



Plastic Free Salish Sea Toolkits



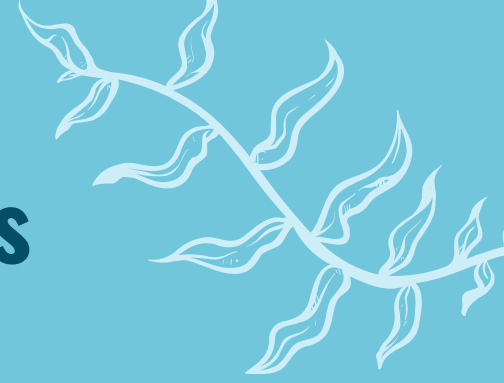
A guide to Plastic Free living in the San Juan Islands for
Individuals, Community Event Organizers & Small
Businesses



PLASTIC FREE
SALISH SEA

PlasticFreeSalishSea.org

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Why Were These Toolkits Created?

While single-use plastics are overly abundant in our society and so much of it ending up in our waterways and oceans, you may find yourself asking, “what can I do to create change?”

It can be a daunting task to take on plastic pollution by yourself. This guide was created by Plastic Free Salish Sea to provide accessible steps and resources to reduce plastic usage for individuals, community event organizers, and small businesses in the San Juan Islands; emphasizing the strength we have in the community. You will find community directories, useful educational material, and more.

Let's work together towards a plastic free Salish Sea!

- The Plastic Free Salish Sea Committee

Report created by Kelsey Kittleson, PFSS Research Specialist



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What is the Marine Resources Committee?

The San Juan County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) began in 1996 as a grassroots effort to establish local management of marine resources. The MRC guides County leadership and County staff in their management of San Juan County's marine resources.

The MRC includes representatives from San Juan County, Tribal governments, the Port of Friday Harbor, commercial and recreational fishing, the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Labs, environmental organizations, local businesses, and residents, bringing a diversity of perspectives and expertise to the San Juan MRC.

In 2018 the San Juan MRC brought together a group of community members and organizations working on solid waste management in the County to launch the Plastic Free Salish Sea campaign.

For more information on the work of the MRC please see www.sjcmrc.org



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What is Plastic Free Salish Sea?

Plastic Free Salish Sea is an education and awareness building campaign aimed at changing citizen behavior and the culture of plastics use. Our vision is to eliminate single-use plastics in San Juan County and clean-up our waters.

Plastic pollution in the world's oceans is having a devastating effect on marine life and human health. Plastic debris may be found daily on San Juan County's shorelines where marine animals risk ingesting it or becoming entangled in it. In addition, microplastics that you can often barely see are found in marine life of all forms and sizes ranging from whales to sea snails, and even in sea salt - so in turn finding its way into our diets. Our use of plastic, particularly single-use, must change.

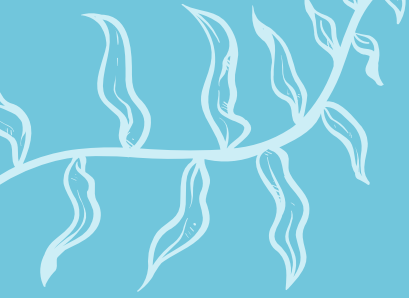
The goal of PFSS is to provide resources for all solid waste, recycling, waste reduction and zero waste resources, events and organizations in San Juan County. We are currently made up of a group of organizations from around the county, including: San Juan County Marine Resources Committee, San Juan County Solid Waste, The Exchange - Orcas Recycling Service, Friends of the San Juans, San Juan Islands Conservation District, and Lopez Solid Waste Disposal District.



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Individual Toolkit

Dear Individual,

Thank you so much for taking an interest in making your life Plastic Free! We live in a time where plastic usage is skyrocketing. With aggressive marketing by the plastic industry and so much information about plastics out there, it can be harder than ever to know if you're making the right choices. As consumers, producers, and community members, we have the power to make WAVES with small habit changes. Below is a guide for getting started on your plastic free journey!

