

Tailgating Recycling Program

Where We are Now, Where We Wish to Be, & How to Get There

By David Paschal

Where We are Now

After a full semester of working towards implementing a new Tailgating Recycling Program this fall ('08), the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling is pleased to report that tremendous progress and success has been made in the development and implementation of the new program.

Surveys taken before the home Georgia-Tech football game directly reflected the needs and desires of fans attending football games in Kenan Stadium. Fans overwhelmingly responded with demands for recycling availability before, during, and after the game. Over 150 fans were surveyed early Saturday morning before the Georgia-Tech game. At Carolina we are blessed to be a part of an environmentally conscious fan base. Therefore, the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling is committed to providing an environmentally sustainable experience for those attending football games at Kenan Stadium. Thankfully, the Carolina community recognizes the immeasurable benefit created through the implementation of new recycling programs; and the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling believes that as agents of change the responsibility falls squarely on our shoulders to deliver these programs for the betterment of our community.

After analyzing the results of our Survey and discovering that a newly created Tailgating Recycling Program was in high demand from our fans, the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling began preparing for the pilot program launch. The pilot Tailgating Recycling Program began on November 22, 2008. Facing the Wolfpack of North Carolina State on the football field; volunteers, students and those from the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling, tackled the trash and recycling problem for fans that chose to tailgate. Volunteers, based from a central tent on South Campus, set out to distribute clear and colored bags. Clear bags were used for recyclable materials, such as glass and plastic, while the colored bags were used to gather trash. All that was asked of tailgating fans was that 1) Participants gather their trash and recycling 2) Sort them into their respective bags and 3) Leave the bags in their parking space. As is typical with any pilot program, volunteers mainly stuck to Rams Club designated parking lots in order to make hand-out and clean-up more efficient. This process proved quite effective as .68 tons of recyclable materials were collected from our pilot program, more than Carolina's annual Fall Fest!

As evidenced by the amount of recycling collected, a newly developed Tailgating Recycling Program certainly has potential for incredible results. With growing exposure and lessons learned from our pilot program launch, the Tailgating Recycling Program should grow over the years to come.



Where We Wish to Be

Tailgating Recycling Program

Mission Statement: The Tailgating Recycling Program aims to provide an efficient and fan-friendly avenue for recycling, with the overarching goal of waste reduction at its core. The education of fans regarding environmentally friendly tailgating options is also of prime concern. However, the program's material benefits should be fully realized before any public education agenda receives top priority.

The Program's Specifics:

- Volunteers for the Tailgating Recycling Program should be based from a central student-run organization with a clear connection to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- The Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling will partner with the volunteering student organization to ensure an effective hand-out of recycling and trash bags.
- On Saturdays when the University hosts home football games, a central location will be set-up in a visible part of campus with the following purposes in mind
 - Promotion of the program
 - Central location for volunteers
 - Education of fans
- Clean-up will occur early on Sunday morning, making finding volunteers unlikely. In order to solve this issue either outside clean-up may need to be hired or existing UNC staff compensated for additional work.

How We Can Get There

In order for the Tailgating Recycling Program to realize the aspirations so many hold for it, certain pro-active efforts must be made, beginning as soon as possible.

The most important responsibility in order to ensure a successful program is the recruitment of volunteers. A large reliable group of volunteers willing to give of themselves is the most important ingredient for the success of this program. After the volunteers have been identified, the training of these volunteers becomes paramount. Although training to volunteer in this program will not be difficult, merely educating the volunteers before the program begins will help to ensure the program runs smoothly.

In order to reach the largest number of tailgaters, a system placing volunteers at the entrances of campus parking lot with bags may be the most effective. While these volunteers hand out recycling and trash bags and give directions for their use, other volunteers will be on foot patrolling previously designated areas such as Stadium Drive and University Square, areas with a high concentration of tailgating, with more recycling and trash bags. This being said, a central location on South Campus is invaluable to the coordination and publicity of the program's operations. Whether located near Hinton-James dormitory or Rams Head parking lot, the inherent publicity available with a large tent will surely attract new fans to the program as well as increase coordination during the program's operation.

On the promotional side of the Tailgating Recycling Program, the most effective way to quickly gain new customers is through the readily available group of Tar Heel supporters, the Rams Club. An effort of some sort to educate the Rams Club members of the new program and how they can become a part of it will be a top priority. Whether through direct mailings, e-mail, the athletic department's website, or some other form, the Rams Club must become an integral part of the program's customer base if the program is to succeed and last.

Clean-Up also needs to be addressed. Clean-Up must take place early Sunday morning. Finding volunteers for this work may be difficult, as most college students will not volunteer as early as clean-up must occur. Clean-Up is not difficult, as all that should need to be done is the gathering and disposal of bags that have already been filled with recyclables or trash. Clean-up should take no more than two hours to complete.

This program has the potential to have incredible rewards for our community. Let us take the steps to ensure success in its infancy and after its success work to grow the program. An effective small program can be expanded easily as customers will flock to a program that requires little effort and a large benefit to the community. The Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling is committed to working to create a program that will be held as an example for universities across the nation.



We look forward to Greening Game Day with your help!

The Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling