



Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, April 10, 2024

6:30 PM

REGULAR

Cocoa Beach Country Club - 5000 Tom Warriner Boulevard, Cocoa Beach

WELCOME

- A. Call to Order and Roll Call
 - 1. Roll Call
 - 2. Approval of March 13, 2024 meeting minutes
- B. Staff Reports
 - 1. Reports from Environmental Specialist
- C. Old Business
 - 1. Sustainability Plan Update
 - 2. Discussion
- D. New Business
 - 1. 2024 Community Sustainability Award
 - 2. Review and discussion of submitted nominations
- E. Committee Member Announcements
- F. Public Comment
- G. Adjournment
 - 1. Next Tentative Meeting: April 10, 2024 at 6:30 pm

**CITY OF COCOA BEACH
SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE AGENDA
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday March 13, 2024, 6:30 P.M.

Members Present: Bob Day, Waylon Locklear, Keith Capizzi, Adria Perez

Members Absent: Jamie Glasner

Staff Present: Kelsey Mack

Commission Members Present: none.

Visitors Present: 0

A. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Perez called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

Approval of February 7, 2024 meeting minutes: Mr. Day motioned to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Locklear. The minutes were approved unanimously.

B. STAFF UPDATES: Ms. Mack provided an update about upcoming environmental events, announcing the Thousand Islands Festival, trash bash, and earth day events. Ms. Mack also announced that the City will be switching to new agenda management software, committee members will notice that agendas will have a new format in the near future. Ms. Mack also stated that there was currently only one nomination submitted for the community sustainability award. The committee agreed to extend the deadline.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

FY25 Sustainability Budget Recommendations: Mr. Day motioned to approve the budget recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez. The committee discussed the budget recommendations further. Upon further discussion, the committee agreed to amend the recommendations as follows: Remove rooftop solar project, reduce budget for sea turtle services to \$25,000 and clearly highlight support for stormwater projects by adding a heading and making it its own section. Mr. Day moved to approve the budget recommendations as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perez. The motion passed unanimously.

Sustainability Plan Updates: Ms. Mack provided an overview of the latest additions to the sustainability plan draft update. Specific sections of the plan that were discussed include: Natural Resources, Equity and Quality of Life and solid waste. The committee agreed to review the information further and continue discussions at the next meeting.

D. NEW BUSINESS:

Ratification of Election: Mr. Day motioned to ratify the election of Ms. Perez (Chair) and Waylon Locklear (Vice chair). The motion was second by Mr. Capizzi. The motion passed unanimously.

E. COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ms. Perez reminded the committee that the students from Freedom 7 will be attending the sustainability committee meeting on May 1st to present their exhibition projects.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

G. ADJOURNMENT: The next tentative meeting is scheduled for 4/3/2024, at 6:30 P.M. No other items were discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 P.M.

Date _____
Environmental and Sustainability Manager,
Kelsey Mack

Date _____
Committee Chair, Adria Perez

Date _____
Committee Vice Chair, Waylon Locklear

Print**Community Sustainability Award - Submission #15282****Date Submitted: 3/26/2024****Community Sustainability Award: Application Form**

Please complete all sections of the online Nomination form and submit for review. Paper forms may be requested by contacting info@cityofcocoabeach.com or calling 321-868-3341. Applicants are encouraged to draft responses and gather supporting documents/materials to fulfill all scoring criteria (listed in Part III of award information packet) prior to completing the online application.

Nominations are to be submitted no later than March 17, 2024 at 11:59PM. Applications submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed for scoring.

Applicant Information**First Name**

Kris

Last Name

Baker

Email Address*

chair@spacecoast.surfrider.org

Phone

941-726-9549

Nomination information: Who are you nominating?*

- ☒ My organization/group: I am/was directly involved in the nominated project
- ☒ Someone else: I am/was not involved in the nominated project

Organization being nominated*

Andy Abbott and the Beach Bucket Foundation

Affiliation to project/group being nominated*

Surfrider Foundation Space Coast Chapter partners with the foundation

1. Project Overview

- Fulfill all requirements listed in nomination instructions.
- Provide a brief description of the project vision, purpose, and goals.
- Identify project partners (if any) and discuss coordination with these partners or collaborators and their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline including identifying when it was initiated, when it was or will be completed or status if the project is ongoing.

Response*

Andy Abbott, founder of Beach Bucket Foundation began in Palm Beach County and has spread to several communities along the Florida coast including Cocoa Beach. His idea is to provide the local community with more opportunities to pick up marine-bound debris while enjoying their day at the beach. His mission is simple... Creating Community Awareness and Involvement for The Preservation Of Our Beaches and Oceans. Since 2019, Beach Bucket Foundation has been installing trash bucket stations that are secure storage for buckets, near beach entrances for the bucket to take a bucket to the beach and clean up trash and bring it back after using it. There is typically a garbage can near by to empty by the station. Andy and the Beach Bucket Foundation serve as a catalyst for people and businesses within the community to become active participants in conservation.

As Space Coast Surfrider, we have partnered with Andy Abbott the founder of this program. We support his efforts and assist with bucket replacement as well as provide local support and eyes on his station if the buckets need replacement. Andy has collaborated with Cocoa Beach & local businesses for sponsorship for the stations & buckets. His stations in our community will continue to expand at other locations in the future.

(max 3000 characters)

2. Positive Impact

The project must have a meaningful and demonstrable or measurable impact in Cocoa Beach or the surrounding community by helping protect the environment or enhance the quality of life for residents. The applicant should:

- Describe how the project embraces at least 1 of the 3 pillars of sustainability: Environment, Economic, Social
- Describe the impact the project had on the Cocoa Beach community.
- Identify and/or quantify the outcome and benefits of the project to the community and progress toward accomplishing goals.

Response*

Beach Bucket Foundation impact Cocoa Beach environment has been very important. It socially reminds the locals and visitors that we all can make a difference by picking up trash, whether we are walking, resting, or playing at our beaches. We can grab a bucket and clean up! The Beach Bucket stations support local business sponsorships to produce the stations. Socially, the public is educated every time they go to the beach and encourages volunteerism.

(max 3000 characters)

3. Innovation/Creativity

The project should reflect a new concept, technology, or practice or creative implementation of existing concept, technology, or practice. The applicant should:

- Describe actions taken to implement the project vision.
- Describe the innovative or creative approach taken to implement the project.

Response*

Beach Bucket Foundation cleanup stations start conversations about single use plastics and the global marine debris crisis. They offer beachgoers a bridge into community activism while providing a unique philanthropic opportunity for local businesses who want to engage and connect with their communities. Besides cleans our beaches, it builds a sense of community. As we know, Cocoa Beach is a wonderful community! The Beach Bucket Foundation serves as a catalyst for people and businesses within the community to become active participants in conservation and provide the tools to get more active in their communities. It also gets people to be more active and improves physical and mental health.

(1500 characters max.)

4. Overcomes Challenges

The applicant should explain what challenges were overcome.

- Describe the challenge, problem, or need in the community that is identified in the project vision.
- Describe personal or project challenges identified when implementing the project.

Response*

The Beach Bucket Foundation serves as a catalyst for people and businesses within the community to become active participants in conservation and provide the tools to get more active in their communities. One of the challenges is the buckets go missing and are not returned! (even though have holes drilled in the buckets, they are still stolen) We, as Surfrider, have beach bucket monitors keeping eyes on when a station needs replacement of buckets. In some of the more tourist spots, they consistently go missing. The stations increase awareness about marine pollution and inspire more individuals to proactively participate in keeping our beaches clean.

(1500 characters max.)

5. Continuity

The applicant should demonstrate how the project accomplished one or more of the following: longevity, continuity, transferability, endurance, replicability, and resiliency.

- Describe the long-term goals for the project, if any.
- Identify potential partners or collaborators and their role in continuing with the long-term vision of the project or ways to broaden the reach of the project.
- Describe how/if this project compliments and/or relates to other sustainability efforts in the community.

Response*

Continued goals with Beach Bucket foundation would be to continue to install more stations at the beach, even at the local parks. Surfrider would support and collaborate with Andy to promote beach clean ups for the Cocoa Beach area. We need to continue to clean up plastics and garbage, not only for us, but for all the animals that have to navigate and survive in the debris as well.

