



# Media Information

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## Subaru Of America, National Parks Conservation Association, And National Park Foundation Team Up To Reduce Waste At National Parks, Eliminating 16 Million Pounds Of Waste From Landfills

Last year alone, Denali, Grand Teton and Yosemite cut the amount of waste going to landfills by nearly half as part of the Don't Feed the Landfills Initiative

Camden, N.J., Sep 2, 2020 - Subaru of America, Inc., the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), and National Park Foundation (NPF) announced that through an innovative partnership three of America's most iconic national parks are at the forefront to reduce the amount of waste that parks send to landfills. As part of the multi-year Don't Feed the Landfills Initiative led by [NPCA, Subaru of America Inc.](#), NPF, and park concessionaires, [Denali, Grand Teton](#) and [Yosemite](#) national parks have made incredible progress to shrink the environmental footprint in and around these parks. Since the launch of the initiative in 2015, the three pilot parks have made significant strides by keeping more than 16 million pounds of waste out of landfills. Last year alone, through increased recycling and composting efforts, the pilot parks cut their landfill waste by nearly half.

With, on average, 330 million visitors each year, the National Park Service (NPS) manages nearly 70 million pounds of waste nationally, which would fill nearly 600 dump trucks. Subaru has extensive experience in understanding waste diversion to landfills, as the first automotive [assembly plant](#) in America to achieve zero-landfill status in 2004. Because of this, Subaru has committed to sharing its knowledge of zero-landfill practices by working with NPCA, NPF and NPS, toward a goal of significantly reducing the amount of waste that national parks send to the landfills.

"At Subaru, we are committed to protecting and preserving not only our national parks, but the entirety of our great outdoors as we work toward a future free of landfill trash," said **Alan Bethke, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Subaru of America, Inc.** "Our continued work on the Don't Feed the Landfills Initiative has brought a significant reduction in landfill trash in the three pilot parks and will help keep America's national parks – our national treasures – beautiful and clean for future generations."

The successes and long-term impact of the initiative can be attributed to the collaborative community-based approach. Working with many partners including Grand Teton Lodge Company, Signal Mountain Lodge, Yosemite Hospitality, Aramark, Doyon Limited Aramark, Denali Education Center and Nature Bridge, prioritizing visitor outreach and engagement, and customizing innovative waste solutions for each park, have been critical for the progress made so far.

"With millions of people visiting our national parks every year, park staff have a lot to contend with, including

millions of pounds of waste that can impact everything from visitor experience to wildlife behaviors," said

**Theresa Pierno, President and CEO for the National Parks Conservation Association.** "Working with our many partners, we set out to address this mounting issue starting at Denali, Grand Teton and Yosemite national parks. The progress we've made together is incredibly promising. We've reduced trash and increased recycling through visitor and employee education and put new, innovative processes into place. And in doing so, have created a road map that can be used in parks across the country. Together, we are creating a lasting legacy and leaving our parks more sustainable for generations to come."

By first identifying the common waste items found in the pilot parks, which includes food waste, cardboard, single-use plastic bottles, plastic wrap and packaging, steel and aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, and single use portable propane canisters, Denali, Grand Teton and Yosemite national parks set incremental goals to keep recyclable and compostable materials away from landfills. This work has also helped engage visitors to change their behaviors while in parks through improved infrastructure and clear, consistent labeling. There are nearly 1,000 new waste and recycling containers in high-traffic areas in these parks and they are having an enormous impact. The additional containers make it easier for visitors to correctly sort and recycle while encouraging the use of reusable items to help reduce single-use plastic bottles and bags, and coffee cups. Since year one of the initiative, improved visitor participation has helped the three parks on average, increase recycling by 27 percent.

With the remoteness of the parks, where some are hauling recyclables and waste hundreds of miles, finding efficient, cost-effective ways, and collaborating with the surrounding community is an important step to significantly reduce waste. At Denali National Park and Preserve, the initiative-inspired board of directors meets regularly, comprised of local elected officials, businesses, and community stakeholders. This collaboration has dramatically shifted public awareness and engagement and improved recycling capabilities throughout the region. At Grand Teton National Park, food waste makes up approximately 40 percent of the park's cumulative waste. Park concessionaires are currently composting food waste with a local farmer who uses the organic waste as compost for the produce sold back to the lodges and community. In just three summers, nearly 500,000 pounds of food waste has been composted.

