

Season's Greetings from the Gallatin Conservation District!

The holidays are a time for spreading joy, love, and generosity. This festive season gives us a chance to reflect and express our gratitude, perhaps in the form of giving gifts. Gifting may bring joy to you and your loved ones, but it also takes a toll on the planet. Excessive waste is added to landfills during the holiday season from wrapping paper, leftover food, and other seasonal litter. So, how can you bring cheer to your friends and family while also benefiting the environment?

Season of Joy

Shop local: By supporting local businesses, you'll keep your money in the community. Taxes on this revenue help fund cities and provide crucial services, such as fire protection and trash collection. Purchasing at this level helps small business owners and their companies thrive. Odds are, you'll discover a meaningful and unique present that you might not find at a large chain. By shopping small, you encourage community, support local businesses, and reduce environmental impact.



The Gift that Keeps On Giving: It's the season of giving. This year, consider sharing an experience or service with your loved ones. A tangible gift may only last a while but memories are enjoyed for years to come. Get creative and offer your loved ones a time to remember- tickets to Bridger Bowl, a weekend at the hot springs, swing dancing lessons, or a certificate to a floral arrangement course! The memories created from a unique experience will be priceless.

Take Care of Each Other: Offering your time or service to those in need can be a rewarding way to spend a day with family or friends. Volunteering at a food bank, contributing to a coat drive, or donating old toys to a shelter are valuable ways to give back to the community. This is also an outstanding opportunity to teach children about the power of helping others. To spread more good deeds and support larger causes, check out tisbest.org. TisBest is on a mission to give non-material goods by donating gift cards to various charities across the world. You can send your loved ones a gift card to a charity of their choice- from Paralyzed Veterans of America to the Children's Literacy Initiative to Paws with a Cause.

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

Throw a “No-Throwaway” party: On average, Americans throw away 25% more trash during the holiday season than any other time of year. A large amount of this waste is from discarded food. Encouraging friends and family to take home uneaten food is an effortless way to divert waste from entering the landfill. Instead of offering plastic utensils, paper plates, and other single-use items, swap them out for reusable utensils and materials. You can make it simpler for guests to help clean up by leaving a dirty-dish bucket out or providing recycling and composting bins. If washing dishes isn't how you want to kick off your new year, check out tableandteaspoon.com. This rental dishware service simplifies party planning. Rent all-in-one table setting kits- once you've used the dishes, just send them back! No need to wash anything. Can it get any easier than that?

Cut Down on Food Waste: By preventing food from being thrown out, you can help fight the negative impacts this waste has on the planet, food security, and stress on local providers. This holiday season, avoid throwing food out by freezing extras, sending home leftovers with guests, and trying not to over-prepare. If you find yourself discarding leftovers often, try and familiarize yourself with your local compost facility. The Gallatin Valley boasts several composting services, including a curbside pickup option. Organizations like Yes Compost, Happy Trash Can, and the City of Bozeman can provide further details.

Deck the Halls

All Things in Moderation: While decorating for the holidays, there are several ways to tweak your holiday traditions to make them more eco-friendly. If you have yet to string lights, look into the more energy-efficient, LED option. This type of light uses significantly less energy, meaning they'll last longer too! Setting a timer on your lights avoids wasting electricity and in turn, helps you save on the monthly bill. If you're on the hunt for festive decorations, look no further than your neighborhood park! Nature-inspired decor is a beautiful way to bring the outdoors in during the cold winter season. Pinecones, evergreen clippings, and berries are just a few ordinary materials that can be transformed into natural indoor pieces. Feeling inspired? Check out thespruce.com/natural-christmas-decorations for ideas.





‘Tis the Season: If you’ll be celebrating with presents under the tree this year, try one (or all) of these jolly alternatives to eliminate waste. Rethink wrapping paper- by using newspaper, fabric wrap, brown paper bags, or even old maps, you’ll avoid contributing to the 2.3 MILLION pounds of plastic wrapping paper that penetrates landfills every year. Reusing bows, ribbons, and gift bags is a cheerful way to keep the holiday spirit alive from year to year. When the time comes to take the tree down, (whether that’s the first week of January or the last of February), consider composting with a local tree service. Fortunately, residents of the Gallatin Valley are offered a courtesy tree composting service through the Forestry

Division. Just drop off your tree at select sites around the county to be recycled into mulch or natural compost.

As we close in on the season of giving, ask yourself, what kind of planet do you want to leave for future generations?

Are you on the lookout for a locally made, special present? Staff at the Conservation District will be supporting small businesses by hosting a craft fair on Thursday, December 9th. This event will take place during the Manhattan Christmas Stroll from 4-7 pm and occur in the GCD conference room (120 S 5th Street, Manhattan). Come support local vendors and shop for one-of-a-kind crafts!