



Cultivating A Resilient Food System: DEQ's Initiatives in Food Waste Prevention, Rescue, and Recovery

Lily Herd, Organics Recovery Specialist

What is Food Waste?

"Food Waste" is defined in Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 340-090-0010 as:

"Food Waste means waste from fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, fish, shellfish, nuts, seeds, grains, and similar materials that results from the storage, preparation, cooking, handling, selling or serving of food for human consumption. "Food waste" includes but is not limited to excess, spoiled or unusable food and includes inedible parts commonly associated with food preparation such as pits, shells, bones, and peels.

"Food waste" does not include dead animals not intended for human consumption or animal excrement."

Why is Reducing Food Waste Important?

38%

of the food we grow
and import for human
consumption
is wasted



Environmental Impacts of Wasting Food

Land: Over 140 million acres of agricultural land, an area the size of California and New York state combined



Water: 5.9 trillion gallons of fresh water, equivalent to the water use of well over a third of all U.S. households



Energy: 664 terawatt-hours of energy, enough to power over 50 million U.S. homes for a year

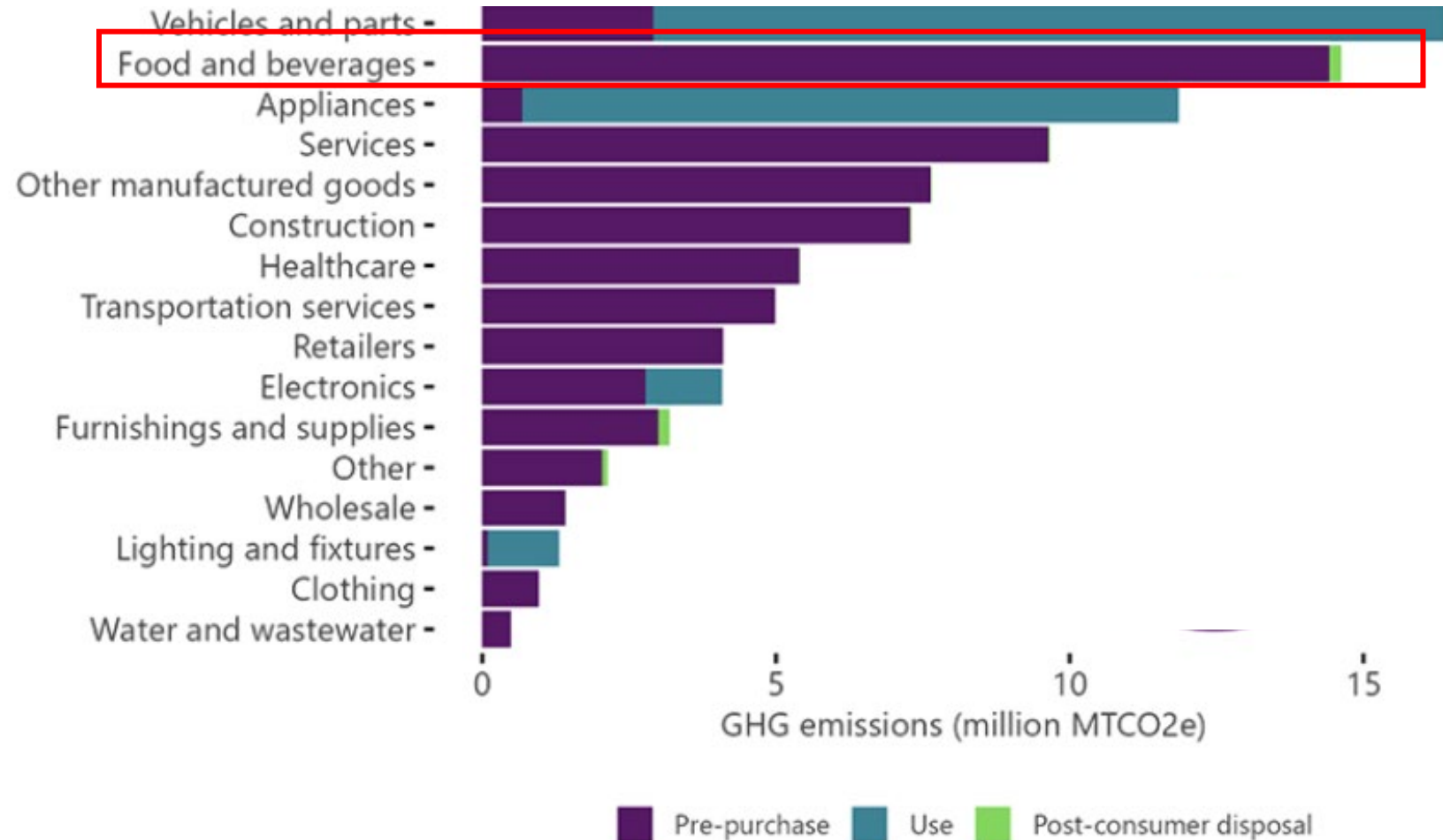


Fertilizer: 14 billion pounds of fertilizers, which the Environmental Protection Agency estimates is enough to grow all of the fruits, vegetables and grains grown and consumed in America each year



GHG Emissions Reduction Potential

2024 Oregon GHGs
emissions by
category + lifecycle
stage



Strat



U



025



Action Plan

Goal: Co-create an actionable plan, based on the framework and principles of the Strategic Plan, with specific projects with partners around the state.

Process:

- Plan and host regional workshops to come together and talk about the work that is already happening and our dreams for the future.
- Prioritize the projects as a collective
- Share Action Plan
- Start projects

Deliverable: An iterative document that serves as a repository for current and future projects.



**Please connect with Jerin Dinkins
if you have any questions!**

Jerin.dinkins@deq.oregon.gov

Strategic Plan: Focus Areas



Sustainable Production



Sustainable Production