An undeniable piece to the success of the initiative is connecting with the millions of people that visit national parks annually as they plan their trips, while they are in parks and after, about waste challenges and what they can do to help. Last year, more than 8.5 million people visited Denali, Grand Teton and Yosemite national parks and contributed to nearly 8 million pounds of waste. Through this collaborative work, nearly half of that waste was recycled, composted, or otherwise not sent to landfills. And there is much more to do.

Visitors play an important role in helping to significantly reduce waste at our parks and can do their part by following these simple steps when planning their next trip:

1. **Plan and Prepare** – especially with additional health and safety precautions amid the global pandemic including requirements to wear masks, social distancing and new reservation systems. Think about what you bring into the parks and check to see if it can be recycled or composted in the park you are visiting. Choose materials that can be reused and take them with you. Avoid buying single use items and disposing of them while in the park.
2. **Opt for Online when you can** – instead of a paper map, try smartphone apps to help navigate your way around the park, when/where access is available.
3. **Bring Your Own Coffee Mug** – bring a reusable coffee mug or buy one from the park visitor center or concession to help reduce waste at parks.
4. **Bring Your Own Water Bottle** – bring or buy a refillable water bottle and take advantage of convenient water refilling stations located around the parks.
5. **Choose Reusable Bags** – bring your own reusable bag or tote for your supplies to help eliminate plastic bag waste.

This work is also connecting the next generation of advocates wanting to keep our parks healthy and sustainable. From a partnership with Nature Bridge at Yosemite National Park that aims to expand outreach about zero landfill practices to local students, to the Zero Landfill Ambassador Program in Denali National Park and Preserve where students are finding solutions to waste and recycle issues in the park and gateway community, these youth are inspiring others to join us in our waste reduction efforts.

“This project proves what’s possible when national, local, and community partners join forces to innovate,” said **National Park Foundation President and CEO Will Shafroth**. “Together, we’re gaining valuable knowledge that can benefit the more than 400 national parks across the country, aligning with the National Park Service’s sustainability goals.”

The success of this initiative was recently recognized by Engage for Good with the [2020 Silver Halo Award in the ‘Best Sustainability Initiative’](#). The Halo Awards are North America’s highest honor for corporate social initiatives and cause marketing. Engage for Good honors businesses and nonprofits with Halo Awards for doing well by doing good.

Don’t Feed the Landfills Initiative is part of Subaru Loves the Earth, the automaker’s environmentally-focused philanthropic pillar of the [Subaru Love Promise](#). To learn more about Subaru Loves the Earth and the environmental work Subaru does, visit [subaru.com/earth](#) and follow #DontFeedtheLandfills and #SubaruLovesTheEarth on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to learn more and see this initiative in action.

#### **About Subaru of America, Inc.**

[Subaru of America, Inc.](#) (SOA) is a wholly owned subsidiary of [Subaru Corporation](#) of Japan. Headquartered at a zero-landfill office in Camden, N.J., the company markets and distributes Subaru vehicles, parts and accessories through a network of more than 630 retailers across the United States. All Subaru products are manufactured in zero-landfill production plants and [Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc.](#) is the only U.S. automobile production plant to be designated a backyard wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. SOA is guided by the [Subaru Love Promise](#), which is the company’s vision to show love and respect to everyone, and to support its communities and customers nationwide. Over the past 20 years, SOA has donated more than \$190 million to causes the Subaru family cares about, and its employees have logged more than 40,000 volunteer hours. As a company, Subaru believes it is important to do its part in making a positive impact in the world because it is the right thing to do. For additional information visit [media.subaru.com](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

#### **About the National Parks Conservation Association**

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice in safeguarding our national parks. NPCA and its nearly 1.4 million members and supporters work together to protect and preserve our nation’s most iconic and inspirational places for future generations. For more information, visit [www.npca.org](#).

#### **About the National Park Foundation**

The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America’s national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help protect more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts and connect all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture, and rich history. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at [www.nationalparks.org](#).

