

MONTEREY COUNTY

# THE RIGHT PATH TO SUSTAINABLE MEETINGS

Green Venues Meet Blue Sky Thinking



MONTEREY  
MEETINGS

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# MORE THAN A MEETING

Protecting the natural wonders of Monterey County is at the heart of the local community. From the Monterey Bay Aquarium to Folktale Winery, there is no shortage of venues that are as committed to sustainability (whether using biodegradable and locally sourced products or partnering with various green organizations) as they are to making your event perfect.

Monterey County is where great meetings happen naturally. Our community wants to ensure your meeting is not only life and business enriching, but also sustainable. Whether your meeting includes mandated sustainability requirements or you’re just interested in protecting the environment we all share, we have a team that can provide expert guidance.

Wherever you host your meeting, we hope you do it thoughtfully and sustainably because responsible travel benefits us all. This guide is designed to equip you with the facts, tips and best practices you need to plan a successful green meeting – and there is no better place for this than Monterey County. We hope you enjoy and invite you to visit.

**Have a question?**  
**Please contact us at [Sales@SeeMonterey.com](mailto:Sales@SeeMonterey.com)**  
**or 831-657-6426.**

“Our community wants to ensure your meeting is not only life and business enriching, but also sustainable.”



# As a meeting planner,

choosing the ideal location is a key part of your role.

To help you find the perfect space for your next event—while keeping sustainability in mind—here are some essential tips to guide your decision-making.

1

## ENVIRONMENT

You should consider the environment — and go green! Eco-friendly meetings can vary in their approach, employing tactics such as using recyclable name badges, cutting down on paper and plastics and making sure that event waste is recycled or composted. You may also want to find out whether the venue is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certified. Monterey County offers many of these venues; the Monterey Conference Center is LEED® Platinum Certified and the Portola Hotel & Spa is LEED® Certified. Both are great options for pulling off a zero waste conference. Likewise, Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove has been making huge strides in becoming a green property. A Certified Green Business with the Monterey Bay Area Green Business Program, Asilomar Conference Grounds has converted all lighting to LED efficient systems and installed a state-of-the-art water recycling system that reclaims up to 75% of the water used for housekeeping operations.

2

## CHOOSE A SUSTAINABLE MENU

Speaking of food, serving sustainable food and drink options is another valuable component of a successful green meeting. Providing locally sourced food will cut down on carbon emissions and help ensure sustainability. It's important to choose a destination that allows you to easily procure this type of food. Monterey County's number one industry is agriculture, which means there is a special focus on locally-grown food. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Sustainable Seafood Watch program also helps ensure a responsible and sustainable seafood menu.

# 4 Things to Consider

## WHEN SELECTING A MEETING DESTINATION

3

## CUT DOWN ON CARBON

Reducing the carbon footprint of your conference can be one of the most important considerations when planning a sustainable meeting. The carbon footprint of an event primarily consists of activities from three areas: flight, ground transportation and hotel. Be conscious of the impact your meeting will have on the environment and figure out the steps you can take to lessen the impact. Arranging group transportation to and from the event can help. Bonus points if you use low- or no-emissions vehicles! Many of the meeting spaces in Monterey County are conveniently located within walking distance of activities and restaurants, helping to offset your carbon footprint.

4

## LEAVE NO PLASTIC BEHIND

Even if you do your best to make reusable goodie bags and cut down on plastic, leftover items from meetings can pile up in landfills in a very short time. Luckily, many meeting venues in Monterey County partner with [ALL-IN Monterey County](#) and Community Reuse Network, non-profit organizations that help distribute to local schools and those in need. Additionally, Monterey County's Offset Project can help ensure your event is zero waste. It will create recycling and composting programs specifically for your meeting, so you'll leave with the knowledge that you left the place just as good (if not better than) you found it.

Did you know there are easy-to-use online tools that will calculate the carbon emissions that result from your meeting? [Click Here to Calculate Your Carbon Footprint](#)



# Top 5 Reasons to Book a Sustainable Meeting in Monterey County

Where you meet matters. In Monterey County, you can tap into the magic of the surrounding landscape. You can be a part of this place's dedication to sustainability, and you can feel confident knowing that green practices are built into every event. No matter the size or situation, you planners can find flexibility and options in Monterey to suit almost any need.

