CLEAN REGATTAS 2022 TOOLKIT

THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

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ABOUT CLEAN REGATTAS

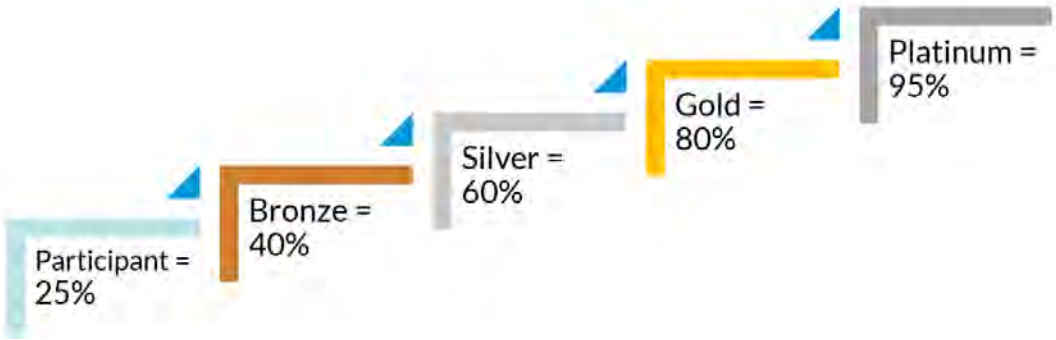
"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead, American cultural anthropologist

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 **3,000 events** have shown their commitments to sustainability by becoming Clean Regattas. This program has reached nearly **800,000 sailors and attendees** in **50 countries**. The certification process recognizes and accounts for the varying capabilities and constraints of both large and small events happening all over the world. This Toolkit, and the resources linked to it, provide organizers with the most impactful ways to turn an event into one that's better for participants, the community, and the planet.

The Clean Regattas program is 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:

Clean Regattas 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.



Platinum Level Certification (at least 19/20 Best Practices) requires more advanced planning. If you are aiming for Platinum, you must reach out to us ahead of your event so that we can best support your efforts. To be certified to the Platinum Level, you will also need to submit a sustainability report after the event, complete with pictures of each Best Practice and descriptions of your efforts. You can learn more about the reporting process and may choose to do so through our Sustainability Reporting Form here.

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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 list, and we support and 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 to your attendees that they should bring a reusable water bottle and water refill stations will be available, chances are you might not weed out every 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 to a few outstanding events each year that have gained the necessary experience by working with us in the past or have had significant advance planning. Check out the Sustainability Report Library to learn about the innovative ways high-level events have achieved Best Practices. You might find some unique ideas that work for your own event!

3. **Communicate and Delegate**
   When organizing your Green Team, designate members to be responsible for certain aspects of event planning. Consider designating one person to be in charge of working with food service vendors and involve another to manage social media and digital communications. It's nearly impossible to tackle all communications and sustainability initiatives on your own; the more people you bring in, 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 also update this Toolkit every year and take your feedback into consideration. If you found something helpful or an aspect challenging, let us know in the feedback section 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 in the weeks following the event.

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THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Step 1: Register Your Event

- If you haven't already, create an account and officially register your event. We'd be happy to welcome you to our growing community and add you to our list of current events.

Step 2: Select Best Practices

- This Toolkit outlines a total of 20 Best Practices. These action items are the most impactful ways you can make meaningful changes at your event. Select those you plan to accomplish and check them off on the online registration page. From there, you will find out what level of certification your efforts will earn.

Step 3: Organize Your Green Team

- Coordinating a Clean Regatta on your own is near impossible, and defeats one of the purposes of hosting a Clean Regatta: involving the community. Find a core group of people dedicated to sustainability 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 channels 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 to receive stories of success from regatta organizers and look forward to sharing these achievements with the greater Clean Regattas community. During your event, be sure to take lots of photos of your Best Practices in action, collect quotes from participants, and any data or metrics on your efforts. You can share these stories when you log in to officially certify your event. We can't wait to hear all about it!

