a trace on our planet... As we inspire, motivate, and help millions of people get moving through our events, we are consistently having a negative impact on the Earth. The good news is that just because 'we've always done it that way' does not mean we have to stay on the same path moving forward.

Nuun is on a mission to empower more muuvment. This mission stands on three pillars: Clean Product, Clean Sport and Clean Planet. Our partnership with the Council for Responsible Sport is an extension of these core values and we are proud to support the creation of this comprehensive 10-Step Guide to more sustainable sports events.



The following pages outline both challenges and opportunities to change our sports event culture for the better. At Nuun, we believe in the power of muuvment to change lives and we know that radically responsible leaders have the power to change the way we do business. We challenge you to take it one step further – to help our collective industry change the world!

The Council for Responsible Sport has spent years observing, evaluating, and certifying socially and environmentally aware sports events. As a result, they've identified the best and most effective practices implemented at events worldwide. We are thrilled to be able to support their immense efforts to compile these findings into this guide so that we can all benefit from their expertise.

If we all adopt even one of the suggestions put forward by the Council for Responsible Sport within this guide, our planet will be better off. So, we at Nuun challenge YOU to join the Clean Planet Muuvment and take the first step forward with this guide.

We know it isn't easy, but together we can build a more sustainable run culture. Having a guide like this will help move the needle at sports events, at work, and in our personal lives; because in many ways we are in a race for a Clean Planet, and it will take all of us to win it.

Let's get muuving!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Rutherford', written in a cursive style.

KEVIN RUTHERFORD  
CEO  
NUUN HYDRATION



## LETTER OF WELCOME FROM THE COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORT

Greetings Colleagues,

This guide is intended to be both informative and practical.

Events have a special place in modern society. Sport events of all kinds buck the trends towards instant gratification, excessive screen time, and social isolation. They must be waited for, planned for, trained for, and traveled to. They bring together people of all shapes, sizes, ages, colors, backgrounds, abilities and stories—hallelujah! And they are ephemeral—here one moment, the fruit of long labors in preparation, then gone just a few hours or days later, leaving what behind? That is the question I believe we are called to consider more closely.

I can't think of a better platform than events to both demonstrate and draw attention to the more intentional behaviors these times call for. At events, we can both 'walk the talk' then 'talk the talk,' preferably in that order.

A wise mentor of mine once said, "if you're not in place, you're just floating in space." A radically responsible event might be one that deeply reflects a place's unique character and values, and which is woven into the cultural fabric there, even helping to define the place itself, and its trajectory forward. With that view, hosting events inherently carries a large responsibility to respect, reflect, and honor the communities they operate within.

In the face of the multi-faceted challenges of these times, which are at least as epic in scale as ever before in history, we in the event industry have a choice—as does everyone else—to go along dutifully performing our tasks as we've traditionally done until we ride right off of the proverbial cliff's edge, or we can sit up, become students once more, and learn how to correct course in the ways we can with the resources available to us. This guide is intended to support those of us who are brave enough to care to try.

Thank you for all you've already done up to this point. We're all testing and trying things out together. For those efforts, I thank you and am encouraged. Please don't stop.



Thank you to Nuun, for its unwavering commitment to radical responsibility and working towards a clean planet. Exemplary leadership and a willingness to be creative in search of solutions is something we all benefit from. The Council is grateful to call Nuun our partner.

In dedication to my four-year-old-daughter, who is growing up quickly, and to all our children, and the generations that will inherit the Earth after we're gone— I wish us all strength, courage, and minds that remain curious.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelley Villalobos".

SHELLEY VILLALOBOS  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORT



## RADICAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY— WHY BOTHER?

It's hard to ignore all the news of seasonal weather anomalies, wildfires, melting glaciers and rising sea levels, and scientists' siren calls to protect and restore the planet before it's too late. The massive growth of the global population and demand for natural resources has made sustainable development the central challenge of the 21st Century, and one that crosses all domains.

Evidence of humanity's current unsustainability is abundant: the prevalence of plastics in the ocean, the depletion of natural resource stocks such as forest timber and fisheries, 35 percent of all food is wasted along its journey from the farm to the fridge. The list goes on and on, but the clearest evidence of global unsustainability is the warming of the global average temperature causing climate destabilization.

We sometimes forget that all these dynamics in play are interrelated by the fact that they're happening here and now on Earth, the only planet known to support biotic life. For example, 2019 was the fifth consecutive year in which ten or more weather events caused a billion or more dollars in damage in the United States<sup>1</sup> alone. This trend has serious ramifications for the places those extreme events occur, the people who call those places home, and the economy at every scale.

A growing awareness of the precarious state of the world has resulted in many people adopting or becoming willing to adopt behaviors that are more efficient, less wasteful, less polluting, more equitable, healthier, and generally more responsible.

In the sports events sector, responsibility indicates decision-making that is defensible socially, environmentally and financially. This concept is often referred to as the 'triple bottom line' as opposed to the conventional single 'bottom line' of financial profitability.

### **A RESPONSIBLE EVENT IS ONE THAT UNDERTAKES A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE WAYS THE EVENT AFFECTS PEOPLE, GENERATES ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, AND USES RAW MATERIALS AND ENERGY THAT AFFECT LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS AND EARTH'S BROADER ECOLOGY.**

One of the primary questions with regards to events being agents of social and environmental responsibility then becomes—what's left when the event is over? What resources have been used? What has been created or otherwise has changed, where, and for whom? Leading responsible events will answer those questions with ever-greater precision in ways their communities embrace.

The ten radically responsible things events do proposed here are based on ten years of observation and evaluation of many of the leading socially and environmentally aware events in the U.S. and beyond by the Council for Responsible Sport and the many events that have embraced it. The word radical stems from the Latin for 'root,' indicating getting down to the bottom of things. Radically responsible events, then, are committed to re-thinking their very structures in order to best align with what they most value about their communities and places.

