



CLEAN REGATTAS 2025 TOOLKIT

THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

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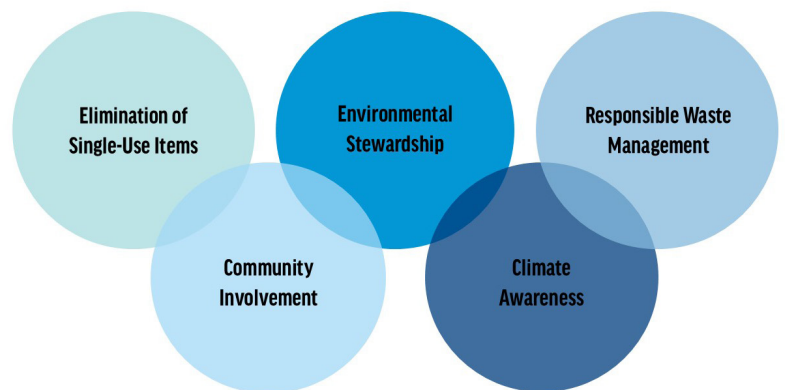
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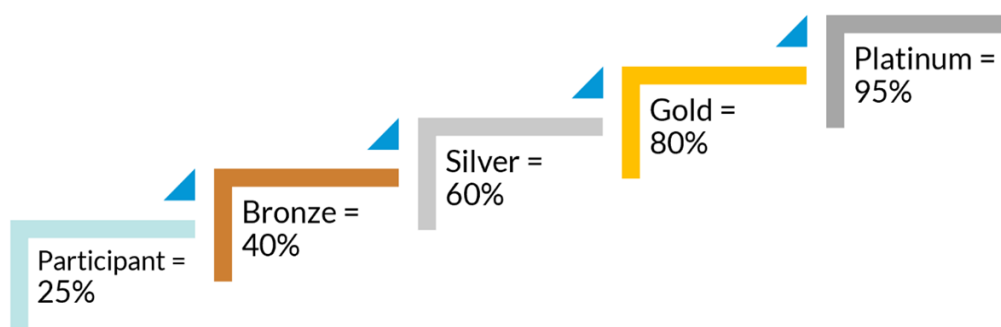
ABOUT CLEAN REGATTAS

The Clean Regattas program is the world's leading sustainability certification for all on-the-water events. Since the program's inception in 2006, over 4,000 events have shown their commitment to sustainability by becoming Clean Regattas. This program has reached over two million sailors and attendees in 54 countries. The certification process accounts for the range of capabilities and constraints of both large and small events happening all over the world. This Toolkit, and the resources linked in it, provide organizers with the most impactful ways to turn an event into one that's better for participants, the community, and the planet.

Clean Regattas are rooted in five interconnected Sustainability Themes that are designed to help guide organizers throughout the process. As an organizer, if you ever find yourself stuck, refer to these themes and ask yourself if your efforts relate to one or more of these areas.



The Clean Regattas program is a voluntary self-assessment tool and awards certification levels from Participant to Platinum. Each of the 20 Best Practices outlined in this Toolkit has an associated point value based on impact and effort. The level of certification awarded is based on the percentage of points earned. Your level will be automatically calculated when you select your Best Practices on the registration page.



Any level reflected in your registration is projected, not guaranteed. Events are not certified at any level until following the event.

Platinum Level Certification (at least 19 of the 20 Best Practices) requires more advanced planning. [If you are aiming for Platinum, please reach out to us.](#) We must have at least one meeting ahead of your event to understand and support your efforts. For Platinum Level certification, you also must submit a sustainability report after your event with pictures and descriptions of each attempted Best Practice. Your report can be completed through your Clean Regattas account or another format of your choosing.

HOW TO GET STARTED

This Toolkit outlines a **wide variety of different ways to complete the Best Practices**, along with “**PRO TIPS**” to go above and beyond. We hope you **implement the methods best suited for your event**. This is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list, and we encourage organizers to get creative and find new ways to achieve the Best Practices. We love to hear about and share new solutions!

FIVE QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Progress Not Perfection

You don't have to tackle every recommendation nor achieve perfection to satisfy the Best Practice. Some things might simply be out of your control. For example, if you clearly communicate that your attendees should bring a reusable water bottle and water refill stations will be available, some folks might still bring a single-use plastic bottle. You've done your job and can mark this Best Practice as achieved!

2. Climb the Sustainability Ladder

If this is your first time hosting a Clean Regatta, don't feel pressured to go straight for Platinum. This level is only awarded each year to a small group of outstanding events that have gained the necessary experience by working with us in the past or have had significant advance planning. [Review the Sustainability Report Library](#) to learn the innovative ways high-level events have achieved Best Practices. You might find unique ideas that work for your event!

3. Communicate and Delegate

When organizing your Green Team, designate members to be responsible for certain aspects of event planning. Consider assigning one person to be in charge of working with food service vendors and involve another to manage social media and photos. It's nearly impossible to tackle all communications and sustainability initiatives on your own; the stronger your team, the greater success you will have.

4. Ask for Help

Feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have: we are here and happy to help! We update this Toolkit every year and take your feedback into consideration. If you found something helpful or an aspect challenging, let us know when you certify your event.

5. Celebrate Your Success

If you would like to include the recognition of the Clean Regatta award during your awards ceremony, please be in touch with us in advance of your event. We are happy to celebrate your achievements! Otherwise, you can expect your certificate after you request certification through your Clean Regattas account.

THE CLEAN REGATTA PROCESS

Step 1: Register Your Event through the IHCA

The IHCA has an account with Sailors for the Sea and will submit the information on your behalf. Please email to vpdevelopment@hansaclass.org for details. Once registered, your event will be added to [our list of current events](#).

Step 2: Select Best Practices

This Toolkit contains a total of 20 Best Practices. Each Best Practice outlines ways to make meaningful change at your event. In your account, select the practices you plan to accomplish at your event, which will calculate your projected certification level.

Step 3: Organize Your Green Team

Coordinating a Clean Regatta on your own is nearly impossible, and defeats one of the purposes of hosting a Clean Regatta: involving the community. Find a core group of dedicated people to help you plan, communicate and execute your initiatives.

Step 4: Publicize Your Efforts

Communication is a key aspect of a Clean Regatta. Let your participants and attendees know about your sustainability efforts ahead of time by highlighting them on your organization's website, social media and email communications to participants. Don't hesitate to repeat your message - repetition helps to instill lasting behavior change.

Step 5: Document Your Success

We love getting stories from regatta organizers and look forward to sharing your achievements with the greater Clean Regattas community. During your event, take lots of photos of your Best Practices in action, collect quotes from participants, and measure data or metrics on your efforts. You can share these stories when you certify your event.

