

# SOAP Action Update

## Zero Waste at Snohomish County Fairgrounds



### Zero Waste Waste Initiative Kicks-Off in 2014

Snohomish County kicked-off the Zero Waste initiative for the Fairgrounds this year at the Evergreen State Fair. The Office of Energy and Sustainability, Parks Department, and Solid Waste Division are working together towards the County's goal of a Zero Waste Fairgrounds by 2017; an action item identified in the County's Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP).

Visitors to the Evergreen State Fair this year noticed thirty new Zero Waste Stations dispersed throughout the fairgrounds. The Zero Waste Stations, pictured above, are comprised of a color coordinated three bin system with signage to help fair goers sort waste into the correct receptacles. Also new to the Fair this year were half a dozen Zero Waste Educators who assisted visitors by sorting garbage from recycling and compostables during peak weekend hours.

Prior to 2014, approximately 85% of the garbage generated annually at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds was recycled or composted. Nevertheless, the remaining 15% of waste (245 tons of garbage) was still going to the landfill. With the start of the Zero Waste effort in 2014, Snohomish County made significant strides in reducing landfill disposal by an estimated 40 tons (~1/3 of total waste) and composting approximately 28 tons of food waste over 2013 levels. In addition, the County's Parks Department purchased a cardboard bailer, which allowed Parks to sell 15 cardboard bales (approximately 800 pounds) on the recycled commodities market.

Over the next two years, the County plans to divert even more waste from the landfill by increasing the number of Zero Waste Stations and Zero Waste Educators. Food service vendors will be required to use compostable packaging starting in 2015.

### environmental goals

Snohomish County is working to achieve the energy and resource conservation goals established in our internal Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) for government operations. Reducing the amount of waste at our County parks is one example of how we are taking action to achieve our SOAP Goals and Objectives, namely:

- **Goal 3:** Reduce, Recycle and Repurpose Waste
- **Objective 40:** Reduce waste from County facilities by 30% by the end of 2013 (or until goal is met) against a 2011-2012 average baseline
- **Strategy vii:** Create a plan to reduce waste through recycling and composting at the Evergreen State Fair.

### environmental benefits

The 2014 Zero Waste initiative resulted in...

- Diverted 40 tons of waste from the landfill (~1/3 of total waste)
- Estimated 28 tons of food waste composted through local commercial composting facility
- Produced fifteen cardboard bales totaling approximately 800 pounds for recycling

### economic case

By taking action to achieve Snohomish County sustainability goals and moving towards Zero Waste at the Fairgrounds, the County has the potential to save:

- \$95/ton by composting instead of garbage
- \$65/ton by recycling instead of garbage
- **\$10,000** annually through increased recycling and composting