(max 1500 characters)

6. Global Impact

The project must demonstrate one or more of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Identify one or more SDG(s) that the project addresses and describe how the project addresses the identified SDG(s).
- Please reference the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Response*

The SDG #14 Life under water, Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development is what this Foundation does. The public privately or with a beach clean up, is able to make a difference and help pick up trash at the beach (& parking lot). A lot of our trash that we pick up, is small plastic pieces. Every little bit helps. The public with Beach Bucket stations, can help make a difference.

(max 1500 characters)

Supporting Documentation

Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documentation relevant to the project that will assist committee members in reviewing and scoring the application. Applicants are limited to submitting a maximum of two (2) supporting documents.

Examples: Flyers, Brochures, photos, reports, letters of support, etc.

Supporting Document 1 (optional)

beach bucket support doc.docx

Supporting Document 2 (optional)

No file chosen

Below is part of a blog on our Space Coast Surfrider website.

<https://spacecoast.surfrider.org/programs/beach-cleanups>

<https://www.floridatoday.com/picture-gallery/news/2024/02/17/sea-oat-planting/72641187007/>

From Cocoa Beach website:

Beach Clean Up

Saturday, January 28, 2023

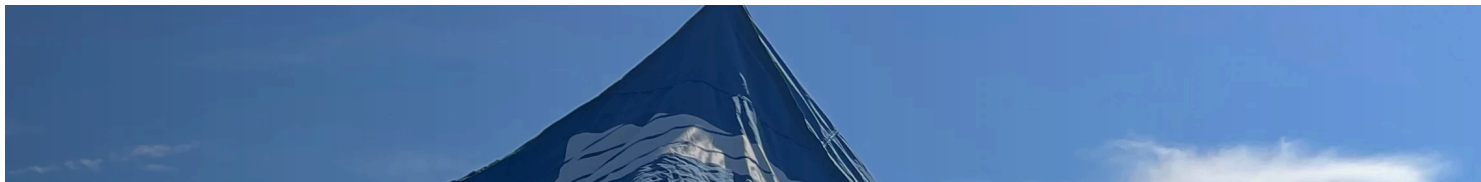
Join the City, Surfrider, and Beach Bucket Foundation for the ribbon cutting of 14 new beach cleanup stations followed by a beach cleanup.

The City of Cocoa Beach is partnering with Surfrider and Beach Bucket Foundation to install 14 new beach clean up stations at all beach accesses from 1st s to 14th st s. Volunteers should meet at 1st st s beach access at 9am for the ribbon cutting by Mayor Malik, followed by a beach clean up. Beach clean up supplies will be provided. What to bring: Reusable water bottle, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, student volunteer forms if you need them signed. This is a family friendly event, all are welcome.





Beach Cleanups



Why? To Be Happy on a Clean Beach!

So many of us enjoy a beautiful day at the beach. With warm sand, seashells and sunshine, fun waves, and fascinating marine life, we realize the beach and the ocean make us happy and emotionally healthy. Keeping the beaches clean and safe is an important part of Surfrider's goals through the Beach Cleanup program.

At the clean-ups, straws, plastic bottles, polystyrene foam, single use plastics, cigarette butts, and other debris are collected weighed and recorded. This data is then compiled nationwide, identifying the types of trash and harmful debris so that we can find solutions to stop it from entering our ocean and littering our beaches.

By volunteering at a beach cleanup, we become more aware of our own lifestyle and the importance of reducing plastic pollution. Tons of plastic waste enters our oceans every year impacting our marine ecosystems and wildlife. Plastic fragments displace plankton as the base of the food chain, and toxic chemicals are transferred into the food we eat.

If you are interesting in hosting a Private Beach Cleanup with Surfrider, [learn how to here](#) .



VOLUNTEER

When and Where

The Space Coast Chapter organizes beach cleanups at different locations within Brevard County. Quarterly, our chapter meets at Coconut Point Park, and volunteers help clean up Highway A1A and the beach in Melbourne Beach, as well as fun collaborative beach cleanups with other businesses & organizations in the area throughout the year. Come out and meet others who also care about our beaches and ocean!

LEARN MORE



Beach Bucket Stations

The Space Coast Chapter and the Beach Bucket Foundation are collaborating to keep our beaches clean. Clean up a beach near you with a beach bucket from Beach Bucket Foundation. Sponsored by local businesses and organizations, look for the buckets at parks in Cocoa Beach and Indialantic. Grab a bucket and do your part. Take your kids and make it a scavenger hunt expedition. Please return the bucket so others may do their part and eliminate the costs of replacing buckets.

Research predicts by 2050, plastic will likely outweigh all fish in the sea.

(source: Ocean Literacy Portal)

Stay Informed

First name*

Last name*

Email*

Postal code

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Print**Community Sustainability Award - Submission #15132****Date Submitted: 3/14/2024****Community Sustainability Award: Application Form**

Please complete all sections of the online Nomination form and submit for review. Paper forms may be requested by contacting info@cityofcocoabeach.com or calling 321-868-3341. Applicants are encouraged to draft responses and gather supporting documents/materials to fulfill all scoring criteria (listed in Part III of award information packet) prior to completing the online application.

Nominations are to be submitted no later than March 17, 2024 at 11:59PM. Applications submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed for scoring.

Applicant Information**First Name**

Sascha

Last Name

Lee

Email Address*

slee@cocoabeachchamber.com

Phone

8056300952

Nomination information: Who are you nominating?*

- ☒ My organization/group: I am/was directly involved in the nominated project
- ☐ Someone else: I am/was not involved in the nominated project

Organization being nominated*

Visit Cocoa Beach #justbeachchause

Affiliation to project/group being nominated*

Director of Marketing

1. Project Overview

- Fulfill all requirements listed in nomination instructions.
- Provide a brief description of the project vision, purpose, and goals.
- Identify project partners (if any) and discuss coordination with these partners or collaborators and their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline including identifying when it was initiated, when it was or will be completed or status if the project is ongoing.

Response*

#JustBeachCause was formed in 2023 as an initiative under the Visit Cocoa Beach tourism division of the Cocoa Beach Chamber to serve the needs of our local Cocoa Beach community and be a bridge between businesses and those in need of support. Through these #justbeachcause initiatives, we have created several new annual events, including a STAR Trade Show and a Beach Cleanup. This is an ongoing initiative that will host up to 3 events a year that serve the community.

(max 3000 characters)

2. Positive Impact

The project must have a meaningful and demonstrable or measurable impact in Cocoa Beach or the surrounding community by helping protect the environment or enhance the quality of life for residents. The applicant should:

- Describe how the project embraces at least 1 of the 3 pillars of sustainability: Environment, Economic, Social
- Describe the impact the project had on the Cocoa Beach community.
- Identify and/or quantify the outcome and benefits of the project to the community and progress toward accomplishing goals.

Response*

The STAR (Service Teams Appreciation & Referral) event is a trade show hosted by a local Cocoa Beach Hotel and is designed to give service and hospitality workers an opportunity to get to know the local businesses in our community to better serve tourists that come to our area. In June of 2023, we had 50+ businesses participate with vendor tables, and 150+ hospitality professionals join us to learn about all that Cocoa Beach has to offer. By doing this, the front-line workers in the tourism industry (uber drivers, concierge, hotel workers, bartenders, etc.) would have a greater knowledge of the area and be a better resource for anyone visiting Cocoa Beach. This event positively impacts both economic development and social needs. Earlier in the year, to serve on the environmental side, #justbeachcause also hosted a beach cleanup on Cocoa Beach which brought out around 20 of our members to help collect trash and unwanted materials on our beach. This was a great event that gave members an opportunity to give back and support their town.

(max 3000 characters)

3. Innovation/Creativity

The project should reflect a new concept, technology, or practice or creative implementation of existing concept, technology, or practice. The applicant should:

- Describe actions taken to implement the project vision.
- Describe the innovative or creative approach taken to implement the project.

Response*

With the efforts of our Visit Cocoa Beach committee, Chamber staff, and marketing team, the #justbeachcause initiative took a creative approach to community engagement by focusing on tourism-based activities and events that promote economic development and engagement. Utilizing digital marketing, printed flyers and promotional materials, and partnering with local hotels to promote the initiative, #justbeachcause has gained traction and members enjoy being involved in the projects we create.

(1500 characters max.)

4. Overcomes Challenges

The applicant should explain what challenges were overcome.

- Describe the challenge, problem, or need in the community that is identified in the project vision.
- Describe personal or project challenges identified when implementing the project.

