

Green Meeting & Event Options At Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

Introduction

Environmentally-aware meetings and events are those planned in such a way as to reduce, reuse and save resources as well as money. Lancer Catering offers some ways to save significant resources while planning your event. Lancer is committed to socially responsible practices including sustainability, recycling, natural, healthy food choices and responsible sourcing that will help lessen our impact on the environment.

A Site with Significance

At Como Zoo Park and Conservatory conservation is part of the mission. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory actively works to preserve resources and operate in an environmentally responsible, efficient, safe and sustainable manner. Plus, as a conservation and education organization, your event dollars help support Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory's mission, including Species Survival Plan, Butterfly Conservation Initiative, Seafood Watch, Plant Rescue Center and Shade Grown Coffee programs.

Green Design

The Visitor Center at Como Zoo was designed "green" using recycled wood product for the interior walls. Photovoltaic cells are used to provide shade over the Fern Room in the Conservatory and are a renewable source of energy. Water is collected and reused throughout the facility, including watering plants in the Conservatory. Como Zoo actively participates in recycling programs on-site as well as acts as a collection site for used cell phones, batteries and printer cartridges.

In addition, our energy-efficient buildings include natural lighting or energy-efficient bulbs and programmable thermostats; and, our kitchens utilize energy-efficient appliances and cooking methods.

Green Meetings and Events

Plan your next meeting or event using these simple "green" steps:

- Use cloth napkins and china rather than disposable paper products
- Use water pitchers and glasses rather than plastic water bottles (**Americans use 25 billion single-serve plastic water bottles per year, 80% end up in landfills*)
- Use bulk servings of milk, cream, sugar, butter rather than individual servings
- Select non-toxic/recycled/reusable or biodegradable products whenever possible
(Ask your sales representative for a suggested list of products available through our vendors)
- Select reusable centerpieces and decorations (live plants or recycled products, for example)
- Offer electronic registration and publish conference itinerary on-line
- Reduce mailings and paper at meetings, use internet and e-mail to promote the event and post electronic proceedings of the event
- When you do need to use paper, use recycled compostable paper, use soy-based inks and print on both sides of the paper
- Provide reusable name tags and binders and use white boards rather than paper
- An accurate guest count will help reduce overprinting materials and handouts as well as to provide the caterer with exact meal counts
- Recycle or reduce solid waste products
- Select organic or vegetarian menu items and use seasonal and local products when possible (Your sales representative will be happy to help you select seasonal items from local vendors)
- Take into account location, where are people coming from and offer car pooling, mass transit, walking or biking an option
- Plan activities that help support and sustain the natural environment (Try our environmental scavenger hunt as a team building activity or do a volunteer activity such as serving lunch at a homeless shelter)

You Are What You Eat!

Lancer sources local products when possible to get the freshest and finest ingredients as well as to reduce transportation costs and emissions. When available, Lancer uses fresh fruits and vegetables grown locally that taste better and are packed with nutrients. Eating local food not only reduces the consumption of fossil fuels but eliminates wasteful packing materials.

For example, some of Lancer's baked goods come from Franklin Street Bakery in Minneapolis that uses quality, natural products. Other fresh baked goods are made from scratch onsite.

Lancer's green policies extend to food preparation, including making sauces, soups and dressings from scratch. Using bulk product gives you better tasting products and helps decrease transportation of finished products.

Our menus include organic and vegetarian options that are better for you. We source fish and seafood that has been approved by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program for sustainable sources, either fished or farmed, that can exist over the long-term without compromising species survival or the health of the surrounding ecosystem.

Organic shade-grown fair trade coffees and local organic beers and wines are also options available for your catered event.

All of Lancer's facilities participate in recycling programs that include paper, plastic, cardboard, aluminum cans and fryer oil. We use non-toxic, non-hazardous cleaning products that won't harm the environment or people. We use other compostable products such as wax paper wraps, napkins and paper food trays.

Lancer is working hard to reduce our impact on the environment. Thank you for helping to make a difference.

BRIDES

Something Borrowed; Something Green!

Add a touch of earth-friendly green to your wedding plans. In addition to all or any of the above "green options" consider a few ideas specific to a wedding ceremony or reception to make your event memorable in a "green" way.

Ceremonies during the day, and if possible, outdoors, saves electricity when naturally lighted. Or for an evening event, consider romantic candlelight using soy candles that burn cleaner and longer than traditional wax candles. And, to reduce transportation, consider having your ceremony and reception at the same location—Marjorie McNeely Conservatory and Como Zoo's Visitor Center.

Print your invitations on 100% recycled paper using soy-based inks, minimize extra paper, use a postcard reply to eliminate envelopes or better yet send electronic invitations. For additional information visit brides.com

For your bouquets and flowers check around for a florist that uses organic flower farms and local or seasonal wildflowers to cut emissions that shipping flowers from far away would create. Use scrubs and potted plants for decorations and centerpieces, or make centerpieces from recycled products and then recycle the centerpieces again by sending them home with guests. One great option is decorating with bamboo—it is sustainable and makes great centerpieces—bamboo grows up to two feet a day.

Arrive in green style—consider a hybrid vehicle, horse-driven carriage or bicycle built for two. Arrange car pooling for guests or charter bus.

Plan A Picnic

Planning an ecologically-correct picnic is easy as using dishes, silverware and cloth napkins, or biodegradable dishes and flatware made from cornstarch, potatoes, sugar cane or bamboo. Ask your sales representative about planning a locally-grown Minnesota menu.