



# **SPLC Summit + Connect**

## **2019 Sustainability Report**

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# Overview

## ORGANIZATION MISSION

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The **Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support and recognize purchasing leadership that accelerates the transition to a prosperous and sustainable future.

Founded in 2013, SPLC convenes buyers, suppliers, and public interest advocates to develop programs that simplify and standardize sustainable purchasing efforts by large organizations. For SPLC, sustainability includes social, economic, and environmental stewardship. Sustainable purchasing is purchasing that builds healthy communities, economies, and environments all along local and global supply chains.

## CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

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SPLC's annual Summit brings together 450 purchasing and sustainability professionals, suppliers, and NGO experts from diverse sectors and regions to share and promote sustainable purchasing best practices for organizations. The Summit's expert-led sessions, networking, tradeshow, and buyer-supplier matchmaking are open to both members and non-members.



# Vitals



## ATTENDEE PROFILE

SPLC's Summit attracts professionals in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors who are working to advance sustainable purchasing by organizations. 17% of attendees are local, 75% are national and 8% are international.

<b>Date</b>	May 20-22, 2019
<b>Location</b>	Portland, OR USA
<b>Venue</b>	Hilton Portland Downtown
<b># Attendees</b>	478 Registered Online 439 Estimated On-Site Attendance
<b># Sponsors</b>	27
<b>Event Features</b>	2 keynote sessions, 35 breakout sessions, 5 back of house tours, an exhibition hall, 1 day-long matchmaking event, 1 networking reception, 1 off site special event and 4 sustainability tours.



# Sustainability Achievements

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There are many areas that contribute to an event's overall sustainability, ranging from venue, accommodations, and food & beverage, to signage, collateral, and even marketing & communications. Greening an event involves a concerted effort across vendors and supply chains to help transform an industry. We are proud of our team's work to advance the following sustainability initiatives.



## WASTE MINIMIZATION AND DIVERSION

Front of house and back of house waste was collected and measured daily. Signage and conference materials were produced on 100% post-consumer recycled content substrate. Back of house tours were conducted to educate attendees on how event waste is being handled.



## CARBON REDUCTION VIA TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Portland, Oregon was chosen due in part to excellent mass transit infrastructure both regionally and in the downtown core. In addition, the off-site special event was within walking distance from the hotel. Public transportation was showcased in post conference sustainability tours.



## SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY CATERING

MeetGreen worked with the hotel catering staff to devise custom menus that prioritized local and organic ingredients. Water conserving proteins were offered for entrees and sugar content was reduced whenever possible.



- Vendor's ability to meet the conference's sustainability needs were assessed via **MeetGreen Sustainability Surveys**.
- Exhibit hall was constructed using **100% reusable materials and structures**. No waste was generated in creating the SPLC Summit Exhibit Hall.
- **Custom menus** were devised in collaboration with hotel chef and incorporated local, organic, fairly traded and low water choices, as well as healthy and low-sugar recipes.

- Conference graphics and **signage were 100% recyclable**. 65% of signage was reusable due to graphics not being date-specific.
- Attendee engagement on conference sustainability was prioritized pre-event via the website, event app, and eblasts with **suggestions for specific actions and choices attendees could make** around transportation and waste reduction.
- **Daily waste diversion percentages** were reported at general sessions to further deepen engagement and commitment from all on-site stakeholders. Total waste diversion was 95%.
- Sponsorship program provided **several choices for organizations to align their investment to support conference sustainability**. Including carbon offset, sustainable coffee, event app, zero waste initiative, and staffing.
- **Event staff were sourced from Galt Foundation**, a staffing company that provides, promotes, and expands employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



## SUMMARY

Conference sustainability is greatly helped by the fact that SPLC commitment starts with a policy [for minimum accepted guidelines for event venue and catering](#). The conference also identified a goal of becoming a zero waste conference by 2019 and we reached this goal with a 95% diversion rate (90% is considered “zero waste”).

Sustainability goals and commitments are helped considerably by a robust sponsorship program whereby benefits packages are offered for zero waste, carbon offset, sustainably produced coffee, and workplace diversity.

