

Michelle Mirowski

Reduce Reuse Recycle

Abstract Many multiple-day music festivals bring in acts that show a full spectrum of different music genres. The largest music festivals in America (such as Coachella, Lollapalooza, Bumbershoot, Austin City Limits and Bonnaroo) showcase a variety of Blues, Hip-Hop, Bluegrass, Rock, Country and Indie acts. Festivals in today's world aren't limited to hippies but tend to draw in a wide array of different people from all walks of life. Attendance to these festivals has been on the rise; with increased attendance comes an increased amount of organization and trash from attendees. Our world is becoming more and more aware of the effects humans have on our planet, and organizers of these festivals are focusing on better ways of disposing of trash by recycling. Festivals have been becoming greener and greener.

Introduction

Austin City Limits, one the biggest music festivals in America (with attendance of 165,000), has set up Rock and Recycle stations. Each station offers information about recycling/human effects along with giving away T-shirts to attendees that fill up plastic bags with recyclables (www.aclfestival.com). Lollapalooza, with the same attendance as Austin City Limits, has a Green Street which informs attendees how to live greener and reduce their carbon footprint (www.lollapalooza.com). Both festival use biodiesel fuel, biodegradable cups/plates, organically sustainable merchandise, organic/locally grown food and have placed a ban on paper handouts (www.aclfestival.com and www.lollapalooza.com). Coachella in California, with 100,000 attendees, has a recycling program offering one new water bottle for ten empty ones (www.coachella.com). Unfortunately only a slight increase in greening Coachella has been made, but still, every little bit helps.

Bumbershoot, Seattle's Music and Arts Festival, has about 150,000 attendees and provides thought provoking and interactive recycled art work. A strong recycling program can be found at this festival along with ReadyMade booths that turn recyclables into something useful in front of you. Plastic water bottles are converted into a poster protector. Bumbershoot has been concerned with the environment since the 1980's, as a Styrofoam ban has been in place since 1980. Vendors are now told to compost their waste and recycle grease for biodiesel fuel. Vendors in 2007 composted 2 tons of consumer waste. Bumbershoot has an extensive amount of information on the efforts it has made towards reducing and recycling along with green facts on their webpage. (<http://bumbershoot.org>)

Two festivals that have made an extensive attempt in being carbon neutral in 2008 are Bonnaroo and Rothbury. Bonnaroo with an attendance of 80,000 offers Planet Roo, an area filled with different informative booths and art work focusing on improving the environment. Planet Roo also has a solar powered stage which hosts environmental speakers and activists along with musicians and artists. Bonnaroo has a large number of recycling bins and works with Clean Vibes. Clean Vibes is an organization that travels from festival to festival that helps organize volunteers that helps recycle and inform the attendees about recycling. In 2008, Bonnaroo started composting reducing the fuel needed to haul away scraps for composting. Next year they plan on having compost containers on the campgrounds.

Rothbury, which made its first appearance in 2008 with only 35,000 attendees, is heavily focused on running a zero waste festival. They are using a lot of recycled paper and compostable products along with having compost bins available throughout the festival grounds. All the vendors, sponsors and on-site associates are expected to use sustainable resources/options. A Green Team has helped with recycling 24 hours a day. Rothbury

founders want to make the festival as educational and informative as possible. A Think Tank (featuring environmental discussions with Dr. Stephen Schneider), Energy Fair and Eco-Art show are featured as center pieces of the festival. Merchandise is made from sustainable material and sweatshop free. In the end both had impressive numbers of recycled items. Bonnaroo recycled/composted a quarter of trash which was a drastic improvement from years before: 3.38 tons of aluminum and 3.9 tons of #1 plastic was recycled and 10 tons of compost was composted on site. Rothbury had 80% of it's trash either recycled or composted with only 20% going to landfills. Both festivals have plans on being greener in 2009. (www.bonnaroo.com and www.rothburyfestival.com)

Bonnaroo and Rothbury have received a Greener Festival Award. The award looks at the environment impacts/planning of the following categories: event management, office and administration, travel and transport, CO₂, waste management, water management, local environment, and noise. Twenty-four festivals won a Green Festival Award in 2008, 18 from England and 6 from other countries. (www.agreenerfestival.com) The massive recycling efforts by festivals has a lot to do with volunteers who help inform the masses about the need for sustainability. Bonnaroo and Rothbury are heavily focused on informing attendees through visual aids which get them to think about the problem. Music festivals have certain large displays that visually pull you in. I feel that grabbing a person's interest is half the battle to a sustainable future for everyone. The goal of my service learning project is to apply ideas from music festivals by creating large and visually intriguing display at Barbeque on the River in Paducah and in the Curris Center.

