


Free Your Event from Bottled Water

*A Practical Guide to
Take Back the Tap
at Your Next Event
and Avoid the
Waste, Expense
and Environmental
Problems with
Bottled Water*

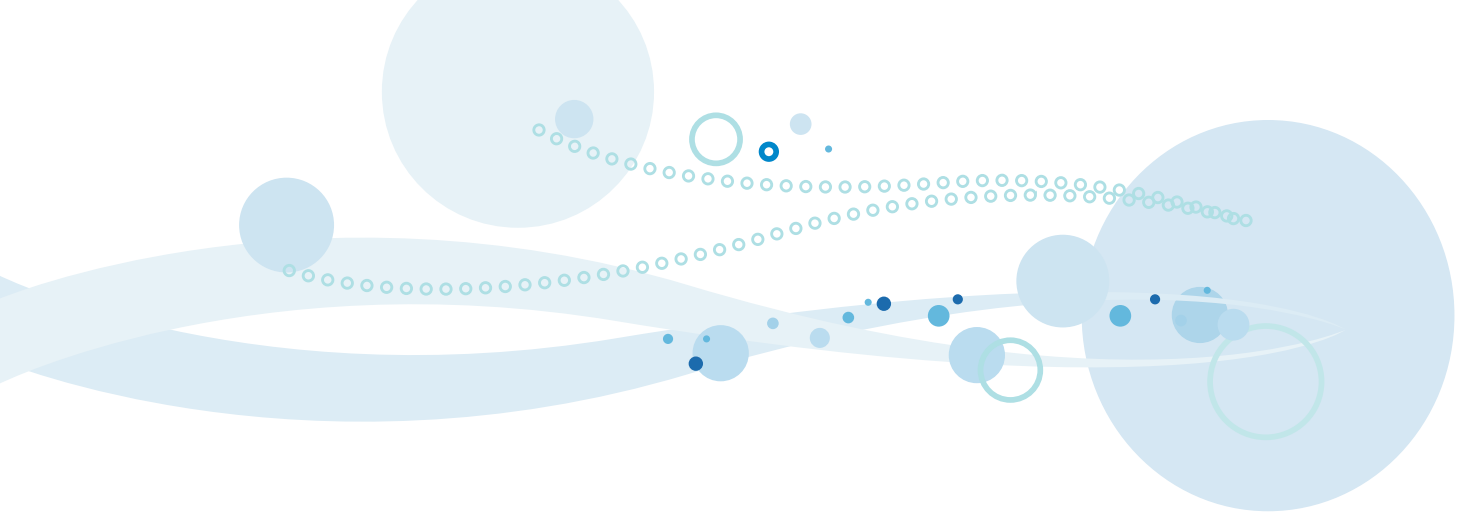


I ❤️ **TAP**
WATER

www.takebackthetap.org

food&waterwatch





About Food & Water Watch

Food & Water Watch is a nonprofit consumer rights organization, based in Washington, DC, that challenges the corporate control and abuse of our food supply and water resources.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Why Your Event Should Shun Bottled Water: The Truth About Tap Water.....	2
Ten Key Steps to Freeing Your Event from Bottled Water.....	3
Case Studies.....	8
College and University Events.....	9
Catered Events.....	10
Trade Shows.....	11
Conferences.....	12
Festivals and Specialty Events.....	13
Checklist for Planning a Bottled Water Free Event.....	14



Food and Water Watch's Rachel Richardson (above) and others help make Riverkeeper's WaterFest a bottled water free event in October 2008. Riverkeeper is Food & Water Watch's partner in the Take Back the Tap New York campaign. Photos by Wenonah Hauter.



Differentiate your event from others by joining the surging nationwide movement to kick the bottled water habit and Take Back the Tap. Instead of buying into the myth of purity in a bottle and littering the landscape with empty water bottles, use this guide to free your event from bottled water.

Big city mayors, including those in San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis and New York City, are joining in this effort by prohibiting the use of city funding for bottled water – effectively eliminating it in all city buildings and city-funded events. Restaurants are stopping the sale of non-carbonated bottled water. Event planners are also joining this movement. From small, catered events to large conferences and trade shows, freeing events from bottled water is becoming more and more common.