Other areas of achievement include messaging pre-conference to all attendees on sustainable choices they can make, daily reporting on waste diversion metrics, elimination of vinyl tabletops and one-use waste bins in the exhibit hall, all conference materials produced digitally, and all single-use signage produced on Falconboard.

The City of Portland was also a wise choice for the conference venue. The city has an excellent light rail system and the city is very walkable. The conference hotel was a willing partner and implemented many new processes as requested by SPLC.

# From Local to Global

In 2015 the United Nations defined a collection of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to achieve the following targeted goals by 2030: ending poverty, promoting prosperity, well-being for all, and protecting the planet. One very powerful visual is seeing how the sustainability actions taken at SPLC Summit link closely to the global initiatives outlined by the UN SDGs.

CONFERENCE SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS	UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
Utilization of leftover food.	SDG 2: Zero hunger
Condiments and beverages served in bulk.	SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
China and linens for meals, no disposables.	SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
100% reusable materials used for exhibit hall construction	SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
Reuse applicable existing signage and use of sustainable materials for new printing.	SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production
Reduce printed material. Materials printed on sustainable paper.	SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production
Incorporation of local, sustainable and healthy food on the menu.	SDG 3: Good Health & Well Being
100% of conference energy offset including travel, meeting space and accommodation.	Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy
No plastic bottled water served at event.	Goal 14: Life Below Water
Employment of event staff from individuals with diverabilities	Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities



# Event Scoring

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**SPLC SUMMIT  
+ CONNECT SCORE:  
68%**

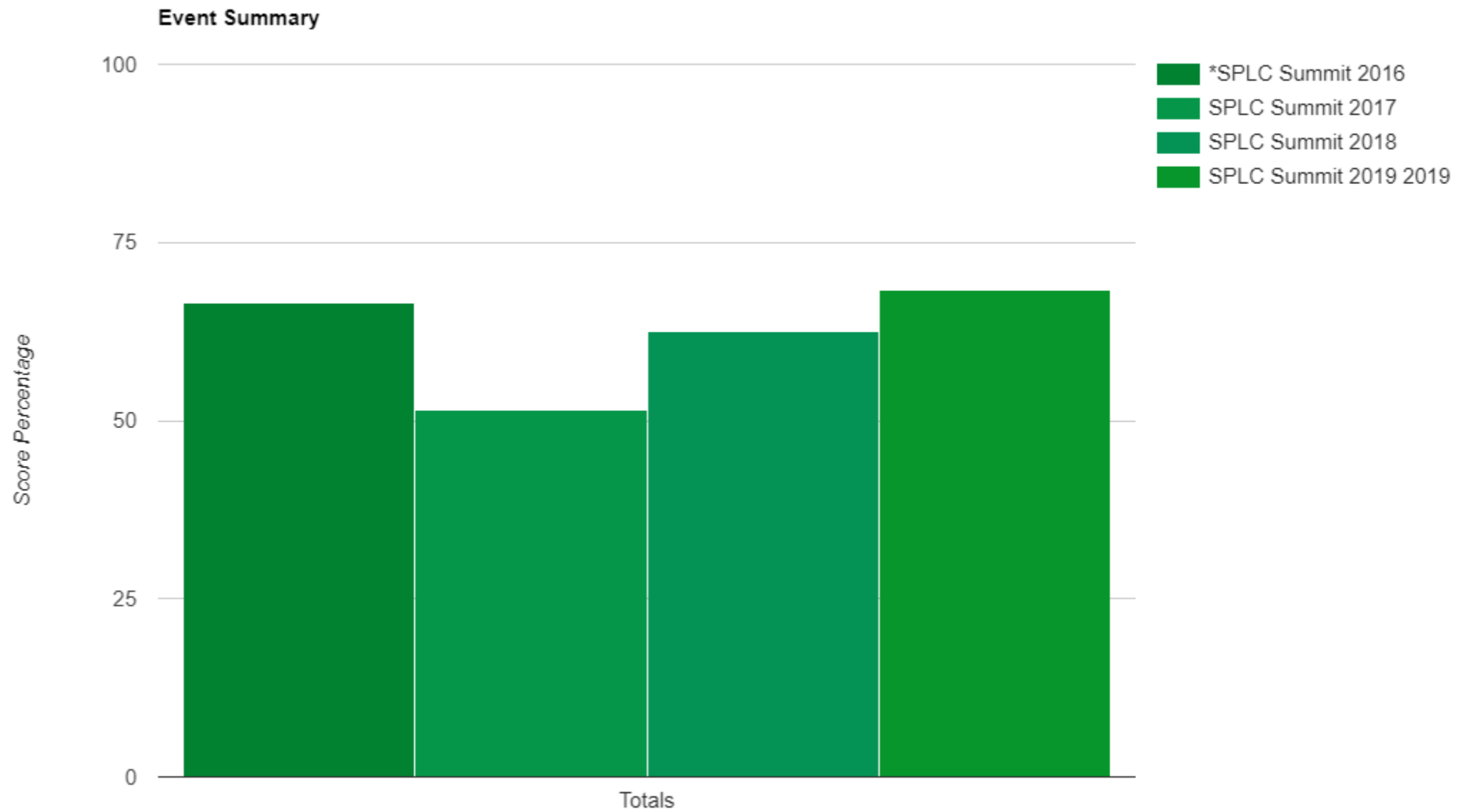
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*Compared to an average calculator score of 42%. In this context, 68% is an excellent score and one of the top scores across all MeetGreen conferences.*