## 1. The hotels in Monterey County are a treasure trove of environmental sustainability.

If you're looking for an environmentally conscious place for your team to stay, Monterey County has you covered. Its hotels are outfitted with biodegradable and locally sourced products and collaborate with a number of green organizations, including LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the Monterey Regional Waste Management District, Compost Coalition program — and many more. Many of these hotels have more than 60% diversion rates, meaning that more than 60% of the waste that could have been dumped into a landfill is instead recycled.

## 2. You won't have to worry about your personal carbon footprint.

The hotels in Monterey County focus plenty of resources on saving energy. They use occupancy sensors and efficient lighting, as well as electric vehicle charging stations. Water conservation is also a focus. Hotels install water-saving appliances and many of them use ozone and greywater systems. There is also a strong focus on plastic reduction, and many items are locally sourced, organic, and packaged in bulk.

## 3. LEED® certifications are everywhere.

There are a number of hotels in Monterey County that currently hold a LEED® Certification. Monterey Conference Center has also achieved a LEED® Platinum Certification. These properties are at the top of their game in terms of being eco-conscious. The Portola Hotel & Spa, for example, features an Ozone laundry system that generates its own electricity, and it participates in the local food scrap and composting program. At the Asilomar Conference Grounds, guests can be confident that three-quarters of the water used for maintenance operations is recycled.

## 4. There are a variety of outdoor activities.

Team-building activities can — and should — be environmentally friendly. Monterey County offers a variety of scenic locales and activities. If you're looking for a marine-themed activity, Adventures by the Sea can help you explore the Monterey Bay by kayak. You can cut down on fuel emissions by renting bike rentals along the Recreation Trail, and don't forget the guided hikes at Point Lobos.

## 5. There is an abundance of green organizations to partner up with.

In addition to utilizing sustainable services during your meeting, your group can partner up with local client services to give back to the environment and foster a sense of community. Your team can do a shoreline cleanup with [Save Our Shores](#), or partner with [ALL-IN Monterey County](#) and Community Reuse Network, non-profit organizations that help distribute to local schools and those in need. Instead of ending up in a landfill, excess items from your meeting will be redirected to schools and nonprofits.





# GOING SANS PLASTIC

## PLANNING A (GREAT!) GREEN EVENT

**When holding a meeting, reducing plastics might not be one of the first things on your mind — but it should be!**

The numbers on unrecyclable waste add up quickly, causing many meetings to be an environmental hazard. Over the course of a five-day meeting, attendees can use over 60,000 plates and 87,000 napkins. Here are some tips to cut down on plastic use in the meetings and events industry.

### USE RECYCLABLE STRAWS, STIRRERS AND UTENSILS

Everyone has seen how quickly forks and straws pile up in the garbage. The best way to get a head start on plastic reduction is to replace single-use plastics with biodegradable utensils and paper straws, which are far easier on the environment and just as easy to use.

Many restaurants, hotels and venues have made this easy for you and have banned the usage of single use materials altogether. Several restaurants have taken this to heart by banning plastic straws and utensils. The law even extends to food vendors, who are required to use biodegradable or recyclable products instead of single-use plastic.

Old Fisherman's Wharf is another institution in Monterey that has replaced plastic straws with reusable ones and seventeen of the wharf's restaurants and fish markets have rallied to limit plastic use. That's a team effort we can all get behind!

### INCORPORATE REUSABLE CUPS

There's no reason to have stacks and stacks of single-use coffee cups at your meeting. Instead, take a hint from reusable water cups and institute washable coffee cups or mugs for attendees to use. Take a page from the book of Monterey County's Portola Hotel & Spa, whose onsite restaurants make sure to use either ceramic mugs or compostable to-go cups. Bonus: Ceramic mugs look much better than cheap plastic cups.

### REPLACE PLASTIC CONTAINERS WITH BIODEGRADABLE ONES

It's rewarding to have attendees insist on taking home the delicious refreshments at your meeting, but to-go containers can pile up quickly. In Monterey County, many restaurants, including The C Restaurant at the InterContinental the Clement Monterey, uses biodegradable containers to package to-go food items. These containers, which are made up of ingredients derived from potato and sugar cane, are compostable and significantly reduce the plastic hazard.

### CUT DOWN ON GOODIE BAGS

Goodie bags are often packed with individually wrapped goodies and foisted on attendees who don't want them, making them a full-on environmental assault. The vessel for the goodie bag swag is an important touch: plastic bags are a serious environmental hazard and Monterey County has taken a leading step by banning polystyrene and thin-film carryout bags at retail stores across the county. Follow suit and put items in a reusable cloth bag that your guests will use for years to come. Better yet – let the bag itself be the prized goodie your attendees get to take home with them. Many companies offer customizable branded bags made out of recycled materials.