During Labor Day weekend 2008, San Francisco hosted the inaugural celebration of Slow Food Nation. The event brought more than 60,000 people over three days and was entirely bottled water free. Food & Water Watch coordinated the water stations to deliver tap water for all attendees to enjoy. As part of this mass hydration effort, we developed this guide to ease the way for other planners who want to break free from bottled water.



A Food & Water Watch volunteer poses with a custom-printed reusable water bottle at a special tap water station designed for Slow Food Nation. Photo by Mike Kahn/Green Stock Media.

Why Your Event Should Shun Bottled Water: The Truth About Tap Water

In 2007, U.S. consumers spent \$12 billion on nearly 9 billion gallons of bottled water, in large part because advertising spin has led them to believe that water in a bottle is safer or better than tap water. It is not. In fact, many bottling companies get their water straight from public water supplies and then sell it for far more than the cost of tap water. Meanwhile, the production, transportation and consumption of the plastic bottles burns fossil fuels, generates mountains of waste and taxes our already overburdened public water systems.

Tap water is safe.

Tap water in the United States is just as safe as bottled water and, in many cases, more so. The federal government requires far more rigorous and frequent safety testing and monitoring of municipal drinking water than bottled water. The Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates tap water, requires that utility companies test municipal water hundreds of times per month, while the Food and Drug Administration, which regulates bottled water, requires only one water test per week by bottling companies.

Independent testing has found arsenic, microbes, toxic chemicals and other pollutants in various brands of bottled water. Many researchers believe that phthalates, which are chemicals used to soften plastic, can leach from plastic bottles into the water they contain. Phthalates and other substances used to make plastic have been linked to birth defects, cancer and developmental problems in humans.

Tap water is cheaper.

Although bottled water is not superior to tap water, it is far more expensive. On a per gallon basis, tap water costs about \$0.002, while bottled water costs \$0.89

Note: Statistics on this page are cited from the report “Take Back the Tap” available at www.takebackthetap.org.

to \$8.26. Since as much as 40 percent of bottled water comes straight from the same water supplies as water from the tap, this amounts to paying up to 4,000 times more for the same product.

Tap water eliminates the social and environmental problems caused by bottled water.

Bottled water causes many equity and environmental problems. Already, public water systems in the United States are facing challenges in providing affordable water for their citizens. When beverage companies take water from municipal or underground sources and charge exorbitant prices for it, they are profiting on water that local people need.

Meanwhile, the production and transportation of plastics takes a significant toll on the environment. Annual U.S. plastic bottle production requires more than 17 million barrels of oil, enough to fuel one million vehicles on our roads each year. The industrial processes emit toxic chemicals, while the transport adds more pollution and carbon emissions that contribute to global climate change. In the end, the 86 percent of the empty plastic bottles in the United States are not recycled and end up as mountains of plastic trash that will be sitting in landfills for years to come.

Cost Comparison

Use this chart to consider the price tag for making your event bottled water free. You may find it's cheaper to provide only tap water. Either way, the savings for the environment are great!

	Tap Water	Bottled Water
Water Costs		
Containers/Bottles		
Waste Removal		
Messaging/Marketing*	FREE	
Total		

*Don't forget to include some Food & Water Watch materials to educate attendees about the benefits of drinking tap water.

Ten Steps to Freeing Your Event from Bottled Water

To create this guide, we interviewed a wide range of people — event organizers, green caterers, non-profit employees, public utility commission staffers and representatives from water filtration companies — who eliminated bottled water while planning their events. Although every event is different, we narrowed the process of going bottled water free down to 10 key steps based on the common experiences of the planners and other professionals we interviewed.

1. Learn whether the venue will serve exclusively tap water.

It is important to verify first that the venue will allow tap water to be served in place of bottled water.

Surprisingly, many venues work with caterers or vendors who have contracts obligating them to serve bottled water. Therefore, it is important to have conversations with the vendor up front about your wish to exclude all bottled water from the event. Experienced event planners recommend having multiple conversations with vendors to ensure that they understand that you do not want any bottled water.