The **MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0** is a comprehensive tool available for benchmarking the sustainable elements of events. Using the Calculator allows SPLC to capture valuable information throughout the event planning process in order to make it easy to see where successes lay and where improvements can be made.

Those events that score highly are run by organizers who not only request sustainable practices, but also ensure that these requests are implemented through systemic processes, that procedures are tracked and that a high level of performance is achieved.

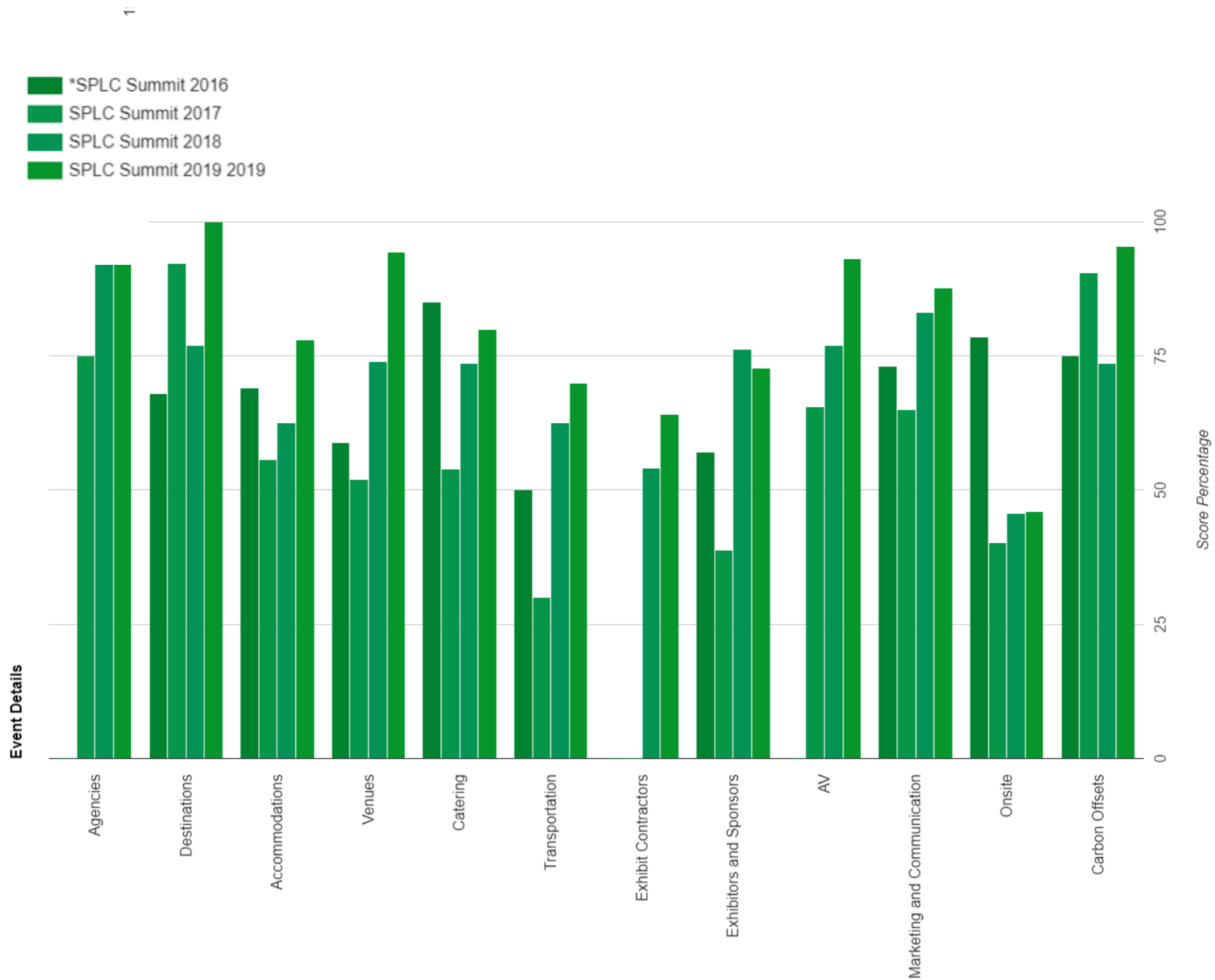




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## **SPLC SUMMIT + CONNECT MEETGREEN CALCULATOR SCORE YEAR BY YEAR**

This report shows the **total calculator score** for the **SPLC Summit** over a history of years.



## MEETGREEN CALCULATOR EVENT CATEGORY COMPARISON

This report shows the Calculator score across each category for SPLC Summit + Connect over a history of years.



# Sustainability Opportunities

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Event sustainability is inherently a long-term process. As such, it is an opportunity to innovate, and evolve at a pace that is congruent with your organization's resources and road map. The following pages offer a combination of practical next steps as well as some ambitious targets to help frame future event sustainability planning.



## CREATE

Consider migrating the conference to a **circular economy model** for assets such as signage. With the advent of recent challenges to waste diversion streams, continue to make a concerted effort to minimize waste rather than recycle materials.

**Commit to greater attendee engagement** by consistently communicating your efforts. Keep a **green tagline** at bottom of any eblasts or staff signature lines leading up to the event.

Communicate with sponsors and exhibitors to **ensure samples and promotional items utilize minimum packaging**. Advance greening initiatives for exhibitors.