Step 6: Get Certified

Confirm your Best Practices on checklist, submit photos and descriptions of your methods to email address in step 1. Once completed, the IHCA will "Request Certification". **Your level of certification is only final after this step; your certificate will be emailed to you after review.** For regattas aiming to earn Platinum Level Certification, you will also need to submit a sustainability report, documenting your efforts with pictures and descriptions of each Best Practice achieved. You must certify your event within the year that it occurred. Events held in December have until the end of January of the following year to certify.

BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST

ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE ITEMS

- ☐ 1. Eliminate Single-Use Water Bottles and Provide Water Refill Stations
- ☐ 2. Eliminate Plastic Straws
- ☐ 3. Serve Food with Plastic-Free Dinnerware
- ☐ 4. Skip Bags or Go Reusable
- ☐ 5. Award Practical Items or Use a Perpetual or Upcycled Trophy

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- ☐ 6. Publicize Your Sustainability Efforts
- ☐ 7. Involve Local Organizations
- ☐ 8. Post Educational and Reusable Signage
- ☐ 9. Serve Local Food or Source Seafood Sustainably

RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

- ☐ 10. Organize a Green Team
- ☐ 11. Ensure Proper Waste Bin Placement and Signage
- ☐ 12. Divert Food Waste from the Landfill
- ☐ 13. Use Paperless Event Management

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- ☐ 14. Host a Beach or Marina Clean-up
- ☐ 15. Prevent Toxins from Entering the Water
- ☐ 16. Increase Awareness of Wildlife and Habitat Protection
- ☐ 17. Offer Vegetarian or Vegan Alternatives

CLIMATE AWARENESS

- ☐ 18. Promote Alternative Transportation
- ☐ 19. Reduce Day-of Event Emissions
- ☐ 20. Inspire Future Action



ELIMINATE SINGLE-USE ITEMS

1. ELIMINATE SINGLE-USE WATER BOTTLES AND PROVIDE WATER REFILL STATIONS


WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Plastic beverage bottles are consistently in the top five most collected items at beach clean-ups around the world, according to the International Coastal Cleanup. With a variety of solutions available to fit different venues and audiences, the overwhelming majority of Clean Regattas have achieved this Best Practice, preventing millions of single-use plastic water bottles from entering our waters.

HOW TO DO IT

- Communicate ahead of time that the event will not offer single-use water bottles or single-use plastic cups. Request attendees bring their own water bottle to refill.
PRO TIP: Avoid “boxed water” or “bioplastic” bottles. These items often end up in the landfill, as they are generally not easily recyclable or compostable. The goal is to limit any single-use material and encourage refilling whenever possible.
- Provide reusable water bottles or cups. If you do so, please consider the material of the reusables; many plastics have been found to leach chemicals that can be harmful to human health. Additionally, consider if your attendees already have a stockpile of reusable water bottles. In this case, think twice before providing an unnecessary item.
PRO TIP: This may be a perfect sponsorship opportunity to co-brand with a group interested in reaching your audience. Reach out to local businesses to see if they would purchase the items for the branding opportunity.
PRO TIP: Companies such as [r.World](#) and [Turn](#) provide reusable cups and other servicewear for events to meet their zero waste goals. Once guests are done, they drop items in a bin, which the company picks up to sanitize and bring to the next event. Whether for water or other beverages, these are a great option if you can't invest in permanent durable options and need to provide cups to all attendees.
- Inform participants that there will be water refill stations available and identify where these stations will be located with proper signage (see Best Practice 8). [You can download signs HERE.](#)
PRO TIP: To provide hydration to participants out on the water, we've seen success with dolphin pumps. See following table for details and ideas.



| Product | Example | Cost Estimate (USD) |
|---|---|---------------------|
| In-line Water Filtration Hose Attachment |  | \$20-30 |
| Dolphin Water Pump Attachment |  | \$25 |
| Personal Hydration Reservoirs |  | \$25-35 |
| 10-Gallon Water Jug with a Spigot |  | \$60-100 |
| Permanent Water Bottle Filtered Refilling Station |  | \$700-1,000 |
| Water Monster 125-Gallon Tank |  | \$1,500 |

2. ELIMINATE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The 2023 International Coastal Cleanup Report notes that straws and stirrers were the ninth most collected item from beach clean-ups around the world. Plastic straws are only used for a short period of time, yet they are created from a material that is meant to last forever. Additionally, plastic straws are not recyclable. While some may see plastic straw bans as not doing enough in the fight against plastic pollution, straws are the epitome of a throw-away lifestyle and can have deadly impacts on wildlife. They often make their way into the water and, unfortunately, sometimes into the noses of sea turtles and the stomachs of seabirds.

HOW TO DO IT

- Don't offer plastic straws.
PRO TIP: If you are working with a partner location to host the event who would otherwise use plastic straws, make sure you communicate your efforts to them as part of your event preparations.
- Provide straws made from materials other than plastic. We've seen some unique solutions including metal, paper, hay - even pasta!
PRO TIP: Many "bioplastic" straw options exist that are made from materials like cornstarch or sugar cane. These still require industrial composting for them to degrade, so be wary!
- Place "Skip the Plastic Straw" signs up where drinks are being served.
[You can download signs HERE](#). Take it a step further and instruct those serving drinks to provide straws by request only.



3. SERVE FOOD WITH PLASTIC-FREE DINNERWARE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The plastic-free movement has grown to encompass all kinds of food serviceware, and it is important to anticipate how your event might be impacted by these policies. By implementing reusable alternatives, you can lead the charge and feed hungry sailors without single-use plastics.

HOW TO DO IT

→ **REUSABLE DINNERWARE:** Providing reusable dinnerware at your event is ultimately the most environmentally friendly option. It may require an initial investment to purchase durable plates, cups, and utensils, but this investment easily pays for itself in the long run. Alternatively, you might encourage participants to bring their own “mess kit” of dinnerware, and even award those that do so with raffle or drink tickets!

PRO TIP: Provisioning an event with single-use plastic dinnerware can be costly, for your wallet and the environment. Thrift stores, yard sales, or online market places are good places to find inexpensive, reusable dinnerware. You can also look into the companies mentioned in Best Practice 1 to rent materials.

PRO TIP: Consider choosing to serve food that doesn't require utensils at all. Think sandwiches, pizza, skewers and kabobs, and local shellfish!

→ **REUSABLE UTENSILS:** If you have the budget, [To Go Ware](#) offers discounts on bulk orders of reusable bamboo utensils. These cutlery sets come with a bamboo knife, fork, spoon and two chopsticks in a travel pouch. You can even customize the logo on the pouch, adding sponsorship opportunities. With this option, you are providing your attendees with utensils they can keep, helping to instill a mindset of reuse.