7 Ideas to help you get started

- **Use reusable shopping bags:** Instead of using single-use plastic bags provided at stores, use paper bags or better yet, bring your own reusable bag!
- **Carry a reusable water bottle and mug:** Carrying a reusable water bottle and coffee mug instead of buying disposable plastic bottles/cups is a great way to stay hydrated and reduce your plastic usage.
- **Buy bulk:** Ready-made, small portioned products are often packaged in a lot of plastic packaging. Buying bulk can eliminate unnecessary packaging and can be much less expensive. A win for the planet and your wallet!



Individual Toolkit

- **Create an on-the-go “car kit”:** Keep a reusable bag filled with; reusable bag; put another reusable bag inside of your kit for when you need to run to the grocery store; Reusable coffee mug and water bottle; Reusable utensils (can be a variety of material! You can include plain silverware or opt for a bamboo set.); Large sealable tupperware container (this container can be a variety of materials, but make sure that it has a sealable lid and is able to fit a full meal in it).
- **Buy or make low-waste/plastic-free home and personal supplies:** Many companies are actively trying to reduce their plastic packaging and providing low-waste alternatives. See our website for a list of resources and companies. There are many DIY recipes for shampoo, toothpaste, cleaning solutions, etc. These alternatives are usually cheaper than buying your own; you can save the planet while also saving money.
- **Educate yourself about the Plastic Free Movement!** We have so much power in community and education. Visit our website for more resources.
- **Shop local:** Luckily, we live in an area with many farms and food producers. When you shop at Farmers Markets, local co-ops, and other stores that source locally, plastic packaging is reduced.



Pictured: Nikyta Palmisani with her car kit



Tips for Recreating Outdoors

According to the 2017 San Juan County Visitors Study, the primary reason tourists visit the islands are because of the abundance of natural resources and public lands.

The San Juan Islands are truly a nature lover's paradise! While enjoying these natural spaces, it is important to remember to reduce our single-use plastic usage and "Leave No Trace". Here are a few recommendations to keep in mind when exploring the outdoors:

- **Dispose of waste properly:** Pack out what you pack in. Land managers in the San Juan Islands have different guidelines on how to dispose of waste. While trash receptacles may be provided, you should always be prepared to pack out everything that you pack in. To learn more about agency-specific waste disposal, please visit their websites or call ahead.
- **Bring a reusable water bottle:** 60 million plastic bottles end up in landfills and incinerators every day. Be part of the solution by bringing your own water bottle when spending time outside! Some public lands have water bottle refill stations. Check with them in advance to see if this is available!
- **Bring reusable pet supplies:** If you like to explore the outdoors with your four-legged friends, remember to bring a reusable container for your dog as well. Temperatures in the islands can get pretty high in the summer.
- **Bring an extra bag for trash:** The San Juan Islands are known as an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. We all have a responsibility to keep these natural areas clean. Next time you are hiking, cycling, or spending time outdoors, bring an extra reusable bag and some gloves and clean up any trash you see!
- **Bring your own food, reusable containers & utensils:** Many natural areas are not near restaurants or other food vendors. A great way to avoid getting hungry while on a hike AND reduce plastic usage, is to bring your own meals, snacks, reusable containers, and utensils.



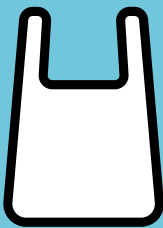
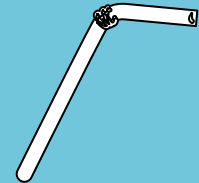
6 Easy Plastic Free Swaps



Disposable coffee cup → reusable coffee mug
BONUS: Keeps your coffee hotter for longer!

Disposable straws → reusable straws

Many options available: Silicone, Stainless Steel, Bamboo

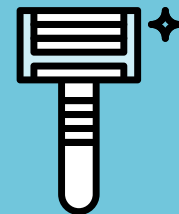


Single-use plastic ziplock & plastic wrap → Reusable Baggies & food wrap

There are many options available: Silicone bags, beeswax food wrap, etc.

Disposable razors → safety razor

BONUS: Safety Razors can be better for your skin and can be cheaper in the long run.



