



Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa

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1. Overview

The Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa began a number of environmental programs back in 1995. In that year the hotel replaced nearly all incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents with an estimated reduction in kilowatt hour (kWh) use of 800,000 per year. In that same year the resort began recycling mixed office paper and glass. These efforts began as a result of a handful of committed employees as well as a desire to reduce our electrical consumption. For a few years the efforts ebbed and flowed as the company contracted to haul the recycled material faced challenges shipping the materials off-island for processing. The environmental efforts have been in high swing for the past 3-4 years however, with recycling expanded to include aluminum and plastic as well. Throughout the property we have teak recycle bins for guests to recycle glass, aluminum, and plastic.

Green waste is hauled and used by a landscaping company to make compost. We are working to establish a program for kitchen wet waste which will reduce the tonnage hauled to the landfill drastically. We are currently in discussions with local pig farmers who would come and pick up the waste for feed. This was done for more than 10 years in the past but the farmer became unreliable in picking up the waste daily. We want a full commitment of reliability this time.

Our most recent huge step forward in our environmental program includes the installation of an 18,500 square foot photovoltaic panel covered parking lot for our employees. This system is expected to generate over 438,000 kWh per year of clean, renewable energy for the resort with a by-product of providing cool shaded parking. This is the only system of its kind in the state and makes us one of only two resorts in Hawaii with alternative energy sources. We are the clear leaders in the industry on Kauai for environmental initiatives. We are currently working with the other large resorts on-island to institute in-room recycling. All recyclable materials from guest rooms are currently sorted back-of-house.

Below is a list of other programs we have instituted:

- All guestrooms feature low-flow showerheads, low-flow toilets, and sink aerators providing an estimated reduction in water usage of 40-50%.
- Exhaust fans in kitchens and pumps for water features are controlled electronically on timers for an annual estimated savings of 250,000 kWh.
- Our air-conditioning system is on an energy management system connected to the front desk system so that unused rooms are only cooled slightly.
- Waste is minimized at group catering events by using glass and china dinnerware and cloth napkins. Water, juice and condiments are provided in bulk containers, not individual servings. All glass, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans are recycled.
- A towel and linen conservation program allows guests to choose if they want their linens and towels changed each day. This program saves over 500,000 gallons of water each year.
- Dry cleaning uses Green Earth machines replacing petroleum based solvents with silicone, made from silica.
- Take-out packaging is made from biodegradable corn-based plastics.
- Plastic cups in spa replaced with reusable acrylic.
- Landscaping practices Integrated Pest Management choosing biological controls over chemicals.
- Nearly 60,000 sq. ft. of grass covered roofs reduce cooling needs and further clean the air.
- Waste cooking oil is collected and processed into bio-diesel fuel.
- All usable hotel items such as mattresses, art, furniture, dishes, etc. are sold in fundraisers for local charities and events.
- Each office workspace recycles.
- Our heat to energy conversion system uses heat produced by the air conditioning system to heat water for our guestrooms, laundry and swimming pools. This process decreases environmental pollution and conserves 205,000 kWh each year.

2. Program Establishment

A Green Team was formed of a few committed employees with executive level representatives from each division – Food & Beverage Director, Rooms Executive Manager, Executive Chef, General Manager, Purchasing Director, Engineering Director and the Public Relations Manager. Our General Manager's commitment to the program has made implementing new programs much easier. Having purchasing participation is very beneficial in researching options for reducing The Team has not developed an overall plan but addresses issues and ideas on a case by case basis. Having upper level representatives from each division is key in working out all the possible areas that would be involved and affected by changes. One change that was more complicated than one might think is having the housekeepers remove the recycling materials from the guest rooms in a separate bag/bin than rubbish. Their carts were already quite full and heavy so a lot of thought and planning had to go in to how we would affix a separate bag for them to use.

Doing our part to protect our island's fragile environment is of critical importance to the resort.

3. Goals and Benchmarking

Our goal is to continue to reduce our environmental footprint. In terms of the standard reduce, reuse, recycle, our goal is to reduce as much as possible. At the purchasing stage, think how can we reduce potential waste beginning at this initial stage? Goals include reducing the amount of resources used each month. Our biggest challenges over the years have primarily come from vendors we have contracted with.

Our recycling success is measured in how many tons we have diverted from the Island's landfill over the years. Our energy-wise initiatives are measured in resulting decreases in kWh used each year. (See Outcomes below for details on accomplishments).

The initiatives we have undertaken and the results are used to educate guests and potential guests about our commitment to the environment. We include a handout that outlines our initiatives in each sales kit that goes out to potential group business. It is also included in all press kits so that visiting media know of our commitment.

4. Outcomes and Environmental Benefit

We clearly have a huge positive impact on our island's environment. Each month we divert approximately 13 tons of recyclable materials from our

island's landfill. Through the various initiatives we have implemented over the years like variable speed motors on pumps and fans, switching to CFL's, general awareness and reduction of usage, we have reduced our annual electric consumption by over 1.5 million kWh. This is a reduction of over 700,000 tons of CO₂ emissions. We expect our new photovoltaic system to further reduce our consumption by over 400,000 kWh.

As awareness is rising in the general public about ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle, we have seen an increased interest in our environmental programs. As mentioned before we include our initiatives in sales and press kits. The information has been presented at client events with rave comments. People are thrilled to know that we are doing our part to conserve precious resources. Other hotels and resorts can easily replicate the initiatives that we have implemented over the years. They all involve some degree of retraining people to do things a little differently or to do a bit more, which is sometimes challenging but we have clearly seen positive outcomes from our efforts.

5. Relevance to Traveler or Travel Industry

The Grand Hyatt Kauai's environmental effort helps convey a positive image for the industry. Many other hotels on the island have followed our lead and implemented similar programs. We are seeing more and more that our guests want to feel like they are participating in our efforts. Although we do recycle all cans and bottles from the guestrooms back-of-house, guests really want to feel like they are doing their part, hence our plan to purchase and place a recycle bin in the guest room. More and more people are looking for hotels that are practicing environmental conservation.

6. Real-World Example

Although the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa is respected for its stewardship of environmental conservation programs, it has come about by taking baby steps over the years and raising awareness of the need to conserve resources. Over a ten year period we reduced overall electrical consumption by over 1.5 million kWh. Our newly installed photovoltaic covered parking lot, the only one in the State, will further reduce our consumption by over 400,000 kWh. This equates to an overall reduction of over 1 million tons of CO₂ emissions per year.

Given our finite land resources, living on an island, reducing the amount of waste that goes to our landfill is critical. Through our recycling efforts (glass, plastic, aluminum, and mixed office paper) we divert over 13 tons of recyclables per month from our landfill. We are constantly working to try to reduce our waste further through future programs like diverting kitchen wet waste as well.

Simple first steps that make a big difference are switching to CFL's, implementing a recycling program, using cloth napkins, china, and refillable instead of disposable condiments in banquets, and switching take-out food packaging to corn-based compostable containers. Raising awareness in all departments and offering a suggestion box or contest for the best suggestion on how to best reduce in all ways gets everyone involved in the process. Rethinking purchasing decisions so as to reduce waste is essential.