

Waste Reduction and Recycling Initiative

Final Report Instructions

Thank you for utilizing the Waste Reduction and Recycling Initiative to reduce waste in your community through your project. The purpose of this document is to assist you in completing a final report to share the results of your WRRRI project. These results will help us to share lessons learned and valuable information with people across the NWT who may be interested in completing a similar project.

Please feel free to add extra information to this report, in addition to providing the details requested below.

If you have any questions or would like assistance to complete this report, please contact the Waste Reduction and Management Section at wrrri-irrd@gov.nt.ca or 867-767-9236, extension 53176.

Part A. Final Reporting

1. Contact

- Contact name: Lise Picard;
- Project name: Yellowknife Farmers Market 2023 Waste Reduction.

2. Project activities

Tell us about your project! What did you plan to do – and did you successfully do it?

Since 2015, the YKFM has been working at developing ways to reduce waste at public events by:

- By policy , we demand all food vendors to use only compostable dinnerware and utensils;
- Encouraging patrons to dispose their used compostable dinnerware and utensils in organic bins staffed by volunteers who inform them about waste reduction;
- Further reducing waste by encouraging people to bring their own dinnerware rather than using the disposable compostable ones offered at the YKFM.

In 2023 we wanted to improve the method described above by:

- Ensuring there were volunteers at each waste stations (8) to inform the patrons about the compost program;

- Having 100 patrons or more bringing their own dinnerware 5 times at the market over the course of the summer. These people were to be registered with the Loyalty card program.
- Enhancing the program's public education component by having a media campaign focused on "Reducing waste by bringing your own dinnerware".

We were very successful in:

- Having 8 to 10 volunteers each week attending the compost bins and informing the public about the program;
- Having a coordinator to assist with the program delivery;
- Having all the vendors using only compostable dinnerware;
- Having a media campaign on "Reducing waste by bringing your own dinnerware";
- 181 people registered in the Loyalty Card "Bring your Container" Program;
- Reusable containers were used 172 times (*67 times in 2022*) by patrons;
- 20 people brought their own container 5 times over the course of the 13 weeks summer market.

An evaluation of all the YKFM programs was conducted during the summer 2023 by a Graduate Student of the University of Waterloo. We have included in this report the evaluation findings pertaining to the Waste Reduction Program 2023.

Data were collected in Yellowknife NWT, during the 2023 market season, and included surveys, interviews, and a discussion group. 115 patron participated in the RMA on August 15, 2023; 29 patron and vendor were surveyed in August and October, 2023; 7 interviews were conducted with vendors and community partners, in August and October, 2023, and 8 volunteers participated in a discussion group on October 15, 2023. The evaluation is available upon request.

??How long did it take you to complete your project? Did any of the tasks take more or less time than you thought?

The project took place during the Yellowknife Farmers Markets on Tuesday evenings from 4:30 to 7pm from June 6th to August 15 and September 12 and 19, 2023. The scheduled markets of August 22 and 29 and September 5th did not take place because of the evacuation due to wild fires close to Yellowknife.

On October 15, 2023 we hosted a "Thank You Tea" for the volunteers (8 attended) and a discussion to evaluate the program was conducted by the graduate student doing the YKFM evaluation.

??Who was involved in carrying out the project activities?

- One board member - writing the proposal, hiring 2 contractors, doing purchases, monitoring the budget, preparing supporting documents, coordinating volunteers, hosting the “Thank You Tea”, preparing questions for the evaluation, writing final reports;
- One on site contractor – ensuring all food vendors were using compostable dinnerware, setting up and taking down the compost bins, welcoming the volunteers;
- One communication contractor – designing and implementing a “Bring your container” communication plan;
- 27 volunteers assisting the program by helping in setting up and taking down the bins, informing the public about the program. A chore of 8-10 young volunteers were present at each market.

Did everything go according to plan? Anything that was easier/went better than originally expected? Anything that was harder/went worse than originally expected?

All of the planned activities went according to plan.

