



Institute for
Sustainable Solutions

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Oregon Country Fair - Carbon Neutral Proposal

Project Time Frame

Phase I: January 2020-August 2020 – Scoping, OCF stakeholder interviews, data-gathering and carbon footprint analysis.

This first phase of the project provides the foundation for a long-term initiative on carbon neutral fairs. Future phases could include: technical analysis and prioritization of carbon reduction opportunities, implementation support, monitoring and evaluation, and scaling.

Project Description

Outdoor fairs and festivals serve an important community purpose by convening like-minded constituencies around issues and activities that are an extension of their personal values and identities. Whether the focus is music, art, food, pride of place, or a political cause, outdoor gatherings bring people together to create community and shared experiences.

Furthermore, these gatherings are popular: *Billboard* magazine estimated in 2015 that 32 million people attend at least one music festival per year in the US. Including the estimated 10-20 million people who attend hundreds of film and food/beverage festivals, nearly one-fifth of the US population attends a festival each year.¹ And the popularity of such gatherings appears to be rising: The Oregon Country Fair welcomed 58,000+ participants to its three-day event in 2019, its largest attendance since the 1980s.²

But as festivals have grown to become a major force in our culture, so too has their impact on the planet. The many positive impacts of festivals can be counterbalanced by the combined carbon footprint of participants traveling to attend them and the energy use of the festivals themselves, and their contributions to the waste cycle.

The Institute for Sustainable Solutions wants to explore this issue and identify ways to reduce the carbon output of these vital community functions. The Oregon Country Fair (OCF) has agreed to act as both a financial contributor and participant in the Institute's research; OCF is interested in the potential impact on its own operations as well as the opportunity to influence the activities of other fairs. With this goal in mind, the final report from this project will be shared publicly.

¹ <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/music-festivals/6539009/music-festival-statistics-graphic>;
<http://www.festforums.com/new-blog-1/2017/5/31/festatistics-festivals-by-the-numbers>

² <https://kval.com/news/local/oregon-country-fair-attendance-highest-since-1980s>

Project Phase I: Scoping and Foundation Building (January 2020-August 2020)

1. *Defining Success:* ISS will work with the OCF to clarify the vision for what a carbon-neutral festival is. As part of this broader exploration, OCF may articulate its own carbon goal and steps needed to meet it.
2. *Clarifying the Scope:* ISS will develop criteria to help festivals identify how to make key decisions related to their approach to going carbon neutral. This will include research within OCF and external research on organizational and festival carbon neutral plans. Questions to be explored include: What values determine which actions are pursued and prioritized? What cultural attributes can help to support a bold carbon neutrality goal? What is a reasonable timeline for executing carbon neutrality? What actions have existing carbon-neutral festivals and events taken to achieve that goal?
3. *Planning for Successful Implementation:* ISS will work with the OCF as an exemplar of how to develop strategies for successful implementation of a carbon reduction strategy. This body of work will be grounded by a carbon footprint for the fair to understand the full scope of carbon emissions. Potential implementation strategies to explore may include: engaging internal stakeholders and key influencers, aligning steps toward carbon neutrality with existing initiatives, creating a robust core planning and action team, developing agreements for engaging other parts of the organization, and encouraging the participation of volunteers and key stakeholders in implementation.

Phase I Activities

1. Work with OCF stakeholders to establish a project collaboration plan that provides details about how both parties will work together to execute the collaborative project.
2. Work with OCF stakeholders to delineate their perspectives and provide guidance on developing and implementing a strategy for going carbon neutral.
3. Conduct interviews (and/or possibly a survey) with key stakeholders (and/or larger audience) relevant to the investigation.
4. Research best practices and case studies surrounding carbon neutral festivals to inform the strategy and identify relevant approaches based on the OCF context.
5. Data-gathering and analysis to inform a carbon footprint for the fair as well as some initial ideas around carbon reductions.
6. Create an evaluation framework that can be conducted internally or by ISS and shared with festivals nationally; the evaluation framework is meant to be deployed continually to gauge progress on this complex issue and also gather data on how the organization's culture is shifting as a result of the project.

7. Deliver a publicly available report that provides the main findings, methodology and potential next steps for the project.
8. Develop a dissemination plan for the report and host an in-person workshop for local festivals that are interested in the work.

Phase 1 Budget

The proposed budget for Phase 1 is:

Item	Amount
Staffing	\$6,400.00
Travel	\$100
Summer salary	\$2000.00
PSU Gift management fee	\$425
Total	\$8,925.00

Based on the alignment of this project with the priorities of ISS, it will also contribute resources to the work in the form of a paid internship for a student to support the carbon footprint inventory.

The Institute for Sustainable Solutions is excited to work with OCF to investigate and support the development of a carbon neutrality plan or strategy specific to large festivals and fairs. The project will support OCF’s decision-making related to going carbon-neutral – aiming to ensure that the planning effort is successful, reflects the values and culture of OCF, and sets the course for successful and broader implementation.