2. Find the best tap water source.

Locating the best tap water source at the venue is an integral step in planning the event. The choice should be based on the characteristics of the venue and resources available for the event.

Ideally, the venue will have an indoor or outdoor tap water source that is easily accessible and already used to provide drinking water. If this is the case, set up a water station (place where water is distributed at the event) for dispensing water from this tap. If it's not the case, some outdoor venues may have an existing potable water line that is not typically used to provide drinking water and could be tapped into for this type of event. In this situation, it is a good idea to test the



water quality or ask the groundskeepers if the line is connected to a “back flow preventer” or other technology that can flush the line. The municipality’s water quality department usually will test the water quality for you. It also is a good idea to measure the water pressure to ensure adequate flow to serve the number of people expected to attend. This is a simple step that takes just seconds. Most groundskeepers will have the necessary tool on site. Your water calculation in the next step will come in handy for this.

In the case of a venue with no access to potable tap water, contact the local municipal water utility to find out if it offers the use of large water tank trucks to serve tap water at public events. These trucks can be parked on site to pump water to serving stations. Although this may solve the tap water access problem, it is very costly for the water utility to provide this service. While some utilities may be able to sponsor the cost of the truck, others may not have the resources to do so. Typically, this is the option of last resort.

If the event is outside and existing water lines are being used, it is very important to check with the local health department on permitting requirements.

3. Calculate how much water your event requires.

For some event planners, such as caterers for smaller events, this may not be necessary. However, for large outdoor events, it may be necessary to determine how much water will be needed to be sure that the water source has adequate pressure to serve all attendees. (Water pressure is not typically a problem but is important to investigate in advance.) Use the following calculation to make this determination:

- **Multiply the number of people in attendance by one liter (or 34 ounces) to calculate the total water needed for one day of an event.**

- **On a hot day, especially at an outdoor event, multiply this total by 1.5.**

Example: FWW curated water at the Slow Food Nation Event in San Francisco in August 2008. Half of this event was held at an indoor venue and the other half was outdoors, so we calculated:

20,000 people x 1 liter = 20,000 liters for indoor use

20,000 people x 1.5 liters = 30,000 liters for outdoor use

We provided the water systems to them for free in exchange for the publicity. We generally rent them out, and it could be done that way, but can be done in exchange for sponsorship. Most water system dealers would be willing to do that at a big event.

– Casey Taylor, Taylor Made Water Systems

Hold the Bottle, Please

A person at an event drinks, on average, one to one and a half liters of water per day, depending on whether the event is held indoors or outdoors. Most events provide half-liter bottles of water for participants. Events that serve tap water therefore have the potential to save between two and three plastic bottles per attendee.

Using the example of Food & Water Watch (FWW) at the Slow Food Nation event, it is clear how economically and environmentally beneficial bottled-free events can be:

FWW Slow Food Nation Event in San Francisco

(half of this event will be held at an indoor venue):

20,000 people x 2 bottles each (1 liter) = 40,000 bottles for indoor use

20,000 people x 3 bottles each (1.5 liters) = 60,000 bottles for outdoor use

Total saved: 100,000 water bottles in one day!

4. Decide whether to use a water filtration device.

For many event organizers, filtering and/or cooling the water is important. Some venue kitchens may already have water filters that can be used for the event, especially for caterers. However, it is more likely that you will not be so fortunate.

If you would like the water to be filtered, contact a filtration company in your area. Several independent certifying agencies verify filtration devices. The most notable and well-regarded organizations (all non-profit) that test and verify water treatment and filtration products are: National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF), Water Quality Association, and Underwriters Laboratories Inc. Filtration devices can also be researched on the Food & Water Watch web site (www.fwwatch.org)



Reusable bottles are distributed at a tap-water-only press event announcing Food & Water Watch's Take Back the Tap campaign in San Francisco. Photo by Noelle Ferdon.

Some water filtration systems need a power source. For those filters, it's important to be sure the venue has a water source close to a power source beforehand and plan your water stations accordingly.

