



VISALIA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

2017-2018 Annual Report

The Visalia Environmental Committee (VEC) informs and advises the Visalia City Council and citizens on preserving and improving environmental quality for the benefit of the community. Issues addressed include air quality, hazardous waste, recycling, water conservation, and other natural resource conservation. This Committee has been meeting and continues to meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:45 p.m. in the Transit Building 2nd Floor Conference Room, which is located at 425 E. Oak Avenue. This fiscal year VEC held 12 regular meetings and one (1) special meeting on August 2, 2017 to discuss and take committee action in support of moving to Stage 2 of Visalia's Water Conservation Ordinance. Throughout this past year, Visalia's Environmental Committee had a total of seven (7) members of the public attend regularly scheduled meetings.

During the 2017-2018 year, this Committee selected Jose Saenz to serve as Chair and Maile Melkonian to serve as Vice Chair. The Environmental Committee welcomed one (1) new member this year, Melisa Prins, while saying goodbye to three-term member Patricia Gallimore and four-term member Lonnie Miller, both of whom contributed so much to this Committee and made a difference in the community.

2018 Meetings

January 10

February 7

March 7

April 11

May 9

June 13

July 11

August 8

September 12

October 10

November 14

December 12

Visalia Earth Day 2018 – On April 21, 2018, the Visalia Environmental Committee partnered with Imagine U Children's Museum to host the 2018 Earth Day Celebration. This year's event was themed "Rolling into the Future," and highlighted bicycle usage and new electric vehicle technologies displayed by the Groppetti Automotive Group. Forty-one (41) businesses, non-profits, and government agencies provided a wide-range of information focused on conservation and environmental sustainability. Approximately 600 participants attended this year's Earth Day Celebration in downtown Visalia.



Commercial Environmental Recognition Awards – In an effort to encourage best environmental business practices in the City of Visalia, the Visalia Environmental Committee established the Visalia Commercial Environmental Recognition Award. Members selected COSTCO and Black Bear Diner as the first recipients of this Award (in fiscal year 2017-2018). Both businesses were recognized for solid waste diversion measures implemented. These businesses were some of Visalia’s first businesses to capture and divert their mixed recyclables and organic “food waste” from landfill-bound waste. Black Bear Diner has also moved completely away from the use of Styrofoam containers. The Visalia Chamber of Commerce joined the Visalia Environmental Committee Members in presenting COSTCO and Black Bear Diner with a “Green Business” window decal, now on display at both locations. Both recipients received coverage in the Visalia Times-Delta.

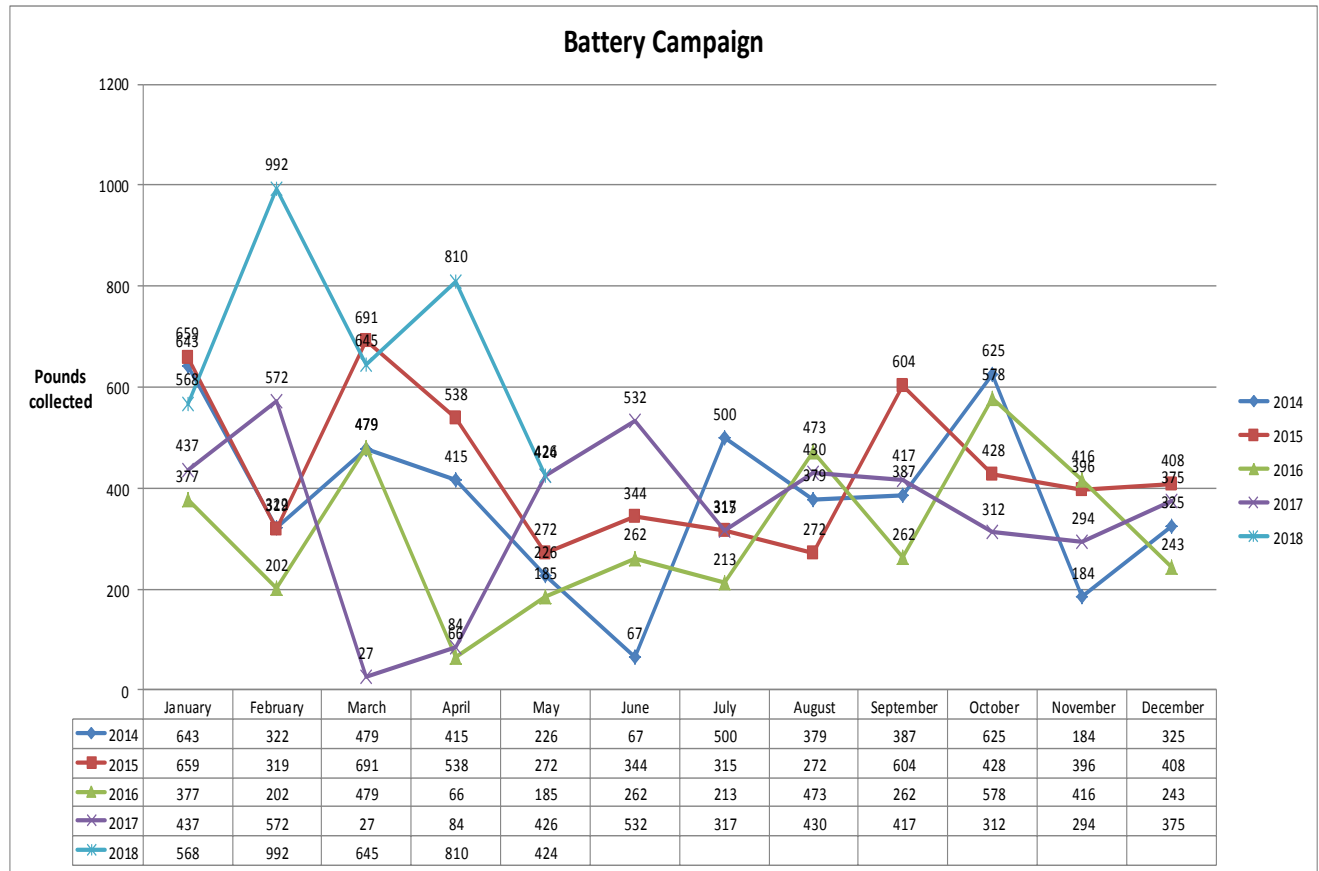
Environmental Communication– The Visalia Environmental Committee has issued letters of support for the City of Visalia’s application for funding from the Urban Greening Grant Program and reviewed and made recommendations to the City Council regarding the Active Transportation Plan, the Solid Waste Ordinance, and the Residential 3-Can System.