**THE 10 THINGS RADICALLY  
RESPONSIBLE RACES DO:**



Image credit: Denise Hovey

*Yes, you can. With intentional planning, we can all do better.*

# 01

**SIMPLIFY.  
ELIMINATE THE  
UNNECESSARY.**



## SIMPLIFY. ELIMINATE THE UNNECESSARY.

One of the most responsible things anyone can do in a time when humans are over-consuming natural resources by 60 percent<sup>2</sup> is to eliminate demand for goods in the first place. This means simplifying the material demands of the event. While expectations for shirts, medals, single-use bottled beverages and other mementos for participation is not likely to fade away any time soon, it doesn't mean organizers shouldn't take a fresh look at these elements with an eye for eliminating the unneeded and emphasizing the quality of the experience rather than the stuff that comes with it.

### RECOMMENDED TACTICS INCLUDE:

- + Review expenditures from the past few years. For each item that was a purchase of a physical thing, ask:
  - + *Is it integral to the success of the event?*
  - + *Did we order too much and have leftovers?*
  - + *Did this item generate any waste?*
  - + *Is there a more sustainable option that would better demonstrate our environmental values to our participants?*
- + Communicate to ensure suppliers and vendors know your environmental values and clearly define the limits of what you consider to be appropriate when it comes to generating waste and handing out physical materials at expos or festivals.
- + Reflect your preferences in contracts. For example:
  - + A contract with an advertiser or sponsor could specify that all printed advertisements be printed on recycled paper with environmentally preferable (water and plant based) inks.
  - + A contract with a rental equipment service could specify that it will use fuel efficient vehicles and purchase greenhouse gas emission credits (aka carbon credits) to offset the total vehicle miles traveled on behalf of the event.
  - + A contract with a food vendor could specify giving priority to local suppliers and farms, using plant-based (as opposed to plastic) service ware, and composting food waste.
- + An organization-wide procurement policy could include specific requirements for vendors, exhibitors/sponsors and event staff with purchasing duties; clear guidance can be provided on the organization's stance and approach to:
  - + Large and small format printing
  - + Food, food service items and packaging
  - + Giveaways, mementos and merchandise
  - + Waste prevention and diversion goals

# 02

**VOTE WITH YOUR  
PURCHASES FOR A  
CLEAN PLANET AND  
WELLBEING FOR ALL.**

## VOTE WITH YOUR PURCHASES FOR A CLEAN PLANET AND WELLBEING FOR ALL.

The adage “vote with your wallet” has become commonplace in discussions about how consumption in our personal lives affects the ecological state of the world. The basic economic principle of supply and demand holds that we buy what is provided to us, but that we influence what’s provided by what we choose to buy<sup>3</sup>. Regardless of an event’s size or financial resources, each purchase choice is a vote for that offering in the marketplace, and by association, the company that provides it as well as its practices and values.

**“As you introduce sustainability to the event, use each purchasing decision as an opportunity to challenge your current practices. What is the product’s lifecycle and what can be done to make it more sustainable? What possibilities exist for closing the loop? Engaging in these conversations with your staff, stakeholders and partners is what leads to innovation and change.”**

**Catherine Morris**

**SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER, CHICAGO EVENT MANAGEMENT**

Values-based purchasing has already caused a shift towards greener choices in the past decade or so, and consumers reliant on organizations to act.

**86 percent of consumers expect companies to do more than simply make a profit<sup>4</sup>, and 63 percent rely on companies to produce positive change in the world<sup>5</sup>.**

**VOTE WITH YOUR PURCHASES FOR A CLEAN PLANET AND WELLBEING FOR ALL.**

**KEY EVENT ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER WHEN VOTING WITH YOUR PURCHASES INCLUDE:**

- + Rented equipment
- + Venues
- + Printed media and signage
- + Food and beverages
- + Branded merchandise
- + Medals and/or awards
- + Participation clothing (e.g. finisher's shirts)
- + Lodging partners

**SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK OF PROSPECTIVE SUPPLIERS INCLUDE:**

- + Does the company have a sustainability strategy?
- + Does it measure its own resource use and track performance towards goals?
- + Does its business model support a clean planet and healthy people?
- + Does the product or service have any social or environmental credentials that distinguish it from conventional competitors?

Simply asking these questions provides useful input to those companies that their clientele wants to know where they stand and is, at least in some part, considering these elements in their decision-making.

*Making water available with filling stations is environmentally preferable to distributing single-use plastic bottles.*



# TOP 5 RECOMMENDED RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING ACTIONS FOR EVENTS



- 1. Choose organic and plant-based food and beverage options**—Whether it’s a post-race meal for athletes, feeding event volunteers, or vendors selling food to attendees, prioritizing organic ingredients is the simplest way to ensure that food has been produced using cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that support the cycling of natural resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity<sup>6</sup>. Organic usually costs a bit more, but as we evolve the definition of value beyond price alone, we can consider if it’s “worth it” to us to support biodiversity, waste prevention, and soil health, knowing that this is a critical choice we are making in exchange for a little more money.
- 2. Increase the sustainability of giveaways**—For participant shirts this means asking suppliers whether they are using recycled polyester, organic or Better Cotton Initiative, or other more sustainable fibers and yarns in their fabrics. Bags should be made of cloth, mesh, or another easily reused material, or be made from post-consumer recycled content. Reusable coffee mugs, durable bottles, or grocery bags are items that are more likely to be reused over time and can help people incorporate more sustainable behaviors into their daily routines.
- 3. Stop buying single-use plastic water bottles and other cheap plastic items**—Eight million tons of plastics leak into the ocean every year, the equivalent of dumping one garbage truck of plastic into the ocean every minute. In a business-as-usual scenario, by 2050 there will be more plastics than fish in the ocean by weight<sup>7</sup>. Start with one physical area to test using water refill stations with biodegradable paper cups instead of bottled water or gallon jugs, then expand the program over time. If you must continue using single-use water bottles, work closely with a recycler to capture and sort them, and ensure they get recycled.
- 4. Restrict lodging contracts to properties with written commitments to sustainability**—Judge options by their performance on energy efficiency, recycling, water conservation and sustainable procurement. [Green Globes](#) offers a structured assessment of the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply chain partners. Ask hotel partners if they are Green Globes certified or have undertaken the assessment.
- 5. Eliminate dated signage and choose printing partners using best practices**—Many events already employ the practice of printing non-dated signage to be reused in future years, thereby preventing yearly waste production and the cost of reprinting every year. Some events add changeable elements, like adjustable arrows (e.g. stickers, Velcro) for wayfinding signage. The [Sustainable Green Printing Partnership](#) offers a certification program to verify the sustainability claims made by printing companies and offers a map of certified companies. Ask printers if they’ve heard of the certification, or if they already practice any of the tactics it entails.