- The vendors used compostable dinnerware. Occasionally some vendors would use plastic utensils. This was caught by the volunteers at the compost bins and the vendor was asked to use compostable. The evaluation revealed that the vendors generally support the compost program and believe that it is important to reduce waste. There was indication that compostable containers are more expensive and at times are more challenging to acquire, although these were noted as mostly manageable challenges.
- Having volunteers at the compost bins informing the public is essential for the success of the program. We received amazing support from a group of dedicated young volunteers age 10 to 18 years old. They were always on time, attending the compost bins and informing the public about the YKFM’s Waste Reduction Program. Their support made the program easier to run as we could count on their presence. Here is a comment we received from a patron about these wonderful volunteers: « Just wanted to say that you had amazing little helpers today at the Market! They were so helpful at the compost bins and also confidently but very kindly and gently reminded a couple of people about their dogs - what wonderful young helpers to have! »
- The evaluation revealed that compost volunteers generally enjoyed participating in the YKFM, they shared that they liked the flexibility of the volunteer experience, and all agreed that they would volunteer again next year (2024). It was clear that volunteers have concern for the environment, that they believe in the importance of the Compost and Waste Reduction program and that they felt good about their role in climate action. Volunteers maintain compost and waste reduction practices in their own lives and believe the conversations they have had with patrons have positive impact on behavioural change more broadly. Volunteers felt it was important to have a volunteer stationed at each bin, and suggested a reconsideration of bin placement, such as more bins in the food section.
- Of patrons who participated in the surveys, 63% reported they were aware that the dinnerware was compostable, while 73% reported using the green bin. This difference in

awareness vs use supports the need for volunteers to be providing support and education around how and what to compost at the market.

- The loyalty program encouraged patrons to bring their own containers to reduce packaging waste. The program offered a \$20 market voucher as incentive to support behavioural change. The program went well but we did not reach the goal of 100 people bringing their container 5 times to the market. Despite advertising on the YKFM social media, conducting a campaign with Cabin Radio, posting information at each vendors, having information on 2 sandwich boards still there are many patrons who are not aware of the program. The evaluation revealed that 50% of patrons were aware that they could bring their own containers, and only 40% were aware they could participate in the loyalty program. This suggests opportunities may exist for the market to increase uptake of the loyalty program.

3. Waste reduction

What amount of materials was reduced, reused, recycled, or recovered? (Please include any calculations!)

Most of the waste generated at the market was composted. This was observed by the number of bags filled by compostable waste compared to the garbage bags. We did not keep track of the precise numbers of bags containing compostable waste versus garbage bags.

While they recognized the importance of composting, volunteers expressed their desire to see more waste reduction overall. The volunteers also highlight an opportunity to contribute to waste reduction by reimagining the “Bring your container” program. Some of the volunteers have experience with other events and festivals and wondered about container rental or purchase opportunities, such as the “rent a plate” service (Ecology North, 2021) offered at Folk on the Rocks. Vendors also wondered about container programs to support those who would like to reuse but forgot to bring their own.

These suggestions will be discussed with the 2024 team and practical ways to have the suggestions implement will be seriously considered.

4. Environmental, social and economic benefits

We believe the environmental benefits were that the patrons attending the weekly market were exposed to information on waste reduction at most of the waste stations, the volunteers involved in the program had conversations with many patrons and learned how to educate them. We believe we diverted about 80% of the waste generated by the market from the land field to be composted. We did not weight the compost bags as we did in previous years. However we do know that when we had 8-10 volunteers at the compost bins we usually achieved a 80% diversion rate.

The Waste Reduction project offers economic benefits to 2 contracts for local individuals. It offers the opportunity to many high school students to complete their mandatory volunteer hours during the summer. In 2023 we hired a summer student during a few weeks for her to learn how to coordinate the program.

During the evaluation the compost volunteers talked about how much they enjoyed the social aspect of attending the market and in their volunteer role. Being outdoors and connecting with community were aspects that made volunteering enjoyable. Additionally, seeing the compost bins fill up and thinking about the reduced waste in the Yellowknife land fill was described as satisfying. Participating in the Compost and Waste Reduction program was viewed as an important community service and contribution to local climate action.

The volunteers spoke about the atmosphere and community connections the market offers. They also spoke about how the market gives back to the community from a climate action perspective both in education and waste reduction. Volunteers demonstrated a true passion for their role at the market and in climate action.

Some youth mentioned that having to volunteer at the market once a week “got them out of their room” and help them dealing with anxiety.

5. Lessons learned

If someone else were to implement a similar project in a different community, what aspects of your project do you think they should follow?

Over the years the YKFM Waste Reduction method has been used by many other large events in Yellowknife. As an example in 2023 the YKFM assisted the Multicultural event to run a very successful waste reduction program. The YKFM methodology was duplicated and it worked very well. The organizers recruited enough volunteers to have one volunteer at each compost bins which is essential for the program to be efficient.

Ideally if all customers were to bring their own container there would be no need to have the Compost component of the program.