With these tips in mind, your next meeting is sure to be a sustainable success. Reducing the use of plastics is a team effort, and by incorporating these guidelines, you're well on your way to hosting meetings that have a smaller environmental footprint.



# MONTEREY COUNTY

## A SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION

Monterey County is working hard to make our communities the very best places to live, to support healthy lifestyles, create jobs and surround ourselves with a healthy environment.

The following are just some of the green initiatives and highlights of Monterey County's sustainability program.

- There are 13 weekly farmers markets as well as numerous fresh fruit and vegetable stands throughout Monterey County.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is the second largest sanctuary out of 15 in the nation and is home to the largest submarine canyon off the coast of North America (equivalent to the size of the Grand Canyon). The National Marine Sanctuary System promotes environmental protection, stewardship and ocean research.
- Over 90 businesses in Monterey County are certified by the Monterey Bay Area Green Business Program.
- Three cities including Pacific Grove, Monterey, and Carmel-by-the-Sea, are registered with Tree City USA.
- There is a county-wide ban on polystyrene and on thin-film carryout bags at grocery and other retail stores.
- Monterey County is the epicenter of the sustainable seafood movement.

## Take the Right Path

The Right Path is a program developed by See Monterey, its Board of Directors and hospitality partners. The initiative aims to educate visitors on how to visit responsibly and stay safe while making the most of every moment in Monterey County. By following these easy, practical tips, you can make the most of your meeting while helping preserve the beauty of Monterey County for generations to come. Our local residents, businesses, wildlife, flora, lands and seas will appreciate it!

For more information on responsible travel, visit us at [www.SeeMonterey.com/Sustainable](http://www.SeeMonterey.com/Sustainable)



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# PARTNERS

## MONTEREY CONFERENCE CENTER

The City of Monterey has demonstrated a great commitment to sustainability and the environment through policies and programs such as the Green Building Ordinance, free recycling, the Commercial Food Scrap Collection Program, plastic bag and polystyrene bans, and the smoking ban on Municipal Wharf I. In 2014, the City of Monterey adopted the Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy (EPPP). In addition to considering price, performance, availability and safety considerations, staff has been directed to consider environmental and health impacts when making purchases. With this policy in place, the City of Monterey continues to further its dedication to making Monterey an environmentally sustainable community.

### SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- In concert with the EPPP, the new Monterey Conference Center has achieved a LEED® Platinum Certification:
- LEED®, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a green building certification program that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices
- LEED® is transforming the way we think about how buildings and communities are designed, constructed, maintained and operated across the globe
- LEED® certified buildings save money and resources and have a positive impact on the health of occupants, while promoting renewable, clean energy



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## MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

The Monterey Bay Aquarium is committed to continuous improvement in a sustainable approach to caring for and preserving the health of the planet. The aquarium integrates sustainability – balancing environmental considerations and social responsibility with business goals – into all aspects of the ways it designs exhibits and operates the aquarium (including the offices and animal care facilities). It strives to serve as a role model for the staff and volunteers, guests and the communities it serves. The aquarium is committed to following business practices that address a range of environmental concerns to achieve net zero emissions, net zero waste and environmentally sustainable sourcing of seafood and produce.

### SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Prioritize using locally sourced products whenever possible
- Uses only sustainably caught seafood as defined by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program
- Minimizes waste through recycling, composting and careful event planning
- Eliminated all single-use plastics from the front of the house culinary program



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INTERCONTINENTAL THE CLEMENT MONTEREY

InterContinental The Clement Monterey is located directly overlooking one of only 13 Marine Sanctuaries, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The interpretive signage and other design features reflect and respect the California Coastal Commission recommendations and requirements. Sustainable practices are part of the DNA of this hotel.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Sustainable seafood commitment
- No single-use plastics for water; no plastic straws
- Biodegradable containers for any to-go items
- Energy savings throughout hotel and ozone washing treatments for linens

*Awarded the WRAP, Waste Reduction Awards Program, for commitment to reuse, recycle and recover.*



[LEARN MORE](#)