A new music festival, Roll Over Dover, was planned on being hosted in Dover TN but due to alcohol permit problems the event was cancelled. The other closest fairly large festival was in Paducah, Barbeque on the River, which is hosted ever year by the water front. I quickly came into contact with Merle Paschedag, director and founder of Recycle Now, the largest recycling organization in Paducah. After moving to Paducah Merle became frustrated with the

lack of recycling in the community. Through the years Merle has tried to improve recycling efforts in Paducah by setting up Recycle Now, a volunteer based recycling organization.

Methods

I volunteered two Saturdays working at the Recycle Now drop off center helping unload recyclables from cars into giant piles on truck beds. The first Saturday in September the drop off center was located in the Kroger parking lot. By the last Saturday of September the Recycle Now drop off center had moved to a permanent location. The permanent drop off center allowed for volunteers to more efficiently pick up recyclables and sort them into the proper containers. Merle managed to have the building leased to him for nearly free.

We discussed plans for the Barbeque on the River festival. Merle had previously obtained 20 old city trashcans and we were bouncing around a few ideas of what to do with them. In the end the now recycling bins were painted a light, non-threatening blue that was out of the ordinary which we hoped would spark interest in people. A binder was attached to the top containing information about recycling and how one could become a volunteer at Recycle Now. All 20 recycling containers were placed around the downtown area during the Festival. A recycled plastic bag table cloth was made along with 1,000 one-inch buttons containing seven different designs. Buttons included pictures that enforced the need to recycle and reduce waste.

After the Barbeque festival the focus started gravitating on how I can inform Murray students about recycling in an interesting and visually pleasing way. Through talking to other volunteers and Merle my knowledge of Western Kentucky's view on recycling increased. I was clearly not in Michigan any more.

I thought through the best idea would be to set up a Recycling Art Show; Your Trash Could Be Treasured. The art show was made up of two parts; an art competition and an informational display. To better understand the average Murray student and to get a better grasp as to what the informational displays should cover I conducted a survey. During the month of

September 54 people were asked the following questions: Do you recycle pop cans and/or plastic water bottles? Do you own a reusable water bottle? Has Murray State University made any environmentally friendly changes from last year? If so what? Surveys took place either morning, evening or afternoon in the Curris Center, a high foot traffic area for students. After most of the surveys a discussion arose on recycling and Murray State. It was clear that most students will not bother recycling unless recycling the bins are a few feet away. Only 22% of students who were surveyed recycled and 37% own a reusable water bottle. A great number of students were aware of MSU food services switch from Styrofoam cups to Ecotainers, 83% to be exact from the survey. Complaints on how soft the Ecotainers got was a main topic of discussion but most agreed that paper cups were more environmentally sound than Styrofoam ones. Unfortunately only 5%, 3 people, were aware of the compositing occurring on campus. Doing these surveys gave me a good idea of what informational displays were needed.

Before starting on the informational displays, I searched for sponsors from local Murray businesses for both different aspects of the art show. The following businesses donated gift certificates for the winners: Cracker Barrel, Dinh's Vietnamese Egg Roll, Mr. Gatti's, MSU Food Services, MSU Bookstore, Mugsy's Hideout, Papa John's, Quarter's Campus Grill, Rudy's Restaurant, Terrapin Station and Tumbleweed. Merle from Recycle Now was excited about the art show and donated an IPOD Shuffle to the winner and a number of T-shirts for the runners up. Lowe's donated PVC piping while, Office Depot and Wal-Mart donated poster boards for the informational aspect of the art show. The pop cans from the pop can wall were borrowed from Facilities Management and A Green House. I volunteered for an afternoon at A Green House helping Chuck sort trash and in return he let me borrow a few hundred pop cans. In the end about \$250 dollars in prizes were donated for the winners and \$70 dollars in posters/PVC piping were donated for the educational aspect of the art show.

