

Bring Your Bag: Campaign Overview

VERMILLION, SD

Greening Vermillion
[HTTP://WWW.GREENINGVERMILLION.ORG/](http://www.greeningvermillion.org/)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings,

My name is Dr. Meghann Jarchow, a professor of ecology at the University of South Dakota. As coordinator of the sustainability program, I teach various courses in sustainability and sit on several university committees. As a resident of our city, I serve as the chair of Greening Vermillion, a nonprofit dedicated to connecting people in the community and making projects happen.



We are excited to announce one of the projects we are currently pursuing: the Bring Your Bag Campaign. Bring Your Bag is a public awareness campaign which seeks to create a Vermillion free of plastic bags. Because our goal is to educate and promote long-lasting change, we believe raising awareness is the most effective and engaging avenue toward achieving positive change.

The following guide outlines the goals, processes, and research driving the campaign. Inside, you will find a comprehensive review of research conducted by senior-level sustainability majors, the official strategic plan, and a proposed timeline for carrying out the campaign. We look forward to sponsoring this campaign and hope to have your support!

Cheers,

Meghann Jarchow, PhD
Chair of Greening Vermillion
Meghann.Jarchow@usd.edu

STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision: To create a plastic-bag-free Vermillion

Goal 1: To foster active participation by Vermillion area citizens, businesses, organizations, and government in reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bags.

- **Objective 1:** Create a list of key stakeholders.
- **Objective 2:** Develop specific action items that each stakeholder can do to participate in the Bring Your Bag Campaign.
- **Objective 3:** Speak to businesses about options for incentive programs that will encourage reduction of overall plastic bag consumption.
- **Objective 4:** Engage student-led interests on USD campus to eliminate the distribution of single-use plastic bags at USD.

Goal 2: To increase awareness through education and outreach regarding the environmental impacts, available alternatives, and consumer incentives related to single-use plastic bags.

- **Objective 1:** Create a marketing strategy that targets the following: K-12 Schools, University of South Dakota, and Vermillion community.
- **Objective 2:** Identify events and determine outreach opportunities.
- **Objective 3:** Determine information and materials that can be distributed at events.
- **Objective 4:** Work with area businesses to showcase and inform customers about plastic bag alternatives. (Additionally, offer demonstrations in local businesses and encourage businesses to offer alternatives to plastic bags).
- **Objective 5:** Define a comprehensive incentive that can be adopted and publicized by local businesses.
- **Objective 6:** Identify speaking opportunities to address target populations and provide information about the bag program, including incentives and alternatives.

Goal 3: To use an adaptive management approach by obtaining and maintaining accurate information related to Vermillion area bag use over time.

- **Objective 1:** Use a behavioral change framework in developing campaign strategy.
- **Objective 2:** Conduct surveys to determine where the community stands in relation to plastic-bag use and awareness of the problems that they cause.
- **Objective 3:** Create specifically targeted marketing meta-campaigns that are tailored to the data that we obtain.
- **Objective 4:** Use the information collected over time to guide efforts in managing the campaign and for adjusting accordingly to achieve goals.

Goal 4: To be efficacious, transparent, and inclusive in our process so Vermillion can be a model for other communities.

- **Objective 1:** Establish and develop relationships that foster strong stakeholder collaboration.
- **Objective 2:** Maintain transparent and accessible resources and data.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Phase 1: Analysis

January - February 2015

- Identifying problem: plastic bags
 - Compile preliminary research and literature reviews
 - Conduct a SWOT Analysis
- Choosing direction
 - Decide on how to proceed: public awareness campaign

Phase 2: Planning

January - March 2015

- Recognizing audience
- Creating goals
 - Create a strategic plan
 - Review SMART Goals
 - Integrate goals and objectives

Phase 3: Action

April 2015 - April 2017

- Developing an infrastructure
 - Solidify communication channels
 - Social media
 - Email account
 - Tabs on Greening Vermillion website
 - Finalize contact points
 - Develop a brand
 - Identify funding sources and procedures
 - Update website regularly
 - Make progress and process easily accessible
 - Keep detailed records
- Establish promotional or other educational events
 - Earth Week
 - Kickoff Event: Earth Week's Green Thursday on the Platz
 - Sustainability Series

Phase 3: Action (cont.)