ASILOMAR CONFERENCE GROUNDS



Celebrated as Monterey Peninsula’s “Refuge by the Sea” - Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove offers an ideal venue for countless types of events. Whether you are planning an educational conference, a corporate event or a day meeting, Asilomar will welcome your group with attentive service, professional planning and creative catering, in a truly inspirational setting. Asilomar Conference Grounds is committed to green business practices in all facets of their operation and it shows.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Asilomar maintains an ISO 14001 environmental certification
- Partners in Clean the World program (soap and amenities recycling)
- Participants in Terra Cycle (disposable glove recycling program)
- Uses local food waste composting program
- Utilizes energy efficient lighting
- Practices water conservation efforts (low flow shower heads, toilets, and sink faucets)



[LEARN MORE](#)



THE QUAIL

Whether you are in Carmel for a board meeting, a big presentation, staff retreat, or a special event, The Quail offers over 8,500 square feet of private Monterey Peninsula meeting space designed to meet a variety of needs. Committed to sustainable meetings practices, the professional staff at The Quail can provide everything you need to make your event a success.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- All paper products, bottles cans and uniforms hangers, batteries, copper, aluminum, wood and stainless steel are recycled throughout the property; paper, plastic and aluminum recycling in all meeting rooms
- Kitchen oils are recycled and made into alternative fuels; all oils from vehicles are recycled
- The golf cart barn is a green facility using different recycled products; 80% of all golf carts are electric powered
- Energy efficient lighting is used throughout the property; motion lighting is used to save on energy
- Kitchen exhaust system is done through natural means to use no electricity
- Approx. 50 trees are planted annually throughout the property
- Participant in the the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) programs.
- Compost piles are utilized in the greens department



[LEARN MORE](#)

FOLKTALE WINERY

Folktale Winery puts tremendous effort into providing a high quality experience in a healthy, sustainable way. Whether your group is small and intimate or a memorable corporate retreat, Folktale aims to create an experience tailored to your group. Each of the venue locations has its own unique feel and narrative. Discover and enjoy this idyllic setting with the award winning wines, food, natural beauty, comfortable climate, excellent location, and warm hospitality of Carmel Valley.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Organically grown estate vineyards
- Houses owls to mitigate vineyard pests naturally
- A native cover crop year-round preserves the topsoil (and they harvest the greens for the menu)
- Maintaining the property by hand avoids using heavy, soil damaging machinery
- Reduced waste wherever possible - from implementing cloth napkins to electric vehicle charging stations
- Culinary program focused on local, in season produce, and high quality, ethically sourced meats from Niman Ranch as well as Seafood Watch certified seafood options



FOLKTALE  
WINERY & VINEYARDS

[LEARN MORE](#)



PORTOLA HOTEL & SPA

As Monterey’s first U.S. Green Building Council LEED® Certified hotel, Portola Hotel & Spa offers meeting and event planners the opportunity to host sustainable events. The dedicated Catering & Events team works closely with planners to minimize waste, reduce carbon emissions, and integrate eco-friendly solutions throughout the event process.

Sustainable meetings at Portola are a collaborative effort, focusing on reducing landfill waste and conserving resources. With environmentally conscious practices in place, Portola Hotel ensures every event aligns with the Hotel’s commitment to sustainability and supports green initiatives within the community.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Environmentally friendly vendor and exhibit company suggestions
- Source organic and sustainable ingredients from local farmers and vendors throughout Monterey County and keep compost on the farm, reducing the Hotel’s carbon footprint
- Utilization of china, glassware, and silverware replacing the use of to-go cups for breakout spaces and events of 50 or less attendees
- Composting of pre and post-consumer waste
- Additional assistance provided by Portola’s Banquet team to separate recyclable and compostable materials, preventing them from going to the landfill



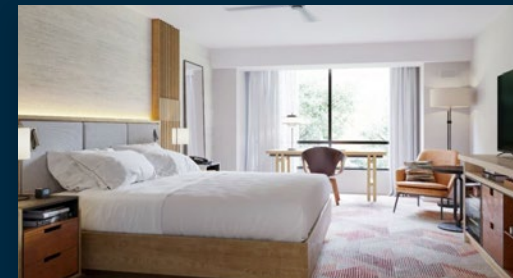
[LEARN MORE](#)

HYATT REGENCY MONTEREY HOTEL & SPA

Centered on the beautiful Monterey Bay coastline, Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel and Spa captures an atmosphere of energy and inspiration. Featuring 40,000 square feet of meeting space, the hotel has become a favored destination for corporate meetings, business retreats, training sessions and conferences. Their experienced meeting planners can work with you to plan an unforgettable green meeting.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Building a culture of environmental stewardship
- Setting ambitious goals to tackle environmental challenges
- Identifying and planning solutions
- Collaborating to reduce food waste
- Building new structures of the hotel more sustainably
- Following Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch Program guidelines