Step 6: Get Certified

- Log into your account, check off the Best Practices you completed, and **check the box marked "Complete – Submit for Certification"**. Your official certificate will be emailed to you only after this step is complete. 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 happening in December have until the end of January of the following year to certify.

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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. Use or Provide Reusable Bags
- ☐ 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. Promote Alternative Transportation
- ☐ 16. Increase Awareness of Wildlife and Habitat Protection
- ☐ 17. Offer Vegetarian or Vegan Alternatives

GREEN BOATING

- ☐ 18. Use Eco-Smart Race Management Techniques
- ☐ 19. Prevent Toxins from Entering the Water
- ☐ 20. Encourage Green Boating Practices

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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, resources and access 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!

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ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE ITEMS

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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 project. With a variety of solutions available to fit different venues and audiences, 97% 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 to participants ahead of time that the event will not offer single-use water bottles or single-use plastic cups. Request that they bring their own water bottle to refill.
  - **PRO TIP:** avoid "boxed water" or bottles made from "bioplastic". These items often end up in the landfill, as they are generally not easily recyclable nor compostable. The goal is to limit single-use materials and encourage refilling whenever possible.

→ Provide reusable water bottles and/or cups to participants. If you do so, please consider the material of the reusables; many plastics have been found to leach chemicals harmful to human health. Additionally, consider if your audience might already have a stockpile of reusable water bottles. If this is the case, think twice before providing an unnecessary item.
  - **PRO TIP:** This may be a perfect sponsorship opportunity to co-brand with a company interested in reaching your audience. Reach out to local businesses to see if they would be willing to purchase the items in return for the branding opportunity.

→ Inform participants that there will be water refill stations available and identify where these stations will be located with proper signage (see "#8 Post Educational and Reusable Signage"). You can download signs HERE.
  - **PRO TIP:** To provide hydration to participants out on the water, we've most commonly seen success with dolphin pumps (see following table). These attach directly onto 3-5 gallon water jugs and allow coach boats and race committee boats to distribute water to competitors. Alternatively, the hydration reservoirs provide a softer, personal option.

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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 w/ Spigot		$30-50
Permanent Water Bottle Filtered Refilling Station		$1,000
Water Monster 125-Gallon Tank		$1,500

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2. ELIMINATE PLASTIC STRAWS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

The 2021 International Coastal Cleanup Report notes that straws and stirrers were the seventh most collected item from beach clean-ups around the world. 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. 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. 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.
  - o **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 "bio-plastic" straw options exist that are made from materials like corn starch 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.

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3. SERVE FOOD WITH PLASTIC-FREE DINNERWARE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

The plastic-free policy movement has grown to encompass all kinds of food service ware, 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 a quick calculation will show just how easily this investment will pay itself off. 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, weekend yard sales, or online marketplaces are good places to find some inexpensive, reusable dinnerware.
- **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, which might help procure sponsorship opportunities. With this option you are providing your attendees with utensils they can use beyond the event, helping to instill a mindset of reuse.

→ ACCEPTABLE SINGLE-USE ALTERNATIVES: If you must go with single-use items, investigate options that are easily composted. Paper plates (without waxy coatings) and wooden utensils are ideal. Beware of "compostable bioplastics," as they are highly susceptible to "greenwashing" and have no place in your backyard compost pile. Only those made from *biopolymers* are truly biodegradable and must be sent to an industrial composter. Please do your research before purchasing these tricky products. If you're really stumped, reach out to us! We'll talk more about composting in #12 Divert Food Waste from the Landfill.

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4. USE OR PROVIDE REUSABLE BAGS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Did you know, single-use plastic bags are used on average for only a few minutes? They are also extremely difficult to recycle, and often cause problems at material recovery facilities. Untangling plastic bags from machinery is not only time consuming, but it puts employees in dangerous positions. Plastic bags are a common scourge on the environment; we see them everywhere, 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. Reusable bags provide a solution to this problem and your event can do its part to make an impact.

