



YAMPA VALLEY
SUSTAINABILITY
COUNCIL
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Inspiring our community for future generations

2013

Zero Waste Wedding Guide

Reducing the Carbon Footprint of your event

Of the 2.5 million U.S. weddings annually, the average event costs \$30,000 and produces 62 tons of carbon-dioxide and 500lbs of waste.

From Low Impact to Zero Waste, small adjustments to your wedding can make a huge difference in cost to you and your family as well as on the impact of the local, regional, and even global environment. By greening up your event in any of these areas below, you can reduce these numbers. In addition to the economic and environmental benefits of a Green Wedding, there are social benefits as well. By talking to your vendors about green choices, you can help change the way people think about consumption.

LET'S GET STARTED!

We've provided Green Newbie, Enthusiast, and Environmentalist suggestions for all levels of reduction!

Announcing the big day!

From paperless invites to online web sites, the electronic age has helped green weddings.

For Save the Date cards:

Often a necessity to ensure a good turnout, think about ways to reduce the excess in stamps and carbon dioxide used to transport snail-mail the old fashioned way.

- * **Green Newbie:** Use postcards instead of a full card and envelope
- ** **Enthusiast:** Find something reusable like a bottle opener or USB drive that they won't throw away
- *** **Environmentalist:** Send a colorful email with a link to your website

Websites:

Use the tech option to cut down on frequently asked questions and correspondence with your guests. Provide: Maps and directions, important location information such as preparing for high altitude and weather changes, lodging links and online registration, introduce the other family with photo albums...

- * **Green Newbie:** Unique registry: honeymoon focused gifts like tours, lodging, and restaurant certificates
- ** **Enthusiast:** Have guests RSVP as a "Green Guest" to cut down on paper invitations
- *** **Environmentalist:** Have a link to purchasing carbon offsets for long distance travelers

Invitations:

It's hard to let go of this tradition, but you can reduce the cost and waste and still have some fun with it! Let them know what's coming by announcing your Zero Waste Event!

- * **Green Newbie:** Use recyclable or reforested paper products
- ** **Enthusiast:** Make homemade invitations with home made paper or reused sources
- *** **Environmentalist:** Use seed paper strips that guests can plant in their garden

Other ideas:

Send a video or an audio clip, inscribe it in reclaimed wood, Greenvelope, mobile sign-in.

Approaching the big day!

As the clock ticks down to your special day, there are a million and one details that you cover to make sure the day is the best it can be. Here are some ideas to help, but feel free to call upon our Zero Heroes to help think of ideas outside the box when you are planning in the months ahead.

Attire:

- * **Green Newbie:** Look for inexpensive rentals for the men, and truly “reusable” dresses for the ladies!
- ** **Enthusiast:** Pay attention to the materials: organic, peace silk, bamboo or hemp
- *** **Environmentalist:** Go vintage! Reusing and altering beautiful vintage clothing, now that’s unique!

Decorating the Event: Decorations can be a big chunk of the bill, so from designing on a dime to sensible floral arrangements, get creative and start early with this one!

- * **Green Newbie:** Home made candles, local river rocks, edible favors, reusable ribbon, fruit, evergreens
- ** **Enthusiast:** Go with potted flowers or local wildflowers and reuse them as gifts for the guests of honor
- *** **Environmentalist:** Use antique doors for an archway and solar lights for evening ambiance

Welcoming your Guests:

- * **Green Newbie:** Give your guest gifts in a reusable cloth bag
- ** **Enthusiast:** Give a USA-made reusable water bottle or coffee mug for use during their stay
- *** **Environmentalist:** Fill the reusable bag with homemade or locally purchased gifts without packaging

Zero Waste for the Food and Beverage portion!

Whether or not your event is hosted by a restaurant or hotel, you can arrange it to be a Zero Waste event. Cutting down on food waste can divert up to 95% of this type of waste, while supporting the local dirt program if there is one.

- * **Green Newbie:** Make sure the venue host recycles and has reusable tableware
- ** **Enthusiast:** Schedule your wedding at one of the many Zero Waste restaurants in Steamboat
- *** **Environmentalist:** Schedule your event outdoors, catered by a local, and provide Zero Waste supplies

MORE:

Compostable Tableware: All products available in our Zero Waste kits are made from recycled paper, plant starch, or sugarcane and are fully compostable and provided locally by Steve Green Company.

Options to Tableware: Reusables don't create any waste. If you don't have enough, ask guests to bring their own or rent from local suppliers. Serve finger foods and utilize bread bowls and ice cream cones to avoid the need for tableware. Use cloth napkins and towels to cut down on paper waste.

Composting and Recycling: Compost bin are reserved with Twin Enviro, and guests should be educated with signage (below): 970-879-6985. Recycling bins are usually onsite but if not, can be scheduled with Waste Management or taken to a nearby site. If needed, use our Zero Hero Team for assistance.

Educational Signage: Make sure your guests know they have entered a "Zero Waste Zone!" Download these signs off the Zero Waste Page on the YVSC website <http://www.yvsc.org/programs-projects/zerowaste/>

Other ideas:

Book our Water Monster for an outdoor event: www.yvsc.org/all-about-the-yvsc-water-monster-team/
Give reusable bags such as our YVR bags for gift bags for your guests or wedding party instead of paper or plastic bags
Bicycle Taxi to from the ceremony to the reception
Look for information on Conflict Free Diamonds and recycled metals for rings
Honeymoon at an EcoFriendly destination, and reduce the footprint of your travel with [Carbon Offsets](#)

Resources

Local Zero Waste Locations:

Sheraton Resort Steamboat
Steamboat Ski and Resort: All venues on and off mountain, including Steamboat Grand Hotel
Rex's Restaurant and Holiday Inn
Botanic Gardens and Community Center

Websites:

<http://www.greenbrideguide.com/>
<http://www.greatgreenweddings.com/>
<https://www.greenvelope.com/refer-a-friend>
<http://pinterest.com/koyalwholesale/go-green-wedding-decor/>
Carbon Footprint Calculator: <http://www.nativeenergy.com/travel-carbon-calculator.html>

Guides:

[The Everything Green Wedding Book: Plan an elegant, affordable, earth-friendly wedding \(Everything \(Weddings\)\)](#) by Wenona Napolitano

A book from the series of Everything Guides. Focuses on how easy and affordable it is to choose a stylish environmentally friendly wedding.

[The Green Bride Guide: How to Create an Earth-Friendly Wedding on Any Budget](#) by Kate L Harrison

Easy to digest book chock filled with great information and ideas for the engagement, through the wedding, including choosing a location, bridal gowns and makeup, invitations, flowers, the ceremony, and the honeymoon. If you are just going to buy one book....pick this one!



Zero Waste is the largest program of the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council and diverts an average of 25,000 gallons of waste annually from the landfill through educational efforts, large public event consulting and volunteerism, and through its partner program Sustainable Schools. Since 2009 we have impacted 62,000 people at over 75 events with the help of hundreds of volunteers and supporters. www.yvsc.org/zero zero@yvsc.org