TIP: Ask the water filtration company to be a partner at the event. The company may be willing to donate its filtration system in exchange for free advertising at the event. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement that could eliminate the cost of leasing or purchasing a filter.

5. Plan tap water distribution/water station set-up.

A key consideration is how the tap water will be delivered to the event participants. Your goal should be to make the water system self-serve. Otherwise, your labor needs will increase dramatically. It is important to consider how to set up the water stations to ensure easy flow of people and to prevent long lines. A single

water station can have numerous taps with individual lines of people waiting for each tap. With more than one station, be sure to evenly space them so that water is accessible at all locations. Existing tap water sources, such as water fountains, can also be considered in this planning.

The most challenging aspects are making sure that access to the water is easy and reliable, that the water isn't coming out at a snail's pace and that we don't have long lines. The most important thing is that the delivery of water is successful.
 – Noelle Ferdon, Food & Water Watch

If using a filtration device, be sure an electrical outlet is nearby for power. If your event is outdoors, be sure to let the event planners know in advance how much power you will need. It may be necessary to connect the water source and the serving station with a hose placed outside of walkways. Also, a drain hose may be necessary to capture water that overflows, though this is not as important for outdoor events. Even better, equip stations with spigots that shut off automatically to prevent this problem.

Although many events will not require something this elaborate, the water station for the Slow Food Nation event was designed by an architecture firm. Food & Water Watch took the station across town for the grand reopening of the California Academy of Sciences. The Academy of Sciences, San Francisco's largest museum, underwent a major green renovation that included eliminating bottled water from the entire facility. To support this mission, the reopening in September 2008 in Golden Gate Park was also entirely bottled water free. In partnership with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Food & Water Watch and Taylor Made Water Systems, the event served tap water to more than 60,000 people in two days.

6. Select tap water containers.




Once the water stations are in place, figure out how the attendees will hold the water. Several options exist, each with different advantages and disadvantages, depending on the type of event, the venue, the number of participants and the resources available.

Glassware

Reusable glassware is the ideal container for more formal events. While often available at venues such as hotels and convention centers, glassware can also easily be ordered from rental companies that deliver to and pick up from the event site. This arrangement is also the most aesthetically pleasing.

Reusable Bottles

Reusable water bottles may also be sold at the event to benefit a cause or a sponsor. For example, at various events in California, Klean Kanteen provides its water filtration system in exchange for a booth to sell its reusable bottles.

	Container Type	Average Cost	Pros	Cons
	Rented Glassware	50¢ per 12 ounce glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No waste. Can be delivered to and picked up from site. Aesthetically pleasing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to rent glassware in large bulk. Not ideal for outdoor events. More expensive than compostable cups in bulk of 1000 or more.
	Reusable BPA-free Bottles/Coffee Mugs	\$15.00 for a 27 ounce bottle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No waste. Generate proceeds for an organization or company. Can advertise or promote a cause. Most cost efficient container on a per use basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More expensive initially. Unexpected cost for event attendees. Requires additional logistical planning to sell your own bottles on site.
	Compostable (PLA-Corn Plastic) Cups	1000 for \$115.00 50 for \$7.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodegradable so can be disposed of, alongside food, in a commercial composting system. Easy for large, public events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates waste, which has to be transported after event. Not as environmentally friendly as reusable products. Corn for PLA is genetically modified corn. Most cups are processed by agribusiness company Archer Daniels Midland.

TIP: Advance advertising of the event's bottled water free status can reduce the overall usage of reusable or compostable cups because it will encourage attendees to bring their own bottles.

Another option is to ask a sponsor to donate reusable bottles with the company's logo. For example, at the 2008 Snowsports Industries of America (SIA) Trade Show, the Sessions sports apparel company gave reusable plastic bottles to attendees. Event organizers co-sponsored the expense of the bottles and both Sessions and SIA benefitted from the free advertising. Although this is an ideal arrangement, it is not always possible, so there are several alternatives.

Compostable Cups

Compostable/biodegradable cups are becoming increasingly available. The cups, typically made of polylactic acid (PLA), a derivative of corn, and at times mixed with compostable paper, biodegrade within 180 days in a commercial composting system.