# 03

**GET CIRCULAR.  
DIVERT WASTE  
MATERIAL FROM  
THE LANDFILL.**

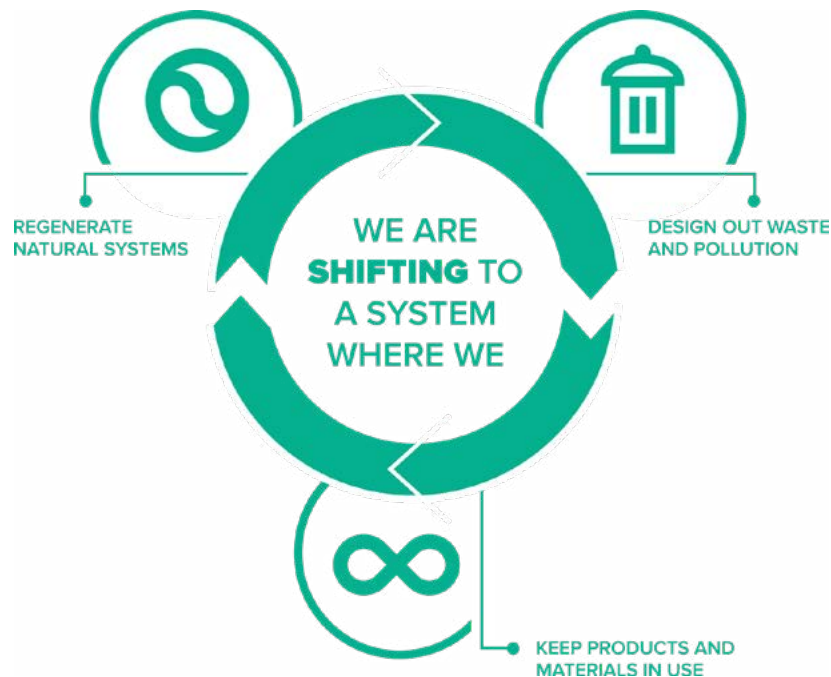
## GET CIRCULAR. DIVERT WASTE MATERIAL FROM THE LANDFILL.

Why is there such increased interest in striving for 'zero waste' at events in recent years? In a nutshell, the past century saw the extraction of many natural resources grow exponentially for the first time in history. Exponential growth in a finite environment translates to one thing, unsustainability. Science and ecology necessitate human development towards a more circular or 'steady state' material economy, that is, more conscious decision-making about how we manage resources.

**A circular economy decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designs waste out of the system. The concept is based on three principles<sup>8</sup>:**

- 1. Design out waste and pollution**
- 2. Keep products and materials in use**
- 3. Regenerate natural systems**

Waste capture and management is one of the most visible elements guests interact with at an event, and therefore, is a major opportunity to demonstrate alignment with a more intentional system for using, reusing and ultimately recycling materials. By putting circular principles into action, events can become enabling catalysts towards a regenerative, restorative economy that is waste-free by design.



*Image credit: Ellen MacArthur Foundation*

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES IN ACTION AT THE BANK OF AMERICA CHICAGO MARATHON

As one of the largest marathons (45,000+), an Abbott World Marathon Major, and the world's only Inspire Evergreen level certified event, organizers of the Bank of America Chicago Marathon have sought to apply circular economy principles into operations, resulting in three innovative programs that reduce or eliminate waste, and reduce demand from nature for raw materials.



## CUPS TO SOIL

After successful tests in 2017 and 2018, in 2019, all the course aid stations served water in cups made from bamboo that could breakdown in a commercial compost operation and be turned back into soil along with the banana peels and apple core remains of the 'runner refresh' area beyond the finish line. Composting is an ideal way to divert material that would otherwise be landfilled, instead placing nutrients and carbon molecules back into the soil where those elements are needed to grow the next generation of crops. And yes, storing carbon in the soil is a way to counteract greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change.





## BOTTLES TO FABRIC

Water bottles are source-separated with help from green team volunteers and Republic Services (the event's contracted waste hauler), providing a 'clean stream' of material for manufacturers to purchase and turn into valuable new items such as the polyester Nike tech shirt participants receive made from yarn spun from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic.



## BLANKETS TO BOARDS

The race gives runners insulating foil blankets by Heatsheets to maintain their body temperature before and after running. Heatsheets, in its own quest for responsibility, collaborated with a company that makes composite board products—Trex—that can use the blankets in its product when mixed with sawdust. The result of the ['Blankets to Boards'](#) program is a manufactured board that is durable and water-resistant while being sourced from post-consumer material. In 2018, organizers made and donated a Trex board bench to a nearby school. It takes about 500 Heatsheets to make one bench. Organizers plan to continue the program, donating benches each year to neighborhoods along the race course.

## GET CIRCULAR. DIVERT WASTE MATERIAL FROM THE LANDFILL.

Take a close look at what's been in the 'waste stream' at past events. Then use the three classic "Rs"—reduce, reuse, recycle—in that order, to develop new strategies for reducing your waste stream in future events.