Luckily I had met Karen Hammond while volunteering in Paducah. After explaining

my recycled art show idea to her she was excited about it and wanted to help. The recycled art show was featured as Paducah Parenting green event of October with a two page spread. Paducah Parenting has about 20,000 copies distributed monthly to not only Paducah but the surrounding towns which made for wonderful advertisement. The recycled art show was also announced through the public radio station on campus, in the school newspaper, and Roundabout Murray email in addition to the numerous posters located throughout campus buildings.

Results

The art show was hosted in the rocking chair lounge October 13-17 and was open to students, faculty and community members. Each entry needed to be at least partially made of recycled materials. The Curris Center is a centralize location which will have the maximum amount of potential on lookers. Informational displays featured what environmentally friendly Murray State University has done in the past year. One display featured facts about Styrofoam vs. Ecotainers, hopefully helping students understand that sacrificing sturdy cups for slightly less sturdy cups will save years less waste in landfills. Information on compost and what Murray has composted was another display. I attempted to make the displays visually interesting including a glass cut out of a compost site and dump site to help better visualize the effects. Information on where and how one could get involved with recycling was also available, giving information about A Green House, Recycle Now and Murray Environmental Society.

A "graveyard" display informed people how long it would take for items which could have been recycled to decompose. The pop can wall helped pull people into the display and direct their attention to the fact that a recycled pop can can be recycled and back on the shelves in a few days rather than sitting in a landfill for hundreds. I hoped that the display helped bring up discussions and stir interest in not only recycling but also becoming more environmentally aware overall. Last but not least

plastic bag table cloths and overhang were made from over two hundred plastic bags to mimic how plastic bags are found everywhere. A sign hangs off of a string of plastic bags with the question “How many bags have you used this month?” Hopefully the display has sparked the interest or changed the lifestyle of at least one individual in Murray.

For the competition, 12 entries were entered. Merle and one of his friends who is associated with the Lower Arts District came down from Paducah to judge the competition. The winner of the competition was a giant metal moose made out of recycled horse shoes and scrap metal created by Jason Hargrove. Second place went to a peacock made out of plastic bottles and an old umbrella made by Angie Mullen and third place went to a collage containing old overalls made by Joetta Kelly. Three honorable mentions were a wooden/beer goat by Sarah Humphrey, plastic flower water spout/cigarette butt swan by Mathew and purses made from plastic bags and ponchos by Kay Hayz. In addition to the gift certificate packet, first, second and third place winner received trophies which were made out of recycled pop cans. The Trophy Case donated engraved metal plates for each of the trophies.

Discussion

The recycled art show received lots of media attention. To my surprise Tuesday, October 14th a photo of the recycled art show and myself was on the front page of the Murray Ledger Times. Wednesday my picture and short blurb had been picked up by the Associated Press was in the Paris, Tennessee newspaper all the way up to four hours away in one of Lexington, Kentucky’s newspapers. I was excited about the newspaper coverage going so far because maybe someone might get an idea for starting a recycling art show in their own town.

After the Recycled Art Shows the informational displays were donated to M.E.S.S. and the pop can wall was donated to the 08 Sustainability Conference. M.E.S.S. plans on hosting a recycled art show next year, the contacts I made by this project have been passed

down to M.E.S.S. for a bigger and better art show in 2009. I passed through the Curris Center during the week of the recycled art show and always noticed a lot of people observing the recycled art displays. Hopefully these displays enticed people to take a look and read some of the recycling facts that they normally would pass. If at least one person changed their mind or reconsidered what they were doing, it was all worth it.

The ideas that are brought forth by the creative minds of festival organizers can be effective when applied to large crowd situations outside of festivals. Having large visually pleasing exhibits outside of grocery stores and in stadiums could potentially spark interest in different types of people to recycle. These exhibits would include information on where to recycle and living greener. Hopefully these exhibits could help advertise a more sustainable future and promote that every one can do their part to better the future.

Table 1: Hours spent on Recycle Projects.

	Hours
Recycle Now Paducah	14
Recycled Art Show	
• Advertising/sponsors	10
• Survey	5
• Display	40 ⁺
• Setting up	6
TOTAL	75

Literature Cited

www.aclfestival.com

www.bonnaroo.com

bumbershoot.org

www.coachella.com

www.lollapalooza.com

www.ruthburyfestival.com