For those already planning to compost food and container waste, adding compostable cups to the mix is not an issue. However, if composting is not already arranged, this will require some additional logistical planning to get bins in place and ensure that the compost is properly removed at the end of the event.

TIP: One way to avoid some of this extra work is by partnering with a local government agency or environmental organization that can help with the composting. For example, Bioneers partnered with the Marin Conservation Corps to take care of separating the biodegradables from the trash.

These cups can be ordered online in bulk prior to the event, but be sure to allow plenty of lead time to order the containers. And keep an eye on other sustainable container alternatives that are on the horizon. The cups do add costs to the event, but the expense can be minimized by getting the cups donated or by obtaining sponsorship via a logo on the cup.

The chart on page 6 highlights some of the advantages and disadvantages of each type of container.

7. Contact potential partners for the event.

As described in previous steps, engaging partners can make an event easier to plan. Given the momentum behind the movement back to tap water, many government agencies and green corporations are eager to affiliate themselves with bottle free events. Sponsors can help reduce costs by providing equipment or subsidizing the cost of containers. Partners can assist in advertising for the event, or they can help with logistical arrangements. Typically the positive publicity associated with being involved in an eco-friendly event is encouragement enough for partners or sponsors to get involved. The following are potential partners:

- City governments
- Public utility commissions
- Water filtration companies that may sponsor or lease filtration equipment
- Departments of the environment may help with composting
- Public or private waste companies (that may want to promote composting programs)
- Departments of parks and recreation or other local agencies that manage the grounds on which an event will be held may help with logistical arrangements

8. Develop marketing and publicity.

Marketing and publicizing the event as bottled water free is an important element to its success.

TIP: Experienced planners recommend providing multiple reminders to attendees, partners, sponsors and others involved about the event being bottled water free.

For conferences, trade shows or annual meetings, including an announcement in the registration materials and any other follow up materials is a good idea. Posting information on the web site of the event or of a sponsoring organization can also help to spread the message. Advertising the event's bottled water free status in advance can reduce the overall

usage of reusable or compostable cups by alerting attendees to bring their own bottles. This publicity also helps remind other event partners, sponsors, exhibitors and others that only tap water should be available. For example, sometimes exhibitors give away bottled water as free gifts, so it may help to write in the exhibitor agreement that bottled water will not be served at the event.

Hanging signs on the day of the event is important as well. They direct attendees to water stations. They also provide the opportunity to educate attendees about the benefits and safety of tap water.

Finally, being a part of an event where bottled water is prohibited can be a selling point for your company. For example, green caterers can promote the fact that their company does not use bottled water. Progressive organizations and companies can try to get media coverage of their involvement in the event. So it may be a good idea to incorporate the bottled water-free angle into the event's overall outreach message.

9. Plan for the provision of water to speakers and exhibitors, as well as on field trips or for other special situations.

It is important to provide water for speakers, exhibitors and other special guests of the event who may have different functions than the attendees. Speakers may expect to receive a bottle of water, so it will be important to provide containers and pitchers or some other vessel of water specifically for the speakers. Volunteers may need to help with this task. Exhibitors may also be accustomed to bringing their own bottled water or having it provided for them. Providing water and containers for exhibitors will help to eliminate this use of bottled water at the event.

If a field trip is planned as part of the event, be sure to remind participants to fill up their water bottles before leaving for the trip. Allocate time in the agenda of your meeting for this. Bringing a refillable 5-gallon jug is also helpful for field trips leaving by bus.



A poster promoting FWW's water curation at Slow Food Nation.

10. Recruit staff and volunteers to help with the event.

It is important to line up an adequate number of staff/volunteers to help serve tap water on the day of the event. This will depend on the chosen water distribution method. Typically, each water distribution station will need two staff people to help ensure the tap is operating properly, but more people may be needed if the water distribution plan calls for additional tanks. For example, the Bioneers Annual Conference planned to fill five-gallon bottles of water to distribute to the tents set up outdoors. It took staff time to fill and haul the water bottles to the various locations. However, Bioneers used the same people to help set up tables, compost waste and haul water. Think about recruiting volunteers from the local water utility, a filtration company, non-profits and other partners you are working with to support the mission of a bottle free event.