Conventional soaps, shampoo & conditioner → bar soaps, shampoo & conditioner

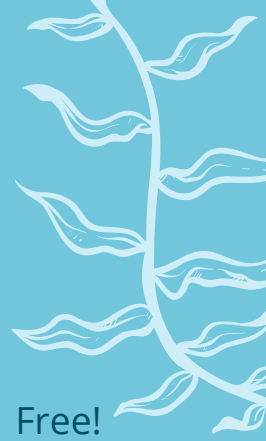
Many companies provide alternatives such as bar soaps or refillable containers

Disposable menstrual products (tampons, disposable pads) → reusable menstrual products (menstrual cups, washable pads)

BONUS: Much cheaper in the long run



Community Events Toolkit



Dear Community event organizer,

Thank you for taking an interest in making your event Plastic Free! Unfortunately, community events can sometimes be major centers for single-use plastic usage. But, they can also be an incredible way to highlight plastic free efforts, and garner support and awareness from community members for the Plastic Free Movement. Despite variables of size, location, and nature of the event, there are many ways to make your event plastic free. Below are a few ideas to help make your event Plastic Free as well as some organizations that offer unique programs to reduce plastic usage at events.

Food and Supplies:

BEST: Buy Bulk! Check with your local store to see what their “bring your own bulk bag” policies are. Many local co-ops, farmers markets, and grocery stores allow you to bring your own bags/containers to put your bulk groceries in. **BONUS:** Buying bulk and using your own containers not only reduces single-use plastic consumption, but it is typically cheaper than buying pre-packaged foods! If you have an event where vendors will be present, encourage them to buy bulk food supplies when possible.

GOOD: Buy bulk and use paper/compostable bags provided at the store and look for pre-packaged foods with limited packaging (preferably not plastic).

AVOID: Buying pre-packaged or individually wrapped items. When buying bulk, avoid using plastic bags provided to bag up your items.





Community Events Toolkit

Dishware, cups, bottles, utensils:

BEST: If applicable, ask event attendees to bring their own dishes, cups, and utensils or provide reusable items for attendees. **BONUS:** Asking attendees to “BYO” their own foodware can be a fun activity! You can get creative and potentially have a “Most unique plate/mug/etc.” contest! If you have an event where vendors will be present, require them to provide 100% compostable foodware.

GOOD: Have compostable dishware, cups, bottles, and utensils provided.

AVOID: Providing single-use plastic utensils, dishware, cups, etc. When working with food vendors, ask them to not use disposable plastic foodware.

Decorations:

BEST: Utilize community resources to create/gather decorations! San Juan County is the home of many powerhouse artists that also care about their environmental impact. Reach out to the community and see if there are ways that you could use local art as decorations. **BONUS:** With such a strong creative spirit in the islands, art created from trash has become popular! Please reach out to Plastic Free Salish Sea if you are interested in featuring trash art at your event. It is a great way to raise awareness and display community creativity.

GOOD: Use Earth-friendly alternatives (cardboard, bamboo, wood, etc.) to disposable plastic decorations.

AVOID: While disposable decorations such as streamers and balloons may be very appealing to use, please avoid doing so. Decorations are often used once or twice and then end up in landfill, or worse the ocean!





Community Events Toolkit

Water/Drinks:

- BEST:** Provide water or other drinks in bulk containers and ask attendees to bring their own waterbottle/cup or provide reusable/washable cups.
- GOOD:** Provide water or drinks in bulk containers and provide compostable drinkware options.
- AVOID:** Providing single-use plastic water bottles or other drinks.

Waste Management:

- BEST:** Utilize a three bin system with bins for landfill, recycling, and compost. When using this system it is incredibly important to put up clear and informative signage, showing what items go in which bin. The PFSS website has a few printout versions in the “infographics and posters” section. If capacity allows, it can also be useful to have an event volunteer/employee that is standing near the bins to help answer questions and keep things organized. If your event is using a lot of one specific product and/or brand, it could be beneficial to look at TerraCycle (see website for more information).
- GOOD:** Utilize a two bin system if compost is not available (if the event is in San Juan County and you are struggling to find a compost outlet, please reach out to Plastic Free Salish Sea and we may be able to help!). The two bins can be landfill and recycle. Again, adequate signage is important to help folks sort their waste.
- AVOID:** Providing one bin and not sorting recyclables and compost from landfill. Also, if you are using a two or three bin system, please don't forget about informative signage!