- Build relationships with stakeholders
 - Recognize potential stakeholders
 - City Council
 - City Manager
 - County Commission
 - Earth Week Planning Committee
 - K-12 Schools
 - Local Businesses
 - Other municipalities that have pursued plastic bag campaigns:
 - Brookings, SD
 - Sioux City, IA
 - University of South Dakota
 - President's Council on Sustainability (administrators)
 - Sustainability Department (faculty)
 - Sustainability Club (students)
 - United Way
 - Vermillion Chamber of Commerce
 - Vermillion Sierra Club
 - Make and maintain contact
- Gauging public opinion
 - Monitor changes over time
 - Conduct continual surveys and public opinion polls
 - Initiate first survey at kickoff event
 - Analyze data and how it relates to campaign strategy

Phase 4: Impact

May - June 2017

- Reflect on successes, failures, and processes
 - What did we do well?
 - Where could we have improved?
 - What are the takeaways?
- Evaluate campaign and initiatives
 - Did our goals and actions have the intended effects?
 - How well did we collaborate with stakeholders and integrate all facets of the community?
 - Is progress measurable?
 - Did we meet our objectives outlined in the strategic plan? Why or why not?
 - What's next?

RESEARCH REVIEW

Marketing Strategies for Plastic Bag Campaigns: In Theory and in Action

Morgan L. Appley

Over the past several years, there has been a growing concern about the impacts of plastic shopping bags on human, animal, and aquatic life. Several countries, states, and municipalities have either banned or greatly reduced the use of single-use plastic bags by enacting legislation, plastic bag taxes and fees, or consumer awareness campaigns. Using a combination of social marketing research, communication research, and qualitative research in the form of a focus group marketing strategies for use in a public education campaign are identified in order to encourage the use of reusable shopping bags. Specific suggestions include strategic uses of words, images, and facts to build a campaign based upon repetition and brand recognition. Suggested mediums for communication are refrigerator magnets, door tags, and poster advertisements to remind consumers to bring their bags. These advertisements use a repetitive theme with consistent messaging but include unique variations to keep consumers engaged. By maintaining a unified message, focusing on positive, action-oriented messaging, and encouraging consumers with the use of facts and simple imagery, the campaign is likely to attract interest and encourage individuals to use reusable bags. Reducing or eliminating single-use plastic bags in Vermillion, South Dakota, would be one step toward the process of eradicating our global plastic bag problem.

A Supplemental Behavioral Change Framework for the Bring Your Bag Campaign

Nathan J. Bedoya

Changing the normative use of plastic shopping bags has occurred primarily at a public policy level through taxes imposed on consumers. While this approach has been generally effective, it does not always receive the necessary political support, and more importantly, it does not completely address the root issue of individual behavior. Through the use of data collection, behavioral analysis and change techniques, advocates of plastic bag bans can assess the state of their communities to custom tailor strategies and potentially induce more meaningful change. This paper is an introductory step in creating a long-term plan that follows and adapts to a community as it progresses through its stages of change.

The framework provided in this paper uses the transtheoretical model as its basis and three behavioral change tools as its supporting pillars. If successful, the framework could be a useful in understanding alternatives and could potentially benefit other groups trying to enact voluntary behavioral change in their communities. The paper then applies this framework to the Bring Your Bag campaign developing in Vermillion, South Dakota. This application places an emphasis on addressing the lack of data on which stages Vermillion community members are in and positively moving them through stages of change. It is assumed that community members currently fall within the first two stages of the transtheoretical model known as precontemplative and contemplative. Following this assumption, the framework is adjusted and suggestions are given to assist in addressing the needs of these two stages as noted in previous literature.

Varying Policy Approaches to Single-Use Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinances

Michelle L. Corio

In the past thirty years, the world's consumption of plastic has doubled, while just under 10% of the world's supply of oil and natural gas goes toward plastic production. Even more alarming than the increased reliance on oil to fuel the plastics industry is the use-to-lifespan ratio of the plastics products it is creating. Over 33% of plastic products "are for short-term usage and are discarded within a year of being manufactured." Single-use plastic bags are one such product. They consist entirely of plastic materials, serve no specialty function, and do not contribute to efficiency over time as they are often discarded with twenty-four hours of being used yet have a lifespan of over 1,000 years. Plastic bags are now harming ecosystems by in the ocean and on land.

