

Green is good when keeping National Cherry Festival clean

By **KIMBERLY WARREN**
Record-Eagle staff writer

Green isn't often a color associated with the National Cherry Festival—cherries are supposed to be red, right? But Anna Collinson is working with a team of volunteers—The Green Team—to assure that the festival is green.

"We want to be able to show our guests that we're concerned about the impact the Cherry Festival makes," said Collinson, director of recycling for the Cherry Festival. "The recycling program is really a great program."

Collinson's Green Team works daily in and around their tent at the Open Space food court, recycling and cleaning up.

"Recycling is one of the few events that needs staff all week," said Collinson. "Volunteers work in the tent, and I'll go around with extra volunteers to service Festival garbage cans throughout the day to make sure they're not overflowing."

"Everybody pitches in a hand—volunteers, directors, the executive board."

Green Team members are made up of Community Share groups who apply to the Festival each year and use the opportunity for

fund-raising. Collinson said some of the groups that participate include 4-H groups, high school sports teams and environmental organizations.

Collinson said the team helps to compost most every material put out at the food court.

"We compost more than the average compost pile," she said. "Paper plates, meat, bones, everything—except plastic, we pull that out."

Collinson said she has helped to encourage vendors at the food court to move away from plastic materials so everything could be composted or recycled.

"We did receive a grant last year to recycle P.E.T. plastics and buy specific containers for those types of bottles," Collinson said.

Most water bottles and pop bottles are made out of the P.E.T. — or No. 1 — plastic, she added.

Along with the list of compostables, Collinson added that the Green Team collects materials such as glass, cardboard, tin and aluminum for recycling. In this list, she included pie plates from the pie eating contest and wine glasses from the wine tasting.

"Our work is concentrated on the Open Space because that's where the largest concentration of people are," Collinson said.

Besides asking the vendors to use all recyclable materials,



The National Cherry Festival Green Team has made major strides in recycling festival trash.

Collinson said they are using the vendors' trays to also spread the word.

"As a customer at the food court area, you'll buy your food and get a tray with a liner that tells all about the recycling program," she said.

Collinson added that the recycling program is promoted in an unusual way.

"There are no trash cans in the food court area," she said. "Many people happen upon us because they cannot locate the trash can. Typically, we set up a decoy can to draw people to the tent — and it works."

Once people find the tent and

learn about the recycling efforts of the Festival, Collinson said, they are enthusiastic.

"It is good to know that most people want to properly dispose of their trash in the first place," she said. "It's good to know how excited they get when they learn of the recycling efforts."

The recycling tent also sports a meter to gauge the amount of materials collected for recycling. It is designed to help educate festival-goers about The Green Team's work.

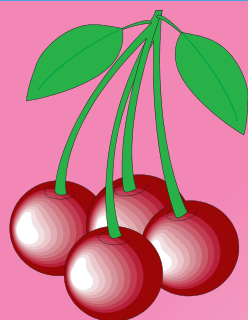
In previous years, Collinson said the recycling program has recycled an average of 43 percent of all

waste from the Open Space area, and during the 2001 festival, the Green Team helped clean up 63,000 pounds of materials total—20,000 of them being recyclables.

Shoreline Waste in Manistee will provide trash and recycling services for the National Cherry Festival this year.

Collinson said the program's success is due for the most part to the volunteers.

"We couldn't do it without the volunteers," she said. "The Cherry Festival is like a big family, and everybody works together to see it succeed because you all have the same goal: to make it work."



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