Response*

The need that we addressed was a lack of education for service workers/hotel staff/etc. on local tourism-based businesses. By doing this, we increase the quality of information and resources available to tourists and promote local businesses. The challenge with hosting a free trade show is setting the expectation of how many people will attend. However, through enhanced promotion on various channels and utilizing our hotel partners to help promote, we were able to spread the word and have a good turnout.

(1500 characters max.)

5. Continuity

The applicant should demonstrate how the project accomplished one or more of the following: longevity, continuity, transferability, endurance, replicability, and resiliency.

- Describe the long-term goals for the project, if any.
- Identify potential partners or collaborators and their role in continuing with the long-term vision of the project or ways to broaden the reach of the project.
- Describe how/if this project compliments and/or relates to other sustainability efforts in the community.

Response*

The long terms goal of #justbeachcause is to have ongoing community engagement projects and initiatives that serve our tourism area and promote economic development, community engagement, and greater support for the tourism-based businesses in Cocoa Beach. We have several partners that help us fulfill this mission, including many of the Hiltons and local hotels, Ron Jon, Cruise lines, and a group of solid business owners that want to see the tourism industry thrive. We plan to acquire new partnerships with tourism businesses, create branded shirts and signage for the events, and develop more programming to continue the vision. Our mission is to serve the community, and in that way we look for opportunities for sustainability.

(max 1500 characters)

6. Global Impact

The project must demonstrate one or more of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Identify one or more SDG(s) that the project addresses and describe how the project addresses the identified SDG(s).
- Please reference the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Response*

Although we aim to support all of these goals, the main goals that we serve are:
Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Through supporting local tourism, engaging in quality of life initiatives, and working to improve our environment, these goals are served by #justBeachCause and Visit Cocoa Beach.

(max 1500 characters)

Supporting Documentation

Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documentation relevant to the project that will assist committee members in reviewing and scoring the application. Applicants are limited to submitting a maximum of two (2) supporting documents.

Examples: Flyers, Brochures, photos, reports, letters of support, etc.

Supporting Document 1 (optional)

VCB Star Flyer (1).png

Supporting Document 2 (optional)

No file chosen

Attn. Hospitality Professionals
Become an expert tourist!



Visit Cocoa Beach

POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

#justbeachcause

STAR EVENT

Service **T**eams **A**ppreciation & **R**eferral

Thursday, September 19, 2024

1:00PM - 5:00PM

Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront



Take a staycation and visit with our local businesses all in one place! Learn about what our area offers to better serve the tourism industry.

Meet Local Vendors

Build Relationships

Win Prizes

Print**Community Sustainability Award - Submission #15103****Date Submitted: 3/13/2024****Community Sustainability Award: Application Form**

Please complete all sections of the online Nomination form and submit for review. Paper forms may be requested by contacting info@cityofcocoabeach.com or calling 321-868-3341. Applicants are encouraged to draft responses and gather supporting documents/materials to fulfill all scoring criteria (listed in Part III of award information packet) prior to completing the online application.

Nominations are to be submitted no later than March 17, 2024 at 11:59PM. Applications submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed for scoring.

Applicant Information**First Name**

Kelly

Last Name

Lieneke

Email Address*

thetinyturtlecbfl@gmail.com

Phone

321-271-5175

Nomination information: Who are you nominating?*

- ☒ My organization/group: I am/was directly involved in the nominated project
- ☐ Someone else: I am/was not involved in the nominated project

Organization being nominated*

The Tiny Turtle

Affiliation to project/group being nominated*

Owner/Manager

1. Project Overview

- Fulfill all requirements listed in nomination instructions.
- Provide a brief description of the project vision, purpose, and goals.
- Identify project partners (if any) and discuss coordination with these partners or collaborators and their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline including identifying when it was initiated, when it was or will be completed or status if the project is ongoing.

Response*

Being the only Ocean Friendly Restaurant under the Surfrider Foundation brings great honor as well as challenges to maintain the standard. Extra costs, time, resources, etc while maintaining a successful restaurant can be difficult to tackle, but we are committed to being the best example to inspire others to do the same.

(max 3000 characters)

2. Positive Impact

The project must have a meaningful and demonstrable or measurable impact in Cocoa Beach or the surrounding community by helping protect the environment or enhance the quality of life for residents. The applicant should:

- Describe how the project embraces at least 1 of the 3 pillars of sustainability: Environment, Economic, Social
- Describe the impact the project had on the Cocoa Beach community.
- Identify and/or quantify the outcome and benefits of the project to the community and progress toward accomplishing goals.

Response*

We have eliminated styrofoam and single use plastics from our TOGOware options. We have an ask policy, don't just give to help in the amount of single use trash produced. We recycle as a business! We repurpose our aluminum cans by giving to the Florida Wildlife Hospital to turn in for cash to help fund their organization. We talk about and share ways to help protect our environment.

(max 3000 characters)

3. Innovation/Creativity

The project should reflect a new concept, technology, or practice or creative implementation of existing concept, technology, or practice. The applicant should:

- Describe actions taken to implement the project vision.
- Describe the innovative or creative approach taken to implement the project.

Response*

We created a fun book in celebration of our 10 year anniversary that shares a message of sustainability to get the younger generation thinking about this topic. We have now also started monthly rounding up campaigns with our Toast Point of Sale system that will benefit our favorite local Non-Profits that are dedicated to making a difference!

(1500 characters max.)

4. Overcomes Challenges

The applicant should explain what challenges were overcome.

- Describe the challenge, problem, or need in the community that is identified in the project vision.
- Describe personal or project challenges identified when implementing the project.

Response*

Getting others to make changes feels impossible at times. There is always the question of the cost involved. Some just think it's pointless and not necessary. I've had to try to defend our decision to be ocean friendly. We have probably lost some business because some don't agree with some of our choices.

(1500 characters max.)

5. Continuity

The applicant should demonstrate how the project accomplished one or more of the following: longevity, continuity, transferability, endurance, replicability, and resiliency.

- Describe the long-term goals for the project, if any.
- Identify potential partners or collaborators and their role in continuing with the long-term vision of the project or ways to broaden the reach of the project.
- Describe how/if this project compliments and/or relates to other sustainability efforts in the community.

Response*

Having the support of Surfrider to share what we are doing has hopefully inspired others. Receiving recognition and feeling proud of making a difference helps keep us going with our sustainability efforts. I am thought of by students working on projects relating to sustainability at our local schools to ask questions about what we are doing. I hope our local organizations who promote sustainability and have environmental missions can work together to get our community to accept changes that will eliminate some of the harmful products used.

(max 1500 characters)

6. Global Impact

The project must demonstrate one or more of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Identify one or more SDG(s) that the project addresses and describe how the project addresses the identified SDG(s).
- Please reference the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Response*

SDG 14 Life Below Water is why we continue to say no to single use plastics and styrofoam. There is no need to keep a product around for years in the trash when it is only used once. There are better choices now and we all should be using them.

(max 1500 characters)

Supporting Documentation

Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documentation relevant to the project that will assist committee members in reviewing and scoring the application. Applicants are limited to submitting a maximum of two (2) supporting documents.

Examples: Flyers, Brochures, photos, reports, letters of support, etc.

Supporting Document 1 (optional)

inbound989828084530472528.pdf

Supporting Document 2 (optional)

inbound8735232284386556293.png

Tacos, Ice Cream, and Dreams: The Fantastical Adventures of Freddie, Eddie, & Moe in Cocoa Beach

Story & Graphics
by Brian Veal





Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide 2.0



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Introduction

Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide 2.0 is designed to equip restaurants with tools to avoid greenwashing and choose the best Ocean Friendly products for their businesses. Since the first Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide was launched in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on the restaurant industry and greatly increased the public's reliance on single-use plastic takeout items. Despite this setback, governments at global, federal, state, and local levels have pushed for more sustainable packaging and single-use plastic bans. This increased awareness of the plastic pollution crisis and the ensuing policy actions have resulted in an expansion of good, bad, and sometimes in-between alternative products entering the market.

The good news is that Ocean Friendly products are more widely available than ever before. Restaurants can now buy sustainable products from national retailers at discounted and wholesale prices. Additionally, there is better awareness and avoidance of harmful chemical additives, such as polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and Bisphenol A (BPA). We've even seen more cities and states pass policies that require or incentivize reuse, making it easier for restaurants to get rid of disposables altogether.