HOW TO DO IT:

- → 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.
    - o **PRO TIP:** Work with a sponsor to provide reusable bags with their logo.
    - o **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 keep it relatively dry, try wrapping sandwiches in reusable beeswax wrap or wax paper instead of plastic. Lunchskins offers a variety of plastic-free lunch solutions. 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.

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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 Regatta 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 award something educational, like knot-tying boards for kids!
    - o **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 pick exactly what they want.
- → Ensure no balloon releases or confetti are used during ceremonies.
- → If you have any sponsors or outside organizations coming to the event who may be bringing promotional material, relay your efforts and encourage them to avoid "gimmick" giveaways that are often made from single-use plastics.

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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6. PUBLICIZE YOUR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Spreading the sustainability message is good press both for 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 organizations. Publicize your goals ahead of the event to inform 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 in your local news outlets.
  - o **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.

→ Publicize your commitment and efforts toward becoming a Clean Regatta. If applicable, use your organization's webpage, 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.

→ Many events have even created a page on their website dedicated to sustainability. Long-time Clean Regattas use this page to share their certificates from over the years and keep track of their efforts.

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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. Think 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 your local farms to source some (or all) of your food.
- → Coordinate your composting efforts with a local facility or farm 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.
    - o **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.
    - o **PRO TIP:** If you are planning on hosting a beach clean-up, coordinate collection of any interesting finds and see if they can be incorporated into a powerful art piece.

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8. POST EDUCATIONAL AND REUSABLE SIGNAGE

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Having signs that showcase 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 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. While this may mean utilizing plastic, be sure it can be used again. Consider putting your messaging on whiteboards or chalkboards. Creating painted wooden signs can also be a fun way to involve youth and provide an opportunity to educate them about the importance of communication.

- **PRO TIP:** Avoid printing the year on your signs or other information that may become outdated. 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. Also, make sure to check that your facts are coming from a reputable source.

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

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

→ Do 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.

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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 other 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 100 miles (160 km) to be considered "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 carbon footprint associated with this travel.

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. Farming foods organically means not using synthetic fertilizer or pesticides and thus less harmful runoff reaching our waterways.
- → If you have a local farmer's market, build your menu around what is in season.
- → Ensure that all seafood is sustainably sourced. Check the Monterey Bay Seafood Guide or Marine Stewardship Council website for guidance.

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RESPONSIBLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

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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 AND RECRUIT YOUR GREEN TEAM:

- → Recruit youth involved with your organization. It is a great learning opportunity for them and an even better educational opportunity for adults to hear kids talk about waste and doing their part for the planet.
- → Check to see if 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.

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

- → Make an announcement identifying volunteers during the skippers' or 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.

GIVE GREEN TEAM MEMBERS RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS:

- → Overseeing implementation of specific Best Practices.
- → Communicating the Clean Regatta mission to participants and media.
- → Managing water refill stations or distributing reusable water bottles.
- → Maintaining trash, recycling, and compost bins. This includes ensuring that there is no contamination by helping attendees sort their waste.
    - o **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.

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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 allows for an opportunity to educate attendees why certain 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 making their way into the natural environment. We must prioritize reducing plastics at the source.

HOW TO DO IT:

GATHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

1. 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 waste-free as possible. If you work with multiple vendors, this may be challenging, but you'll be that much better prepared to manage the sources of waste when your event is underway.
    - **PRO TIP:** Some things are more difficult to control, such as what an outside vendor brings into the event. If they serve food or drinks in "bioplastic", make sure you know where this material should end up (hint: it's not the backyard compost bin). If you are working with an industrial composter that can handle this material, make sure bioplastics don't get mistaken for conventional plastic and end up in recycling bins. Bioplastics cannot be recycled like normal plastics. If you are not working with an industrial composter that can accept this type of material, it will end up in landfill.
2. 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.

