

How B Corps Make Champions Retreat More Sustainable

bcorporation.net/news/how-b-corps-make-champions-retreat-more-sustainable

Certified B Corporations do more than talk about sustainability—they commit to climate action, flip extractive business models to regenerate ecosystems, and measure their impact to minimize the footprint of their operations and supply chains. And for B Corps, doing good isn't the finish line— they continually seek ways to do better. Companies and individual attendees bring this ethic to how they show up at Champions Retreat, the largest annual gathering of B Corps in the U.S. and Canada.

This year at [Champions Retreat](#), leaders who are using business as a force for good will come together with a focus on how to build an inclusive and regenerative economy. And when B Lab gathers the B Corp community, it is important to ensure the annual gathering demonstrates the community's proven commitment to environmental responsibility. Our events team prioritizes reducing the environmental impact of Champions Retreat, including by incorporating environmental solutions from B Corps into the event.

The events team has been working to ensure that this annual gathering is produced in a way that demonstrates our commitment to environmental responsibility.

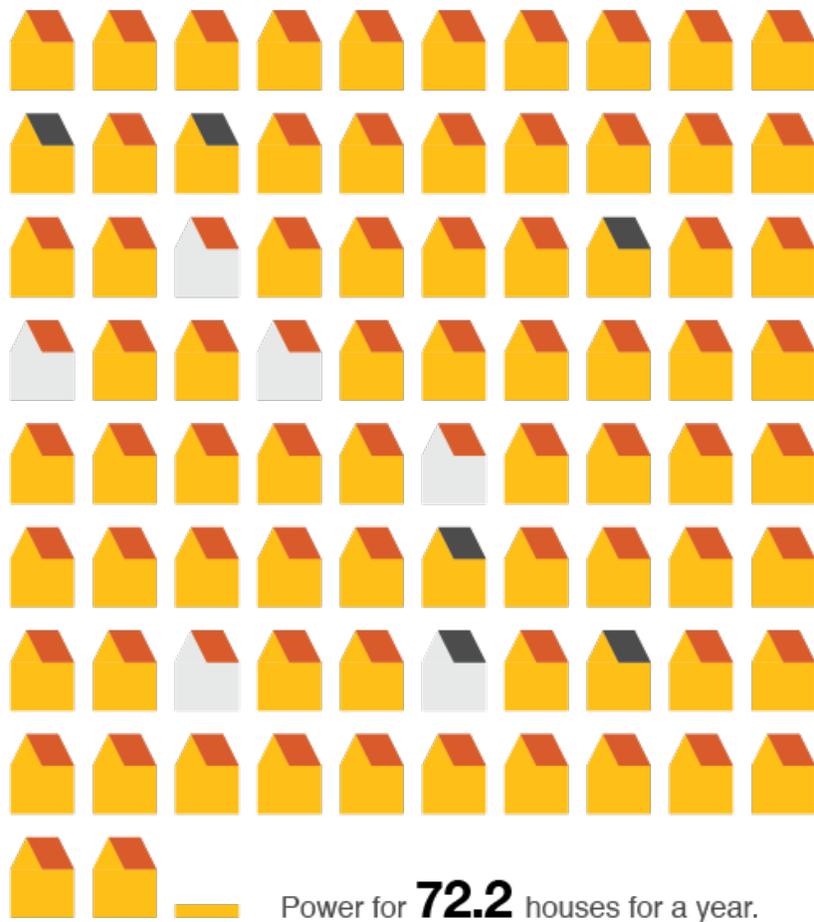
We talked with Sarah Ford, B Lab's Senior Engagement Associate, who is one of the leads for Champions Retreat about how B Lab brings B Corps' passion for sustainability into each stage of the planning process.



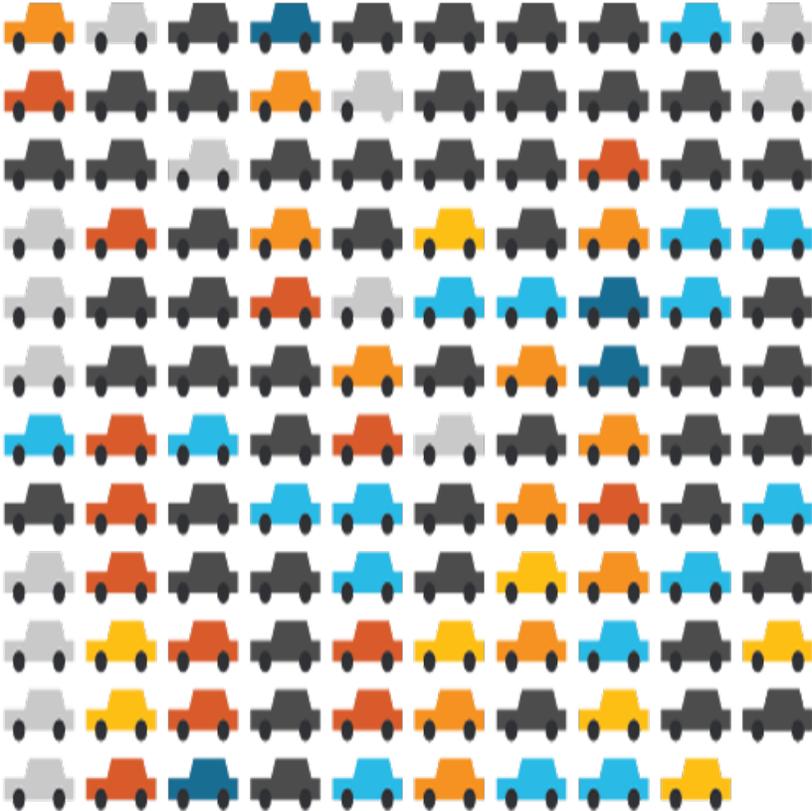
How do B Corps and B Lab improve the environmental sustainability of Champions Retreat?