### RECOMMENDED TACTICS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- 1. Make a plan.** Provide a clear picture of waste diversion efforts and priorities (reduce, reuse, donate, recycle, compost, trash) for the entire event production team; the plan should include:
  - + Identification of key waste items expected at the various event locations (e.g. cups at water stations)
  - + Waste diversion objectives and tactics by event location
  - + Description of the operations to take place and timing of service, volunteer shifts, etc. where applicable
  - + Instructions that can be used to inform and train event staff and volunteers
  - + A site map with waste management collection, conveyance and sorting areas identified
  - + A point of contact for anyone with questions about the waste management plan during the event
  - + Measurement of waste generated by event activities
    - + If possible, include reporting specifications in contract language with service providers. Communicate the need for them to deliver weight slips/reporting on all services. Remind them just prior to the event and ask for a point of contact that will be responsible to deliver a post-event report.
- 2. Reduce**
  - + Ask, what are we buying that will come in packaging and can we eliminate or divert that packaging?
  - + Make an explicit request of shirt and medals vendors to not individually wrap them in plastic. This simple request shows companies that their customers care about waste prevention and eliminates the demand for thousands of difficult to recycle thin plastic film bags that nearly always end up in landfills.
  - + Share and communicate material guidelines with exhibitors or vendors. They may already be working on waste reduction at their own company, or they may seek recommendations for how to comply and improve with event standards.



*Shirts in packs of 20, rather than individually wrapped*

*Image credit: Conqur Endurance Group*

## GET CIRCULAR. DIVERT WASTE MATERIAL FROM THE LANDFILL.

- 3. Reuse**—It's commonplace to reuse things like non-dated and branded signage. Other areas where it may be relevant to consider durable rather than single-use items include:
- + Dining/Catering at ancillary events (e.g. hospitality areas, dining or networking events during event weekend)—spending a little more for washable plates rather than throwaway enhances the quality of the experience and prevents waste.
  - + Offices—making sure the staff break room is equipped with washable wares and ideally has a sink to wash them in will prevent unnecessary single-use waste daily.
  - + Expo—what if we designed waste out of sampling at event expos?



*Nuun is working to eliminate waste at shows by trying out a new waste-free sampling method with durable, washable sample cups.*

- + Finish Line/Finisher's area



*Finishers of the 2019 California International Marathon received a filled water bottle, provided by Nuun, that they could refill at Water Monster stations*

## GET CIRCULAR. DIVERT WASTE MATERIAL FROM THE LANDFILL.

### 4. Recycle (and Compost)

- + Donate and compost food waste. In the US, about 35 percent of food is wasted. The first-ever national food loss and waste goal was launched in 2015, calling for a 50-percent reduction of waste by 2030<sup>9</sup>. For races, the two most relevant efforts would be to first make sure that all edible, unserved food and beverages are donated to local food banks or shelters. Second, setup food waste collection bins near where food will be served to sort out food waste specifically for composting. Think of composting as recycling nutrients. Banana and orange peels, apple cores, and other plant materials turn into great fertilizer to grow the next generation of crops. Much paper and plant-based serviceware is now price competitive with conventional plastic serviceware.



*Banana and orange peels, apple cores, and other plant materials get turned into fertilizer through composting to grow the next generation of crops. Much paper and plant-based serviceware can also be commercially composted, depending on local infrastructure.*

- + Purchase disposable items that can be recycled or composted. This will require conversation about specific items and flexibility by organizers to look for viable alternatives within their local circumstances. Capabilities change from city to city. When China stopped accepting mixed recyclables from the United States in 2017 domestic recycling underwent a major disruption because without a buyer for those materials, there is no economic incentive for recyclers to collect and separate the material from other waste in the first place. Many cities have suspended their recycling programs entirely.
- + Glass, aluminum, paper and paperboard are usually accepted for recycling, with the additional requirement of having a 'clean stream' of those materials, rather than a 'contaminated' mix of those materials along with other unsorted waste. Place collection points in the places where those materials are most likely to be generated (e.g. cardboard bin near where shirts are being unboxed).
- + To get cleaner streams, focus on staging fewer waste collection points with more supervision on them.
- + Green team volunteers who have been given clear direction to help sort are vital to achieving clean streams of waste and sending more material for recycling and composting and less to landfills.



*Green team volunteers at 'Zero Waste Stations' ensure 'clean streams'. Waste is simply placed on the table for sorting by volunteers.*

# 04

**BE CLIMATE  
ACCOUNTABLE.  
MEASURE AND  
OFFSET CARBON  
EMISSIONS.**

## BE CLIMATE ACCOUNTABLE. MEASURE AND OFFSET CARBON EMISSIONS.

Climate change. The big, gnarly issue that affects us all in different ways depending on where we call home, and which no single one of us has the power to curtail alone.