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

HOW TO DO IT:

MAKE CLEAR, INFORMATIVE SIGNS:

3. 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.
4. 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 random locations as these tend to accumulate with contaminated waste.

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12. DIVERT FOOD WASTE FROM THE LANDFILL

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Composting is important to reducing carbon emissions and limiting the size 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 (over the course of 20 years) than carbon dioxide, 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 nutrient-rich soil, which eliminates the need for synthetic fertilizer. Healthy soils better absorb water which reduces runoff, leading to less 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.

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12. DIVERT FOOD WASTE FROM THE 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 and dairy), such as the "bioplastics" mentioned in Best Practice #3 Serve Food with Plastic-Free Dinnerware.
    - o **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 be wary of bioplastics and to do your research. Products made from trees *without waxy coatings*, such as paper plates and wooden utensils 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.
    - o **PRO TIP:** You can check here to see if your products meet the Biodegradable Products Institute certification.

IF YOU CAN'T COLLECT COMPOST:

- → Donate any untouched leftovers to a food pantry or shelter.
- → 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.

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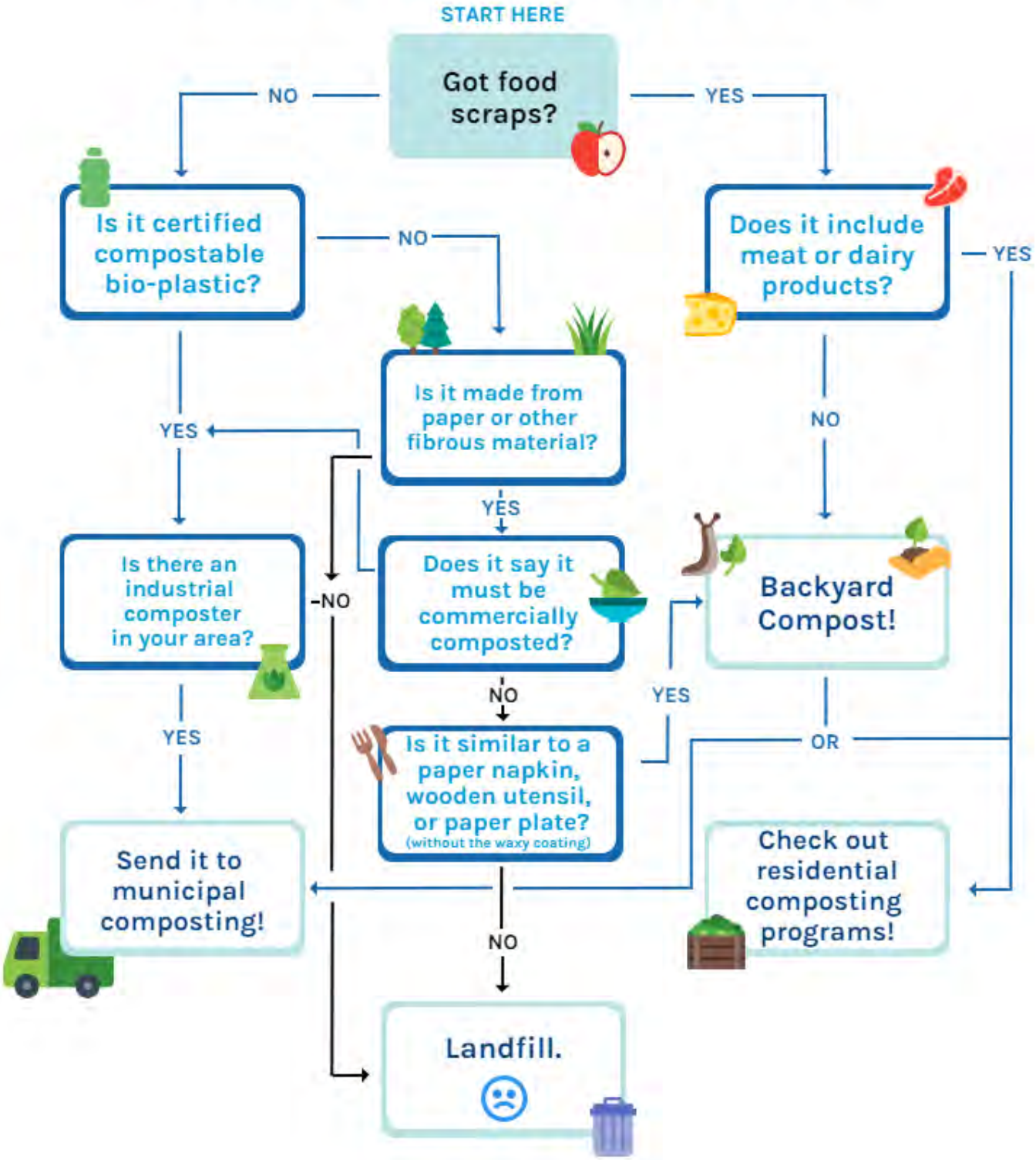
What Can I Compost?



