

Denali Park Partners Take Active Role in Zero-Landfill Initiative

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(Zero-Landfill ambassadors show their spirit and their reusable hand towels)

In 2015, Denali National Park and Preserve embarked on the Zero-Landfill Initiative along with Yosemite National Park and Grand Tetons National Park.

In partnership with the Denali Education Center and Doyon/Aramark Joint Venture (JV), and supported by the National Parks Conservation Association and Subaru of America, the primary goal is to increase the park waste diversion rate from 15% to 30%.

In order to be successful, it was recognized that there was a need to engage other Denali borough stakeholders in creating a culture of recycling and reducing waste. In one effort of the multi-pronged approach, Denali Education Center formed student-led groups at three borough schools to develop recycling programs and to tackle what the students identified as important community waste issues that they wanted to highlight. This year-round, community partnership is working to reduce landfill waste through education, changing habits, increasing recycling rates and reducing sources of waste coming into the borough.

Within the park, changes include increasing recycling opportunities for guests and employees while educating visitors about the initiative via interpreters, social media, and transit and tour bus drivers. In late 2017 Doyon/Aramark Joint Venture, (JV) began construction on a new recycling facility that will ultimately be a donation to the park. It is slated to become operational this summer. Additionally in 2017, JV unveiled a 100% recyclable and compostable snack box on their bus tour route. And finally they worked to address food waste collection from visitors and employees through expanding composting options.

Despite the newness of the program, there has been marked success! JV composted 6,275 pounds of food waste through their arrangement with Susitna Organics and they sent 2,625 pounds of food wrappers (candy, chips) to the Terracycle recycling program. In 2017, JV achieved a diversion rate of 23% and the park diverted 22% of what would have been municipal solid waste from going into the Denali Borough Landfill. For more information on the ZLI Initiative go here:

<https://www.nps.gov/dena/getinvolved/zero-landfill.htm>

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