Places around the world are taking actions to combat the consequences of this consumer phenomena and to reduce consumption of single-use plastic bags. These reduction ordinances come in myriad forms. This research uses a continuum that ties policy actions to the main actor's sector to compare and contrast varying options for reducing plastic bags through policy. The paper utilizes snippets of case studies from all over the world at all levels of governance. Additionally, it seeks to identify the overall effectiveness of those different policies and make personal recommendations regarding further action in Vermillion, South Dakota, as it pursues its own reduction strategies over the coming years.

Paper vs. Plastic: The Life Cycle of Disposable Bags

Zoe A. Kuegle

Disposable bags have become a deeply engrained part of our everyday lives as a means of transporting goods from their place of purchase to our homes with little regard to their greater impact on our planet. Billions of bags are produced, used, and discarded every year. The realization that HDPE bags are more harmful than they are necessary is already underway, however disposable paper bags, although used less widely, remain under the radar of many environmentalists and policy makers alike. My research aims to explore the history of the disposable bag, both paper and plastic, currently available at stores and their lifecycle using a lifecycle analysis approach. Plastic and paper bags are compared using factors including the manufacturing process, the disposal options and impacts of the bags in landfills, as well as the viability of recycling and bag banning policies to shed lights on the negative effects and impacts of all disposable shopping bags. The analysis of these components as part of a lifecycle analysis provided the result that single-use HDPE bags impart a lesser impact environmentally when compared to disposable paper bags. This unexpected outcome proves the need for further alternatives to and policy action against all disposable bags, not just HDPE bags. This information provides meaningful comparison and analysis to show the need for a movement towards more permanent options.

The Impact of Plastic Bags on Humans and the World around Us

Auston P. Johnson

Plastic bags pose various detrimental effects to both people and animals. This research focuses on how plastic bags can harm human health. One of the main public health threats resulting from plastic bag decomposition concerns the chemicals that bags leak in landfills, which then trickle into more complex earth systems. Some of the chemicals released include cadmium, lead, benzene, petroleum, bisphenol (BPA), phthalates, polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE), polyvinylchloride, and ethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP). Once a chemical is absorbed into the body, it stays there where it continuously multiplies throughout life. These chemicals cause lung, kidney, genetic, skin, and liver diseases; damage reproductive, nervous, digestive, and lymphatic systems; and put people at risk for other chronic health complications. For example, nearly 291,000 pounds of ethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP) are released each year from landfills and often finds its way into ground water systems. Eliminating plastic use is the best way to reduce health risks, both domestically and abroad. With public awareness campaigns, educational outreach, and policy initiatives that support the reduction of plastic bag consumption, we can work toward achieving this; Vermillion is just the beginning.

The Effect of Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags on Animals

Don E. Poeckes

With over 100 billion plastic shopping bags being used in the world annually, and with 95 percent of these bags being thrown away, single-use plastic shopping bags pose a serious problem to the environment. The polyethylene material that these bags are made of can last 100 to 1,000 years in the environment. They are also lightweight, which causes them to be easily dispersed into the environment. The main objective of this project is to discuss the health risks that single-use plastic shopping bags impose on animals. An analysis of specific case studies regarding the impacts of plastic bags on animals was conducted. The results of this analysis show that the primary health risk that plastic bags impose on animals is ingestion, which is caused by many animals mistaking plastic bags for food. Once ingested, these plastic bags can block digestive pathways, which can lead to the animal's death. Some animals that are impacted the most by plastic bags are sea turtles, whales, aquatic invertebrates, the desert tortoise, and cows. The goal of this project is to inform individuals about the consequences single-use plastic shopping bags have on animals and the environment in an effort to promote the use of reusable shopping bags.

Please feel free to reach out to Meghann Jarchow or another member of the Bring Your Bag Campaign if you have any questions, comments, or concerns! Thank you.