



Plastics Reduction Partner Certification Program



*Proud
partner of:*



#breakfreefromplastic



Agenda

- **Why - Plastics Reduction Partner Program?**
- History
- Certification Levels
- Framework
- Steps to Apply
- Benefits of Partnership
- Partners
- Credits & Thank You's
- Additional Resources
- **Q&A**



THE BAD NEWS

The bad news...



Globally, only 9% of recyclable plastic is actually recycled

(National Geographic)

Trash kills wildlife >

It's estimated that ingestion of plastic kills 1 million marine birds and 100,000 marine animals each year

(One Green Planet)



Trash harms habitat >

5.25 trillion plastic particles in the ocean from food and beverage containers, microbeads from personal care items, etc.

(One Green Planet)



THE GOOD NEWS



The good news...
In 2023, CR2ZW campuses:



Cut out **205 million** single-use plastic containers

Donated, recycled and composted **29.4 million pounds** of waste



Prevented the release of **29.108 metric tons of carbon** dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂E) into the atmosphere, equivalent to preventing annual emissions from **6,128 cars**



History of NWF Partnering for Change with Higher Ed

NWF starts working with colleges and universities

through Campus Ecology program, advances sustainability efforts in waste reduction, habitat restoration, purchasing, *etc.*



1989

2000



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

In 2018, NWF takes over management of **RecycleMania!** NWF and RecycleMania support campuses as they compete to reduce, reuse, recycle.

In line with EPA's 'zero waste' vision and emphasis on designing out waste, RecycleMania changes its name to **Campus Race to Zero Waste**



2020

2022

Next?



2022

**NWF launches CR2ZW
Plastics Reduction
Partner program**

Reporting on 3-year evaluation cycle to line up with AASHE STARS.

- Can be reported on early if believe meet criteria for new level (ask to limit to 1x per year if early)
- Will earn **AASHE STARS Exemplary Credit** - recurring



NWF CR2ZW's *Plastics Reduction Partner*



Created to recognize and support action colleges and universities are taking to reduce the purchase and use of plastics on campus!

Certification Levels

Bronze (18-48 points)

Introductory badge – your college or university is newer to the plastics reduction space and trying to get the word out about the need for change.



Silver (49-74 points)

Intermediate badge – your college or university is reducing plastics in practice, and your impact is visible campus-wide.



Green (75-100 points)

Advanced level badge – your college or university is institutionally committed and demonstrating leadership in the plastics reduction space as a true change agent.



Certification Framework: Four Action Categories



I. Build Awareness

II. Support Behavior Change

III. Assess & Implement Operational Change

IV. Demonstrate Institutional Leadership



Two Step Application Process for Certification

Step 1: Commitment Letter

- Review, fill in required action statements, and have high-level administrator sign and date commitment letter...

Commitment Letter

- ✓ **Review the Workbook,** assess what you have done and can provide documentation for, and what you wish to pursue over the next 3-year evaluation cycle.
- ✓ Use drop down to specifically identify **two actions from each Category (I.-IV.)** that you pursue. You will complete more if seeking certification, but these are good to create a plan forward.



Plastics Reduction Partner: Commitment Letter

We recognize it is time for a change in strategy. Instead of the antiquated strategy of simply focusing on individual behavior change 'at the bin,' we instead will focus on what we bring to campus in the first place. By purchasing less, as well as pivoting to better alternatives like durable reusables, and single-use items with proven waste diversion results and sustainable sourcing we will support a shift from linear to circular economies. We will add our institution to the list of universities and organizations calling for climate action and pollution reduction.

Our campus is committed to:

- Reduce the purchase and use of single-use plastics in their campus daily operations.
- Educating and building awareness among students, faculty, and staff about campus-wide plastics reduction efforts, with a special emphasis on new students and employees.
- Providing opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in campus-wide plastics reduction efforts to support long-term behavior change.
- Demonstrating institutional leadership to reduce the purchase and use of single-use plastics on campus; and regularly evaluating and taking steps to improve current strategies.

_____ in _____, _____ is ready to act.

Today, _____, we commit to become an NWF CR2ZW Plastics Reduction Partner.

After reviewing the Plastics Reduction Partner workbook, we highlight the following priority action items, among others from Category I-IV that we will pursue:

Chose 'top two' actions items (among others you will pursue) from each category's drop down menu, as a show of commitment for the next three-year evaluation cycle.

Category I.	1. (click)	▼
	2. (click)	
Category II.	1. Residential Life	
	2. Social Media Engagement	
Category III.	1. Deeper Dive	
	2. The Next Gen.	
Category IV.	1. Events and Tabling	
	2. Visual Cues - Improving Diversion	
	3. Best Practice Awareness	
	4. (click)	▼
	5. (click)	▼

Commitment Letter

- ✓ **Check which certification level** you are pursuing during the next 3-year evaluation cycle.
- ✓ **To start every new 3-year cycle**, have high-level administrator sign and date Commitment Letter.
- ✓ **Save as**, rename with your institution and the date

Through these and other sustainability efforts, our **aim⁵** is that by the end of the three-year evaluation cycle we will submit our results in the Plastics Reduction Partner workbook for the **(check one)**:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Bronze Certification	<i>Introductory level – as we are newer to the plastics reduction space but committed to getting the word out about the need for change.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Silver Certification	<i>Intermediate level – as we are committed to reducing plastics in practice and making an impact that is visible campus-wide.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green Certification	<i>Advanced level – as we are institutionally committed to demonstrate leadership in the plastics reduction space as a true change agent.</i>

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Title, Institution: _____

Secondary Signature (optional): _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Title, Institution: _____

The Plastics Reduction Partner Certification is a program of National Wildlife Federation and the Campus Race to Zero Waste. The National Wildlife Federation is one of over 2,500 organizations working on the #breakfreefromplastic global movement and a proud partner of Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). We have collaborated with AASHE to ensure that participating universities are eligible for STARS' Innovation credit.