[LEARN MORE](#)

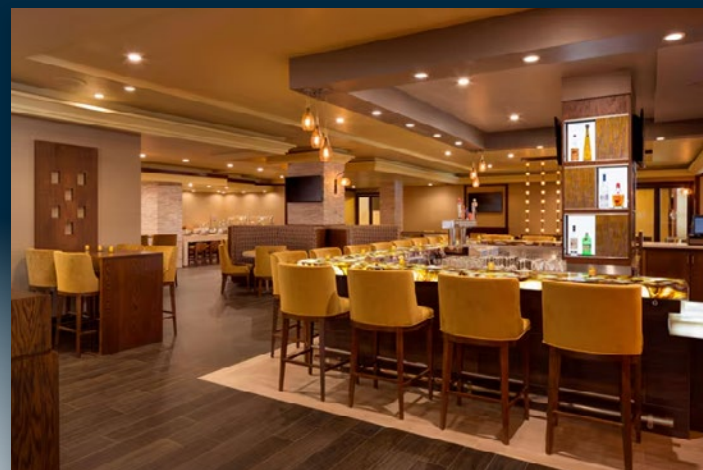


MONTEREY MARRIOTT

Experience the perfect blend of location and exceptional service at Monterey Marriott. From the moment guests arrive, the welcoming team ensures a comfortable stay. Spacious rooms feature plush bedding, deluxe amenities, and stunning views of downtown Monterey or the Bay. Guests can savor world-class dining at Fin & Field or explore nearby restaurants. Elegant event venues provide the ideal setting for business meetings, weddings, and social gatherings, with the Monterey Conference Center just steps away for additional space. Whether visiting for work or leisure, Monterey Marriott offers a memorable stay. Plus they have a number of eco-friendly initiatives.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- Marriott properties focus on energy efficiency, with a carbon footprint of just 4.26 kg per room night—helping you host a greener event
- With a water footprint of 295.38 liters per room night, Marriott hotels strive for water conservation through smart irrigation, low-flow fixtures, and linen reuse programs
- Marriott properties offer guest room recycling, making it easier for attendees to dispose of waste responsibly
- Many Marriott locations provide electric car charging stations, promoting the use of low-emission vehicles



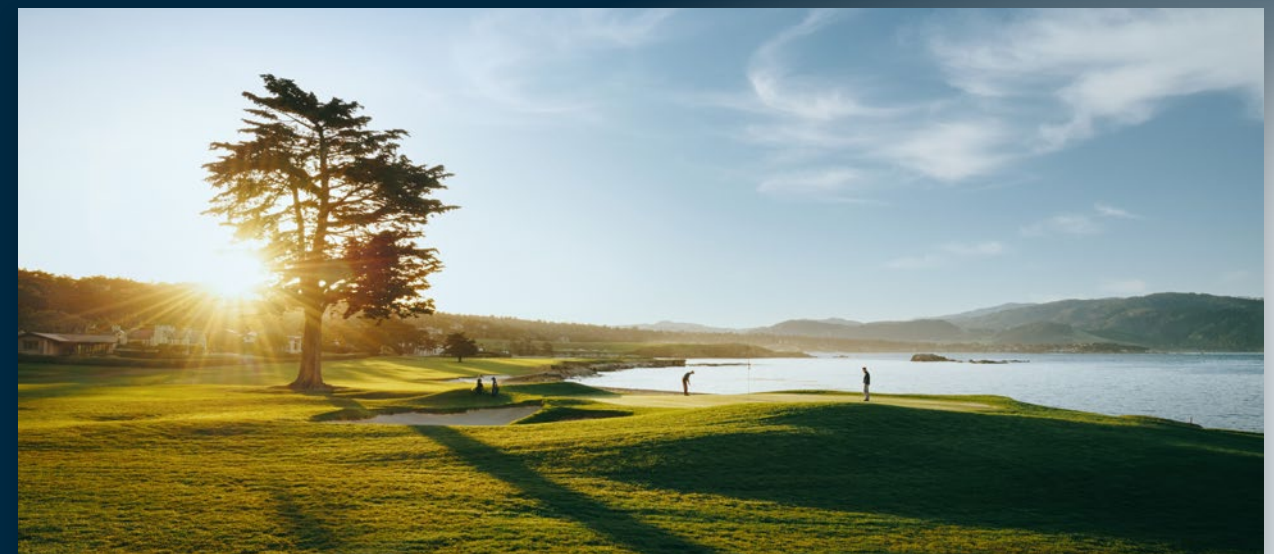
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PEBBLE BEACH RESORTS