→ **ACCEPTABLE SINGLE-USE ALTERNATIVES:** We **strongly discourage** using “compostable bioplastics,” and will only accept them as a suitable option for this best practice if you also have a composting option that demonstrably accepts these items. If you must go with single-use items, wooden utensils and paper plates without waxy coatings are ideal. Check with your waste hauler or use a tool such as [the UP Scorecard](#) for recommendations.



4. SKIP BAGS OR GO REUSABLE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Between shopping, skippers' bags, lunches, and other giveaways, you can end up with a lot of containers at your event that are ultimately headed for landfill. Choosing reusable options or avoiding bags and other containers altogether can reduce waste.

Did you know that single-use plastic bags are only used for a few minutes on average? They are extremely difficult to recycle, and often cause problems at material recovery facilities. Plastic bags are a common scourge on the environment, and they are often confused for food by marine life. For these reasons, municipalities, states, and even entire countries have started to ban single-use plastic bags. Solve this single-use problem by going reusable or skipping bags and containers altogether.

HOW TO DO IT

- Evaluate whether you need to package materials in bags or other containers at all. Consider whether attendees already have enough tote bags and, if so, avoid bags altogether or deliver supplies in containers participants return after the event.
- Use reusable bags while provisioning for your event. Take them with you while shopping for food and supplies.
- Provide reusable bags to competitors to hold event documents, lunches or anything else that might typically come in a plastic bag.

PRO TIP: Work with a sponsor to provide reusable bags with their logo.

PRO TIP: Provisioning for lunch on the water without single-use plastic can be tricky. Nobody likes soggy sandwiches! If you have a place to store food that will be relatively dry, try wrapping sandwiches in reusable beeswax wrap or wax paper. Alternatively, you can try reusable silicone bags. They are a bit of an initial investment, but they're waterproof, dishwasher safe, and come in fun colors – perfect for youth events.

[Stasher](#), for example, offers a variety of options.



5. AWARD PRACTICAL ITEMS OR USE A PERPETUAL OR UPCYCLED TROPHY

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Trophies signify achievement and memorialize an experience. Materials used to create awards and trophies should be thoughtfully considered to ensure the principles of the Clean Regattas program are reinforced for years to come.

HOW TO DO IT

- Create a perpetual trophy that will be updated year after year.
 - Source trophies created with upcycled materials.
 - Award something utilitarian, such as gear (spray tops, life jackets, sunglasses, hats, reusable bags, etc.) or something educational, like knot-tying boards for kids!
- PRO TIP:** Be wary of clothing, as the fashion industry has an inherently large environmental footprint. Try to source from companies who are transparent and sustainable in their practices.
- Create a “Green Award” to highlight sustainability achievements by a specific individual or boat. It is a thoughtful way to reward and highlight the actions of volunteers and participants who might not otherwise get attention.
 - Make a trophy coupon system, where competitors can choose their prize. This option will save you from ordering trophies people might not want and, if awarding gear or clothing, allows winners to make their preferred selection.
 - Ensure no balloon releases or confetti are used during ceremonies.
 - If you have any sponsors or outside organizations coming to the event who may bring promotional materials, relay your efforts and encourage them to avoid “gimmick” giveaways that are often made from single-use plastics.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



6. PUBLICIZE YOUR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Spreading the sustainability message is good press for both you and the planet. By letting the world know that you are hosting an event with the environment in mind, you gain a unique marketing advantage that is appreciated by both attendees and partner groups. Publicize your goals ahead of the event to shape participants' expectations. This also provides incentive to follow through with your actions and hold your team accountable. You never know who you might reach by sharing your efforts- you could inspire another event organizer in your community to host a Clean Regatta themselves!

HOW TO DO IT

- Share Sailors for the Sea's conservation message with your community and beyond through press releases, social media posts and local news outlets.
PRO TIP: Tag Sailors for the Sea in your social media posts so we can see and share your message!
Instagram: @sailorsforthesea X: @SailorsforSea
Facebook: @Sailors for the Sea
Consider tagging local clubs in your posts so they see your efforts and may be inspired to do the same.
- Publicize your commitment and efforts toward becoming a Clean Regatta. If applicable, use your organization's webpage and social media channels, make note in your Notice of Race and in communications to event participants and attendees.
[You can download our Clean Regatta logos HERE.](#)
PRO TIP: Check out our template social media posts to help promote your efforts. [You can download them HERE.](#) If you need a quote for a press release that is unique to your event, [please contact us.](#)
- Many events have even created a page on their website dedicated to sustainability. Repeat Clean Regattas use this page to share their certificates from over the years and keep track of their efforts.



7. INVOLVE LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Involving local organizations is a great way to introduce new people who might not be familiar with your yacht club, sailing program, or event, and provides an opportunity for attendees and participants to connect with the greater community. Pulling together expertise already present in your community, whether it be your local aquarium, farmer's market, waste management facility or art gallery, will help you achieve your sustainability goals.

HOW TO DO IT

- Invite local environmental groups to host an informational booth, activity, or movie night at your regatta. Consider aquariums or local conservation groups.
- If you are hosting a youth event, consider having environmental education activities. [Check out our KELP \(Kids Environmental Lesson Plans\) program](#) for ready-to-go games.
- Support local farms to source some (or all) of your food.
- Coordinate with a local group to collect your food scraps.
- Reach out to local food pantries or shelters to see if they accept untouched, leftover meals, or use the event as an opportunity to host a food drive.
- Create a sustainability themed competition for sailors and spectators.
PRO TIP: Gather information from your waste management company, and work with your Green Team to create a waste sorting competition. Combine it with your beach or marina clean-up for an even greater impact.
- Work with local artists or photographers to host a conservation-themed art or photography contest. This is also a great way to get youth involved.
PRO TIP: If you are planning to host a beach clean-up, coordinate collection of any interesting finds and see if they can be incorporated into a powerful art piece.



8. POST EDUCATIONAL AND REUSABLE SIGNAGE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Having signs that highlight that you are a Clean Regatta helps to spread your message of sustainability and reminds participants of your goals. Signs indicate relevant information, such as where to refill your water bottle or properly dispose of your waste. Signs also help establish the brand identity for your event. A cohesive identity or theme encourages attendees to consider their actions.

HOW TO DO IT

→ Give thought to the materials used to make your signs. Ideally, make signs from materials that can be used year after year. Durable plastic may be the best choice if it can be used repeatedly. Consider using whiteboards or chalkboards or creating painted wooden signs, which can be a fun way to involve youth and provide an opportunity to explain the importance of communication.

PRO TIP: Avoid printing the year or other information that may become outdated on your signs. Call on any artistic minds on your team to get creative and use materials you may already have.