If someone else were to implement a similar project in a different community, what aspects of your project do you think should be done differently?

We would insist at the start of the program for people to “Bring their own container”. Volunteers, vendors and patrons all agree that more education is essential to see the waste diminished in large events.

6. Communication, education and awareness

How did you communicate information about the project and the results of the project to the community (for example: through public events, website, signage, radio program)? Was this a good tactic?

A Power Point of the methodology of the YKFM Waste Reduction Program was presented to different audiences in 2023:

- In May, to the francophone community in Fort Smith and in Yellowknife;
- In June, to the SWANA (Solid Waste Management Association of North America) conference in Yellowknife and to the NWT Agri-Food conference in Fort-Simpson.

From June to September the YKFM offered information on waste reduction to 700 patrons, 50 vendors and staff, 8-10 volunteers on a weekly basis during 13 weeks.

Information about the YKFM Waste Reduction Program is on the YKFM web site with all the supporting documents. Ex: Packaging Vendors Guide, advertising templates, reports for previous years.

We ran waste reduction information posts on social media but we did not monitor the public interaction.

The evaluation revealed that patrons and vendors alike support the Compost and Waste Reduction program. Vendors described using locally grown produce, often from other market vendors to make the products they sell through their businesses. Vendors spoke about the packaging they use, not only are vendors using composable materials to serve food, but they are intentionally reducing waste, for example by using reusable jars.

Volunteers shared that they believe the current education efforts of the Compost and Waste Reduction program indeed contribute to behavioural change. However, they would like to see more emphasis placed on education. They spoke about the need for increases in educational signage or perhaps an educational table, they spoke about community goal setting and suggested it would be powerful to display a visual representation of how the community is doing with reaching the waste reduction goal. This might look like a simple bag count each week with a sign that indicates “X” number of bags have been diverted from landfills. This approach might serve as a motivator to behavioural change in addition to the Loyalty program.

The volunteers also suggested to have in 2024 an educational display. This could include the life cycle of products (what they are, how they are processed in Yellowknife and the end result) and why these matter to the environment, e.g. what the alternative is (landfill). This could also include a goal component, so each week updating the waste diverted from landfill. This could potentially include going back to weighing the compost again but could be as simple as the number of bags of compost that would have been bags of garbage. Each week the number would be updated and displayed.

7.Into the Future

This project has been running, adjusting and improving since 2015. It will continue in the future. We are very grateful for the support we receive from the young volunteers. Their enthusiasm and energy brought a new dimension to the program. We will invite them earlier in the season to participate in the planning and to include their ideas and recommendations in the 2024 program. We will work at building a strong team who will take on this program in the years to come.

8. Anything else?

We wonder if the 2023 evacuation due to forest fires will have an impact on the awareness of the public and their behaviour towards waste reduction. We will consider that aspect when developing the 2024 educational material.

Part B. Final Reporting: Expenditures

Please provide a detailed expenditure report for the project, signed by the Recipient, and copies of receipts for all expenses. This detailed expenditure report should include details for all project expenses, including those paid for by the WRRRI and paid for by other funding sources or in-kind contributions. Your budget has been included to help ensure your costs are reflective of what was approved.

The template for the expenditure report was sent to you (along with these report instructions) by the WRRRI Coordinator.

Part C. Photos

Please provide some photos of your waste reduction project to help show the results and accomplishments of this project.

You will need to submit signed Media Usage Consent Forms of any people appearing in photos. See end of document for a copy of the form.

Please note we do not have signed Media Usage Consent forms and the pictures include are just for the purpose of reporting. Thank You.



Some of the 2023 Volunteers



Volunteers setting the Compost Bins.



Volunteers at waste station.



Volunteers at a waste station.



Vendor showing their compostable dinnerware.



Advertising "Bring your container" sandwich board at the market.



BE A ZERO WASTE SHOPPER

Bring your container, mug and cutlery and get a stamp on your **LOYALTY CARD** (5 stamps = \$20 market voucher)

ALL DINNERWARE AT THE MARKET IS COMPOSTABLE
Put your plate, cutlery, cup and food scraps in a green compost bin

Put your recyclables in a blue bin

Bring a shopping bag

YELLOWKNIFE FARMERS MARKET

For more information visit our website or email us at: ykfarmersmarket@gmail.com

YELLOWKNIFEARMERSMARKET.CA



New "Zero Waste " Sandwich board to be used in 2024.



Volunteers being hosted at the "Thank You Tea".