

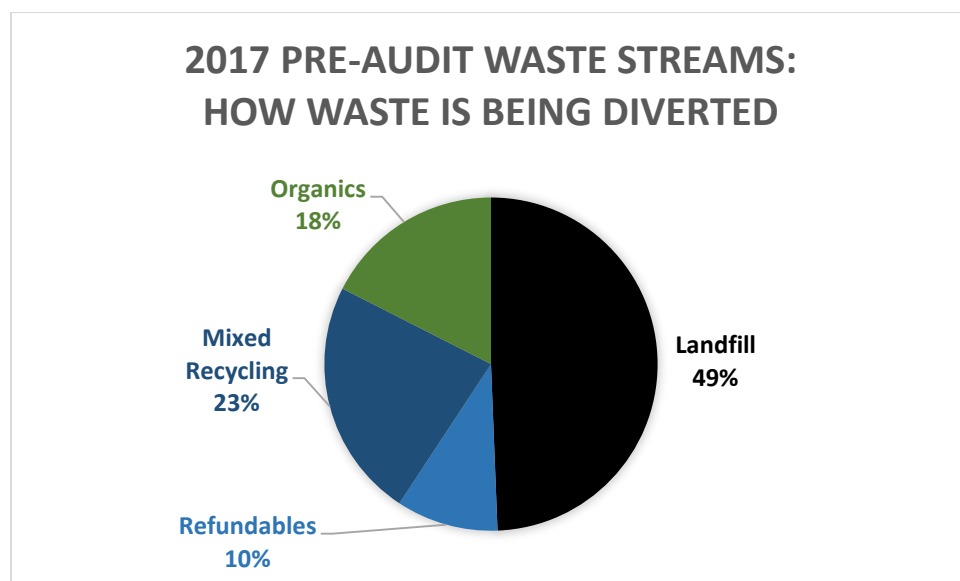
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### Garbage on the Green 2017: The results

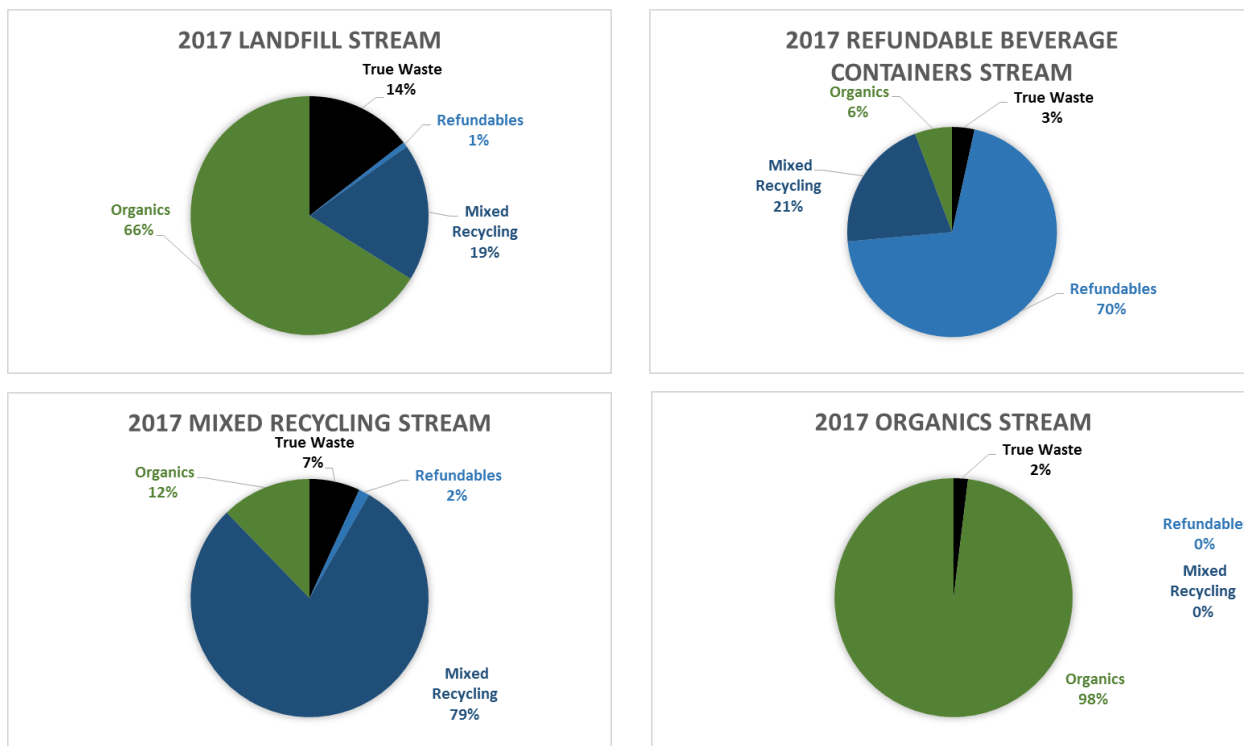
We conducted our third annual Waste Audit (AKA: Garbage on the Green) on October 18, 2017. In the past two audits, we were able to identify key factors within the audit that we wanted to focus our attention on:

