



# Sustainable Strides



A Newsletter for the Eco-Conscious Athlete  
From Happy Planet Running

We can make your race leave no trace!

[happyplanetrunning.com](http://happyplanetrunning.com)



## Issue #9 – March 27, 2026

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## Recent HPR Updates

- This year's RF Events [Shamrocks and Shenanigans](#) in Ann Arbor was seriously green. Over 1,000 runners, adults and kids, showed up in their best Irish hues to run a 5K or 1K, while the Green Team got to work behind the scenes. Total waste for this event was 55.5 lbs, slightly less than last year, and landfill waste totaled only 0.4 lbs!! This produced an excellent **diversion rate of 99.3%** as the remaining 55.1 lbs was recycled and composted! Want the full breakdown? [Read the full sustainability report here.](#)



- Pi Day (March 14) isn't just about eating pie, it's about wearing it too! At this year's Epic Races Pi Day 5K in Ypsilanti, over 150 adults and kids braved the cold morning to tackle either the 1-mile or 3.14-mile course. At the finish line, participants were rewarded with a slice of pie, and some brave souls received an optional whipped cream "pie" to the face. During these shenanigans, the Green Team worked to keep waste to a minimum. The event generated just 1.7 lbs of landfill waste, most of which came from non-compostable pie cups. Even so, the event achieved a great **diversion rate of 96%**! With a small switch to compostable pie cups next year, this event can be even closer to zero waste! Want the full statistics? [Read the full sustainability report here.](#)



- St Patrick's Day means it's that time of year for another Corktown Races at Roosevelt Park in Detroit. More than 2,500 people showed up to celebrate with a little running, a little cheering, and a lot of beer before heading over to the St Patrick's Day parade. While the participants kept things lively, the Green Team kept things clean. With an event this size, waste can add up, but staff and volunteers worked hard to streamline waste quickly and efficiently. Out of more than 620 lbs of total waste, only 6.8 lbs ended up in landfill! Recycling totaled 470 lbs, 275 lbs. of which was cardboard, and that plus the beer and water cups nearly filled the 10-yard container provided by Unlimited Recycling! Overall, this event had an outstanding waste **diversion rate of 98.9%**. Want the full breakdown? [Read the full sustainability report here.](#)



- For more about what we do, [check out our full set of sustainability reports](#), which covers every event we've done since 2017. They're good reads!
- Check out our [Instagram](#) or [TikTok](#) for frequent event updates and content!



## Staff Spotlight

- HPR has two new hires!!



Linda Sun is a Master's student in Behavior, Education, and Communication at Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) who also finds time to be a docent at the Natural History Museum and help with sustainability at football games.



Payrav Dehqonov is a Master's student in Sustainable Development and Sustainable Systems at Michigan's SEAS who is passionate about renewable energy and environmental impact assessment as well as staying active by spending time in nature.



## This Issue's /FAQ

- **Q: What does HPR do to promote sustainability?**
- A: The visible service is collecting the waste at the events we serve. But we do a lot more behind the scenes! Well before the event even begins, we work with our clients to help them make more sustainable choices with the materials and resources they use. Reduction and reuse have an even bigger impact than recycling, especially with plastic, which is heavily overproduced and overused.
- HPR is also available to talk to schools, businesses, and other organizations about the benefits of increased sustainability. Jeff Is both a Michigan Master Composter and Michigan Master Recycler, and he and his staff can answer your questions and even provide training.
- HPR's goal is not only to make events sustainable, but to provide insight into how to be even more zero waste in many areas. If you're interested in hiring HPR for your event, look at [package pricing rates](#) on our website. Initial contact and consultations are always free of obligation!





## The Latest in Sustainability News

- [Beavers: The Secret Weapon to Fight Carbon Emissions](#): A new study in Switzerland has found that beaver-built wetlands can help store and trap large amounts of carbon. When beavers build dams and ponds, they turn that water source into a net carbon sink. Beavers have been historically hunted to near extinction, but with their reintroduction across Europe and North America, these animals can help mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon as an effect of their work.
- Many see beavers as a nuisance, yet they not only create carbon sinks, but create wetlands, improve water quality, and promote biodiversity. If you want to see beavers in Ann Arbor, check out Fleming Creek at Matthaei Botanical Gardens to have the chance to meet the Gnawson family! To learn more about how beavers can help mitigate climate change, read [this article](#) from LiveScience.



- [Detroit Opera House Partners with U-M to Become More Sustainable](#): The Detroit Opera House has partnered with the University of Michigan to make the opera house's productions more sustainable. Shellie Miller, a professor of sustainable systems at the School of Environment and Sustainability, and Sarah Oliver, an associate professor of theatre and drama and the U-M School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, are collaborating with graduate students and Detroit Opera House staff on this project. Funded by a grant from the Graham Sustainability Institute, the team is looking for ways to make the opera house use less resources, as well as promote a message of sustainability. This plan is in the works, as the 2027/28 themed season at the opera house will be "Sustainability". To learn more about how U-M and the Detroit Opera House are working together to make opera house productions more sustainable, read [this article](#) from Michigan Public.



## Zero Waste Fun Fact: Animals that Recycle

- Did you know that humans aren't the only animal that recycles regularly? Many animals live in a delicate ecological balance with their natural surroundings, making recycling the most efficient means for survival. Birds, for example, are one of nature's greatest recyclers. Birds often build their nests from whatever material is available. In urban settings, nests can even be constructed from newspapers, plastic, paper clips, etc.
- Hermit crabs are another example of consistent recyclers. Hermit crabs don't grow their own shells, and as they need shells to protect themselves, they utilize shells from other sea life such as sea snails. If these shells aren't available, hermit crabs will use whatever they can find, even if this ends up being plastic and glass litter.
- Butterflies also are a great example of zero-waste animals! Monarch larvae grow inside an egg and once they are caterpillars, they eat their old home before they transform into butterflies. To learn more about other animals that practice sustainability in their everyday lives, read [this article](#).



# Get Involved!



## Join the Green Team!

- Get in on the action and join us at our upcoming events! Look up an upcoming Zero Waste event on our [calendar](#), click on the event's logo to go to its website, and sign up to volunteer for the Green Team.
- Know someone who'd like to get more involved in sustainability? Have them apply to be an HPR team member! Hourly pay for event work and special projects, and HPR-paid opportunities to further their education in composting, recycling, and more. Just email Jeff!



## Run Into Us!

Sat. April 11	<a href="#">Martian Invasion of Races</a>	Dearborn
Sat. April 25	<a href="#">Trail Marathon</a>	Pinckney
Sat. May 8	<a href="#">Hightail to Ale 5k</a>	Detroit

[Click here](#) for the full schedule!

## Questions? Comments? Concerns?

Reach out [here](#) or email [jeff@happyplanetrunning.com](mailto:jeff@happyplanetrunning.com)!

## Thank You!

- Thanks for reading and supporting sustainability! If you enjoyed this update, please consider sharing it with others who care, too — together, we can grow a more waste-free future.

## Follow us on Social Media!

- To learn more about sustainability and zero waste, and to stay up to date with all Happy Planet Running news and events, follow us on social media!



### Follow Along With Us

Instagram: @happy.planet.running

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TikTok: @happy.planet.running

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This issue was produced by Marilyn Harbin and edited by Jeff Jackson.