At the outset of the 2020 conference, **identify 3 new goals and desired outcomes** that relate to sustainability.



## ADVANCE

**Draft a comprehensive event sustainability policy** to ensure that green practices are incorporated into all meetings. This process should be finalized and communicated to all stakeholders.

**Confirm event-specific priorities and measurement targets**. This could be a first action-step for the sustainable event team.

Establish **areas of responsibility** including staff and vendors and determine how to communicate this information to all stakeholders.

**Communicate opportunities and impacts**. Include a strategy for pre, during and post-event outreach to attendees and other stakeholders.



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# *Congratulations*

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**on a successful event using  
the Earth's resources wisely!**

# Special Thanks

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The success of SPLC Summit + Connect event sustainability can be attributed to our great partners and the commitment they made to making SPLC's vision a reality. We are grateful for the many individuals and companies that had a hand in the 2019 conference, including:

[Hilton Portland Downtown](#), Conference Venue

[Green Circle Certified](#), Zero Waste Initiative Sponsor

[Sustainable Solutions Corporation](#), Zero Waste Initiative Sponsor

[Lacas Coffee](#), Sustainable Coffee Sponsor

[Apex Clean Energy](#), Clean Energy Sponsor

[Fern Expo](#), Expo Contractor

[Galt Foundation](#), Diversity Staffing

[Lloyd Ecodistrict](#), Sustainability Tour

SPLC Summit Attendees and most importantly, SPLC program committee and Staff!

**JUNE 2019 | PREPARED BY MEETGREEN**

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