- In 2015, we identified that many plastics were going into the garbage, and subsequently introduced a new recycling program to the organization to allow for the collection of mixed recycling. This was a success, reducing the amount of mixed recycling going into the garbage by 25%, and increasing the overall user compliance.
- In 2016, we identified that the amount of organic (compostable) material going into the garbage had increased, and we worked hard to implement a new Sustainable Waste Station system across the Chilliwack and Abbotsford campuses to counter this. These new systems provide users with the opportunity to dispose of waste into any of these four streams: Landfill, Refundable Beverage Containers, Mixed Recycling, or Organics.

In 2017, we audited all four of the waste streams that are now being collected on campus, whereas in years past we were only auditing the Landfill stream. First, let's break down how our new streams are diverting waste:



Over half of our campus waste is not going to the landfill! Next, let's look at how each waste stream breaks down:

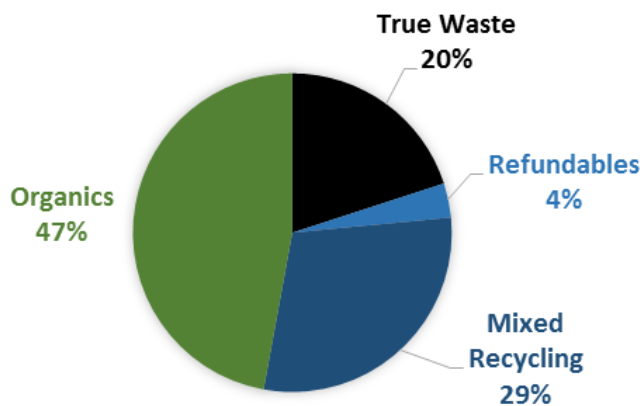


As you can see, overall compliance is pretty good in three of our four streams: Refundable Beverage Containers, Mixed Recycling, and Organics, with 70%, 79%, and 98% compliance, respectively. A couple notes to make on each stream:

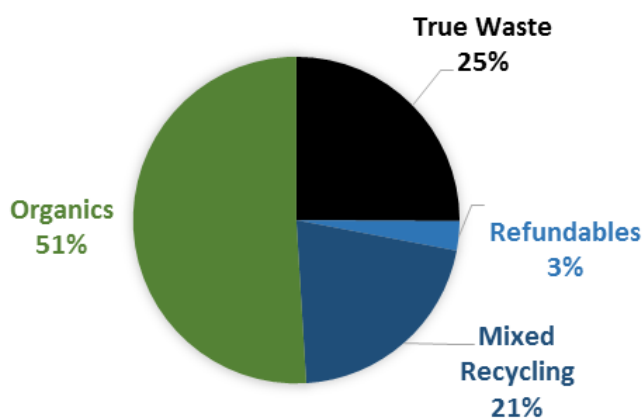
- **Refundable Beverage Containers:** The biggest issue we see within this stream is coffee cups. Some cups are considered mixed recycling, while others are considered organics (compostable), so each of those components are noted within the pie chart above. Because the collection bin lids have circular holes in them, it's likely that people see circles and want to put their circular cups into that bin. We'll likely put some signage directly on these lids to try and mitigate these errors.
- **Mixed Recycling:** Overall, this stream has pretty good results. The Organics component in this stream is predominantly coffee cups from Fair Grounds, the Cascade Café, and Spirit Bear Café. In reality, these may be recyclable as well, but the information on the cups themselves states that they should be composted, and thus should find their way into the Organics bins.
- **Organics:** 98% compliance. This is fantastic! We had no idea how successful it would be, but the numbers don't lie. If people choose to put their waste in the organics bin, they do it right.