We are focused on relationship-building, fostering peer-to-peer learning, and supporting initiatives, such as:

- Regional Food Hubs
- Low-impact food production strategies
- Indigenous Foodways
- Small-scale farming in rural communities
- Urban gardens

Sustainable Production: Case Study #1



CASE STUDY: *Employee Engagement Leads to Improved Manufacturing Line Efficiency and 70% Food Waste Reduction.*



Sustainable Consumption



Sustainable Consumption

Bad Apple Campaign 2.0



Food Waste Prevention Week



Sustainable Consumption: Case Study #2

CASE STUDY: Food Waste Prevention Week is a social media-based consumer campaign to educate and teach people about how to prevent food waste in their homes and communities. During FWPW in 2025, the messaging reached over 7.3M reached across the US.

SAVE THE DATE FOR:
Food Waste Prevention Week 2026

Sept 28 – Oct 4, 2026



Sustainable Waste Management



Sustainable Waste Management



Sustainable Waste Management: Case Study #3

Case Study:

The 'Nixyaawii, Don't Throw It Away! Project' is an initiative to address food waste and strengthen materials management for the CTUIR Tribal community.



Longhouse Food Waste Assessment Root Feast

Early on in the project we were figuring out our Food Waste Assessment methodology and letting our Longhouse know what we would be doing, many people have been supportive citing that it was a practice that people used to do or that they would do at home. DeArcie (left) shares laughter with a 2024 Root Feast participant who stopped by the Longhouse kitchen to ask about the project.

(April 2024)



Summer Food Waste Audit Pilot Rock School District

Early in the project, we coordinated with Pilot Rock School District, a small school district in the CTUIR Ceded lands, to hold a waste audit with their 8th & 9th grade summer school students. We talked about what kinds of materials are recyclable, what kinds aren't, and measured how much of each waste category we created.

(July 2024)



Community Picnic

Developing a Food Waste Assessment (FWA) for the Nixyaawii community is an outcome of the project; during CTUIR's annual Community Picnic, we asked participants about their food waste habits and knowledge as data for our FWA. Left is project intern Ermia Butler, center is project co-director Colleen Sanders, and right is project manager DeArcie Abraham.

