

# 2026 Alliance for the Great Lakes Regatta – Clean Regatta

## 1. Eliminate Single-Use Water Bottles and Provide Water Refill Stations

Columbia Yacht Club (COLYC) has a water refill station located on the rail deck and has proper signage to notify racers. Additionally, COLYC does not sell single-use water bottles, but instead sells aluminum water bottles with screw tops to allow for racers to reuse at our water refill station.



## 2. Eliminate Plastic Straws

COLYC does not use plastic straws, but instead uses Agave Fiber Straws. 100% NATURAL - Mexican Agave drinking straws are made from natural Agave (Mexican Tequila Plant), making them one of the most sustainable renewable drinking straws available today.

For this event, we purposely did not provide an Agave Fiber Straws unless someone asked for one.

## 3. Serve Food with Plastic-Free Dinnerware

COLYC uses bamboo plates for our buffets at the regattas and reusable glass/plates for indoor dinning. All silverware used was biodegradable.

For this event, we used reusable glasses, silverware and ceramic dishes. All were collected and washed in the Kitchen.

## 4. Skip Bags or Go Reusable

No skipper bags where use for this event.

## 5. Award Practical Items or Use a Perpetual or Upcycled Trophy

COLYC reward regatta winners with flags that captains enjoy flying and occasionally alcohol bottle.



## 6. Publicize Your Sustainability Efforts

COLYC shares Sailors for the Sea's conservation message within the yacht club. We promote the green boater pledge within our weekly emails and we are working on building out a public website to share our great efforts and stories. COLYC Conservation Committee website:

<https://sites.google.com/drakedata.io/colyc-conservationcommittee/home?authuser=0>

## 7. Involve Local Organizations

COLYC is teamed up with Sailors for the Sea not only for green regattas, but also for a green boater pledge competition between other yacht clubs in Chicago. We also worked with Alliance for the Great Lakes for a harbor clean-up.

## 8. Post Educational and Reusable Signage

COLYC had electric signs promoting the regatta and had signage posted throughout the regatta party on our sustainable efforts and promoting the green boater pledge and the COLYC Conservation Committee Website.

We also had representatives from the Alliance for the Great Lakes volunteering at the table during the afterparty to talk about their initiatives. Additional marine education was shared thanks to the Shedd Aquarium.



## 9. Serve Local Food or Source Seafood Sustainably

COLYC works with local vendors to locally source as many food offerings as we can. Here is a list of our current local vendors: Nichols Farms, Mick Klug Farms, Werp Farms, Shawn Michelle Ice Cream, Heaven's Honey, Agave Straw Co, Verterra Fallen Leaf Products, GFS Compostable Cups, Fortune Gourmet, Wabash Seafood, Midwest Produce, Plantswitch

## 10. Organize a Green Team

At COLYC, the Conservation Committee is our designated team that promotes conservation on our waters and organizes volunteer events. At the regatta after party, we were walking around promoting our green regatta and conservation efforts that we do at the club.

## 11. Ensure Proper Waste Bin Placement and Signage

COLYC provided clearly designated waste and recycling bins throughout the regatta areas, including locations near the regatta party and other high-traffic areas where sailors and guests

were likely to generate waste. Bins were positioned in convenient, visible locations to encourage proper disposal and prevent waste from entering the harbor.

Signage was used to identify waste and recycling collection areas and reinforce our Clean Regatta and conservation efforts. Members of the COLYC Conservation Committee also helped direct sailors and guests to the appropriate waste and recycling locations during the event.

By combining convenient bin placement, clear signage, and volunteer engagement, COLYC worked to make proper waste disposal easy and prevent litter from reaching Lake Michigan.

## 13. Use Paperless Event Management

COLYC uses our website, CASRA's website, and Club Spot online platform to post all Notice of Race (NOR), sailing instructions, registration, and results. We do not print out any of the details to give to captains, but we instead encourage them to use their phone/tablet to access the information. Link: <https://theclubspot.com/regatta/Yr6tsQ1ebr>

## 14. Host a Beach or Marina Cleanup

During the regatta, we hosted a harbor clean-up for everyone on land to participate. The harbor clean-up was advertised to the racers, regatta attendees and Columbia Yacht Club members.

Picked up 15.6 lbs of trash from going into the lakefront

Your Group's Top Litter Items:

- Cigarette Butts: 385 collected
- Plastic Pieces: 206 collected
- Food Wrappers: 134 collected



## 15. Prevent Toxins from Entering the Water

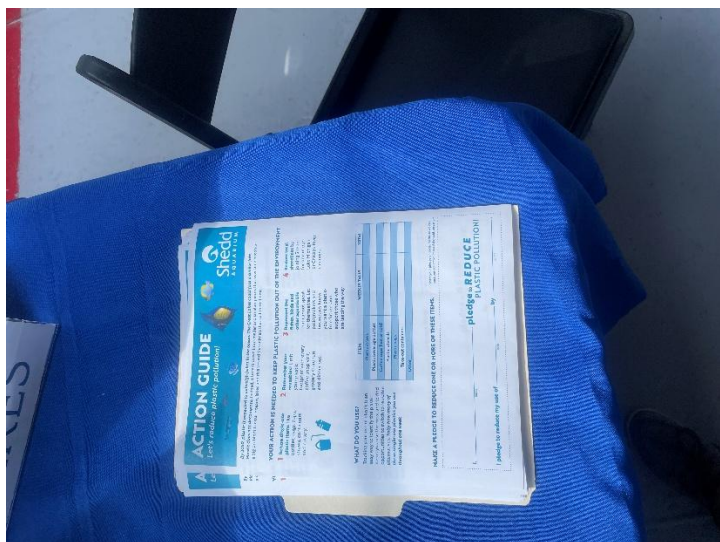
COLYC promotes the proper disposal of oil as we have a designated oil drop-off canister on our dock for racers to use as needed. We also follow all federal and state laws to make sure that no toxins leak out into Lake Michigan. We directed boaters to our website for more details and tips:

<https://sites.google.com/drakedata.io/colyc-conservationcommittee/green-boater-tips?authuser=0>

## 16. Increase Awareness of Wildlife and Habitat Protection

We have added details on our conservation website to promote local wildlife and the efforts we can do to help: <https://sites.google.com/drakedata.io/colyc-conservationcommittee/wildlife-habitat?authuser=0>

Additional resources were provided from the Alliance of the Great Lakes and Shedd Aquarium, that were part of the welcome table.



## 17. Offer Vegetarian or Vegan Alternatives

COLYC offered vegetarian options, such as salads and different sea food options during the regatta party on Saturday. There wasn't a party for the Sunday race.

## 18. Promote Alternative Transportation

COLYC promotes alternative transportation with outdoor and indoor bike racks, Divvy bike station close by, and use of CTA trains and buses. Car pooling is always encouraged to the regattas if sailors are driving.

## 19. Reduce Day-of Emissions

COLYC is conscious of the boats we send out to set markers and only use the boats that are necessary. The committee boat for each course is anchored and engine turned off.

## 20. Inspire Future Action

At Columbia Yacht Club, our commitment to Clean Regattas continues to grow. In 2025, we took a major step forward by pledging to make all of our hosted regattas certified Clean Regattas. This club-wide initiative reflects not only our pride in past conservation efforts, but our intent to set a strong example for others in the sailing community. We've also seen growing momentum around our Conservation Committee, with new volunteers joining who are passionate about protecting the waters we sail on. By embedding sustainability into our culture and growing our volunteer base, we aim to inspire lasting environmental stewardship both on and off the water.