PRO TIP: Replace the PVC poles you would use to fly your flags with sustainable bamboo poles. You can even donate them to a local farm or garden center if you aren't going to use them annually.

→ Be mindful about how you convey your sustainability messages. Action-oriented messages can effectively promote positive measures that will make an impact. Make sure to check that your facts are coming from a reputable source.

→ Signs near your waste bins are necessary to help folks properly sort their trash, recycling, and composting.

→ If you were able to source your food locally, tell your participants with signage and highlight those community connections.

→ Doing something cool and unique to go green? Tell your attendees with signage.

PRO TIP: You can [download and customize premade signs for your event HERE](#).



9. SERVE LOCAL FOOD OR SOURCE SEAFOOD SUSTAINABLY

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The backbone of almost any event is its food. With hungry sailors and guests comes a great opportunity to work with local farmers or fisherfolk to serve food that is locally and responsibly sourced. We consider food sourced from less than 100 miles (160 km) to be “local.” This is a great way to cut down on your “food miles,” or the distance your food travels from the farm to your table, and the associated carbon footprint.

HOW TO DO IT

- Offer locally sourced foods, and if applicable, work with your catering company to do so. The whole menu doesn't have to be local. Creating a featured appetizer can be a fun way to showcase your local cuisine.
- Consider providing organic options. Organic farming doesn't use synthetic fertilizer or pesticides, which reduces harmful runoff that can impact waterways.
- Ensure that all seafood is sustainably sourced. Check the [Monterey Bay Seafood Guide website](#) for guidance.



RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT



10. ORGANIZE A GREEN TEAM

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Organizing your Green Team is one of the most established Clean Regattas Best Practices and is vital to the success of hosting a sustainable event. The Green Team provides you, the organizer, with much needed support and people to share responsibilities. Your Green Team can be any size, consisting of kids and adults from all over the community.

HOW TO DO IT

ORGANIZE & RECRUIT YOUR GREEN TEAM:

- Recruit youth involved with your organization. It is a great learning opportunity for them, as well as for adults, who will be able to witness kids doing their part for the planet.
- Check whether your club has a volunteer list.
- Reach out to local sailing programs or environmental organizations. This is a great way to meet new people in your area and further community involvement.
- Encourage racing teams to appoint an environmental steward or “e-Steward” that will take charge of ensuring their crew follows the tenets of Clean Regattas.

ENSURE THAT THE GREEN TEAM CAN EASILY BE IDENTIFIED DURING THE EVENT:

- Make an announcement identifying volunteers during pre-event meetings.
- Create special “GREEN TEAM” t-shirts, hats, badges or pins for volunteers.
- Seek out especially competent individuals to be Green Team Leads. Have them take on additional responsibilities and keep their fellow Green Team members motivated.



10. ORGANIZE A GREEN TEAM (CONTINUED)

HOW TO DO IT

GIVE GREEN TEAM MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS:

- Overseeing implementation of specific Best Practices and taking photos of participants engaging with those Best Practices.
- Communicating the Clean Regatta mission to participants and media.
- Managing water refill stations or distributing reusables.
- Maintaining trash, recycling, and compost bins. This includes ensuring that there is no contamination by helping attendees sort their waste.

PRO TIP: You'd be surprised how many people are unfamiliar with their local recycling regulations. Helping attendees sort their trash is an important educational opportunity that should not be overlooked.



11. ENSURE PROPER WASTE BIN PLACEMENT AND SIGNAGE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Good waste management requires well-labeled bins and, if possible, volunteers to help people sort their waste. With three potential waste streams – landfill, recycling, and compost – clear signage is extremely important. Having Green Team members help sort waste not only reduces contamination but provides an opportunity to educate attendees on why which waste belongs where. While recycling is still important for materials such as aluminum and glass, of all the plastic ever generated, only about 9% has been recycled. Plastics are more likely to end up in a landfill, incinerated or polluting the natural environment. We must prioritize reducing the plastics we use at the source rather than relying on recycling.

HOW TO DO IT

GATHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

→ Begin by doing your research and identifying potential sources of waste before the event. This includes talking to vendors and communicating your goals to be as close to zero waste as possible. If you work with multiple vendors, this may be challenging, but you'll be that much better prepared to manage the waste during your event.

PRO TIP: If vendors serve food or drinks in “bioplastic”, make sure you know where this material should end up. **If you aren't working with an industrial composter, we recommend against bioplastics.** Bioplastics cannot be recycled. Without an industrial composter that can accept this type of material, it will end up in landfill.

→ Check with your local waste management company to ensure you are posting the proper recycling and waste management rules, as guidelines vary from place to place.



11. ENSURE PROPER WASTE BIN PLACEMENT AND SIGNAGE (CONTINUED)

HOW TO DO IT

MAKE CLEAR, INFORMATIVE SIGNS:

→ Ask your Green Team to help make signs for the bins before the event based on the information you've collected from your vendors and local waste management company. Clear signage that visually lists what can go into the COMPOST, RECYCLING and LANDFILL bins ensures that waste is handled properly. This is the most effective way (outside of a Green Team member standing next to a bin) to educate participants about what belongs where. [You can download template signs HERE.](#)

PRO TIP: Placing actual examples of items on or near the bins where they belong can also help participants with the sorting process.

→ Pair every "landfill" bin with a recycling bin and/or a compost bin (whatever is most appropriate for your event), and place in strategic locations. For instance, compost bins should be placed near where food is served, and recycling bins near the bar. Avoid placing recycling and compost bins in non-strategic locations as these tend to accumulate with contaminated waste.



12. DIVERT FOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILL

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Composting is important to reducing carbon emissions and preserving the capacity of our landfills. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 20-30% of what we throw away at home could instead be composted. Food rotting in the landfill releases methane gas, which is roughly 84 times more potent as a heat trapping gas than carbon dioxide over the course of 20 years, according to the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report. Additionally, when food is composted, it sequesters carbon back into the ground and acts as a carbon sink. Composting also creates a nutrient-rich soil amendment, which eliminates the need for synthetic fertilizer. Healthy soils better absorb water, which reduces runoff, leading to fewer toxins making their way into the water. Composting, when done correctly, can make a HUGE difference. If you can't compost, there are other ways to achieve this Best Practice – so pick what works best!

HOW TO DO IT

IF YOU CAN COLLECT “BACKYARD” COMPOST:

→ Composting at your event can be complicated. If this is your first time, we recommend that you stick to collecting food scraps **ONLY** and check out [our Composting Blog](#) to learn more. If your organization is equipped to compost in your own backyard, we recommend collecting only fruits, vegetables and grains and staying away from dairy and meat. If you are sending your food scraps elsewhere, communicate with collectors to learn what they will accept.