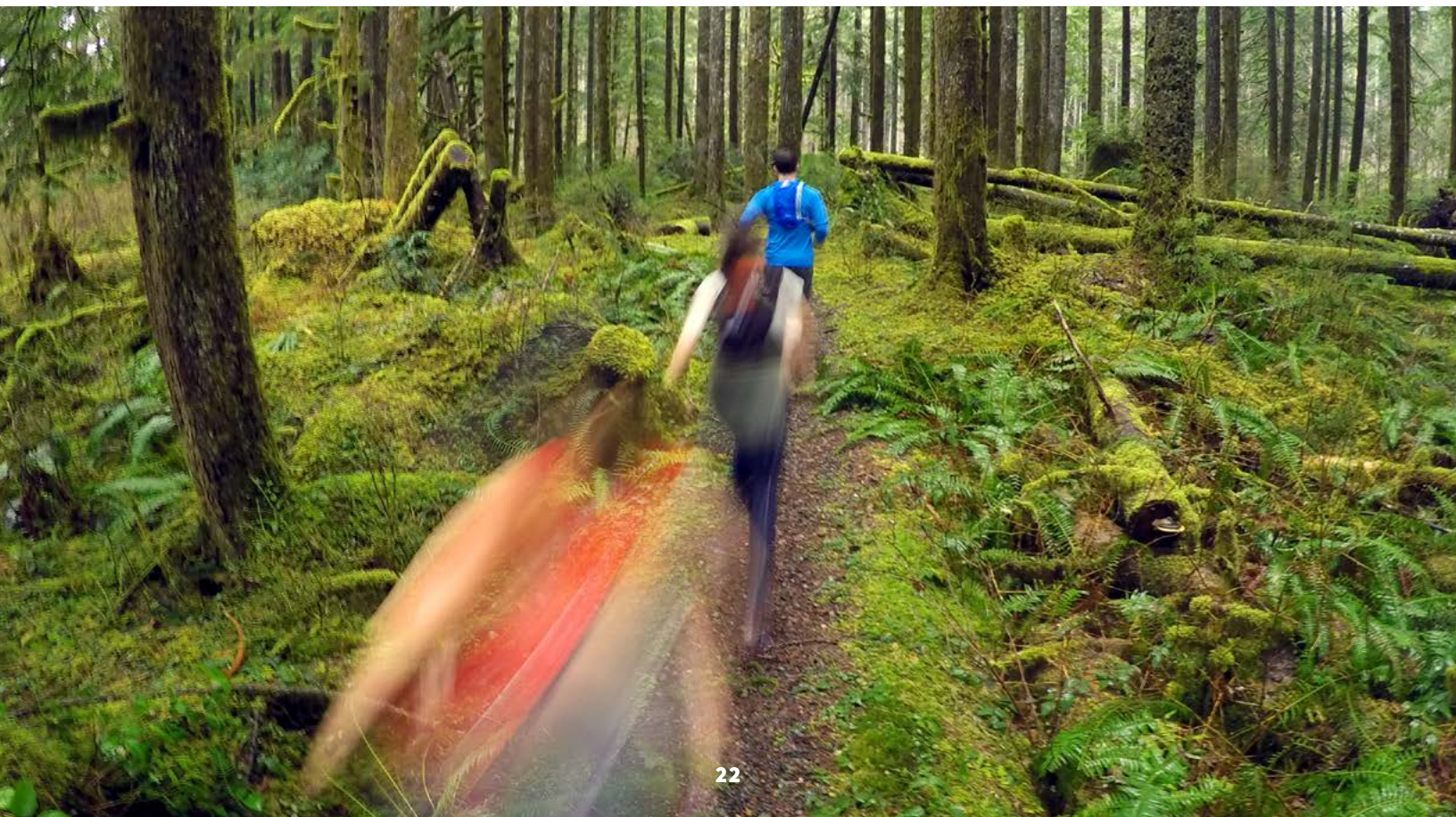
### SOLVING CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIRES COLLABORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM EVERYONE.

Every company, institution, organization, and individual is responsible to first quantify its own activities' contribution to the problem, and then adjust behavior or otherwise compensate for it in order to be part of the solution. Whether or not enough of us will fulfill that responsibility in the timeframe afforded will determine the success or failure for humanity on the path towards restored ecological balance for Earth.

Climate change is an umbrella term that refers to the myriad and geographically diverse effects of the overall warming of the global average temperature due to increased concentrations of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane within Earth's delicate atmosphere.

Using fossil fuels to power our activities increases the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by pulling up carbon-based gases and oils from underground and putting the carbon dioxide and methane stored in them back into the air by combusting them for energy.

Strategies to reduce the use of fossil fuels and eventually eliminate or otherwise counterbalance their use are crucial to restoring a balanced atmosphere for current and future generations of not just humans, but all living things on the planet.



**SOME OF THE WAYS THAT EVENTS DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY USE FOSSIL FUELS INCLUDE:**

- + Using electricity from the grid for office operations, event expos, and warehouses
- + Transporting people and things to and from the event site(s) with vehicles (cars, trucks, delivery vans)
- + Transporting people and things to and from the event by airplane
- + Using gas-powered generators for event electricity (e.g. sound amplification, projection of monitors)
- + Electricity and fuels used in the extraction and processing of raw materials for mementos like shirts and medals, then the manufacturing and delivery of those goods

**RECOMMENDED TACTICS FOR REDUCING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AT EVENTS INCLUDE:**

- + Choose locations that are accessible by locally available low emissions transportation options, then working with local transit districts to provide free or subsidized mass transit on event day(s)
- + Encourage and even incentivize carpooling with designated and/or free parking spaces for carpools
- + Build a GHG offset allocation into the price of individual registration.
- + Give participants the option to contribute a small amount (\$2-5) during the registration process to compensate for the GHG emissions of their travel to and from the event. Use funds raised to purchase offsets from a verified third-party.
- + Collaborate with governmental and private partners to advance bigger-picture regional goals for reducing the use of fossil fuels and transitioning to emissions-free energy sources such as:
  - + Renewable energy infrastructure development
  - + Watershed restoration and conservation (storing carbon dioxide in the soil and plant life)
  - + Waste prevention and diversion of waste from landfill
  - + Advancing public transportation infrastructure

In December 2018, the United Nations Climate Change Program and the International Olympic Committee launched “Sports for Climate Action,” a declaration and framework for action, and made an open invitation to all sport event host entities to declare their commitment to climate accountability. In its first year, more than a hundred organizations signed onto the declaration. The Council for Responsible Sport serves as a point of contact for North American organizations interested in joining. Contact the Council for Responsible Sport for more information and guidance on how to join. A complete list of organizations currently signed onto the framework can be seen on the [‘Sports for Climate Action’](#) webpage.



# ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGING EMISSIONS AT THE CREDIT UNION CHERRY BLOSSOM TEN MILE RUN

In 2010, in order to be accountable for its contribution to climate change, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run began offering registrants of the race an opportunity to pitch in to help purchase 'carbon offsets'—supporting projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to compensate for emissions made elsewhere—in this case, the emissions caused by participants' travel to and from the race. The number of registrants voluntarily opting in has climbed every year, from about three percent in 2019 to about ten percent of all participants in 2019.



**"We have been able to raise over \$70,000 for carbon offsets at the Credit Union Cherry Blossom since 2010 without much effort beyond providing an option for people to purchase an offset at the time they sign up for the race. When we started, we asked those who were driving instead of taking the Metro subway to donate the cost of the fare which was \$3.75. A few years ago, we stopped communicating it as a tradeoff and increased the amount to \$5.00. The number of donors increased substantially. We purchase the offsets through Native Energy, and periodically report on the impact of the offsets in our race publications. This is a heck of a lot easier than sorting dumpsters, not that it should be an either-or proposition. The offsets are simply a low effort, high impact addition to our sustainability initiatives for our CRS Gold Certified event."**

**Phil Stewart, RACE DIRECTOR, CREDIT UNION CHERRY BLOSSOM TEN MILE RUN**





# 05

**POWER YOUR  
EVENT WITH CLEAN  
ENERGY. SUPPORT  
THE TRANSITION TO  
RENEWABLE SOURCES  
OF ELECTRICITY.**

## POWER YOUR EVENT WITH CLEAN ENERGY.

In response to the science of climate change demanding swift reductions of GHG from human activities, an energy market transformation is underway across the world, moving society away from reliance on power from fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas towards harnessing and utilizing the constantly renewable, emissions free energies inherent in the wind, sun ('solar power') and Earth's radiant heat ('geothermal energy'). Over the past decade, renewable energy production has grown by 100 percent in the US, with approximately 11 percent of net electricity consumed in 2018 coming from renewable sources<sup>10</sup>.