The bad news is that some companies have become more subtle in their greenwashing tactics and market their products as biodegradable or compostable without providing a full list of ingredients or trusted certifications. Companies have also made efforts to avoid the term 'bioplastic,' which can have a negative connotation, and instead use terms such as 'plant-based' or 'bio-based' to describe their biopolymers. In addition, recycling continues to be an unreliable form of waste management as the U.S. recycling rate fell to 5-6% in 2021 and most cities still do not have industrial compost facilities required to dispose of certain compostable or bioplastic products.

Due to the sheer amount of products on the market and rampant greenwashing, navigating the world of plastic alternatives hasn't gotten any easier. That's why we've updated our Foodware Guide to help restaurants stay

informed and increase awareness of what's on the market today. The latest Foodware Guide provides updated terminology, a decision matrix to help review products and avoid greenwashing, as well as case studies and examples of new products ranging from 'best choice' to 'what to avoid.' While this guide does not put forward all of the available options, the goal is to provide a starting point.

Thank you for being a member of the Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Restaurants program! We appreciate your commitment to protecting our ocean and beaches by reducing the amount of single-use plastics used in your establishment. If you are not yet a member, you can sign up now or reach out to your local chapter or club for more information. One restaurant, one customer at a time – together, we are increasing awareness, driving behavior change, and ultimately creating scalable impact to reduce our collective plastic footprint.



Common Terms & Labels



Common Terms & Labels

There are many buzzwords and labels swirling around the market today. While some labels have a vetted verification process to ensure products meet certain standards, others aren't well regulated and don't hold much weight. Words such as 'renewable,' 'biodegradable,' 'eco,' or 'green' can often be used with no scientific backing at all. This can sometimes result in 'greenwashing,' which makes it even more difficult to make the right choice. By outlining the below terms, we hope to provide the knowledge needed to make informed decisions on the foodware products used in your establishment.

BIO-BASED PLASTICS

As stated by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), "bio-based plastics are manufactured from plant materials instead of being made from oil or natural gas." As they are plant-based, there is a tendency to assume that this type of plastic must be biodegradable. However, bio-based plastics can be designed to be structurally identical to petroleum-based plastics. If designed in this way, they can last in the environment for the same period of time as petroleum-based plastic and result in the production of microplastics. Bio-based plastics are usually branded with a leaf symbol and may state that they are made from corn, sugar cane, agave, or other natural-sounding sources. These products may have a large environmental footprint because of fertilizers, pesticides, and the land needed to grow the crops. There is often no indicator to state what percentage of the plastic is made from plants. Even the [USDA](#) sets their minimum bio-based requirement at just 25%, with the rest of the polymer usually made from or blended with conventional fossil fuel-based plastic.

BIODEGRADABLE

The [EPA](#) defines this as "the ability of a substance to be broken down physically and/or chemically by microorganisms. For example, many chemicals, food scraps, cotton, wool, and paper are biodegradable; plastics and polyester generally are not." While this term does mean that items can be broken down, the term typically hasn't taken into account the time frame for degradation to occur, which could be months, years, or longer. It also often doesn't consider if chemicals would be left over in the environment or released during the degradation process. Additionally, the definition doesn't outline the specific conditions required for proper degradation, such as specific heat, moisture, or oxygen levels. These conditions do not exist in common disposal sites or out in the environment. In fact, if bioplastics end up in the landfill, they release methane, which is a greenhouse gas that is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. More often than not, "biodegradable" items don't fully break down, resulting in more microplastic pollution. The term biodegradable is not well-regulated, so be wary of companies that tout their products as biodegradable without any certifications or end-of-life instructions.

BIOPLASTICS

Bioplastics are polymers that often look and feel like plastic. They can be made from non-fossil fuel or renewable sources, and may or may not biodegrade or compost, depending on how a product is made. Bioplastic is sometimes used as a broader term that also refers to a fossil fuel-based plastic that has been combined with additives to become biodegradable over various time frames.

While some labels have a vetted verification process to ensure products meet certain standards, others aren't well regulated and don't hold much weight. Words such as 'renewable,' 'biodegradable,' 'eco,' or 'green' can often be used with no scientific backing at all.

COMPOSTABLE

The simplified definition by [Lexico](#) states, “able to be made into compost,” with [compost](#) defined as “decayed organic material used as a plant fertilizer.” Similar to biodegradable products, most compostable products, especially bioplastics, require highly specific environmental conditions. This means that these items will not simply turn into compost when tossed in a landfill or in our waterways. An important distinction to note is whether an item is home compostable or only compostable in a specialized industrial composting facility. While the term ‘compostable’ is more highly regulated than the term ‘biodegradable,’ there are still some factors to consider before purchasing compostable products, such as proper disposal methods.

INDUSTRIAL COMPOSTABLE

If a product is only compostable in a specialized industrial composting facility, which is usually the case with bioplastic foodware, these facilities can be difficult to come by and jurisdictions often lack the distribution networks needed to get compostable waste from your trash bin to the right facility. Further, some industrial composting facilities are beginning to [reject bioplastics](#) because they often don’t break down completely, take a longer time to process, and contain chemicals that can contaminate the compost and reduce its value. Industrial compostable products are often labeled with certifications, such as ASTM D6400, ASTM 6868, or EN 13432.

HOME COMPOSTABLE

Home composting for natural food waste, such as fruits and vegetables, plant debris, and even paper products with minimal ink or chemical processing, has some fantastic benefits. Products labeled as home compostable (such as certified ‘TUV Home Compost’) are more easily able to break down into their natural material. Home compostable means that materials are able to meet the ‘compostable’ specifications without the need for an industrial composting facility. Under TUV Austria’s OK Compost HOME certification, the material must, through backyard compost methods such as worm bins or compost piles: (1) biodegrade by 90 percent or more within 365 days; (2) fully disintegrate in a way that makes the materials indistinguishable from the compost soil; and (3) not have measurable ecotoxicity.

GREENWASHING

Greenwashing occurs when companies label and market products as environmentally friendly to potentially capitalize on the growing environmental awareness among consumers without actually providing an environmental benefit. Consumers may feel better about their choices, even though those items may have similar or even worse environmental impacts than their previous choice in product. To add insult to injury, these products are often more expensive than the ones they intend to replace.

MINIMALLY-PROCESSED NATURALLY OCCURRING MATERIALS

Surfrider defines “minimally-processed naturally occurring materials” as products made with ingredients that are not artificial or fossil fuel-based, and have not undergone extensive processing and/or chemical modification from their natural state. Naturally occurring materials, such as paper, bamboo, wood, hay, and seaweed, for example, do not require industrial composting facilities for disposal. Some certifications that Surfrider looks for include: USDA Certified 100% Biobased and TUV Home Compost. No certification is perfect, however, so try to seek out products that show a full list of product ingredients before determining if a product is made from naturally occurring materials.



MARINE DEGRADABLE

Marine degradable generally means a material has the ability to completely biodegrade under marine environmental conditions, including aerobic marine waters or anaerobic marine sediments within a specified time frame, leaving no toxic substances or residue (so it doesn't have any ecotoxicity). Some will only apply this term to non-plastics, such as cellulose materials like paper. As a standard providing more clarity, assurance and testing requirements needs to be provided for this term to be effective and meaningful – currently it is not a reliable term.

PETROLEUM-BASED PLASTICS

These are conventional fossil fuel-based plastics, which are usually cheap, plentiful, and highly resistant to biodegradation, regardless of environmental conditions. While this seems like a beneficial quality when using the product, the convenience has dangerous consequences throughout its lifecycle. These materials have not been shown to biodegrade in our lifetime, even with controlled experiments using a wide range of microorganism strains. Since they are produced from fossil fuel, they are also a major contributor to climate change and should therefore be avoided when purchasing disposable products. To make matters worse, petroleum-based plastics can release toxic chemicals into food or beverages that are being served.

PFAS

Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”) are a group of man-made chemicals commonly found in food packaging and household products, such as nonstick pans and water-resistant fabrics. According to the EPA, PFAS can accumulate in the body over time, which is why they are also referred to as “forever chemicals.” They have been linked to adverse health outcomes, including cancer, compromised immune system function and hormone disruption. See Surfrider’s [Beachapedia article](#) for more information.

PLA

Poly(lactic Acid) (PLA) is a bio-based plastic commonly used in foodware and takeout items, and marketed as a sustainable alternative to conventional plastics. Despite claims of environmental friendliness, products made from PLA will only reach complete degradation at industrial composting facilities and often contain high ‘upstream impacts’ from growing the plant-based material and processing it into a plastic product. PLA is often made from corn and the raw materials must undergo an intense and highly polluting chemical process to transform that organic material into PLA. PLA plastic will not break down into natural elements in your backyard composting pile, the landfill, or most importantly, the ocean.