Community Events Toolkit

Management & oversight:

While going plastic free can be much easier than most people realize, it can take a bit more pre-planning and organization when coordinating events (compared to non-plastic free events). If possible, having an individual or team of volunteers or organizers in charge of plastic free efforts can streamline the process. These folks can help oversee the planning efforts and can provide management (of the bins, for example) at the event.

Vendors, independent booths, & suppliers:

Distribute an event "values/standards" information page that includes the events Plastic Free Goals to your vendors and suppliers. It is important to set a standard or what you expect of anyone participating in the event, and express how you would like folks to work towards those goals. This can eliminate potential miscommunication and help everyone be on the same page.

Signage & education:

Making your event Plastic Free is a great way to raise awareness about reducing our society's single-use plastic usage. We encourage you to put up signage and integrate educational information into your event. Look at our "Infographics and Posters" for pre-made posters and infographics, or feel free to create your own!





Community Event Specific Resources

Terracycle:

TerraCycle is a social enterprise that is dedicated to eliminating the idea of waste by providing a variety of recycling programs. They are working towards the idea of switching our waste stream from a linear system to a closed-loop (circular) system, and offer a variety of programs, from recycling cigarette butts to candy wrappers. They offer a mixture of free recycling programs and some available for purchase. You can go to their website to find an applicable program, order the box, fill it, and send it back! A great resource for events. To learn more, visit their website here, [terracycle.com](https://www.terracycle.com).

Bye Bye Plastic Supplier Guide:

Bye-Bye Plastic Hello BYO is a campaign that was created by the Better Business Partnership of Australia in 2018. They focus on educating businesses and consumers about the harmful impacts of single-use plastic and how to reduce them in their business model and personal lives. Along with other great resources, they have created a supplier guide that lists businesses and organizations that work towards providing plastic free supplies. While mostly targeting Australians, this is a great guide for anyone looking for sustainable suppliers. To see the guide, please visit their website here, [byebyeplastic.org.au](https://www.byebyeplastic.org.au).

Refill Revolution:

Refill Revolution is a movement first created by the Plastic Pollution Coalition and partners in 2014 at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Manchester, Tennessee. It was first started to encourage festival attendees to reuse and refill stainless steel cups and bottles with beer or water throughout the event. To bring Refill Revolution to your event, simply encourage folks to BYO drinkware (or provide collectable drinkware as part of the event!) to reuse and refill throughout the event. To learn more, visit their website here, www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/guides-events.

Plastic Free Touring:

If your event is hosting traveling musicians or touring artists, you may want to look into Plastic Free Touring. Plastic Free Touring is another campaign created by the Plastic Pollution Coalition to encourage traveling musicians and touring artists to use easy to use tools for reducing their plastic footprint on the road. To learn more, visit their website here, [plasticpollutioncoalition.org](https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org).

Small Business Toolkit



Dear small business representative,

Congratulations on taking the first steps towards making your Salish Sea business Plastic Free! Our planet is thanking you. It can be overwhelming to decide where to start on your small business plastic free journey. Please remember, any progress is progress! Do not be discouraged if your business cannot completely switch over to being plastic free at once (or ever). Baby steps create sustainable change! We hope this toolkit creates a starting point for your journey and can be used as a guide for some frequently asked questions and first steps.

Starting Steps

Step 1: Make sure everyone is on the same page:

An important starting step is sharing with all interested parties, management, and staff about your business's plastic free goals. Share the reasons behind why the business is making these changes, what these changes may look like, expectations for participation by staff, and also being receptive to feedback, questions, and concerns. Being successful on your plastic free journey starts with being transparent with staff and including everyone in the conversations. This conversation could start with everyone discussing some fun facts about plastics and potentially having all staff work together to create a "plastic free" mission statement and/or goals.





Small Business Toolkit

Step 2: Do a plastic audit:

One of the first steps in taking action is recognizing how much single-use plastic your business uses. A plastic audit is a way to take inventory and examine what and how much plastic you use. Sit down with your team and create an audit plan. Your business should aim to do two different types of audits, a waste audit and a supply & use audit. Choose the duration of your audits; for example, you could sort through your waste every day for a week for your waste audit and do a month-long supply audit.