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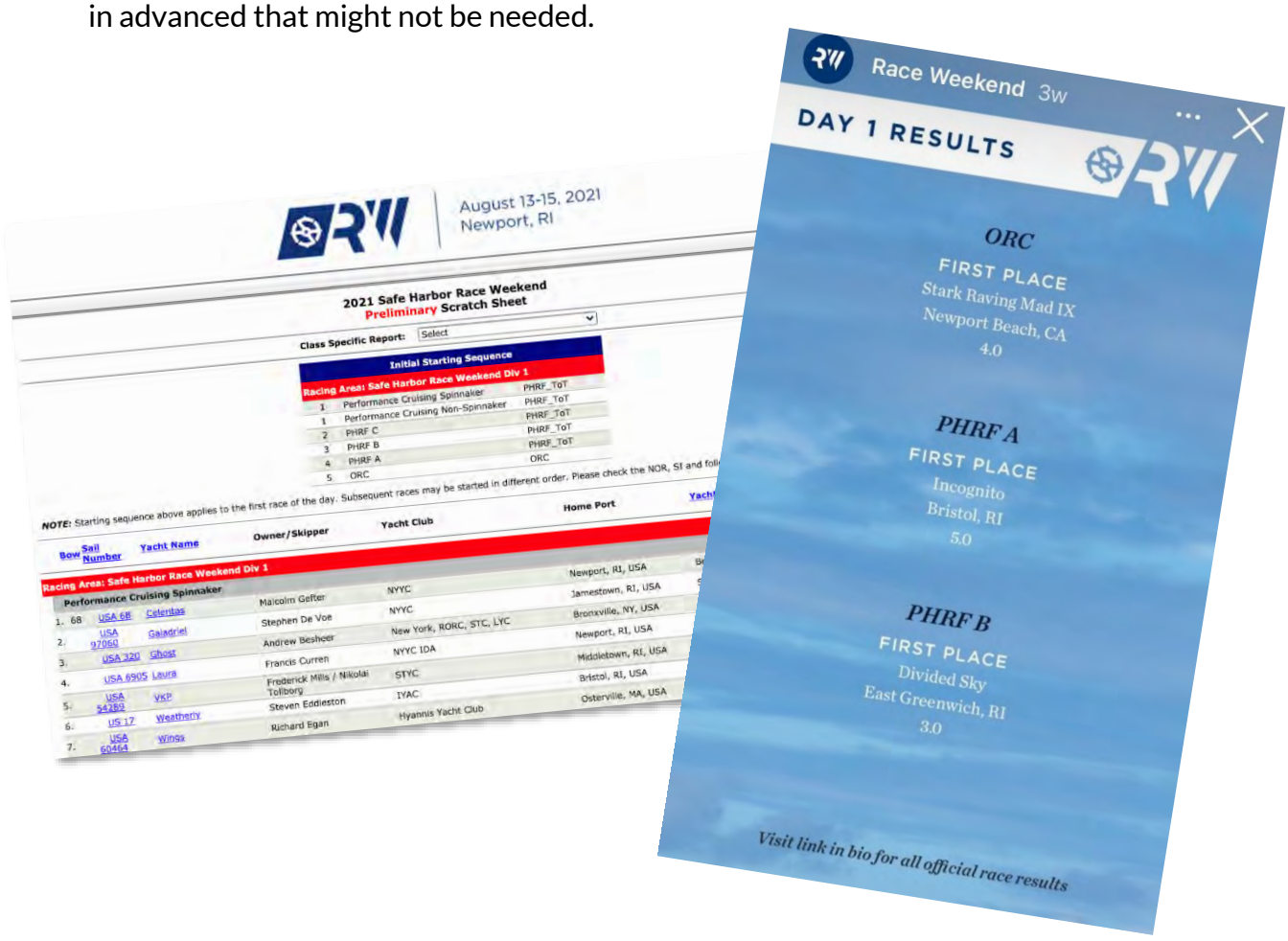
13. USE PAPERLESS EVENT MANAGEMENT