PRO TIP: There are lots of great resources online to learn more about backyard composting. Better yet, reach out to someone in your community who already composts and see if they will help get you started.



12. DIVERT FOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILL (CONTINUED)

HOW TO DO IT

IF YOU CAN WORK WITH AN INDUSTRIAL COMPOSTER:

→ Industrial composters often utilize a process called anaerobic digestion, which breaks down biodegradable material without oxygen. This process is more intense than “backyard” composting and can often handle more than just food scraps, including meat, dairy and potentially even the bioplastics mentioned in Best Practice 3.

PRO TIP: Check [this website](#) to find a composter near you.

→ If you are not able to find a reusable alternative to serve food with, we urge you to avoid bioplastics and to do your research. Products made from trees, such as paper plates and wooden utensils without waxy coatings, can all be composted, generally without question. Waxy coatings on compostable products often contain PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances), a class of chemicals that bioaccumulate, do not break down in the natural environment and have been known to cause human health issues, such as cancer.

PRO TIP: You can [check here](#) to see if your products meet the Biodegradable Products Institute certification.

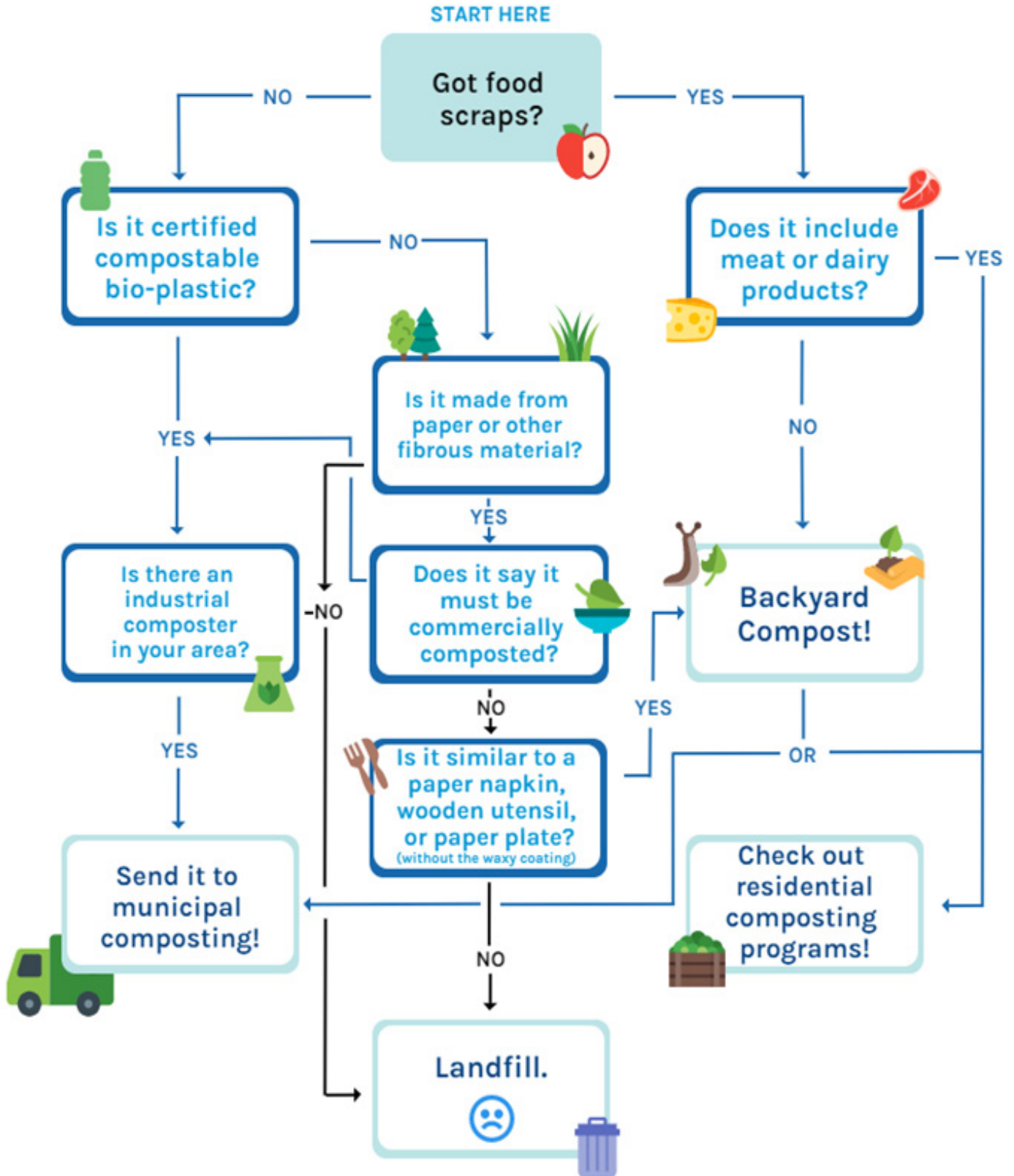
IF YOU CAN'T COLLECT COMPOST:

→ Encourage participants to only take what they can eat and [have signs promoting a “Clean Plate Club”](#) so that no food is wasted in the first place.

→ Donate any untouched leftovers to a food pantry or shelter. Partner with an organization such as [Rescuing Leftover Cuisine](#) to help you redistribute excess food to people experiencing food insecurity.



What Can I Compost?



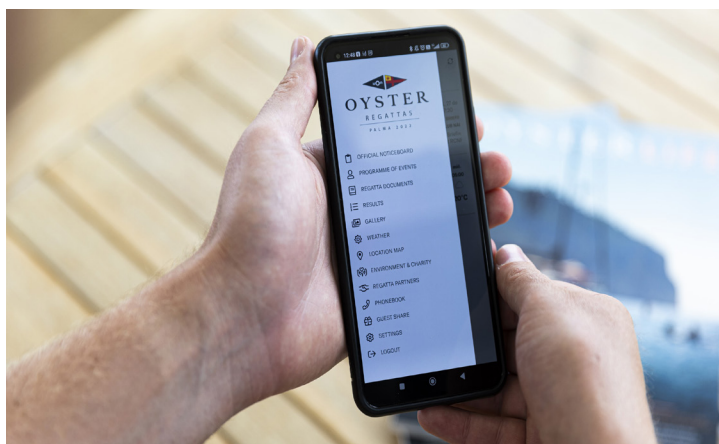
13. USE PAPERLESS EVENT MANAGEMENT

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Producing paper takes a lot of water resources, and often means cutting down trees, leading to deforestation. With the wide use of smartphones, people can have a world of information at their fingertips, including details of your event. Many people also prefer not to carry around a packet of papers. Take this opportunity to reduce the amount of paper your event uses.