Case Studies

The following section provides examples of recent bottled water free events, including a university event, a catered party, a trade show, a conference and a special event. Planners of all kinds are Taking Back the Tap!

College/University Events

Colleges and universities hold a number of large events each year that could easily go bottled water free. Environmental student organizations can partner with university officials to move away from serving bottled water at events such as new student orientation, convocation, graduation, homecoming, career fairs and university sponsored concerts.

Guelph University's Student Orientation

Guelph, Ontario

Tap In!, a student group at Guelph University in Ontario, Canada, was fed up with the sale of bottled water during new student orientation. With more than 5,000 new students, parents, staff and faculty in attendance, cases of bottled water typically cover the campus during the event. It was different in 2008. New student orientation was bottled water free.

Tap in! arranged for a truck to distribute water during orientation week. The truck was parked in front of the main walkway of the university and advertised the bottled water free event. Tap In!, along with community organizations such as Wellington Water Watchers, sold stainless steel bottles at booths and tables. Advance advertising promoted the event as bottled water free and encouraged people to bring their own bottles. The 24,000 liter water truck only needed to be filled once for the entire event. The water was inspected by the city to verify that it met all city health standards. These efforts by Tap In! saved Guelph University from wasting thousands of plastic water bottles during one of the school's largest events of the year.

Venue: Guelph University

Attendance: More than 5,000 new students, parents, faculty and staff



The Tap In! table and municipal water truck at Guelph University's 2008 Student Orientation. Photo provided by Izzy Hirji.

Water Distribution: A water truck hired from a local dairy company dispensed municipal water at a central location on the campus.

Containers: Student organizations sold bottles at the orientation. Students were encouraged to bring their own reusable bottle.

Marketing & Publicity: The water truck was located in a central location and advertised that orientation was bottled water free.

For more information contact Izzy Hirji at watersustained@gmail.com

We used a water truck in a big open space in front of the main walkway where everyone walking by could see. The response was very positive and we got tons of people signing up to find out more about our group.

– Izzy Hirji, Tap in! Member, Guelph University

Izzy's Key Recommendations

- Use a municipal water truck, or rent a truck for water transport, for an informal outdoor/indoor event. Remember to contact the city for sanitation inspections if necessary.
- Ask whether the university will sponsor the event by donating reusable bottles or compostable cups.
- Use the event to increase awareness on campus!



I hate using bottled water because there is no point, especially in New York, which has some of the best water in the country. It's better to use regular tap water with slices of lemon and depending on the weather, put it on ice. It could be a great selling point if you said up front: We proudly serve tap water or purified filtered water. We are not wasting our extra resources. We are taking advantage of free, valuable resources, especially at an event that is geared toward eco-friendly people.

– Louisa Shafia, Lucid Food

Catered Events

Eliminating bottled water at catering events can be quite simple. The biggest challenge may be breaking contracts for bottled water with the beverage vendor. However, most caterers can rent glassware and serve tap water in glass pitchers and glasses. It cuts down on waste and makes for a more picturesque event.

Lucid Food

New York, New York

Lucid Food, a boutique catering company in New York City, proudly serves filtered tap water. Louisa Shafia, the owner of the catering company, tries to be eco-friendly in all aspects of her business by supporting local food, composting and recycling. So going bottled water free was an easy way to cut down on the waste generated at most catered events. In her opinion, not only do most people prefer the environmentally friendly aspects of a bottled water free event, but

they also find that the pitchers of tap water are more aesthetically pleasing than bottled water, especially when she adds berries or lemon slices (organic of course!). Adding fruit also gives the water a subtly sweet taste. Louisa suggests renting glassware from local event and party rental companies that can deliver it to the site.

For more information, contact Louisa Shafia at 212 465 3457 or louisa@lucidfood.com



Louisa's Key Recommendations

- Rent glassware from a local company and have it delivered to the site of the event.
- Put organic fruit in the water to make it more attractive and to add flavor.
- Market the fact that your business does not use bottled water.