For more details and to learn more about bioplastics, check out Surfrider’s [Bioplastics Facts and Research Page](#).



Ocean Friendly Product Guide



Ocean Friendly Product Guide

To help you review products and avoid greenwashing, we've created a Product Buying Guide and Decision Matrix. We hope you will use this tool to evaluate the products you're currently using, discover products you may not have considered in the past and, compare costs. While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, remember to consider how long you will use them and calculate the cost savings of switching away from single-use disposable items over time. [Studies](#) show that switching to reusables have saved restaurants

between \$3,000 and \$22,000. You can use tools from [Rethink Disposable](#), [Upstream](#), and [Product Stewardship Council](#) to calculate cost savings at your restaurant.

Please note that costs may vary depending on the quantity purchased or whether wholesale pricing options are available in your area. We've highlighted which vendors offer discounts to current Ocean Friendly Restaurants. Reach out to ofr@surfrider.org or your [local chapter](#) or [club](#) for more information.



Foodware Buying Guide

CATEGORIES

We've categorized the following foodware options as either "best choice," or "good alternative." We hope this inspires you to find ways to reduce your use of single-use items and make more sustainable choices for your business.

Best Choice

Durable, nontoxic, preferably non-plastic reusables. The Surfrider Foundation advocates for a reduction in the overall use of single-use plastic items by switching to reusables whenever possible. That's why a mandatory criterion for the program is that onsite dining must be served on reusables. This includes cups, plates, sauce containers, and anything else you use to serve your customers. Eating with reusables elevates the presentation of the food and the customer's dining experience, while also helping to avoid harmful chemicals and create less waste. However, not all reusables are made equal. Some reusable plastics, such as melamine, have been found to leach toxic chemicals when exposed to high heat. For this reason, melamine products are not included in the following list.

Good Alternative

Single-use items made from minimally-processed naturally occurring materials, such as paper-based items, bamboo plates, wooden utensils, straws made completely from paper, hay, seaweed, bamboo, and more! That said, beware of plastic-lined paper items, as these are not recyclable or home compostable. Words to look out for include "PLA lining", "plant-based lining," and "grease resistant," to name a few. Additionally, a number of paper and fiber-based products have been found to contain toxic PFAS. These forever chemicals can leach into the food we eat, contaminate compost, and ultimately end up in our bodies. For this reason, items found to contain PFAS are not included in the list below. This section also features aluminum cups, which can be reused multiple times and are typically easily recycled.



ITEMS TO AVOID

Plastics and bioplastics. Watch out for greenwashing and terms that do not require certifications. A product that states 'compostable' doesn't necessarily mean it will be composted or can be composted at home. Phrases to look out for include "made from renewable resources," "eco-friendly," "bio-based," "degradable," "marine biodegradable," "PLA," and "green." If you're confused about whether an item is bioplastic, ask yourself, "does this look and feel like plastic?" If it does, then it probably is a plastic or a bioplastic. In addition, take some time to explore the product's website – if ingredients or processes aren't clearly listed, then the product information may not be transparent.

TAKEOUT CONTAINERS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Klean Kanteen Reusable Container	Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	7 oz, 20 oz, 34 oz	\$21.65+	Yes	Yes	BEST CHOICE
	Ecolunch Box Reusable Container	Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	ECOLunchbox	3 oz, 7 oz, 12 oz, 20 oz, 26 oz, 48 oz	\$15.25+	Yes	Yes	
	UKonserve Reusable Container	Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	UKonserve	25 oz	\$24.99+	Yes	No	
	Fallen Palm Leaf Takeout Box	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Verterra	4.75 x 6.75", 8.4 x 6.6", 9 x 5.5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Paper Takeout Container	Uncoated Kraft Paper	Kraft Paper, Recyclable when clean	Webstaurant	8 oz, 16 oz, 24 oz, 32 oz	\$0.11+	Yes	No	
	Foil Takeout Pan with Lid Takeout Container	Aluminum Foil	Recyclable when clean	Webstaurant	8", 7", 9", 10"	\$0.13+	Yes	No	
UTENSILS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Stainless Utensils	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Bamboo Chopsticks	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	9.25"	\$2.87+	No	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	7.25"	\$3.86+	No	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Bambu or Webstaurant	6.5"	\$0.24+	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Wooden Utensils	Birch wood	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	Eco-Gecko or Webstaurant	6.5"	\$0.05+	Yes	No	
	Wooden Utensils	Poplar and Pine Wood	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	Wood Able	NA	\$0.09+	Yes	No	
	Bamboo Dessert Spoon	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5"	\$0.05+	Yes	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	6.7"	Price varies	Yes	Yes	

COLD CUPS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	BEST CHOICE
	Glass Cup	Glass	Reusable	Webstaurant	14 oz	\$1.05+	Yes	No	
	Klean Kanteen Steel Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	10 oz	\$8.23+	Yes	Yes	
	Steelys Steel Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Steelys Drinkware	7 oz	\$3.75+	NA	No	
	Stainless Steel Depot Steel Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Stainless Depot Company by Hogg	15 oz	\$2.90+	NA	No	
	Coconut Cup	Coconut Shells	Reusable	The Coconut King	Approx. 12 oz	\$1.75+	No	No	
	SiliPint Cup	Silicone	Reusable	Silipint	16 oz	\$9.98+	Yes	No	
	Ball Aluminum Cup	Aluminum	Reusable, Recyclable	Webstaurant or local grocery stores	16 oz	\$0.41+	Yes	No	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	SOFi Paper Cup	Coating-free Paper	FSC, Recyclable, Home Compostable	SOFi or Webstaurant	8 oz, 12 oz, 16 oz, 20 oz	Approx \$0.21+	Yes	Yes	
HOT CUPS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	BEST CHOICE
	Glass Coffee Mug	Glass	Reusable	Webstaurant	12 oz	\$1.68+	Yes	No	
	Stoneware Coffee Mug	Stoneware	Reusable	Webstaurant	12 oz	\$1.21+	Yes	No	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
There are limited options available on the current market that meet Surfrider’s standards as a good alternative. Until science catches up and options become available, Surfrider cannot provide a recommended good alternative for single-use disposable hot cups. Our recommendation is to implement reusables in creative ways that work for your business.									

STRAWS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT
	Reusable Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	4RTides	6", 8.5"	\$0.75+	Yes	Yes
	Dishwasher Safe Straw Cleaning Caddy	Polypropylene	Reusable	4RTides	4" x 4"x 7"	\$29.99	No	No
	Reusable Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	5.5", 6.5", 8.5"	\$0.83+	Yes	No
	Reusable Boba Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Impresa	0.5", 8.5"	\$1.19+	Yes	No
	Bamboo Straw	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	8.0", 8.5"	\$1.66+	No	Yes
	Cocktail Reed Straw	Reed	Reusable, CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5", 7.9"	\$0.14+	Yes	Yes
	Boba Reed Straw	Reed	Reusable, CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	7.9"	\$0.18+	Yes	Yes
	Wheat Straw	Wheat	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 99% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5", 7.9"	\$0.07+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Boba Straw	Paper	CMA, SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Aardvark Straws or Webstaurant	8.5"	\$0.07+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Straw	Paper	CMA, SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Aardvark Straws or Webstaurant	5.75", 7.75", 10.0"	\$0.04+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Straw	Paper	SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Boss Straw	5.75", 7.75", 8.5", 10.0"	\$0.03+	Yes	Yes
	Hay Boba Straw	Wheat Stems, Plant stems	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	HAY! Straws or Webstaurant	8"	\$0.013+	Yes	Yes
	Hay Straw	Wheat Stems, Plant stems	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	HAY! Straws or Webstaurant	5.0", 7.75"	\$0.04+	Yes	Yes
	Seaweed Straw	Seaweed	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Loliware	One size	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes

BEST CHOICE

GOOD ALTERNATIVE

PLATES & BOWLS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Porcelain Plate	Porcelain	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Stoneware Bowl	Stoneware	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	
	Coconut Bowl	Coconut Shells	Reusable, Home Compostable	Coconut Bowls	17 oz	\$6.50+	Yes	No	
	Bamboo Plate	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Bambu or Webstaurant	5", 7", 9", 11"	\$0.88+	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Palm Leaf Plate	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	6", 7", 8", 9", 10", 12"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	
	Palm Leaf Plate	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Clear Conscience	3", 4", 6", 7", 9", 10"	\$0.75+	No	No	
	Palm Leaf Bowl	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2.5", 3.5", 5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	
	Palm Leaf Bowl	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Clear Conscience	5", 5.5", 6", 7", 9"	\$0.67+	No	No	
SAUCE CUPS & RAMEKINS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Porcelain Ramekin	Porcelain	Reusable	Webstaurant	5 oz	\$1.58+	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Round Sauce Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	1.5 oz	\$0.17+	Yes	No	
	Round Ramekin	Aluminum	Recyclable when Clean	Webstaurant	4 oz	\$0.04+	Yes	No	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Palm Leaf Ramekin	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2 oz, 3 oz	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	

OTHER		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT
	Silipint Kids Cup with Lid	Silicone	Reusable	Silipint	8 oz	\$6.00+	Yes	No
	Stainless Steel Rectangular Divided Tray	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	15.5 x 11.5"	\$6.25+	Yes	No
	Bar Bottle	Glass	Reusable	Crew Supply Co.	28 oz	\$18.25+	Yes	Yes
	Pour Spout	Silicone	Reusable	Crew Supply Co.	NA	\$2.49+	Yes	Yes
	Palm Leaf Tray	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2 x 4", 4 x 4", 4.5 x 6, 6 x 9", 8 x 12", 10 x 14.5", 10 x 15.5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes

BEST CHOICE

GOOD ALTERNATIVE



Product Decision Matrix

When Reusables Are Not Available, How Do You Find the Most Ocean Friendly Single-Use Product? Use this tool to review products and avoid greenwashing. If you can answer **yes** across the board – then the product is likely a good option.

GUIDANCE	SPECIFIC QUALITIES	WHAT IT MEANS IF THE ANSWER IS “NO”
Product is made completely of naturally occurring materials	All product ingredients are clearly listed on the product website (if not right on the packaging)	If No – be wary as transparency is a must in this industry. Too often, companies sneak plastics, plastic derivatives, or harmful chemicals (like PFAS!) into their products.
	Product looks and feels different from plastic	If No – this product could have had its natural ingredients chemically altered to be identical to traditional plastics, taking years (or decades) to fully break down, or designed in a way that only breaks down in industrial composters. It can also cause confusion for users on how best to dispose.
	Product is certified as 100% bio-based (e.g. USDA Biobased 100%)	If No – be wary as this can mean that fossil fuel-based plastics, plastic derivatives, or harmful chemicals have been added to the product, and it is therefore not “made of completely naturally occurring materials.” Note: There’s a 1% degree of error so products listed as 99% still meet this requirement.
Product is able to breakdown in the natural environment	Product does not require industrial composting facilities to fully breakdown	If No – this means that the product has not been confirmed to be able to fully breakdown in a home compost pile by a third-party certification. While certifications aren’t perfect, they provide some assurance that the product will break down in the conditions stated, over a specified time frame, and won’t cause any toxicity. This last bit is extra important since many seemingly natural products can be lined with toxic chemicals like PFAS.
	Product is certified as home compostable (e.g. TUV OK Compost Home)*	If No – this means that the product has not been confirmed to be able to fully breakdown in a home compost pile by a third-party certification. While certifications aren’t perfect, they provide some assurance that the product will break down in the conditions stated, over a specified time frame, and won’t cause any toxicity . This last bit is extra important since many seemingly natural products can be lined with toxic chemicals like PFAS.
Bonus! Product materials are born of the waste stream	Product materials are upcycled and would otherwise be discarded (e.g. corn husk, agave fibre, oyster shells).	If No – some of the materials in this product were ‘purpose-grown, meaning that you’ll need to consider the embedded emissions and environmental impact that went into growing the source material (e.g. land clearing, habitat loss, fertilizers, pesticides).

*Certified Home Compostable or made completely from a single, unprocessed or minimally processed natural material that’s undergone toxicity testing.

Case Studies



CASE STUDY

Channel Islands Juice Co.

RESTAURANT DETAILS

Location: 291 E Thompson Rd Ventura, CA 93001

Industry: Fast Casual

Average Daily Guests: 0-100

Channel Islands Juice Co. has a simple mission. To make truly organic juice that is restorative and nourishing. Each hand-crafted blend is served in a returnable and reusable glass jar, that protects and assures freshness. Channel Islands Juice Co. is fiercely committed to using locally sourced ingredients from sustainable sources that nourish the mind, body, and soul.



© Mariah Greene

OCEAN FRIENDLY PRACTICES

- Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.
- Paper straws are provided only upon request.
- No expanded polystyrene is used (aka Styrofoam).
- No plastic bags are used for takeout or to-go orders.
- Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request.
- Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
- Proper recycling practices are followed.
- A discount is offered for customers with a reusable item.
- Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered on a regular basis.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.
- Energy efficiency efforts are in place.
- Composting efforts are in place for food waste.

REUSABLE BOTTLE PROGRAM

Channel Islands Juice Co. serves their cold-pressed juices in refillable and returnable glass bottles. Once a customer returns their glass bottle, they get a \$2 refund. Most customers use that \$2 refund to buy another juice or opt for a wooden token to be used on a juice order at a later date. Customers can also bring their own bottles for a discount. By using this model, this Ocean Friendly Restaurant sees a 50-60% return rate on their bottles and eliminates over 18,000 plastic bottles annually. While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, we estimate that Channel Islands Juice Co. saves \$900-\$2,000 per year after reaching their break-even point. Plus, this reuse model gives customers an excuse to come back!

**Cost comparison based on price for plastic bottles on [Webstaurant](#) as of October 2023.*

While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, we estimate that Channel Islands Juice Co. saves \$900-\$2,000 per year after reaching their break-even point.

CASE STUDY

The Tiny Turtle

RESTAURANT DETAILS

Location: 249 Minutemen Causeway Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

Industry: Fast Casual

Average Daily Guests: 100-300

The Tiny Turtle offers a unique Puerto Rican cuisine with a touch of Caribbean Fusion. The Tiny Turtle opened its 'Food Truck Style' window during the annual art show in Downtown Cocoa Beach ten years ago. Over the years since, The Tiny Turtle has expanded and evolved into one of the top full-service restaurants in Cocoa Beach.



OCEAN FRIENDLY PRACTICES:

- Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.
- Paper straws are provided only upon request.
- No expanded polystyrene is used (aka Styrofoam).
- No plastic bags are used for takeout or to-go orders.
- Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request.
- Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
- Proper recycling practices are followed.
- Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered on a regular basis.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.
- Energy efficiency efforts are in place.
- Neither single-use nor bio-based plastic containers are used for takeout or to-go orders.

PAPER STRAWS UPON REQUEST ONLY

The Tiny Turtle serves paper straws upon request by the customer only. They serve about 200 guests daily and staff estimate that roughly 20 customers ask for a straw every day. With this 90% percent reduction in paper straw usage, we estimate that **The Tiny Turtle saves over \$3,000 every year.** See the breakdown below.

STRAWS OFFERED	COST PER STRAW	APPROX. STRAWS PER DAY	APPROX. ANNUAL COST
Without Request	\$0.05	200	\$3,650
Only Upon Request	\$0.05	20	\$365
Estimated Annual Savings			\$3,285

Tip! Some ways that The Tiny Turtle reduces straw usage is by keeping them out of sight and out of mind. Staff do not keep straws in their aprons and they have educational signs on their tables explaining why they are an Ocean Friendly Restaurant. This way, customers know what to expect and become informed about the harms of plastic pollution on marine life.



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Print**Community Sustainability Award - Submission #15281****Date Submitted: 3/26/2024****Community Sustainability Award: Application Form**

Please complete all sections of the online Nomination form and submit for review. Paper forms may be requested by contacting info@cityofcocoabeach.com or calling 321-868-3341. Applicants are encouraged to draft responses and gather supporting documents/materials to fulfill all scoring criteria (listed in Part III of award information packet) prior to completing the online application.

Nominations are to be submitted no later than March 17, 2024 at 11:59PM. Applications submitted after the deadline may not be reviewed for scoring.