HOW TO DO IT

- Write updates on a whiteboard with dry-erase markers.
- Use online regatta management systems such as [Regatta Guru](#), [Yacht Scoring](#) or [Regatta Network](#) to handle regatta registration, event management and media communications.
- Email important information to participants.
- Digitally broadcast or display results using TV screens or a projector.
- If you must print documents, do so on an as needed basis, instead of printing large quantities in advance that might not be needed.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



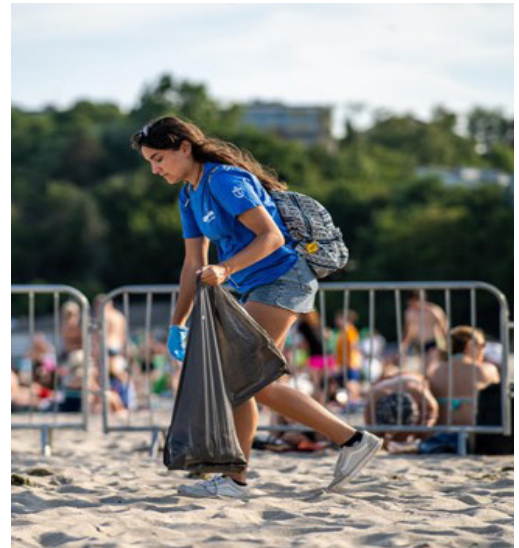
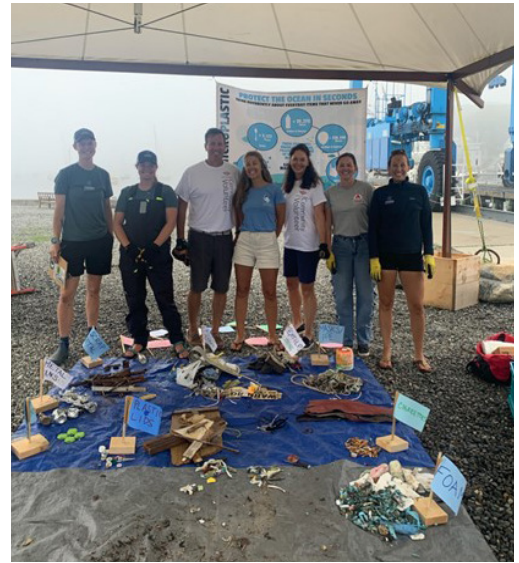
14. HOST A BEACH OR MARINA CLEAN-UP

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Hosting a clean-up of your event space, whether it be a beach, marina or boatyard, has an immediate and visible impact on your surroundings. It also plays an important role in educating participants about the dangers posed by marine debris. Picking up trash will show participants what kinds of waste are most commonly found, and where there are opportunities for them to change their habits to reduce these types of items.

HOW TO DO IT

- Ask local organizations to partner to help with planning, logistics and volunteer management.
- Consider not using new plastic bags to collect the trash. Instead use washable, reusable bags or heavy-duty paper bags. Ask if your local hardware store will donate them.
- Provide reusable, washable gloves or latex and non-latex gloves to ensure that volunteers stay safe when collecting waste. Encourage participants to bring their own work gloves. Grabbers are also a great option.
- Have grabbers or nets available for coach boats so they can easily extract floating debris on the water.
- If you don't have the time or resources to organize a full clean-up, ask participants at the end of the event to clean up their area, or take part in a [#2minutebeachclean](#).
- Want to take your efforts to the next level?
If you have the resources, consider installing a device such as a [SeaBin](#), [Marina Trash Skimmer](#), or [DPOL](#), pictured here. These collect floating debris and clean the water of oil slick. Maintaining these devices provides another great opportunity for community involvement and education, particularly with youth.



15. PREVENT TOXINS FROM ENTERING THE WATER

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

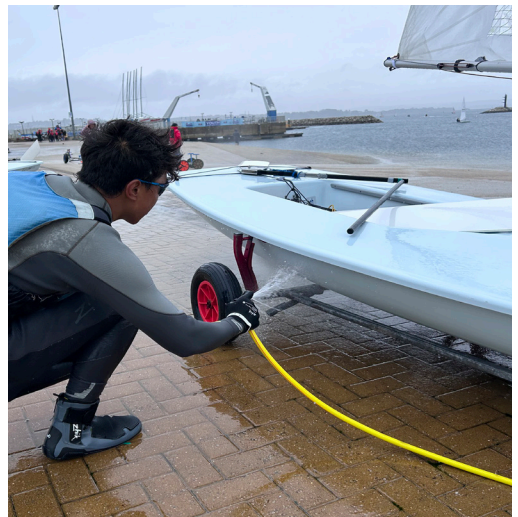
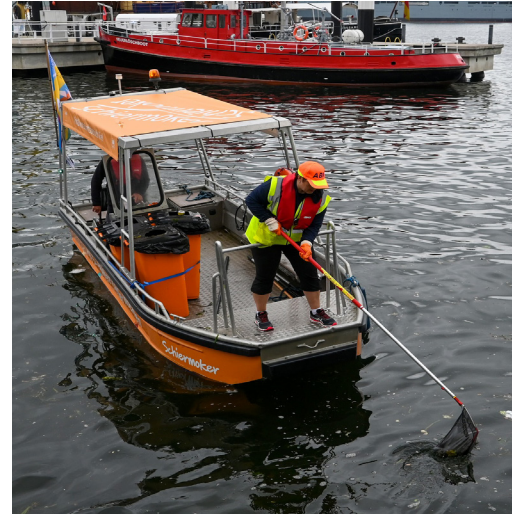
Boaters should be aware of what type of pollutants, including oil and fuel, detergents, sewage and other chemicals, could end up in the water. Awareness is the first step to preventing spills and reducing the impact of those pollutants. Some of the most commonly used products on boats, such as sunscreen and cleaning solutions, contain chemicals that are dangerous to our waterways. Sunscreen can contain ingredients such as oxybenzone that harm coral reefs and the marine environment. Coastal communities around the world, such as the USVI, Hawaii and others, have enacted legislation regulating chemicals in sunscreens. Reducing the amount of detergent, soap or bleach entering your waterways also helps keep your waters free of unnecessary nutrients such as phosphate and nitrates. These same phosphates found in many boat soaps can be found in sewage, urban and agricultural runoff. Phosphates promote plant and algae growth that can be harmful, as they deplete oxygen in the water needed by other organisms.