(Aug 2024)



NDTIA!P NYE Powwow

To increase engagement and visibility with the project, we asked our community to help us decorate food waste collection bins during the Yellowhawk New Years Eve Sobriety Powwow, so they would be visually distinct and create a connection between youth and others who helped with the decoration and the work the project is doing.

(Dec 2024)



NDTIA!P Shed Placement

After a 6-month permitting process through CTUIR's internal land use procedures, the NDTIA!P shed was delivered and installed near the Nixyaawii Longhouse in January 2025. This photo also illustrates some of the challenges our project has encountered, with the extreme temperature range that our area naturally experiences. Pictured is DeArcie (left) with several members of CTUIR's Planning and Environmental Health & Safety staff to observe the shed placement.

(Jan 2025)



Celery Feast

In our project's first collection of post-consumer food waste from the 2025 Celery Feast, cultural Gatherer and Longhouse youth Lisa Gavin (center, white wing dress) took the painted food waste can around and prevented First Foods from being thrown away.

(Feb 2025)



Áqpaš Inoculant Collection

To get our Áqpaš up and running, we needed fresh cow manure to inoculate the digester with methanogenic bacteria found in cow stomachs. We asked our local Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) if we could take manure from their Agricultural Production program cows. They said “yes, definitely, no one has ever asked us this before.” Blazing new trails!

(March 2025)



Food Waste Culture Night

Longhouse cook Syreeta Thompson demonstrates to her daughter the food waste procedure, separating uneaten food scraps into the painted Longhouse food waste can as part of CTUIR Family Engagement Program's weekly Culture Night. NDTIA!P team members manage and collect this food waste to be sorted into different food waste recovery streams in the community.

(April 2025)



Afterschool Food Waste Can Paint

Working with project host site CTUIR Afterschool Program, which operates year-round to provide recreation and education opportunities to Tribal youth in supplement of the Nixyaawii Community School, summer program youth painted their own food waste collection cans to use with their site's food waste diversion.

(July 2025)



Afterschool Food Waste Can Paint

Summer program youth with the CTUIR Afterschool Program paint their own food waste collection cans to use with their site's food waste diversion, assisted by NDTIA!P's DeArcie Abraham (center) and her business Biowaste Technologies.

(July 2025)



Áqpaš Start Day

Innovating in the small-scale biogas digester space has Biowaste Technologies' DeArcie Abraham developing her engineering design skills as she works to construct 5-gallon bucket-based digesters, called Áqpaš (Umatilla word for “stomach”) that will be used with the project.

(July 2025)



Longhouse Food Waste Training

The project's second Longhouse Food Waste Training offered food waste diversion and composting science education to the Tribal community in service of building community capacity to address materials management pathways. NDTIA!P team members Ermia Butler (left) and DeArcie Abraham (right) along with training participant Adan Andrade display some of the food waste created by a simple meal as part of the training activities.

(July 2025)



Longhouse Food Waste Training

As part of the Longhouse Food Waste Training, Arlene Hennings (left) and Toni Cordell (right) participate in a food waste diversion compost activity, designed to illustrate the kinds of items that end up in food waste streams and where they have potential to be utilized in the project's diverse composting options, including aerobic, anaerobic, and vermicompost methods. This activity is one of the educational materials developed by the project to bring Tribal cultural context and kinetic learning to materials management education.

(July 2025)



Pamawaluukt Day with NDTIA!

CTUIR's Pamawaluukt "Discover" Program provides workforce development opportunities to Tribal members employed with the Tribal government to encourage pathways to management positions. As part of her rotation with the Pamawaluukt Program, participant Candice Patrick (left) spent her day with the First Foods Policy Program and got a tour of the NDTIA!P shed from project co-director Colleen Sanders (right) to learn about the diversified food waste processing approaches being conducted.

(July 2025)



Stay connected with the Food Systems Team!



Jerin Dinkins



Ladan Ghahramani



Lily Herd



Scan the QR
code to sign up
for our newsletter!

Thank you!

Lily Herd
(503) 789-6289
Lily.herd@deq.oregon.gov