

# From Coffee to Compost: Network of Environmentally Conscious Organizations

Bozeman, Montana

**W**hy are students cruising the streets of Bozeman, Montana, on bicycles outfitted with trailers? To collect coffee grounds for composting! Coffee grounds are an excellent addition to a compost pile. The grounds are relatively rich in nitrogen, providing bacteria in the soil the energy they need to turn organic matter into compost.

Bozeman's "Coffee 2 Compost" (C2C) program has helped bring thousands of pounds of spent coffee grounds to compost every year. Initially started as a fundraising and volunteer recruitment tool for a nonprofit in Missoula, Montana, the C2C program eventually spread to several other towns in the region.

Incubated by the Bozeman Youth Initiative during the winter of 2011, the project has since passed on to a group of students at Montana State University that participate in the Network of Environmentally Conscious Organizations (NECO).

**T**he Bozeman Youth Initiative is a Montana nonprofit organization that connects the youth of Bozeman to their community. NECO is a student-driven grassroots group dedicated to connecting resources between Montana State University and the greater Montana community, emphasizing environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

## Contact:

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Photo Credit: Madison Nixon

NECO has partnered with two local coffee shops that were looking to lower their waste outputs. Volunteers conduct weekly pickups at each partner shop and then bring the spent coffee grounds to compost bins. One small coffee shop can produce as much as 30 gallons of coffee grounds per week! More than enough to keep young volunteers busy and create heaps of fertile compost. Partner shops, in turn, are happy to spend less time dealing with messy, drippy coffee grounds.

## Project Spotlight

- **Project Type:** Community composting
- **Age Level:** Middle school, high school, college
- **Scale of Participation:** Small group
- **Learning Objectives:** To encourage waste reduction and sustainability in communities
- **Duration:** Ongoing
- **Available Partnership Opportunities:** Coffee shops, restaurants, food stores, schools, community service organizations

Volunteers estimate that the C2C program has helped to divert 5,000 pounds of coffee waste from the landfill every year. Given the success and expanding interest in the program, coordinators at the Bozeman Youth Initiative were inspired to compose a handbook to help others start their own C2C program.



Photo Credit: Madison Nixon

## Field Trip Destinations:

- Griffith Park Composting Facility
  - Check out LA City San's website for more information
  - It is designed to compost the organic matter produced in the regional park. Maintenance crews collect dropped leaves, lawn clippings, and trimmings from acres of landscaping. Zoo doo (collected from herbivores such as elephants and zebras) and biosolids are blended with chipped park greenery and composted. TOPGRO™ the final compost product, is then used in Griffith Park, thus completing the full cycle of recycling.
- Sanitary Landfills
  - Calabasas Landfill (818) 889-0363
    - Living near a landfill is not pleasant... Reducing, Reusing and Recycling is better than throwing it in the trash!!
    - <https://www.theacorn.com/articles/calabasas-landfill-causes-a-stink/>
  - Scholl Canyon Landfill (818) 243-9779
    - Natural Gas production landfill
    - The Scholl Canyon Golf and Tennis Club was built in 1993, by the American Golf Corp. based in Santa Monica. Constructed on top of the northwest part of the landfill in the San Rafael Hills. The newer layout replaced a golf facility that was **closed in 1989 after dangerous levels of methane were released from under the golf course.**



**Resources for Students, by Students**

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