

TENNESSEE SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY

Montgomery Bell State Park

Burns, TN | Restaurant

The Forge Restaurant at Montgomery Bell State Park enrolled in the EPA's Food Recovery Challenge (FRC) program in 2018 in an effort to reduce their food waste. Restaurant staff received training in source reduction, diversion techniques, and composting methods to target and eliminate food waste. Through continuous measurement, data tracking, as well as frequent staff training, the restaurant is able to divert approximately 59 tons of food waste annually from landfills. The restaurant implemented several strategies to improve the overall efficiency of processes and to reduce food waste. The most successful strategies include just-in-time purchasing, improved storage and organization techniques, eliminating buffet option, modification of menus and serving portions, flexibility in menu planning, and repurposing leftovers.



FOOD WASTE REDUCTION



Measurement Matters: The Forge Restaurant at Montgomery Bell restaurant staff has four separate food waste logs in which they weigh each food item and record it in the appropriate log.

- Food waste log that maintains records of each individual food item disposed of, how much it weighs, and for what reason it was disposed
- Food log for source reduction or diverted food
- Food log for all food that will be donated to a local charity
- Food log for all compostable food scraps and plate scrapings from post-consumer leftovers



Cost Savings: The restaurant tracked food waste diversion and monetary savings from the restaurant's food waste reduction initiatives. These totals were calculated by comparing solid waste tonnage picked up from the restaurant dumpster to tonnage diverted in 2018. In addition to realizing a major decrease in the tonnage disposed of, they actually required fewer pickups altogether. Before participating in the Food Recovery Challenge, the restaurant produced 118 tons of waste annually, and now produces 55-60 tons annually. They were able to divert approximately 59 tons of food waste in 2018 by source reduction, donation, and composting efforts. This results in a monetary savings of approximately \$2,500 annually.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION



The Restaurant at Montgomery Bell State Park received national recognition through the EPA's Food Recovery Challenge. The restaurant was awarded the 2018 Source Reduction Winner in the narrative category for their efforts in food waste source reduction techniques. Most successful methods include: just-in-time purchasing, improved storage and organization techniques, eliminating buffet, modification of menus and serving portions, flexibility in menu planning to accommodate use of excess food from previous meals, and repurposing leftovers.

COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION



Montgomery Bell State Park has served as a mentor to others in Tennessee on food waste reduction and education. The park hosted a mentoring/training seminar with guest speakers from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. One speaker was an Endorser to the Food Recovery Challenge (FRC), and the other was an expert in composting science and operations. The training introduced attendees to the FRC program, and used specific examples and onsite learning to better clarify the importance behind reducing food waste, the food recovery hierarchy, source reduction, donation, and composting methods. Other TN State Parks, restaurants, and businesses were invited to attend this training.

TRANSFERABILITY

Through providing a mentoring/training seminar and guided tour of their facilities, signage, and processes, The Forge at Montgomery Bell was able to aid six other TN State Parks in Food Waste Reduction initiatives. The names of these State Park Restaurants reached through programming include: Homestead Harvest at Cumberland Mountain, The Governor's Table at Henry Horton, The Captain's Galley At Pickwick Landing, The Western Spur at Natchez Trace, The Riverboat at Paris Landing, and Gaul's Gallery at Fall Creek Falls.

PARTNERSHIPS

This initiative is successful due to partnerships between several local and state entities. The TN State Parks Go Green With Us Program provided the critical support system needed to compost the food waste on site through the program's sustainable operations initiative. Local charity Hearts and Hands of Dickson, TN served as the donation partner which helped to divert edible food from landfills. TDEC's Office of Policy and Sustainable Practices served as the FRC's Endorser and provided periodic trainings.

To learn more about food waste reduction, please visit: www.getfoodsmarttn.com