The issue of cleaner, renewable energy is largely a structural issue, but small actions over time influence larger changes. This is where events can make an impact. While an event's role in changing local infrastructure may be small, its communications platform is big. Events serve as leaders toward sustainable change by considering some of the following outreach and collaborations.

### **SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY IN YOUR AREA BY:**

- + Engaging the local or regional utility or electricity supplier in a conversation about sharing information to drive enrollment in its renewable energy program
- + Invite a local or regional residential solar energy supplier to set up a demonstration panel at the event. All the better if it can actually power an event activity, such as sound projection.
- + Ask the local utility provider if it has a renewable energy program, and if so, opt to purchase or trade marketing exposure for "renewable energy credits" in the amount needed to cover event activities, which is mostly the electricity used for the duration of the expo and/or packet pickup. Once secured, let people know that the event is powered by renewable sources of emissions-free energy. A low-cost in-kind sponsorship request to a public utility provider in exchange for some marketing exposure at the event could be low-hanging fruit for a new sustainability initiative that supports the transition to renewable energy locally by helping generate awareness.



# 06

**BE MORE  
INCLUSIVE.**

## BE MORE INCLUSIVE.

Events are community gatherings in an upbeat, healthy atmosphere. Unfortunately, not everyone can afford to pay to participate in recreational events, not to mention the training and gear that come along with them. As an event organizer, you have the power and the platform to get people involved beyond their barriers to participation with a bit of thoughtful planning and accommodation.

Notice who is not showing up to the event. Try to identify what might constitute an “under-represented population” that exists within your community, but which isn’t participating in the event. It may be differently abled athletes, senior citizens, youth, economically disadvantaged, new to the sport, etc. Once you’ve identified specific groups that are under-represented, identify the barriers to their participation, and make efforts to remove those barriers. Examples of potential barriers include: inability to understand event promotions and information due to language barriers, the absence of specific categories for participants needing accommodations, lack of equipment or gear, expense of registration fees, and transportation to and from the event.

## CREATING A STAMPEDE OF YOUNG ATHLETES IN NORTH TEXAS

The Cowtown Marathon in Fort Worth, Texas, a gold certified Responsible Sport event, has a mission to promote a lifelong love of fitness, and thus created its C.A.L.F. Program (Children’s Activities for Life and Fitness) in 2009 to help tens of thousands of local children lace up and cross finish lines. Staff and volunteers secured enough support from local partner Academy Sports, in addition to other local grants and sponsorships, to enable visiting over one hundred schools across North Texas annually, orienting students in proper running technique and educating them about resting heart rate, the importance of hydration, proper nutrition and living an active lifestyle. C.A.L.F. works with schools to identify low-income children and fit them properly with a free new pair of running shoes and to make entry fees more affordable for them. Since 2009, the program has provided more than 30,000 pairs of shoes and significantly fee-reduced 5K race entries.



*Left: Mayor Betsy Price (in blue) helps lace up a new runner with a pair that fits in support of the Cowtown Marathon’s C.A.L.F. program*

*Image credit: Cowtown Marathon*

*Right: Since 2009, the C.A.L.F. program has provided more than 30,000 pairs of shoes and grants to youth from lower income households so that they can participate in the kids 5K*

*Image credit: Cowtown Marathon*

## KEY RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES:

When it comes to accommodating people with specific accessibility needs, make sure to provide an open line of communication to better understand those needs and discuss whether they can feasibly be accommodated. It's understandable not to be able to have the capability to accommodate every request. Communicating with honesty is the key to responsibility in that regard.

1. Event registration should include an element allowing athletes to make requests for specific accommodations. Specific requests should be responded to individually in a timely manner, whether or not the accommodation request can be fulfilled.
2. Ensure packet or bib pickup is at an accessible location.
3. Provide accessible portable toilets at all portable toilet locations.
4. Guides should always be welcome wherever they are requested, and should never be charged a registration fee. Asking them to sign a waiver in order to be covered under insurance policies is fine, but the guide is an accommodation to the athlete, and therefore should not have to pay. Mementos such as medals and shirts are optional (though appreciated) for guides.
5. Set up an early start wave for athletes with disabilities. Starting 6-10 minutes before the first wave of elite or other able-bodied athletes provides ample time for naturally creating space for more comfortable and free movement.
6. Designate facilities and/or meetup points at which dedicated volunteers can help athletes navigate to and from key locations together during the event.



*Image credit: Air Force Marathon*

*A start wave for athletes with disabilities 6-10 minutes before the first wave of able-bodied athletes allows for freer movement and less crowding*

*This list was provided by Keri Serota, Athletes with Disabilities Liaison at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon and director of [Dare2tri](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to positively impacting the lives of athletes with physical disabilities and visual impairments by developing their skills in participation.*

# 07

**COLLABORATE  
TO CREATE A  
POSITIVE AND  
LASTING LOCAL  
IMPACT.**

## COLLABORATE TO CREATE A POSITIVE AND LASTING LOCAL IMPACT.

This point of radical responsibility is about shared ambition for a better future for everyone. Does your event have any of that sort of ambition? While events aren't required to positively impact the communities of people who call the event place home, they are business members of those communities, and as such they share at least partial responsibility for the thoughtful stewardship and improvement of those places.