Trade Shows

Trade shows provide an easy opportunity for eliminating the unnecessary use of bottled water. Finding a filtration company to partner with the event and a sponsor for the bottles can really make your trade show free of bottled water without much effort.

Snow International Association Trade Show 2008

Las Vegas, Nevada

Sessions, an eco-friendly snowboard and action sports apparel company, teamed up with Taylor Made Water Systems in January 2008 to make the Snowsports Industries of America Trade Show in Las Vegas a bottled water free event. Taylor Made Water Systems hooked up filtration machines to the tap water lines, and Sessions gave away free reusable plastic water bottles to the more than 6,000 of the 20,000 attendees. The event was such a hit that they have already decided to team up again for SIA's 2009 trade show and increase the number of water stations and the bottle giveaways.

Venue: Mandalay Bay Conference Center

Attendance: More than 20,000 people

Water Distribution: Two distribution sites were set up with point-of-use coolers that not only connected to tap water, but also filtered and chilled it. The filtration company worked with the Mandalay Bay Conference Center and the Snowsports Industries of America staff to set up the water connection at each site.

It's not that much work. You need a tap water source and a filter/chiller, because people prefer cold, filtered water to warm tap water.

– Casey Taylor, President, Taylor Made Water Systems

The reusable bottles meant less plastic waste ending up in the landfill when it came to cleaning up after the show.

– Danielle Glagola, Marketing Manager, Sessions

Casey's Key Recommendations

- Plan in advance.
- Publicize that it is a bottled water free event.
- Contact the water supplier well in advance to make sure all necessary arrangements can be made to set up water stations.
- Find partners/sponsors who may mutually benefit from making the event bottle free.

Containers: Sessions gave away free reusable plastic water bottles to all customers and attendees. No cups were provided.

Marketing & Publicity: Sessions and SIA sent out a press release to all industry contacts before the event. The company was listed in the daily trade show paper for giving away the bottles. Signs were also displayed at Sessions' Booth and the main trade show Ecosource booth.

For more information, contact Casey Taylor, casey@taylormadewater.com



Participants fill up their free reusable bottles at the Snowsports Industries of America Trade Show. Photo provided by Casey Taylor.

Conferences

Annual conferences, whether held indoors or outdoors, can easily be made bottle water free. It simplifies things to announce the bottle free event in registration materials and remind participants before the event so that people can bring their own bottles.

Bioneers Annual Conference 2007

San Rafael, California

Bioneers, a 20-year-old non-profit organization focused on sharing the most practical solutions for environmental sustainability and social justice, organized their first bottled water free annual conference in 2007. Located on the Marin County Fairgrounds in San Rafael California, the event exclusively provided tap water to its attendees. The fairgrounds boast buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright as well as a large, open outdoor space. Bioneers set up tents to hold meetings in this area and provided tap water in all of the locations.

Venue: Marin County Fairgrounds

Attendance: 3,500 people

Water Distribution: Tap water was available inside the buildings on the fairgrounds. Outside, Klean Kanteen provided a reverse osmosis filtration system. Bioneers staff refilled five-gallon jugs of water from the filtration device and dispersed them throughout all the tents set up in the outdoor space.

Every outreach message was highlighting the fact that it was bottled water free. We wanted to give everyone the opportunity to bring his or her own water bottle. ... The event was an absolute success. We'll be doing it again this year and from now on.

– Roberto Aponte, Bioneers

Containers: Bioneers encouraged attendees to bring their own reusable water bottles. Klean Kanteen sold stainless steel bottles at a booth set up next to their filter, and another vendor sold reusable plastic bottles. Bioneers also provided compostable cups at the water stations.

Marketing & Publicity: Bioneers sent out notices to all registered participants explaining that it was going to be a bottled water free event, starting four months ahead of the event. The organization maintained regular communication about the event being bottled water free to help remind people to bring their own reusable bottle.

For more information, contact Roberto Aponte, robertoa@bioneers.org

Roberto's Key Recommendations

- In selecting a venue, talk to all vendors to ask them not to provide bottled water. It may take several conversations for them to understand that you do not want any bottled water at the event.
- Plan the water distribution carefully to ensure that water and containers are both easy to access.
- Get as many in-kind sponsors as possible.
- Use the event to educate attendees about the problems with bottled water.



