RecycleMania is On!

RecycleMania is an 8-week-long competition between college and university recycling programs in the United States and Canada. The dates of this year's competition are February 2nd through March 29th. The competition began in February 2001 with Miami University and Ohio University competing against each other. The two universities wanted a way to promote awareness and increase recycling rates at their schools and have since extended the competition to other schools nationwide. This year there are a total of 461 schools actively participating in the competition, including UNC-Chapel Hill.

UNC-Chapel Hill first entered the competition in 2006 and has participated every year since. There are eight categories in which to compete against other colleges and universities. Last year, UNC placed 18th out of 364 schools in the “Gorilla Prize” category (highest gross tonnage of recyclables, regardless of campus population).

There are also three special categories to compete in: a game day basketball challenge, plastic film recycling, and electronic waste recycling. Stay tuned for more information about how and where the campus community will have an opportunity to compete in these special categories!

The goals of RecycleMania are to have a friendly recycling competition, increase recycling on campus, raise awareness, reduce overall waste, and expand to other campuses. By practicing the 3 Rs, students, staff, and faculty can do their part to help UNC win. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Spotlight On: Green Labs Freezer Challenge

This year, UNC will be participating in the National Freezer Challenge against schools like CU Boulder, UC Davis, Harvard, and more.

A single ultra-low temperature freezer can use the same amount of energy as a large single-family household. Raising the temperature from -86 degrees Celsius to -60 degrees Celsius can reduce energy consumption by 50%. The Freezer Challenge seeks to raise the temperature of ultra-low freezers by 10 degrees (or more)! Just by raising an ultra-low freezer from -86 to -70 degrees Celsius can save 2.4 kWh/day. That is the same amount of energy required to run a full-sized -20 degree Celsius freezer! Then, raising the temperature also reduces stress on the compressors which can increase the freezer lifetime and reduce the risk of compressor failure.

Many samples, like microbial cultures, yeast strains, cell lysates, and other samples have been stored for years in -70
semester! Come out and learn everything you need to know in order to become a Green Events Coordinator and to host certified Green Events for your organization. Sessions generally last about 1 hour and count as a skills training for Public Service Scholars. Visit us at http://go.unc.edu/GreenEvents to learn more. Here is this semester’s training session schedule. Mark your calendars!

1. Wednesday, February 26, 5:00-6:00 pm, Union room 3206-B
2. Thursday, March 20, 5:00-6:00 pm, Union room 3201
3. Monday, April 14, 5:30-6:30 pm, Union 3205

If you are unable to attend any of the above sessions, you are always welcome to schedule a private session for your organization by emailing greenevents@facilities.unc.edu.

### Residential Green Games

Tar Heel-- Green? Green Games is a student-led environmental competition between the housing communities in which students earn points for programs, events and contests to promote sustainable behavior and environmental education. Fall semester saw a great variety of creative programs, from Connor Community’s Sustainability Kickoff to Hinton James’ Sustainability Pledge program to Ehringhaus’ Campus Cleanup days.

Did you know that recycling 1 ton of newsprint paper saves 7,000 gallons of water? For the months of February and March, the Green Games competition will be focusing on recycling. Every community on campus will be holding weekly recycling drives to earn points for their residence hall, save water, and keep UNC clean and green!

Learn more on the Green Games website.

### Waste and Water Watch: Plastic Microbeads

In keeping with the campus-wide “Water In Our World” theme, OWRR presents a section: “Waste and Water Watch” that explores waste topics related to the protection of water quality and management of water resources. To learn more about the three year pan-campus theme, visit watertheme.unc.edu. This issue, we’ll explore the a common pollutant that is more than meets the eye: plastic microbeads.

Plastic microbeads have gained attention recently as legislators in New York and California propose bans on the beads in consumer products. Plastic microbeads are commonly found in exfoliating facial scrubs, soaps, and toothpastes. These polyethylene and polypropylene particles, ranging from 50-500 microns, or ½ mm in diameter, travel through the sewage system after use. Many wastewater treatment plants are not able to divert tiny particles and overflow can end up polluting local water systems. Notably, fish and marine mammals are known to ingest plastic microbeads - including fish that humans harvest and eat.

Plastic pollution, no matter how small, can have deleterious effects on aquatic ecosystems. A anti-plastic pollution non-profit, 5 Gyres, recommends that consumers check product ingredients for plastic content (e.g. polyethylene, polypropylene) and refuse to purchase them in order to Beat the Microbead (image at left courtesy of 5 Gyres).

### Contact Us

Submit a Service Request
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