Waste Audit: By going through the waste at your business, you can see what customers (if applicable) and staff are using and discarding. Create a table/record sheet to document your audit, potentially something that looks like this example (you could have a new chart for every day):

Type of Plastic	Amount/Number	Weight (if needed)	Recyclability
Straws	15	1 lbs.	No
Water cups	11	-	Yes

After doing your audit, use the information to answer these questions:

- What items did you find the most of?
- How many of them were recyclable but ended up in the landfill?
- Are these items essential to your business? If so, are there non-single use plastic alternatives?



Small Business Toolkit

Step 2 Continued:

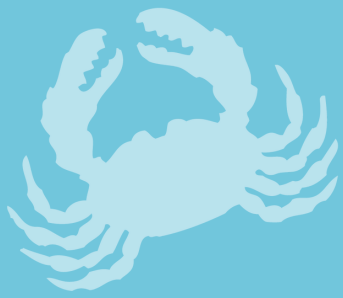
Supply & Use Audit: A supply & use audit can show you where your plastics are coming from and how often they are used. This allows you to figure out if these things are necessary to your business or if there are easy swaps and alternatives. Sit down with your team and create a chart for your audit, it could look something like this:

Type of Plastic	Supplier	How much do you order in a month?	How much is used per week?	How much is used per month?
Straws	Straw Co.	400	100	400
Cups	Cup Co.	500	100	400

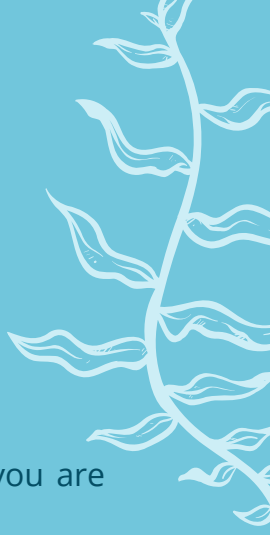
After conducting your audit, you can ask yourself similar questions to the waste audit.

- What products do you order/use the most? Do those align?
- Are all of these products essential to your business? If not, do you think there are alternatives that you could invest in?
- Are you selling single-use plastic items? Can these be swapped for reusable?





Small Business Toolkit



Step 3: Be loud and proud about your Plastic Free journey!

- Go public: announce on your website, Facebook, in-store, etc. about how you are integrating Plastic Free practices into your business model.
- Provide educational information in your business: You can print out and use one of the provided Plastic Free Salish Sea Infographics/posters (or make your own!) and put it up in your business.
- Motivate your staff and Individuals to integrate Plastic Free ethics into their personal life! A few examples are:
 - Incorporate “Challenges” for your staff or customers: Challenge them to do something plastic free and take a picture to document it, and then reward them in some way! If possible, incorporate your challenges on social media.
 - Have a “Plastic Free Employee of the Month” as a fun way to reward employees for their plastic free efforts (and then reward them with some cool plastic free prizes!)
 - Encourage folks to bring their own mugs for coffee and reusable cutlery for their lunches.
- Provide incentives (punch cards, discounts, etc.) for people who bring their own mugs or containers.
- Become a Plastic Free Salish Sea partner! Contact us to learn more.



Small Business Toolkit

Common alternatives for your business:



Implement a Compost bin into your kitchen.

Ask staff to only bring in reusable coffee mugs/reusable containers.



Switch to Paperless billing and sign bills electronically.

Opt for reusable coffee filters and say no to K-cups!



Buy bulk for your business (which typically reduces plastic usage AND costs!)



Conclusion

Thank you again for taking the first steps in integrating Plastic Free ethics into your life. By making small lifestyle changes and working together and supporting each other in our community, we can create major change in the fight against single-use plastics. If you found this guide helpful, please reach out and share your experience with the Plastic Free Salish Sea team! Help us continue to spread the Plastic Free Salish Sea message far and wide to help preserve this incredible Salish Sea Ecosystem. For more information, please visit our website.

- The Plastic Free Salish Sea Committee



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