Visalia Environmental Committee projects include:

- *Active Transportation Plan* – Members reviewed and made recommendations that Council consider Visalia’s Active Transportation Plan a public health issue rather than just an amenities issue. The Active Transportation Plan will improve and increase the City’s bikeway and trail network throughout Visalia.
- *Mill Creek* - This project installed a mile of street trees and associated understory along Mill Creek between Tipton and Burke Streets.
- *Santa Fe Expansion Project* - This project installed a mile of street trees and associated understory along the old Santa Fe Railway.
- *St John’s east of 63 Riparian Corridor* - This project landscaped approximately one mile of Class 1 trail from the Highway 63 towards the east along the St. John’s River.
- *Greenway Trail Project* - This project will landscape approximately one mile of Class 1 trail from Mineral King Avenue to Houston Avenue.
- *Modoc Trail* - This project will landscape approximately one half mile of Class 1 trail from Court Street along Modoc Ditch to St. John’s Parkway.
- *Solid Waste 3-Bin Residential Waste System* – This project will replace all residential split cans with three (3) 90-gallon cans (trash, recycle, and compost).

Battery Recycling Program Report – During 2017-2018, the Visalia Environmental Committee’s residential battery recycling program, now in its 10th year, captured and recycled a total of 5,160 pounds of household batteries. This resulted in just over 2½ tons of toxic waste diverted from local landfills. The Visalia Battery Program has grown to include 84 drop-off locations throughout the City, providing convenient disposal options for Visalia residents. In addition to offering Visalians numerous disposal sites, the Battery Recycling Program was recently recognized by Battery Effect. Battery Effect is an intermediary household battery recycling company that specializes in developing education, collection, and recycling programs for municipalities, K-12 schools, and public and private universities. Battery Effect is based in California, with goals to expand operations nationwide, beginning with the implementation of recycling programs close to home in Long Beach, California. They have replicated Visalia’s program at CSU Long Beach and have solidified a partnership with the City of Long Beach to replicate the program throughout the City.

The battery weight comparison table and chart below illustrate total pounds of batteries collected, by month, between January 2014 and May 2018. It shows both the growth of the VEC Battery Recycling Program, as well as the impact the Program has had on waste diversion from landfills, in the last four years.



2018-2019 Committee Goal Planning

The Visalia Environmental Committee's goals for 2018-2019 are as follows:

1. Earth Day 2019 – VEC Members have set a goal of 50 exhibitor booth and 600+ attendees.
2. Low Water Use Landscape Award – VEC will review and select four (4) new commercial and or residential award recipients for the 2018-2019 Low-Water Use Landscape Award.
3. Commercial Environmental Recognition Award - VEC will review and select four (4) businesses as recipients of the 2018-2019 Commercial Environmental Recognition Award.
4. Environmental Communication – VEC will continue to evaluate and support environmentally friendly programs and projects that benefit the City of Visalia.
5. Battery Recycling Program – VEC will seek to add 10 more battery drop-off locations.