Two Step Application Process for Certification

Step 2: Apply for Certification

- Review the Plastics Reduction Partner workbook, download and begin entering in your data and documentation...

Interactive Workbook



NWF's CR2ZW: Plastics Reduction Partner Certification

Submission Timeline: 3-year reporting cycle. Recommend if institution reports to AASHE STARS, to report at same time as STARS submission as will already be collecting data, & can

Action Metrics	SCORING	Criteria & Points Awarded
Category IV: Demonstrate Institutional Leadership	(Click on cell, select appropriate # from drop down menu based on your action)	
Governance: University-wide governance bodies (faculty, staff, and student senates/ similar) or institutionally supported working groups/ task forces, a) have a sustainability representative/ officer, AND that representative or group b) investigates and promotes plastics and polystyrene reduction on campus.	2	1 pt of maximum 2 pts for each of the aforementioned
Assess Sustainability Literacy: Integrate sustainability – with plastics reduction, support for reuse, and if possible zero waste, circular economy, and closed loop systems – in institution-wide literacy or opinion surveys.	0	2 pts of maximum 2.5 pts for specific inclusion sustainability literacy outcomes that must include importance/ need for reduction of single-use plastic cohorts tracked. If not institution wide, must be sent to) and done once per year during the evaluation cycle.
Curriculum Integration: Integrate plastics pollution and need for reduction/ reuse policy into sustainability learning outcomes into a university course.	0 2 2.5	1 pt of maximum 2.5 pts for inclusion in at least one university-wide requirement or assignment, video screening, part of a sustainability course.
Research & Innovation Integration: Integrate plastics pollution and need for reduction in environment learning outcomes; materials science working toward better alternatives; research seminars or faculty research roundtables, or similar foci in university research and/ or laboratory science.	0	
Into university research and laboratory science.	0.0	0.5 pts for at least one faculty-advised graduate concerning reduction or impacts of plastics, etc.
Into faculty research round tables, lightning talks and other official academic events seeking to advance research and discourse on this topic.	0.0	0.5 pts for at least one faculty-led public academic 3 year evaluation cycle.
Pursue my green lab or similar program for university laboratories.	0.0	1 pt for certification of campus labs by my green checks, etc.) similar program on campus. See notes.
Circularity Criteria in Purchasing: In purchasing policies, budget documents, design manuals for facilities and other large volume purchasers, contracts amended or bidding criteria reflect a preference for items that a) have the ability to be repurposed, reused, or recycled at the end of use, and b) that are themselves made from recycled content/ materials. This will help drive circular economics (away from take → make → waste linear model), helping drive up the recycling rates and recycled content goods in the marketplace. Prefer vendors with extended	0	1.5 pt of maximum 3 pts for assessment. Final for reporting sustainable purchasing for furniture

- ✓ Fill out Summary tab table
- ✓ Use drop-downs to fill out Workbook
 - “Summary Results” will auto populate projected total credit
- ✓ Review Data-Doc Checklist tab and submit relevant documents with Workbook in online portal
- ✓ Save as, rename with your institution short name and date. Submit



Benefits of being a Plastics Reduction Partner

- Of the > 3,400 colleges and universities in the US alone (!), many do not have a roadmap to plastics reduction/ elimination... partnership can help accelerate progress.
- **If you are working on this... be recognized** as a top institution addressing one of the biggest threats to humans and wildlife; NWF and CR2ZW resources and guidance are free and offered to support action!
- **NWF is one of 2,830 organizations** that are active participants in the **#breakfreefromplastic** global movement!
- Your participation is eligible for recurring **AASHE STARS Credit**



To receive STARS Exemplary Credit, please submit:

1. Commitment Letter, and
2. Submit supporting documentation (early if applicable) for **≥ 10 points**



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Plastics Reduction Partner



Partner Organizations:



Credits & Thank You's!



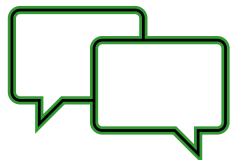
Certification Designer: **Amber Saxton**

NWF's CR2ZW Plastics Reduction Partner program was designed by our **national board member** Amber Saxton, with support from the NWF CR2ZW board and reviewer campuses. Amber is also a **Sustainability Program Manager at George Mason University** and started with the CR2ZW team in 2018 after leading GameDay competitions. She joined to support certification programs and other assessment improvement efforts.



Beta Tester/ Reviewer Campuses:

Special thank you to campuses for providing vital feedback as early reviewers – **Knox College, Mount Holyoke College, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Texas Tech University and The Ohio State University.**



Add your Feedback!

Please email CR2ZW@nwf.org or you can share feedback when you submit your documentation.



Stemming the Tide: Taking Action on Campus Against Plastic Pollution

By Kristy Jones and Laura Hickey, National Wildlife Federation

Additional Resources



Users Manual – Based on Plastics Reduction Partner workbook



Guide – *Stemming the Tide: Taking Action on Campus Against Plastic Pollution*



CR2ZW Case Studies – Learn from your peers!



Questions?



CR2ZW@nwf.org



[www.CampusRace
toZeroWaste.org](http://www.CampusRace
toZeroWaste.org)



**NO
TO
PLASTIC**