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 information on your event. Also, most people 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, Phlotilla, 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 advanced that might not be needed.



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ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

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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 give participants insight into what kinds of waste are most commonly found, and where there are opportunities for them to change their habits and to take action to reduce these types of items.

HOW TO DO IT:

- → Consider partnering with a local organization that can 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.
- → Make sure you have 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 as well. Grabbers are also helpful.
- → Have grabbers or nets available for coach boats so they can also easily extract floating debris while on the water.
- → Want to take your efforts to the next level? If you have the resources, consider installing a device, such as a SeaBin or Marina Trash Skimmer. 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.
- → If you don't have the time or resources to organize a full-on clean-up, ask participants at the end of the event to clean up their area, or take part in a #2minutebeachclean.

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15. 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 invites more members of the community to attend. And although bikes or public transportation aren't always an option, we strongly encourage you 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.
    - o **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 looking into carbon offsets for car travel.
- → If participants must fly to the event, suggest that they investigate offsetting their carbon footprint. We recommend The Ocean Foundation's SeaGrass Grow Calculator. The site first calculates the carbon emissions attributed to one's travels and then provides the dollar amount that it would cost to plant, protect or restore enough seagrass to offset them.
- → Point out where the closest electric vehicle charging stations are located.
- → Promote all alternative forms of transportation in communications with attendees.
    - o **PRO TIP:** Provide incentives for those who take advantage of them to further encourage this behavior.

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16. INCREASE AWARENESS OF WILDLIFE AND HABITAT PROTECTION

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

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

HOW TO DO IT:

→ Before your event, research what types of marine 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.
  - o **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 with your participants.

→ Should a collision with an animal arise during the event, provide all evidence to a local wildlife authority. 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 the proper way to clean boats prior to entering a new body of water.
  - o **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 including seagrass beds or coral reefs.

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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 CO_2 emissions, leading to ocean acidification which can cause coral bleaching and other negative impacts. Reducing your meat consumption is an impactful method of reducing your carbon emissions via individual action.

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.