Festivals and Specialty Events

Slow Food Nation 2008

San Francisco, California

The last weekend in August 2008 Slow Food Nation held its inaugural event in San Francisco. This event was entirely bottled-water free throughout all 3 event locations. Food & Water Watch teamed up with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to coordinate the logistics and messaging around this important aspect of Slow Food Nation.

To curate the water needed for Slow Food Nation, FWW partnered with a San Francisco based architecture firm, SMWM Architects, to design and build the main water station and with US Pure Water to facilitate the water delivery at each station.

Venue: The event took place at three different indoor and outdoor settings: Fort Mason, the Civic Center and Great Meadows.

Attendance: More than 60,000 people

Water Distribution: Water stations and smaller satellite stations were set up at each location. The outdoor stations were connected to potable water lines onsite and the indoor water stations were connected to water lines in the site kitchen and main pavilion. The SFPUC also brought a water truck to one outdoor site. US Pure Water, a local filtration company, provided the filtration/distribution machines in exchange for company recognition.



A special water station designed to serve filtered tap water to festival-goers at Slow Food's inaugural celebration in August 2008. Photo by Mike Kahn/Green Stock Media.

Containers: Food & Water Watch sold 4,000 co-branded Take Back the Tap and Slow Food Nation Kleen Kanteen water bottles. Branded compostable cups were also provided by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission for attendees.

Marketing & Publicity: SFN advertised the event in advance as bottled water free. FWW and SFN also developed a collaborative media strategy to bring attention to this aspect through radio, web and print media.

For more information, contact Noelle Ferdon, nferdon@fwwatch.org

Noelle's Key Recommendations

- Confirm that there is a potable water source to make a bottled-water free event possible.
- Find a partner or partners in government, non-profit or private industry, i.e. a water filtration company.
- Don't forget to include messaging around the social, economic and environmental benefits of an event without bottled water.
- Start planning early!

Checklist for Planning a Bottled Water Free Event

1. Learn whether the venue will serve exclusively tap water

- Find out if the venue can accommodate bottled water free events
- Ensure that caterers allow for tap water only events

2. Calculate how much water your event requires

- Multiply the number of people in attendance by one liter (or 34 ounces) to calculate the total water needed for one day of an event.
- On a hot day, especially at an outdoor event, multiply this total by 1.5.

3. Find the best tap water source

- Determine whether the venue has potable tap water
- Find out if the source is typically used as drinking water. If not, test the quality to ensure drinkability
- Check the water pressure to ensure it will sufficiently serve the number of people you anticipate attending the event

4. Decide whether to use a water filtration device

- Contact filtration company, if needed
- Ask the company to provide a filtration machine in exchange for event sponsorship

5. Plan tap water distribution/water station set-up

- Determine the location of your tap water stations at the event
- Map out the event flow, ensuring even and adequate distribution of water
- Check that all necessary power sources and water sources are in place

6. Select tap water containers

- Choose the type of beverage container for the event
- Order containers well in advance
- If a sponsor is providing containers, arrange for sponsorship in advance

7. Contact potential partners for the event

- Request partnership/sponsorship
- Correspond regularly with event partners

8. Develop marketing and publicity

- Advertise the event as bottled water free from the beginning
- Notify attendees about event being bottled water free multiple times
 - Advertise the bottle free aspect of the event on the web site
 - Advertise on all written materials
- Create signs directing attendees to water stations and education about tap water

9. Plan for provision of water to speakers and exhibitors, as well as for field trips or other special situations

- Develop a plan for providing water to speakers
- Determine how to provide water to exhibitors
- Make a plan for providing water on field trips

10. Recruit and schedule staff and volunteers

- Schedule staff and volunteers to serve water the day of the event

Contact List

For information on how to make your next event bottled water free, contact **Erica Schuetz**, communications assistant for Food & Water Watch, at 202-683-4903 or eschuetz@fwwatch.org.

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Notes





Photo by Mike Kahn/Green Stock Media

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