Pebble Beach Resorts, located less than 10 miles from the Monterey Conference Center, offers a number of programs dedicated to preserving its 5,300 acres of resort properties, golf courses, open spaces, and coastline.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN MEETINGS PRACTICES:

- 100% recycled water used to water golf courses, saving 8 billion gallons of potable water
- Implementation of sustainable practices to reduce water usage across the resort
- Energy efficiency program that reduces over 1.9 million pounds of carbon emissions annually
- Diversion of 6.5 million pounds of plastic, glass, metal, and other materials from landfills each year
- Full-time ecology and forestry management teams dedicated to managing conservation efforts across 5,300 acres of resort properties, golf courses, open spaces, and coastline



[LEARN MORE](#)



# CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY & VOLUNTOURISM

We are privileged to be home to one of the most robust natural landscapes in the world, from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, to pristine beaches, to the legendary hiking trails of Big Sur. We take personal responsibility to protect these assets, recognizing the importance of sustainability and giving back to the community, which extends to how we conduct our meetings and conferences. The following are some of these services we can connect you with:

- Zero Waste Event Services
- Carbon Offset Programs
- Swag, tchotchke and signage repurposing
- Local and sustainable F&B sourcing
- Environmental & Social Volunteer Group Projects
- LEED® and certified green business

For those who know they want to do some good in the community but aren't sure where to start, the [United Way of Monterey County](#) provides comprehensive resources including recommendations for organizations across a spectrum of social issues, assistance with coordination and more. Some examples of local organizations with volunteer programs are listed at right.



## GIVING GOOD

For a consolidated list of opportunities to give back to the community please visit our destination page on [GivingGood.com](#).

## THE OFFSET PROJECT

Make your event Zero Waste! The Offset Project can create recycling and composting programs for your Monterey County meeting and event. Learn more at [TheOffsetProject.org](#).

## SAVE OUR SHORES

Offers activities that include sun and sand during one of their monthly beach cleanups or by signing up for a scheduled corporate volunteer event. Learn more at [SaveOurShores.org](#).

## ELKHORN SLOUGH FOUNDATION

Offers a number of opportunities to get involved with wetland conservation, including field work, gardening and maintenance. Learn more at [ElkhornSlough.org/Foundation](#).

## HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROJECT MONTEREY BAY

One of the first community-based habitat restoration organizations in the country which offers a variety of options for groups interested in lending a hand to local eco-systems, including regularly scheduled public outings or privately scheduled programs. Learn more at [CSUMB.edu](#).

## ALL-IN MONTEREY COUNTY

The organization works with The Food Bank for Monterey County, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District and The Unified Caring Association so they can provide to the community with essential needs such as groceries, personal hygiene items, clothes and household items. Learn more at [AllInMonterey.org](#).

For more options and assistance on planning the social responsibility aspect of your event, please contact our Strategic Client Services team at [Sales@SeeMonterey.com](#) or 831.657.6426.

# TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

- Choose an eco-friendly operator or accommodations
- Consider local conservation or social projects that you could visit or support during your trip
- Buy local goods and produce instead of imported goods
- Hire a local guide
- Do not buy products that come from endangered species, hard woods or ancient artifacts
- Respect local cultures, traditions and holy places
- Use public transport, rent a bike or walk when convenient
- Use water sparingly
- Bring a reusable water bottle and shopping bag to reduce the amount of one-time use plastics
- Always leave a place better than the way you arrived, this includes “pack in, pack out” and “leave no trace” practices
- When you leave your hotel room, turn off the lights and all electronics. Consider leaving the “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door so that housekeeping staff won't clean your room every day.
- Stick to marked trails to avoid harming native flora, and consider taking a bag to pick up trash along your hike.
- Take time to immerse yourself in the local music, art and cuisine. Embrace the cultural differences that make it unique.



# RESOURCES

For additional information on how to plan a sustainable meeting, visit these helpful links:

- [The Right Path: How to Travel Responsibly in Monterey County](#)
- [Plan Green](#)



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