HOW TO DO IT

- Avoid sunscreens with oxybenzone, octinoxate and petrolatum (commonly known as mineral oil). Instead use products that contain zinc oxide and titanium dioxide (in micro, not nanoparticle, form), which are less toxic to the environment.
PRO TIP: Read our [Green Boating Guide](#) for eco-friendly sunscreen suggestions.
- Provide an oil spill kit on all docks or vessels and have an action plan in case of a spill.
- Conduct boat maintenance, especially sanding or bottom scrubbing, in a secured area.
- Request “water only washdowns” at the end of racing. If cleaning products must be used, be sure to supply or recommend a non-toxic alternative to participants. Hang one of our “Water Only Washdown Zone” or “Eco-friendly Cleaning Zone” signs, [downloadable HERE](#).

PRO TIP: Designate a cleaning area on a permeable surface such as grass to absorb any runoff before it enters the water.

PRO TIP: Do your research when choosing cleaning products. Refer to our [Green Boating Guide](#) for environmentally friendly product recommendations, as well as instructions on how to make simple cleaning solutions from household products.



16. INCREASE AWARENESS OF WILDLIFE AND HABITAT PROTECTION

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

One of the many joys of sailing involves being able to enjoy nature and see wildlife while on the water. However, boaters must learn about and take precautions to avoid harmful encounters with marine mammals, transporting invasive species or destroying sensitive habitat while anchoring. Integrating key wildlife and habitat protection information into your event mitigates potential incidents.

HOW TO DO IT

- Before your event, research what types of wildlife may be in or near your local waterways. Remember, some species are migratory and may only be present certain times of the year. Determine how your event could impact wildlife and provide information to participants.
PRO TIP: If you are working with an offshore race on the east coast of North America, reach out to [Sharing the Seas](#) about marine mammal encounters. They'd be happy to provide appropriate information for you to share.
- Should a collision with an animal occur during the event, provide all evidence to a local wildlife authority. You can also report through a platform like the [Marine Mammal Advisory Group Hazard Reporting Tool](#). The worst thing you can do is attempt to conceal the collision. This is how more collisions happen.
- Highlight the animals in your ecosystem with educational activities. For example, shellfish such as oysters and clams are filter feeders that help keep the water clean by removing excess nitrogen. Check out our "Oyster Tag" [KELP Activity](#) to involve youth.
- If your event is hosted in an area concerned about invasive species, educate your participants about how to properly clean boats before entering a new body of water.
PRO TIP: To learn how to identify invasive species in your area and specific tips on preventing the spread of invasive species, [read our Green Boating Guide](#).
- If boats will anchor during or after the event, provide guidance on proper anchoring techniques, such as not anchoring in sensitive habitats like seagrass beds.



17. OFFER VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN ALTERNATIVES

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

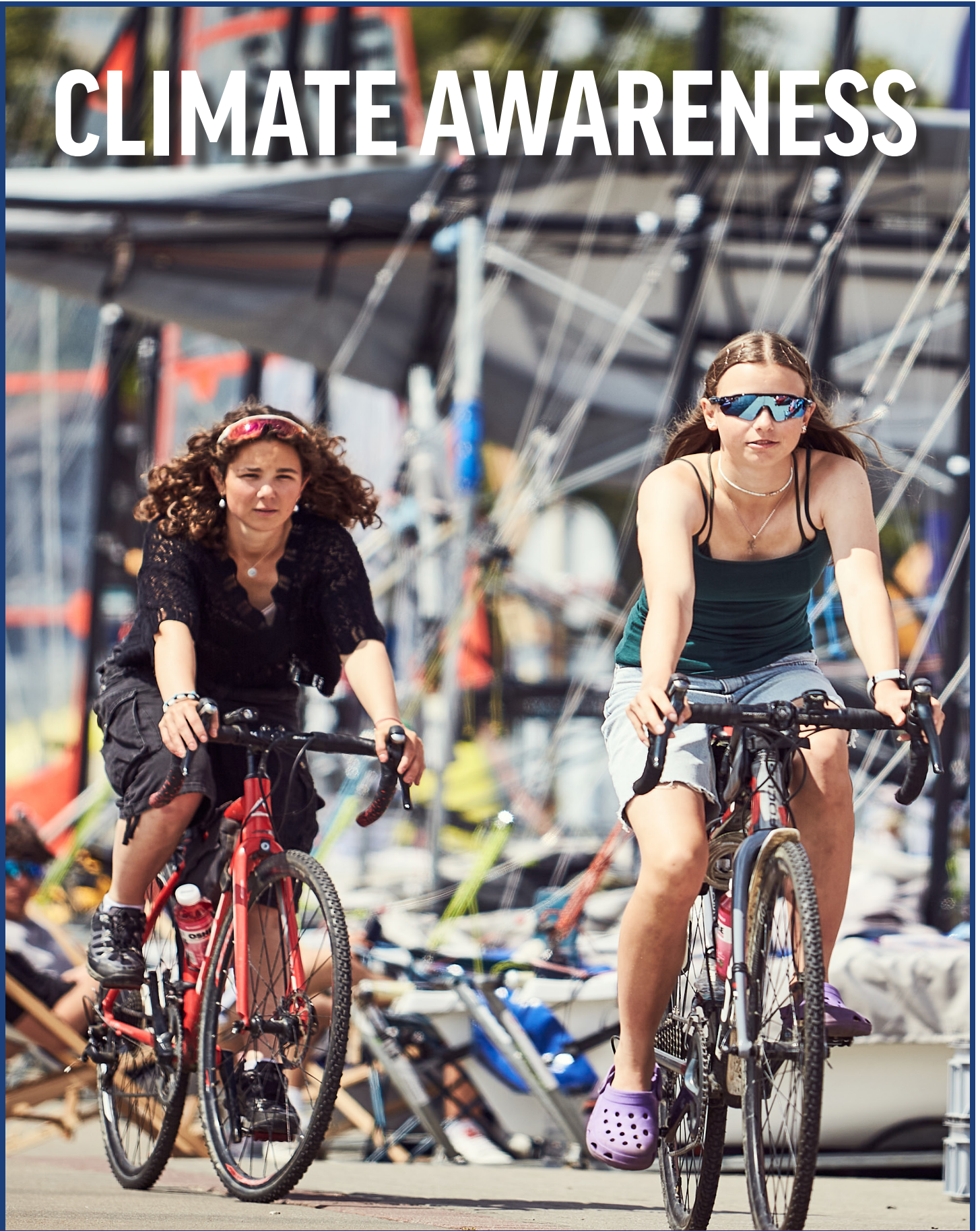
The consumption of meat plays a major role in ocean health. Worldwide, livestock accounts for 14.5% to 18% of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. The oceans absorb approximately 25% of CO₂ emissions, leading to ocean acidification which can cause coral bleaching and other negative impacts. Minimizing your meat consumption is an impactful method of reducing your individual carbon emissions.

