

Longhorn Recycling Roundup cleans up tailgaters' trash



Freshman Mariah Owen helps a UT football fan recycle a plastic water bottle outside the gates to Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium Saturday evening. The Tailgate Recycling Crew hopes to collect at least 20 tons of recyclables at home games throughout the season.

- Trent Lesikar | Daily Texan Staff

TAGS

Sustainability, Campus Environmental Center, campus Saturday, Beverage can, coordinator, Design for X, Director, Electronic waste, Environment, Jim Walker, Maintenance, Nikki Miles, Recyclable materials, Recycling, Sustainability, Waste management

PUBLISHED 5 SEP 2011 AT 10:44 PM BY SYLVIA BUTANDA

While the Longhorns kicked the Rice Owls' cans on the football field, student volunteers collected the cans tailgaters left around campus Saturday afternoon.

The second year of [Longhorn Recycling Roundup](#) began when members of the [Tailgate Recycling Crew](#) handed out plastic bags to sort recyclable and non-recyclable items to tailgaters.

“Considering how big the campus is and how many people show up for football games, this effort is basically making sure people are recycling,” said Office of Sustainability director Jim Walker.

While UT's tailgate recycling operation is relatively new compared to other universities, the 2010 football season recycling crew collected about 17 tons of aluminum and plastic in tailgate lots.

This year's goal is to meet or do much better than last year's results by collecting 20 tons or more of plastic and aluminum cans.

“Tailgating culture has always been come early, be loud, stay late,” Walker said, “Now, recycling is becoming a part of all that.”

The event kicked off with student volunteers meeting at the tent that served as their headquarters on the west side of the LBJ fountain. Nikki Miles, Tailgate Recycling Crew's student coordinator, filled the group of students in on their duties.

Miles provided tag teams with plastic bags and instructions on what could be recycled, which included plastic bottles and aluminum cans.

"We just want to make sure people are having a good time and that they know about the recycling program," Miles said.

The recycling crew gave tailgaters recycling bags and contact cards for the Campus Environmental Center.

Last year's recycling operation covered the RV lots and the School of Social Work area near E. 20th Street, Walker said. This year the recycling crew expanded to include the LBJ school lots and the San Jacinto Corridor.

In addition, this was the first time the Recycling Roundup teamed up with the [Keep Austin Beautiful Organization](#) and the UT Athletics department inside the stadium.

They collaborated at the North End Zone food court, where a compost station was set up.

"I want to encourage other Longhorns to compost and recycle," said freshman Matthew Evans, whose duty at the compost station was to manage waste and compostable items and explain the importance of composting to people as they handed him their trash.

Besides covering tailgate lots, volunteers stood at the main stadium gates to encourage Texas fans to recycle their plastic bottles and cans in recycling stations outside the stadium and in the gray Coca-Cola bins set up inside.

"It's a preservation of our resources," said tailgater Michael Sanders, kinesiology and health education lecturer. "This is getting the good back in society and all it takes is a little effort."