- Landfill: Our past measure of success was to see how much “True Waste” was found in the Landfill stream. If we look at this year’s results in the same way, the results are not ideal:

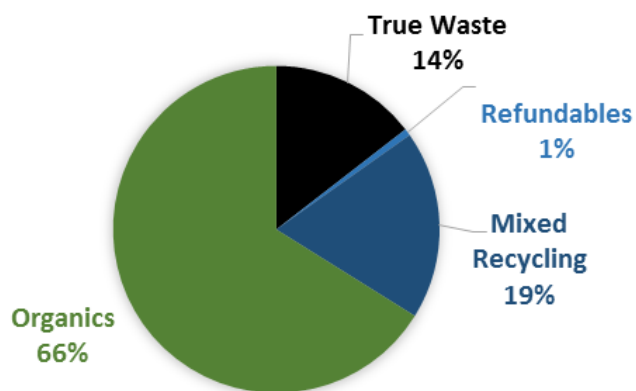
### 2015 LANDFILL STREAM



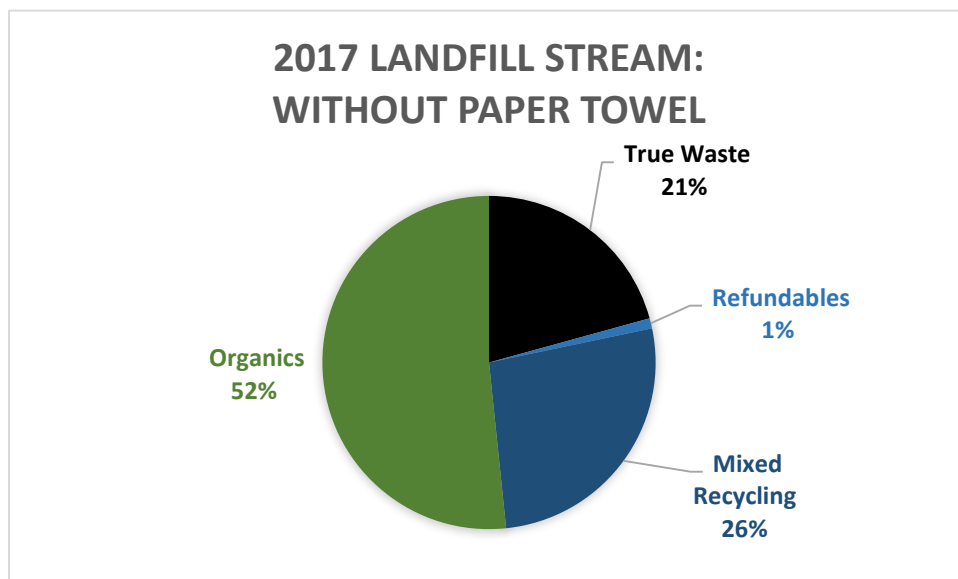
### 2016 LANDFILL STREAM



### 2017 LANDFILL STREAM



The “True Waste” component of our Landfill stream has actually dropped by over 40% from last year. This is the opposite of what we predicted would happen, and we began to look at the reasons why. We first considered that paper towel may be contributing significantly to the “Organics” stream (it accounted for nearly half of the Organics component in the above chart). Our plan is to replace all Landfill bins in bathrooms with Organics bins, as there were countless bags we opened that were almost 100% paper towel. This should solve the problem of paper towel, at least. By removing that from consideration, the new components are as follows:



Still not ideal. With Organics accounting for over 50% of our waste destined for the landfill, it has to be said: We at UFV aren’t great at putting compostable material where it belongs. After chatting with several staff, students, and faculty about the issue these past weeks, a few thoughts have come to light:

- Signage: Our first round of signage is quite comprehensive, using pictures rather than icons. Does this confuse the end user?
- Education: Three of our major food and beverage providers on campus (Fair Grounds, Cascade Café, and Spirit Bear Café) provide their goods in compostable containers. Do users actually know this?
- Lids: We have hinged lids on the Organics bins, but not on the Landfill bin. Is it a matter of convenience?

So, this is where we stand right now. We see that there are still kinks in our system that need to be worked out, and we’re more than ready to tackle these adjustments. We’re keeping our ears open for other suggestions to improve the overall system, and will be looking for input from folks on campus for anything we may have overlooked. Suggestions are welcome, and can be sent to [travis.gingerich@ufv.ca](mailto:travis.gingerich@ufv.ca)