

Sierra Conservation Project, Inc.

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Beverage Container Recycling (RBC) Grant Program

FY 2013/14

GRANT #

RBC25-13-0151

Background

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains where wildlife and bears are a constant challenge when dealing with recycling collection. Bear proof recycling containers make implementing effective beverage container recycling programs cost prohibitive for multi-family housing complexes, businesses and recreation area managers. The proposed program will use grant funds to purchase bear proof recycling containers to create new and improve existing recycling programs throughout three targeted segments. The multi-family segment is currently underserved; only 50% of complexes are participating in recycling programs. The business segment in the Town of Mammoth Lakes has an effective beverage container recycling program but has limited capacity in identified areas. The recreational areas and Parks in the Town of Mammoth Lakes will focus on the campground and park locations lacking recycling infrastructure and capacity.



Grant Project Goals

The primary goals of the project were to:

- Providing currently unserved multi-family housing complexes (approximately 30 locations) with convenient recycling opportunities and outreach.
- Providing unserved commercial/businesses that generate over four yards of solid waste (approximately two large shopping malls with approximately 40 businesses) with beverage container recycling containers, education and service.
- Providing unserved recreation locations recycling service and containers (adding approximately 20 recycling locations).
- Purchasing bear proof containers to create new and improve existing recycling opportunities.
- Appointing a Recycling Coordinator to serve the new projects.

Outcome and Accomplishments

- The Sierra Conservation Project added 30 multi-family housing locations to the program resulting in over 1,800 units that are not recycling in Mammoth Lakes.
- Twenty-nine bars and restaurants have joined the program or used this grant opportunity to improve on their existing recycling efforts.
- Forty-four additional businesses, campgrounds, and recreational sites have been set up with efficient and effective recycling programs throughout the Mammoth Lakes community.
- The original goals of this grant project were exceeded and the feedback from the community was excellent.
- The Sierra conservation Project was extremely pleased to have achieved an over 71% increase in beverage container recycling volumes collected by its programs. This amount equates to 649, 722 pounds of material or 324 tons over the past 18 months of collection.

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Challenges

Material theft became an issue in the summer months at some campground and multi-family housing locations. To combat this issue, the Sierra Conservation Project installed padlocks on containers in problem areas. The cost of bear and animal proof containers combined with the need for specialized 4x4 recycling trucks makes initial program costly. Additionally, the use of locking bear proof containers is invaluable in ensuring program success, so by locking the bear proof containers, the Sierra Conservation Project was able to solve the damage problems and maximize beverage container collection for volume reporting. The Bear proof containers prevent the bears from getting into the recyclables. However, the Sierra Conservation Project experienced some issues with two containers being knocked over and damaged during the project. By welding the doors and repairing the containers, the bear proof containers were able to be put back into service.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

- The Sierra Conservation Project recommends spending extra money to buy heavy duty bear proof containers that have a life span of 10 or more years. The only regret with this project was trying to save money on cheaper equipment when it failed under mountain conditions in the long term.
- Mammoth Lakes is a unique location due to the remote mountain location. The Sierra Conservation Project used its 10 years previous experience to avoid problems relating to weather, snow, snow removal equipment, bears, wildlife and other hazards to program operation.
- The partnership between the Sierra Conservation Project and the Town of Mammoth Lakes was invaluable throughout the process of completing the project. It is highly recommended for private recycling efforts to utilize the assistance of local government when launching community wide programs.

Snapshot

Grant Program: Beverage Container Recycling

Grant Program Website:

<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/BevContainer/Grants/>

Grant Number: RBC25-13-0151

Grant Type: Beverage Container Recycling

Year Awarded: 2014

Funding: Awarded \$108,122, \$114,685 Matching Funds, Total spent \$222,807