Sarah Ford: One of the biggest impact solutions comes from event partner and Certified B Corp TripZero. The largest environmental impact of the event comes from carbon emissions produced by attendees' air and ground travel. We are convening in part to take action to address climate change, so it is critical we reduce and offset emissions for the event. Every attendee who books their hotel room at Loews Hollywood through TripZero can offset the entire amount of their carbon output at no additional charge. The accumulated carbon credits support renewable energy and reforestation projects. We are glad we have had this partnership in place for several years and were floored by the numbers last year. events team has been working to ensure that this annual gathering is produced in a way that demonstrates our commitment to environmental responsibility.

Using data from the 547 Champions Retreat attendees who shared their travel information, TripZero calculated the total carbon footprint of last year's Champions Retreat to be 1,338,026 lbs or 607 tonnes. That is the equivalent of:

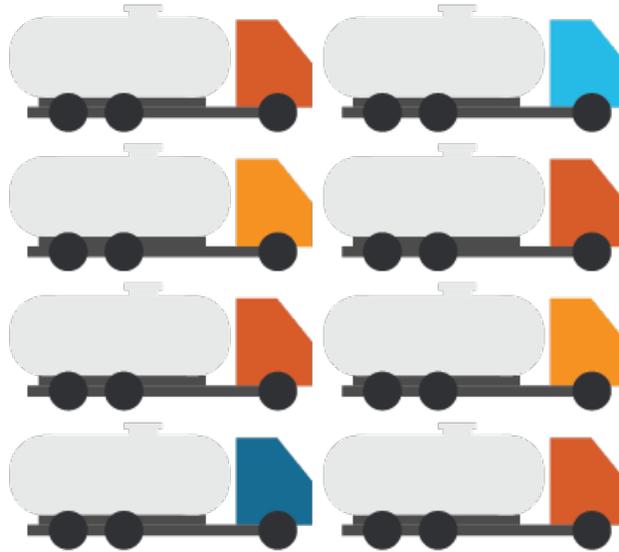


Annual gas for 129 vehicles



8

Tanker
Trucks of
Gasoline



How do you track and measure environmental improvement each year?

Just as Certified B Corps measure their environmental improvement using the B Impact Assessment, B Lab takes the B Impact Assessment every year. The environmental impact of Champions Retreat, including carbon output and significant suppliers of the event, is captured and reflected as part of B Lab's overall impact in our own assessment. Every year we look at the environmental impact of the previous event and consider how we can do better.

We go to a different city every year for Champions Retreat. Every city and every venue is a little bit different. At the beginning of the planning process, we find out what local sustainability programs already are in place. We participate in those programs and incorporate additional practices to reduce our event's impact on the environment and achieve the sustainability goals that our community values.

For example, last year's retreat was in New Orleans. When we discovered that there were limited recycling programs, we contracted with [LifeCity](#), a local women-owned business, to help us figure out a solution. They not only helped us find the right contractor to come in and take the recyclables, but they were also there at the New Orleans event sorting materials to make sure that recyclables didn't end up in the landfill.

This year's Champions Retreat will be held in Los Angeles. We started our planning process by working with the venue, [Loews Hollywood](#), to understand onsite sustainability practices—including recycling, composting and energy efficiency. This year we are working with [Verdical Group](#), a B Corp based in Los Angeles, to find the best local partners to help us

offset the carbon produced by having 600 people using the conference spaces and staying in hotel rooms. We are always thrilled to partner with local organizations working to improve the environmental impact in each of the communities we visit.

Can you give some examples of how you will reduce the environmental impact of this year's Champions Retreat in LA?

We are working with our caterers to limit the amount of food waste and donate leftover food to local organizations that help people who are struggling with food insecurity in California. Wolfgang Puck, the caterer at Loews Hollywood, regularly donates leftover food at the venue to the nonprofit organization [Chefs to End Hunger, which made it a natural fit for us to incorporate into our planning.](#) We know a significant population of individuals experience homelessness in the area and that we are likely to have leftover food. It presents an opportunity to donate food to people who need it.

We know that Los Angeles has a significant carbon emissions challenge, so we are investigating the best low-footprint options for transporting attendees to off-site events.

What can attendees do personally to help reduce the environmental impact of the Champions Retreat?

I think there are two main questions that people can consider as they are preparing for the Champions Retreat to reduce their environmental impact: How can I travel most efficiently to reduce my carbon footprint? What am I packing?

When you are packing, I encourage you to bring your own beverage containers and reusable straws if possible. If you use your own water bottle, coffee cup, and drinking straw instead of disposables from the moment you leave home until you return home, you will greatly reduce the amount of landfill waste generated by your trip. We hope to provide some reusable beverage containers at the Champions Retreat, but we could make a bigger impact as a community if more people bring what they already have. We would love to see your B Corp pride through your Klean Kanteen water bottles or KeepCups attendees may have taken home last year at Champions Retreat return this year.

Attendees can offset their travel emissions by booking their hotel rooms with TripZero, but best yet is to prevent carbon emissions. If you are driving, we recommend carpooling to and from the event, whether you are coming from within LA or farther away. In August, the Champions Retreat app will be a great place to seek and find other attendees to share a ride with to and from the Loews Hotel.