Applicant Information**First Name**

Kris

Last Name

Baker

Email Address*

chair@spacecoast.surfrider.org

Phone

941-726-9549

Nomination information: Who are you nominating?*

- ☐ My organization/group: I am/was directly involved in the nominated project
- ☒ Someone else: I am/was not involved in the nominated project

Organization being nominated*

The Tiny Turtle

Affiliation to project/group being nominated*

Surfrider Foundation Space Coast Chapter, Ocean Friendly Restaurant program

1. Project Overview

- Fulfill all requirements listed in nomination instructions.
- Provide a brief description of the project vision, purpose, and goals.
- Identify project partners (if any) and discuss coordination with these partners or collaborators and their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline including identifying when it was initiated, when it was or will be completed or status if the project is ongoing.

Response*

The Surfrider Space Coast Chapter is proud to spotlight The Tiny Turtle and nominate them for this special award. The Tiny Turtle started on their plastic reduction journey in 2017, when they only offered paper straws upon request only. Since then, they've switched to paper to-go bags, got rid of polystyrene foam cups, use reusables when dining in and provide paper utensils and containers for to-go orders only, sell water in aluminum cans, sell reusable bags, and more. Our Ocean Friendly Restaurant Program has several requirements to be a part of this program. Tiny Turtle walks the walk with how they help the environment. They have survived COVID and continue to thrive and set an example for Cocoa Beach community. They are the only OFR to date, as we lost a few due to COVID. Their vision partners well with Surfrider's,

(max 3000 characters)

2. Positive Impact

The project must have a meaningful and demonstrable or measurable impact in Cocoa Beach or the surrounding community by helping protect the environment or enhance the quality of life for residents. The applicant should:

- Describe how the project embraces at least 1 of the 3 pillars of sustainability: Environment, Economic, Social
- Describe the impact the project had on the Cocoa Beach community.
- Identify and/or quantify the outcome and benefits of the project to the community and progress toward accomplishing goals.

Response*

One restaurant, one customer at a time, it increases awareness, drives behavior change, and ultimately creates scalable impact to reduce our plastic footprint. Tiny Turtle embraces all three pillars of sustainability in our Cocoa Beach Community. Environmentally with their commitment to no plastics or Styrofoam. Economically they survived COVID and not given up on the TOGO options just because it's easier, especially during COVID shut down. They are an established restaurant that is known in Cocoa Beach for not only their food, but also their mission. For the social piece, they continue to educate with the local schools, events and with our Surfrider chapter as an OFR, that we need to think differently in order to make our environment better. Making options available and making good choices.

(max 3000 characters)

3. Innovation/Creativity

The project should reflect a new concept, technology, or practice or creative implementation of existing concept, technology, or practice. The applicant should:

- Describe actions taken to implement the project vision.
- Describe the innovative or creative approach taken to implement the project.

Response*

The Tiny Turtle has found more sustainable alternatives to plastic food ware, ask for a straw which is not plastic, have no plastic bags, no single use plastics including water bottles. All have taken a lot research for them to find, and now have local resources to purchase needed products.

(1500 characters max.)

4. Overcomes Challenges

The applicant should explain what challenges were overcome.

- Describe the challenge, problem, or need in the community that is identified in the project vision.
- Describe personal or project challenges identified when implementing the project.

Response*

There have many challenges having a OFR. Having determination & compassion, like Tiny Turtle has, definitely has what it takes to qualify for this award. They also have created a fun book in celebration of their 10 year anniversary that shares a message of sustainability to get the younger generation thinking about this topic. How appropriate the story is about a turtle and a donkey helping the environment.

(1500 characters max.)

5. Continuity

The applicant should demonstrate how the project accomplished one or more of the following: longevity, continuity, transferability, endurance, replicability, and resiliency.

- Describe the long-term goals for the project, if any.
- Identify potential partners or collaborators and their role in continuing with the long-term vision of the project or ways to broaden the reach of the project.
- Describe how/if this project compliments and/or relates to other sustainability efforts in the community.

Response*

They are educating locals & visitors every time an order is placed. This establishment is huge example of what sustainability efforts can do for the community. As Surfrider Chapter, we continue to support their efforts, Nationally recognized as well. Their continuing environmental efforts are an example of standards we all should be doing. At home or in a local restaurant.

(max 1500 characters)

6. Global Impact

The project must demonstrate one or more of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Identify one or more SDG(s) that the project addresses and describe how the project addresses the identified SDG(s).
- Please reference the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Response*

SDG 14 Life Below Water is the appropriate SDG. Tiny Turtle doesn't contribute to the single use plastics and Styrofoam problem and the pollution in our waters. They are educating locals & visitors every time an order is placed. This establishment is huge example of what sustainability efforts can do for the community. Other businesses should get on board as well, and care about the environment.

(max 1500 characters)

Supporting Documentation

Applicants are encouraged to provide supporting documentation relevant to the project that will assist committee members in reviewing and scoring the application. Applicants are limited to submitting a maximum of two (2) supporting documents.

Examples: Flyers, Brochures, photos, reports, letters of support, etc.

Supporting Document 1 (optional)

Here are 2 articles that were written about our Space Coast Surfrider Chapter Ocean Friendly Restaurant.docx

Supporting Document 2 (optional)

No file chosen

FLORIDA NEWS

Cocoa Beach restaurant survives challenges to become local mainstay

Tiny Turtle celebrates 10 years in business

Suzy Fleming Leonard, Florida Today

Published: **September 26, 2023 at 7:36 PM**

Tags: **Food, Florida Today, Florida Foodie, Cocoa Beach, Brevard County**



The Tripleta Sandwich at the Tiny Turtle in Cocoa Beach (Suzy Fleming Leonard - Florida Today)



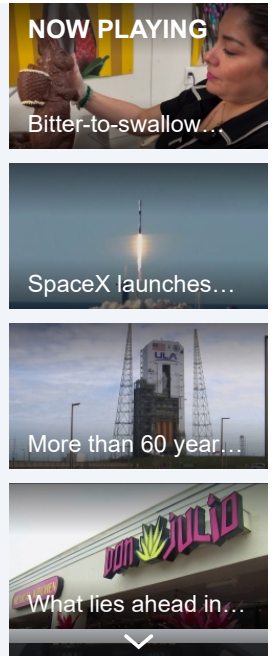
COCOA BEACH, Fla. – Ten years ago, Moises Correa dreamed of owning his own food truck or restaurant.

He
ear
by

An advertisement banner for 'Lagoon Loyal'. It features a photograph of a heron standing in water. To the right of the image is a circular logo with the words 'LAGOON LOYAL' and a stylized 'S' shape. Further right, the text 'LET'S BE CLEAR...' is written in large, bold, white letters, followed by 'A Healthy Lagoon Starts With You!' in smaller green letters. At the bottom right is a green button with the text 'SIGN UP »'.

x

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Alas, as he did his research, he decided a food truck would be too expensive.

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"I could get a food truck for 30 grand," he said. "That was too much."

Instead, he rented a kitchen behind a skate shop off Minutemen Causeway in Cocoa Beach, and on Nov. 13, 2013, he started serving fresh, flavorful meals with Caribbean flair through a to-go window.

Find every episode of [Florida Foodie](#) on YouTube:

Plate Above Catering helps keep Second Harvest's Culinary...





He called his new place the Tiny Turtle.

The menu was as tiny as the restaurant: a wrap, a sofrito bowl, a hot dog and a burger. Guests who didn't want to take their meals home could sit at a couple of picnic tables in a common area near the takeout window.

The beginning of a dream

"I started the Tiny Turtle with \$10 grand, and I borrowed \$5,000 of that," he said. "Actually, it was \$9,500. I gave the last \$500 to Sysco (for food and supplies). I said, if you don't see me again I didn't make it."

Not only did the Tiny Turtle make it, it thrived, growing in the past 10 years from what Correa and wife Kelly Lieneke called a stationary food truck into a full-service restaurant and bar with expansive seating inside and out and a menu that covers breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"You know how I knew I was going to make it?" Correa said. "Somebody else believed in me before I did."

When he left d.i.g. bistro, he asked Pierce if she'd take him back in six months if his business failed. But Pierce had faith in Correa's talent and drive.

"She said, 'Moises, I'm not going to see you again.'"

Lieneke was prepared to support her husband through the start-up process working in massage therapy. At least that was the plan.

Growing the business ... and the family

"I gave my notice, and Kelly said, 'I don't mean to scare you, but we're going to have a kid,'" Correa said.

The Tiny Turtle opened a week before the 50th annual Space Coast Art Festival in downtown Cocoa Beach. It was a make-or-break weekend. The restaurant was a hit.

