



PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

TACKLING TRASH: UNDERSTANDING HUMAN WASTE BEHAVIOR IN HUSKY STADIUM

Session Day 2, In-Person

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Landfilled waste has significant impacts on the environment and is a powerful driver of climate change. Over 100 million people attend sporting events each year, which leads to a significant amount of waste being generated, even when waste prevention or diversion methods are in place. The aim of this study was to analyze the impact that informational signage has on human waste behavior and how that affects the diversion rate at Husky Stadium. To accomplish this, I interned with UW Athletics and conducted an observational intervention study at the first two games of the 2023 UW Football season. I recorded data on every three event attendees' disposal behavior, including factors such as the types of materials they discarded, the time spent disposing, if there was an appearance of thought, whether or not they sorted their materials, etc. Findings show that signage does not have a significant impact on waste disposal behavior. Confusion and convenience were the main underlying drivers that prevented individuals from properly disposing of their waste. Although informational signage is an essential educational measure for increasing waste diversion in a stadium, it will not be the driving factor in achieving zero waste. Rather, limiting concessions products to be reusable, compostable, or recyclable, as well as reducing the amount of different materials in the stream, will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and help Husky Stadium reach its waste diversion goal.