

TO: Elizabeth Eschenbach and Eileen Cashman

FROM: Jessica Horton

SUBJECT: North County Fair - Zero Waste Humboldt Trip Memo

DATE: 02/19/15 and 02/20/15

SUMMARY

The Plaza in Arcata hosted the North County Fair in mid-September, where Zero Waste Humboldt set up their own booth and several stations around each corner where I worked shifts on Saturday and Sunday. The shifts were 4 hours each, where I sorted trash and recycling from the people who attended the fair.

PURPOSE

The entire purpose of Zero Waste is to reduce the amount of waste produced. In order to accomplish their goals, volunteers and members worked to sort out all trash accumulated in the Fair. This process required us to be present at a station, guiding attendants in the proper disposal of their waste. We had a series of helpful reminders expressed in an email sent beforehand:

- Dump all food and liquids in the compost. It's heavy and we don't want it added to the end trash weight. Plus, all the recycling has to be sorted through and no one wants to sort through food-covered items. You'll earn bonus points if you keep the recycling clean for Alec and his crew!
- Beer cups are COMPOSTABLE. Most all of the food containers from the festival vendors are also compostable.
- Straws, lids, utensils, sauce containers are landfill items. Also remember Maggie's saying- "When in doubt, throw it out"-- or at least set it aside until I check in with you.
- If you see any water bottles, please set them aside. I'll search out where they're coming from and try to keep them from getting into the plaza.

In the past years, Zero Waste was able to cut down the total 1.17 tons of trash to 0.57 tons in one year and are now down to 0.42 tons.

CONCLUSION

The volunteer work I participated in this trip significantly paid off at the end of the day as the accumulated trash throughout the entire day all fit in a couple of containers, proving Zero Waste's presence plays a very important role in reducing and properly disposing of waste that otherwise may have ended up in the wrong place. I found my role at the stations I worked to be requiring much more effort than expected as I was continuously sorting out and helping people place their trash in the right containers, therefore I knew that my volunteering was truly making a difference.