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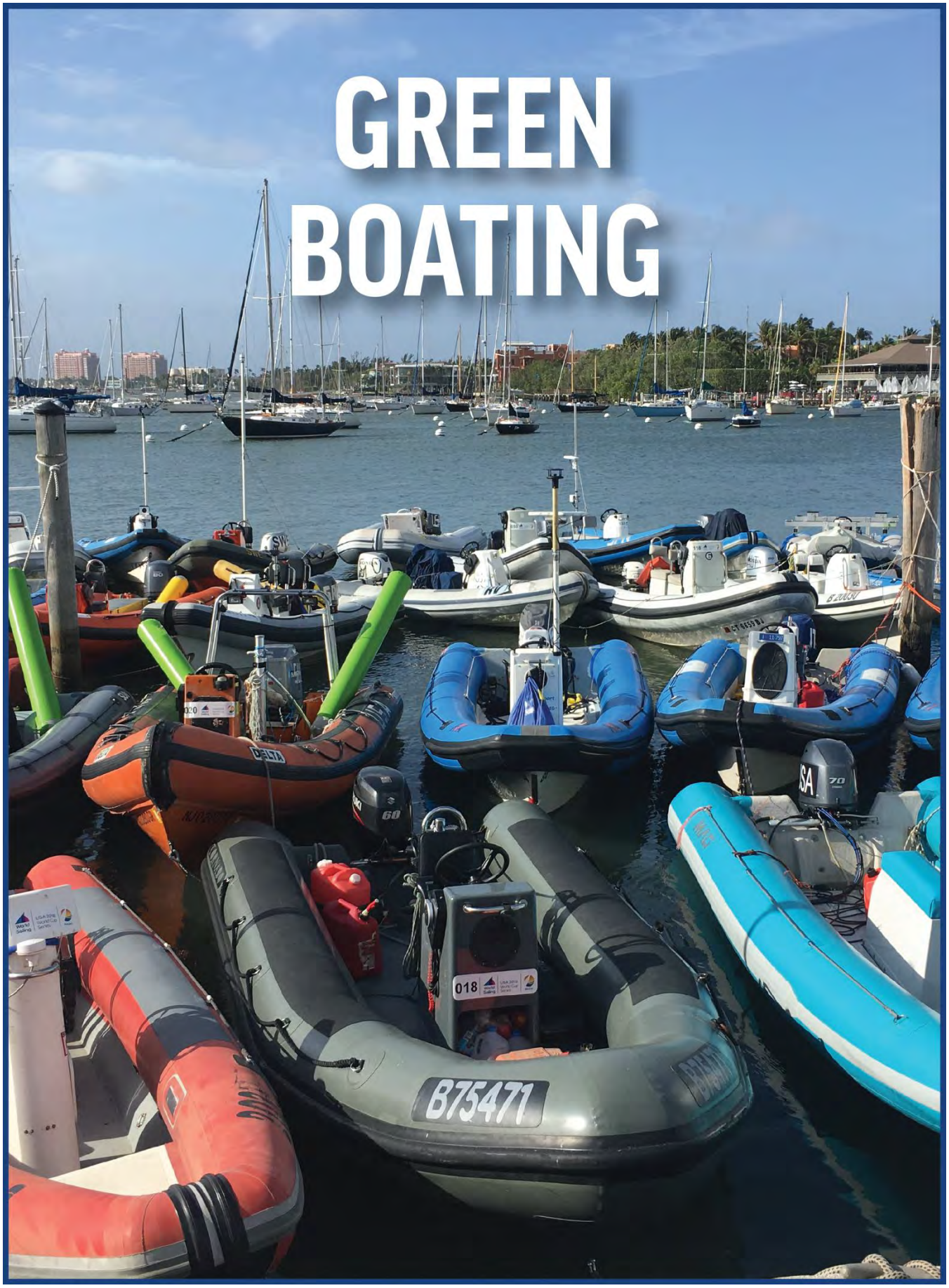
GREEN BOATING



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18. USE ECO-SMART RACE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Over the years, we have learned about many innovative ways regattas are limiting their environmental impacts via race management techniques. 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 at the source.

HOW TO DO IT:

- → Consider creating a spectator boat area off the course where boats are required to anchor and have engines off rather than idle around the course.
- → Remind participants of Rule 47 Trash Disposal (formerly Rule 55) from the World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing.
    - o Rule 47 states: "Competitors and support persons shall not intentionally put trash in the water. This rule applies at all times while afloat. The penalty for a breach of this rule may be less than disqualification."
- → Rent or purchase a MarkSetBot – these robotic marks 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 purposes are moving around marks.
- → Safely limit the number of coach boats and/or race committee boats allowed on the course.
- → Consider doing rabbit starts instead of practice starts to eliminate the amount of setting and resetting that would be needed to maintain a square line.
- → Do not offer bow stickers or any form of identification which may become marine litter.
    - o Replace bow stickers with boom stickers. Moving stickers away from the waterline will reduce the likelihood of them ending up in the water.
    - o Use reusable flags.

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19. 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 toxic chemicals, could end up in the water and try to prevent or reduce 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 harmful ingredients, such as **oxybenzone**, which negatively impacts coral reefs and the marine environment. Coastal communities around the world, such as the USVI, Bonaire, Palau, Hawaii, Florida and parts of Mexico, have started to enact legislation to regulate 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:

- → Create safe refueling areas with fueling spill pads. Provide all motorboats with a bilge sponge and fueling spill pad in case of a fuel or oil spill.
- → 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.
    - o **PRO TIP:** Check our Green Boating Guide for eco-friendly sunscreen suggestions.
- → Request "water only washdowns" at the end of racing. If cleaning products must be used, be sure to offer or recommend a non-toxic alternative to participants. Hang one of our "Water Only Washdown Zone" or "Eco-friendly Cleaning Zone" signs, downloadable HERE.

    - o **PRO TIP:** Did you know manufacturers of chemical products are not required to list ingredients on their containers? It's important to do your research when choosing cleaning products. Check out our Green Boating Guide for environmentally friendly product recommendations, as well as instructions on how to make simple cleaning solutions from household products like, lemon, vinegar and baking soda.
- → Consider designating a cleaning area on a permeable surface (such as grass) that will absorb any runoff before it enters the water. You might also consider stocking the area with pre-mixed cleaning solutions that you know are safe for the environment.

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20. ENCOURAGE GREEN BOATING PRACTICES

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT:

Green Boating looks different depending on what type of vessel you are on. Committee boats, participant race boats, and recreational boats should all be encouraged to learn about the ways they can reduce their environmental impact and follow Green Boating principles. As a race organizer, you can facilitate this by doing any of the following:

HOW TO DO IT:

- → Encourage participants to make a pledge to become a Sailors for the Sea Green Boater by sharing this link in race communications: www.sailorsforthesea.org/greenboater. Every Green Boater will receive a free, digital Green Boating Guide with tips on how to boat in an environmentally responsible manner.
- → Share the Green Boater checklist applicable for the type of boats at your event in communications leading up to the regatta.
    - o **PRO TIP:** You can find lists specific to dinghies, sailboats with motors, and powerboats HERE. These are easy to include in race documents.
- → Conduct boat maintenance, especially sanding or bottom scrubbing, in a secured area.
- → Require anchored boats on the course to turn off engines instead of idling.
- → Use fuel efficient power boats, such as RIBs.
    - o Electric motors are an up-and-coming technology to look out for.

- → Educate boaters about the benefits of using renewable energy, including solar panels, wind generators and water generators.
- → Recycle, reuse or properly dispose of old sails/parts/boats.
    - o Set up a donation box at the event or club for gear such as spray tops, life jackets, and wet suits.
    - o Host a sail drive and find a company that upcycles sails into new products, such as Sea Bags in Maine.
    - o Look into marine recycling initiatives in your area, such as shrink wrap and fiberglass vessel recycling.

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BONUS POINT OPPORTUNITIES

If your event goes above and beyond these 20 Best Practices, please tell us about your accomplishments in the certification process on 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
- → Mentoring other organizations and helping with their efforts to become a Clean Regatta
- → Sourcing your energy from renewable resources
- → Conducting an energy audit of your venue
- → Coordinating pump-out services

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.

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