HOW TO DO IT

- Consider implementing a “Meatless Monday” if you have a week-long event.
- Try the “reducetarian” option of having a meat plate as a side dish and a vegetarian dish as the main entree.
- Instead of meat patties, try veggie burgers.
- Look into the health benefits of eating plant-based and communicate the information to participants.
- If you can, source organic foods.



CLIMATE AWARENESS



18. PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Most of a regatta's carbon footprint is actually caused by the travel associated with getting to and from the event. Letting your participants know that there are car-free alternatives improves accessibility for members of the community. Although bikes or public transportation aren't always an option, we strongly encourage you to take the time to highlight these alternatives when available or work toward making them an option at your event.

HOW TO DO IT

- If you are in a bike-friendly location, promote bike riding by having bike racks available at the event and informing participants of this option.
PRO TIP: Reach out to local walking or biking organizations to recommend the safest routes to your event.
- Encourage public transportation whenever possible by highlighting the nearest bus or train stop to your event.
- Recommend carpooling or arrange shuttles for necessary car travel.
- Point out where the closest electric vehicle charging stations are located.
- Promote all alternative forms of transportation in communications with attendees.
PRO TIP: Provide incentives for those who take advantage of them to further encourage this behavior.



19. REDUCE DAY-OF EVENT EMISSIONS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Reducing carbon emissions is one of the most direct ways your event can be more climate positive. Though transportation to an event is generally the largest source of emissions, small changes during the event itself can also reduce your carbon footprint. You can significantly decrease fuel usage by altering how you operate the racecourse. Did you know reducing power by as little as 10% from full throttle will save 20% in fuel costs? You can also cut off potential sources of marine debris. Even if your event is not a race, you can monitor your day-of carbon emissions to make a positive impact!

HOW TO DO IT

- Consider creating a spectator boat area off the course where boats are required to anchor and have engines off. Provide a water taxi or club boat option for water views or create a viewing area onshore.
- Require anchored boats on the course to turn off engines instead of idling.
- Use fuel efficient power boats, such as RIBs, or explore electric motors.
- Conduct an energy audit of your venue and identify areas for improvement.
- Rent or purchase a [MarkSetBot](#), robotic marks that use electric self-propulsion and GPS technology to set and adjust marks on a course. This technology is efficient, smart and it eliminates the need for fossil-fuel burning power boats whose sole purpose is moving around marks.
- Safely limit the number of coach boats and/or committee boats allowed on the course. Employing boats with electric motors can also reduce your emissions.
- Reducing carbon emissions at the outset is the best way to minimize your footprint but hosting a zero emissions event is often unrealistic. To offset unavoidable emissions, events may choose to investigate carbon credits. We recommend selecting local programs that work on projects in your event's country or area, or partnering with a reputable offset program. The efficacy of carbon offset programs can be difficult to prove and has come under scrutiny in recent years. We recommend doing your homework and we are always happy to help investigate options.



20. INSPIRE FUTURE ACTION

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The true success of a Clean Regatta is the legacy the event leaves. Ensuring participants understand the efforts your event is undertaking can give them tangible actions to take back to their home clubs and communities. Race committee members, race participants, and event attendees should be encouraged to learn about the ways they can reduce their environmental impact and follow Green Boating principles in their own lives. As an event organizer, you can facilitate understanding and inspire future action by following any of the subsequent suggestions – or develop a creative initiative of your own!

HOW TO DO IT

- Encourage participants to make a pledge to become a [Sailors for the Sea Green Boater](#). Every Green Boater will receive a free, digital Green Boating Guide with tips on how to boat in an environmentally responsible manner.
PRO TIP: Consider running a Green Boating contest. Gamifying sustainability can incentivize signups and allow a platform for participants to share their experiences.
- Share the Green Boater checklist applicable for the type of boats at your event in regatta communications. You can find lists specific to dinghies, sailboats with motors, and powerboats [HERE](#), which are easy to include in race documents.
- Include Environmental Steward (e-Steward) as a crew position. e-Stewards on each vessel can help their team follow Best Practices when provisioning, racing, etc.
- Mentor other organizations, fleets, or upcoming events at your venue and support their efforts to become a Clean Regatta. Meet with the Board, Environmental Commission or other Green Teams at your Club to plan how to entrench sustainability.
- Educate boaters about the benefits of using renewable energy, including solar panels, wind generators and water generators.
- Host a “gear swap” at the event where participants bring in items no longer useful to them, such as life jackets or wet suits, that may be useful to others. For gear at the end of its usable life, partner with organizations such as [Sea Bags in Maine](#) or [Sail to Shelter](#), who can upcycle sails or other items into new products.



BONUS POINT OPPORTUNITIES

If your event goes above and beyond these 20 Best Practices, please tell us about your accomplishments during the certification process through our website. We want to recognize these extraordinary efforts in the form of awarding your regatta a higher level of certification (under our discretion and on a case-by-case basis).

Examples of extra efforts include:

- Sourcing event clothing from sustainable materials
- Innovatively reusing materials from a previous year's event
- Sourcing your energy from renewable resources
- Coordinating pump-out services
- Look into marine recycling initiatives in your area, such as shrink wrap and fiberglass vessel recycling

Check out the [Sustainability Report Library](#) and our [Case Studies](#) to learn more about the efforts of previous regattas who have gone above and beyond.



JOIN THE GREEN BOATING COMMUNITY

UNITING BOATERS TO SAVE THE OCEANS

As sailors and water-lovers, you are among the first to notice changes to our seas such as fewer marine animals, more pollution and damaged marine habitats. Through our Green Boating initiative, Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana provides opportunities for you and your community to address pressing ocean health issues. As a Green Boater, you will be provided with the information and resources to support [Oceana in the fight to win campaigns](#) that combat marine plastic pollution, prevent habitat destruction, source responsible seafood and protect marine animals. From demanding plastic-free alternatives to choosing sustainable seafood, your voice and actions are an important part of restoring the abundance of our oceans and protecting marine habitats.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

[Join our growing Green Boating Community](#) and encourage your participants and attendees to become Green Boaters as well. By signing up, you will receive the latest information on sustainable boating practices and opportunities to act on critical policy issues that affect our marine environments. Additionally, you will receive a free digital copy of our Green Boating Guide, which covers over 25 topics, from non-toxic cleaning products that actually work, to ways to anchor properly without damaging the marine habitat, and how to fill up your fuel tank without spilling. Green Boaters are essential advocates for our oceans and can make a significant difference to save our seas.

[Take the pledge today!](#)

- ☒ I AM A **GREEN BOATER.**
- ☒ I AVOID **THROWAWAY PLASTICS.**
- ☒ I USE **ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS.**
- ☒ I ADVOCATE FOR **OUR OCEANS.**
- ☒ I AM A **SAILOR FOR THE SEA.**