### How do your events show that they care about the local community to the people who are participating?

#### What impression do they receive of your commitments and values?

Raising money for charities is not the only way, and in some cases is not the most effective way to have a positive impact. Events that carry the names of their places in their titles are particularly subject to scrutiny about how they take from or give to those places.

Exhibition managers and sponsorship salespeople must be informed and equipped with a strategy to engage with groups that are cause-based, governmental/municipal, local non-profits, or otherwise supported by the broader community. Organizers should recognize that those groups are community stakeholders that provide value to the event by being present and involved, and also that they often operate differently than for-profit vendors and retailers.

#### KEY RECOMMENDED TACTICS:

- + Work towards building a menu of community causes—including key community groups or stakeholders associated with them—that corporate sponsors can opt to support if they choose. Then there is reason to use the communications platform the event provides to share what's being done in partnership and why. When pitching sponsors, highlight how engaging with these groups' positive efforts through the event can enhance their brand.
- + Include sustainability programs on the sponsorship menu. Association with the responsible aspects of events provides opportunities for sponsors to contribute to the quality of those events, respond to consumer demand for environmental action and transparency, engage attendees with causes they care about, and positively influence brand recognition and reputation for those efforts.

# PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO OLD BILL'S SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

Because of the broad community benefit of Old Bill's Fun Run, through which 200+ Jackson Hole nonprofits raise millions each year, everyone here has a stake in the event. The unique philanthropic nature of Old Bill's has helped us establish several community partnerships that are critical to our greening efforts. Our partners have enabled dial-moving initiatives, such as food waste composting, carbon footprint calculation and a comprehensive recycling program.



**"My best advice to an event working toward environmental responsibility is to identify strategic, eco-minded partners in your community and cultivate those relationships. If your experience is anything like ours, you'll find that robust partnerships can take your sustainability efforts to a level that would have been impossible for your organization on its own. I also recommend "greening over time" — not only because smaller steps are more manageable and less likely to cause organizer burnout, but also because partnership opportunities present themselves on a timeline you can't always control. Right time + right place + right people... an elusive unicorn!"**

**Annie Riddell**

**OLD BILL'S FUN RUN COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF JACKSON HOLE**





A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HOSTING RADICALLY RESPONSIBLE EVENTS

08

**GET ORGANIZED.**



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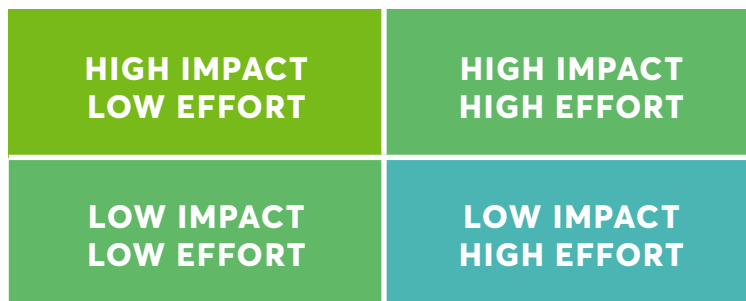
## GET ORGANIZED.

Managers will need to share the work of furthering sustainability projects and programs by prioritizing, delegating tasks, and sharing some authority to act.

### RECOMMENDED TACTICS FOR GETTING ORGANIZED:

- + **Prioritize** — Event organizers are notorious multi-taskers, but nearly everyone deals with limited time and capacity. It's worth taking time to think through the tradeoffs between pursuing efforts in which decisions have clear impacts and those that require great efforts of coordination for a relatively small discernable impact.

One simple tool that may help prioritize where to start is sorting potential initiatives and projects on a simple chart that sorts efforts by impact and effort. Every event is different. Placing ideas into such a grid will help guide decision-making towards what is realistic within the circumstances.



- + **Allocate internal capacity / identify and empower your champions** — Every city, group, team, and event has them! If yours hasn't discovered (or hired) its champion yet, ask around and look a little harder. This will look different depending on the size and capacity of the organization. It may be that part of an Expo or volunteer manager's job description, or it might be the communications intern with a secret passion for recycling that can be recruited to help manage the switch from water bottles to water monsters. Maybe a certain longtime volunteer is ready for more responsibility. Perhaps a nearby high school science teacher who is looking for ways to bring real-world examples into their curriculum and is willing to calculate the event's GHG inventory (i.e. quantify the event's contribution to climate change). Start with the opportunities that make the most sense within the context of the event and allow the work to evolve naturally over time.
- + **Measure and report performance** — What gets measured gets managed. Think about and list the various indicators or statistics that are currently measured. Seek to clearly define which items, programs and indicators the event cares to track. These should be directly related to goals. If the goal is to divert half of the waste generated at the event from the landfill, good data about where trash goes is necessary. If a public report of social and environmental results is desirable, initiatives need to be measured (e.g. how much discarded clothing was picked up and donated after the start?) Find a way to track down, or at least estimate impacts.

## GET ORGANIZED.

Each event's list of measurements will look a little different, but if you're taking on some of the responsible actions proposed in this guide, a report may likely include measurements of indicators such as:

- + Quantity of eliminated waste materials not generated in the first place because of conservation efforts as compared with previous event years (e.g. the number of plastic bags eliminated by asking for bulk packaging of shirts and medals, number of water bottles eliminated by switching to refill stations, quantity of GHG emissions prevented by people who carpooled to the event)
- + Quantity of waste diverted from a landfill
- + Weight of waste generated by type
- + Total energy use by event activity (electricity, fuel for operations, participant travel)
- + The total amount or count of donated goods (e.g. leftover unserved food, clothing left at the start, shoes donated at the expo)
- + The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from event energy use and event-related travel
- + The quantity and result of carbon and GHG offsets
- + Summary of communications to event goers and/or participants about social and environmental topic matter and initiatives

## MEASURING AND REPORTING PERFORMANCE AT THE LOS ANGELES MARATHON

In 2019, the Los Angeles Marathon, a gold certified Responsible Sport event, created and published one of the most robust sustainability reports the endurance event industry has yet seen that outlines innovative ideas, reports specific performance metrics, and details the strategic planning of efforts <sup>11</sup>.

Download the report [here](#).