"Sometimes you just have to throw yourself out there and see what happens," Correa said.

When Lieneke took maternity leave, she started helping out at the Tiny Turtle and got absorbed into the business.

"I was nervous serving," she said. "I didn't know what I was doing."

It didn't take her long to love it, so she stayed.

Their son, Kaleb, 9, has grown up in the restaurant, first strapped to his mother's chest while she helped customers, then in a playpen behind the counter.

"It was a true mom and pop," Lieneke said.

As Kaleb has grown, so has the Tiny Turtle.

Within six months of opening, the skate shop at the front of the building closed, and the couple expanded into a counter-service restaurant with a compact dining room.

In 2019, Correa and Lieneke were offered the opportunity to buy the building which, at the time, included The Fat Donkey Ice Cream and Rick Piper's Art Gallery.

The couple had been saving to move the Tiny Turtle to a larger location, and once again decided to take a chance and put that money into a down payment rather than deposits and more rent.

Ed Martinez, owner of The Fat Donkey, bought his portion of the building. Correa and Lieneke were left with a property that included their restaurant, two other retail spaces and three small apartments. They moved into one of the apartments.

Then COVID struck.

Making it through COVID

They laid off their staff and started serving to-go meals from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"We made this our living room," Correa said, looking around the busy dining room.

"We were living upstairs and just had to pay our mortgage," Lieneke said.

After four months, they were able to bring staff back.

"We made it through," Correa said.

Piper's art gallery had closed, and business was picking up. In 2021, they took down the wall between the two units, got a full liquor license and turned that space into a bar.

Next came a mangrove-shaded patio out front and an expansive tiki hut in the back.

Through all the transformations, Lieneke and Correa have kept the flavor of the past in their restaurant. Piper's artwork hangs on the walls. Wayne Coombs Mai Tiki Gallery, which closed in 2012, once occupied the space. Now a **large tiki carving created by Keelee Coombs**, Wayne Coombs' nephew hangs from the ceiling of the hut. Local musicians perform there regularly.

The restaurant also pays homage to its proximity to the ocean.

The Surfrider Foundation has named the Tiny Turtle an “Ocean Friendly Restaurant” because of its environmentally sustainable practices.

While Correa’s passion is food, Lieneke said hers is the environment. The restaurant uses paper straws, which are given out only upon request. To-go packaging is made of paper rather than polystyrene. Wooden, rather than plastic, to-go utensils, again, are given only if a customer asks for them.

“I want to inspire and encourage others to do it,” Lieneke said of making more environmentally friendly choices with products in the restaurant.

Looking to the future

Lieneke originally is from Southern California. Correa was born in Puerto Rico, but grew up in Orlando. Now they’re happy to call Cocoa Beach home. Correa’s dream has become Lieneke’s dream, too.

As they prepare to celebrate the Tiny Turtle’s 10th anniversary in November, Correa and Lieneke don’t take their success for granted, but they feel like they’ve got some breathing room now.

The not-so-tiny Tiny Turtle now seats 150 guests and has 20 to 30 employees. The menu now includes empanadas, sandwiches, tacos and wraps.

The final unit on the property has been rented to Junk Food Bakery. The family still lives in one of the on-site apartments. (“When we say we’re always here, we’re *always* here,” Lieneke said.)

Correa is working on a new project with a group of other Cocoa Beach restaurateurs.

But they promise not to neglect the Tiny Turtle. A proper celebration and ribbon cutting are planned for the 10th anniversary.

They’re proud of the prominence it’s earned in the community. Even after the bar was added two years ago, it’s remained a family-friendly place.

“One thing I hear from parents is this is their kids’ favorite restaurant,” Correa said. “They know when you’re eating here, their kids are going to go get ice cream.”

If not ice cream from the Fat Donkey, then a house-made pop tart or cake pop from Junk Food.

“We’re surrounded by desserts here,” Lieneke said.

It’s a sweet arrangement, and they wouldn’t have it any other way.

The Tiny Turtle is at 249 Minutemen Causeway, Cocoa Beach. Call 321-446-7361, visit thetinyturtle.com or follow facebook.com/TheTinyTurtle.

Check out the [Florida Foodie](#) podcast. You can find every episode in the media player below:



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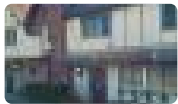
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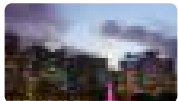
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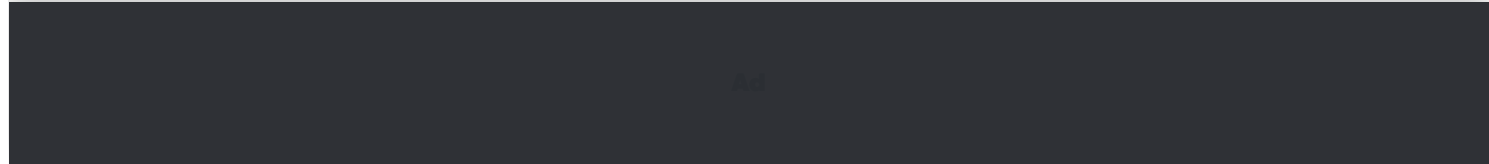


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04.14.23

Ocean Friendly Restaurants Spotlight: The Tiny Turtle

By CJ O'Brien



The [Surfrider Space Coast Chapter](#) is proud to spotlight [The Tiny Turtle](#). Since November 2013, The Tiny Turtle has been serving up Puerto Rican cuisine with a touch of Caribbean fusion. Located in Cocoa Beach Florida, this Ocean Friendly Restaurant started off as a “food truck style” window and has quickly become the top full service restaurant in the area! Husband and Wife duo, Chef Moises and Kelly Lieneke have set the bar for other restaurants in Cocoa Beach to reduce single-use plastic and prioritize better choices for the ocean.



Left to right: Owner, Kelly Lieneke and staff

The Tiny Turtle started on their plastic reduction journey in 2017, when they only offered paper straws upon request only. Since then, they've switched to paper to-go bags, got rid of polystyrene foam cups, use reusables when dining in and provide paper utensils and containers for to-go orders only, sell water in aluminum cans, sell reusable bags, and more. Their bar is even made from a washed up log from Hurricane Irma in 2017.



A before look at the washed up log from Hurricane Irma in 2017



The final product - a beautiful bar for The Tiny Turtle

When asking Kelly about what other restaurants can do to become Ocean Friendly, she said to start small! “Each action makes a difference. You can start with getting rid of styrofoam or you can change your straw ask policy.” The Tiny Turtle serves about 200 guests every day and staff estimate that roughly 20 customers ask for a straw daily. This one simple change has saved The Tiny Turtle money, as they have to order and use less inventory. Kelly has also noticed that people seek out their restaurant for their sustainability choices, “as a business in Cocoa Beach, we should be an example. It is important to choose products that are safe for sea life and the environment.”



Kelly sporting her turtle suit at a local 5K

Additionally, Kelly and Chef Moises are passionate about serving their community. Every year, The Tiny Turtle sponsors the The Cocoa Beach Art Show, Cocoa Beach Turkey Trot 5k, Thunder on Cocoa Beach boat races, and more. Kelly was a part of the Sustainability Committee for the City of Cocoa Beach, and is currently a member of the Space Coast Surfrider Chapter and the Keep Brevard Beautiful Litter Quitters. She has worked closely with local and national vendors to provide naturally occurring durable products that can be used for to-go sauce cups and containers and has partnered with local artists that incorporate plastic litter into their work. If you're lucky, you'll catch Kelly dressed as a turtle at the next cleanup or community event!



The Sofrito Bowl



The Wake Up Burrito

"From the beginning, my passion was sustainability, and my husband's passion was food," said Kelly. Together they have created a unique restaurant experience that protects the ocean and sea life, celebrates Puerto Rican cuisine, and gives back to the community.

Learn how to get involved with the Surfrider Space Coast Chapter's [Ditch the Straw Challenge](#).



Live music event on The Tiny Turtle's patio

Is your local restaurant [Ocean Friendly](#)? If not, encourage them to [sign up and join the movement](#) to end single-use plastics!

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<https://www.clickorlando.com/florida-today/2023/09/26/cocoa-beach-restaurant-survives-challenges-to-become-local-mainstay/>

<https://www.surfrider.org/news/ocean-friendly-restaurants-spotlight-the-tiny-turtle>