# 09

**UNIFY YOUR  
EFFORTS UNDER  
A COMPREHENSIVE  
SUSTAINABILITY  
PLAN.**

## UNIFY YOUR EFFORTS UNDER A COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN.

Develop a formal plan to reduce event's environmental footprint and increase social impact.

Include specific goals and measurable objectives that have been approved by the event's senior leadership. A well thought-out, written plan for pursuing environmental and social responsibility is essential.

### CONVENE MEETINGS WITH YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND DEFINE THE SCOPE OF YOUR EFFORTS:

- + What are your primary goals and objectives?
- + What level of support and enthusiasm does the event's senior leadership team bring to the table?
- + Who among your sponsors, vendors and civic partners will support your efforts?
- + Who will manage this aspect of the event on a day-to-day basis?
- + Which goals have financial impact on the event budget? How will you fund initiatives that have a cost impact?
- + How will you measure your success?
- + With whom and how will you share your accomplishments and lessons learned?
- + Ultimately, your plan should include a set of realistic goals and measurable objectives for reducing your event's environmental footprint and enhancing its social impact as well as a working list of tactics to undertake.

Use the results of input received to sort through and create a written plan that reflects the current and future trajectory of efforts, focus areas, priority programs and goals.

A sample outline of a strategic sustainability plan for an event can be downloaded [here](#).



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HOSTING RADICALLY RESPONSIBLE EVENTS

# 10

# INTEGRATE COMMUNICATIONS.



COUNCIL *for*  
RESPONSIBLE  
SPORT

## INTEGRATE COMMUNICATIONS.

Build awareness of your efforts, programs and ways people can be part of the solutions to the social and environmental concerns of the times. The global scale of climate change calls for 'all hands on deck' to restore the ecological balance needed to ensure a safe future for all.

Organizers are experience designers. The physical nature of events means organizers wield disproportionate influence over what imagery and experience people are exposed to while in attendance. Mentally navigate the event from a participant's point-of-view and envision the most appropriate and appealing ways to integrate sustainable behaviors and messages into the experience. If you made a specific effort, spend the time to generate awareness with educational signage or electronic messages about why or how the work was done.

Only share public-facing communications if there is solid event or program to justify them. Provide informational and engaging ways for people to consider the issue in their own life. For example, encouraging people to utilize public transportation on race day, then making it more convenient or affordable for them to do so could translate to them using that method more frequently after a positive experience on event day. A post event message could include a 'thanks for riding' from organizers, and a coupon code for their next bus or rail pass purchase.

*Below: The 2018 OUC Orlando Half Marathon finish area included a 'Community Matters' space for local partners looking to raise awareness of their causes and offerings*



## INTEGRATE COMMUNICATIONS.

### PUBLICITY EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RESPONSIBILITY MIGHT INCLUDE:

- + Distribution of a press release announcing intentions and plans
- + Publication of a web page within the event website dedicated to responsibility initiatives and plans
  - + [Bank of America Chicago Marathon](#)
  - + [Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon, 'Greening the Pig'](#)
- + Gathering key stakeholders and partners into a designated activation area of the expo or finish area and raising awareness of global, national, and local social and environmental issues of import. Examples include consumption and waste, disaster preparedness, water scarcity and conservation, drinking water/water cleanliness, healthy lifestyles for all ages, housing and homelessness, and many more. Try to identify the issues that most resonate with the event's participants and community and focus on those.
- + Collaboration with local networking groups to convene a discussion or forum about sustainability in the local business community
- + Working with sponsors to share their own sustainability stories with the event audience in interesting, creative ways. Remind sponsors that sharing purposeful content positively impacts brand reputation. Event goers want to act responsibly on causes important to them and they expect companies to do the same.

*The 2019 Bank of America Chicago Marathon Abbott Health & Fitness expo featured a sustainability booth including a spin wheel with sustainable prizes such as reusable stainless-steel straws*





# ABOUT THE COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE SPORT



The Council for Responsible Sport is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization with a vision of a world where responsibly produced sports events are the norm. Its mission is to provide objective, independent verification of the socially and environmentally responsible work event organizers are doing and to actively support event organizers who strive to make a difference in their communities.

Event planners can refer to the Responsible Sport Standards in order to strive to implement sport event industry specific best practices in five key categories at their event properties: planning and communications, procurement, resource management, access and equity, and community legacy.

Events that hope to obtain official certification of their efforts can apply through the Council and be verified by an independent third-party. The current version of the Responsible Sport Standards (version 4.2) was developed by an outside working group of both sustainability and sport industry experts, reviewed by a wide range of stakeholders throughout 2013 and implemented in January 2014.

Over 180 industry leading events in 27 US States and eight countries have developed plans and policies, made event specific innovations, documented and reported their efforts, and met requirements to earn official certification from the Council. Inspire level events have earned multiple consecutive certifications and have committed to sharing their stories publicly and mentoring other events.

The Council offers a program called Engage to events not yet ready to certify, but that are ready to get organized and get going towards radical responsibility. The Council is based in Portland, Oregon.



More information is available at  
[www.CouncilforResponsibleSport.org](http://www.CouncilforResponsibleSport.org)

## ABOUT NUUN & COMPANY



Nuun is a hydration company with the mission of inspiring more movement for happier, healthier lives. Nuun electrolyte tablets and powders provide functional hydration products optimized for exercise, daily health, travel and immune support. Clean and Non-GMO Project verified ingredients, a refreshing taste and low sugar make Nuun a favorite amongst active consumers. Nuun products, like their tablets in their distinctive, colorful tubes, are convenient to carry and add to water, and are better for the environment than traditional bottled sports drinks. Consumers adding Nuun tablets to their reusable water bottles helped save the shipping of over 100 million pounds of water in 2018 alone. 15-year-old Nuun is the #1 selling sports drink supplement brand in running, cycling, outdoor and natural foods stores. The Seattle based company's culture and mission have been recognized by Outside Magazine, who named Nuun to its' 2017 and 2018 'Best Places to Work' lists.

To learn more, visit [www.nuunlife.com](http://www.nuunlife.com) or follow them at @nuunhydration and #nuunlife.



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