



## FACT SHEET: GREEN BUSINESS PRACTICES

The National Aquarium diligently and creatively pursues green business practices in order to live its mission—to inspire conservation of the world’s aquatic treasures—and has been recognized for these efforts. The Aquarium strives to implement green conservation action programs both within and outside its walls.

Energy efficiency: It takes a lot of energy to keep 20,000 animals happy and healthy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year, not to mention 1.3 million annual guests and more than 400 paid staff and over 900 volunteers. In partnership with Constellation Energy, the Aquarium recently completed the implementation of \$3.7 million in energy and water efficiency upgrades, including the conversion of 99 percent of the Aquarium’s light fixtures to LED; installation of high efficiency units boilers and chillers; building envelope improvements; installation of updated transformers and switching gear; and the installation of high-efficiency water fixtures and air handlers. In just the first two years, these efforts saved over \$400,000 in utility costs, allowing the Aquarium to dedicate more resources to conservation and education programs.

Solar power project: In 2015, the Aquarium implemented an innovative 25-year agreement with Constellation Solar that enabled the construction of a 4.3-megawatt (DC), grid-connected solar generation project on 22 acres of under-utilized farmland in Cambridge, Maryland. With 14,500 photovoltaic panels producing 6,000 megawatt hours of electricity, this new solar farm now meets 40 percent of the Aquarium’s annual energy demand. Since its implementation, the system has prevented 6.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, which is equivalent to planting 75,385 trees or keeping 916 cars off the road during the same period.

Recycling: Throughout its campus, the Aquarium recycles plastic, glass, aluminum, cardboard, paper, batteries, old computers, toner cartridges and printers. In addition:

- Waste cooking oil from the Aquarium’s Harbor Market Kitchen café is recycled to biodiesel.
- The Aquarium has formed a partnership with Recycled Green Industries, a commercial composting facility in Woodbine, Maryland, to compost organic waste from café kitchens, animal prep kitchens and visitor/staff dining areas.
- Whenever possible during renovations and building upgrades, old materials taken out of the Aquarium—from concrete to carpets—are recycled, and new products installed are made out of recycled materials.
- A 40,000-gallon cistern harvests rainwater so it can be used for outside landscape irrigation.
- Staff members collect and send hard-to-recycle waste like energy bar wrappers and corks to TerraCycle, a company that upcycles these materials into innovative new products.
- Neoprene wetsuits used by staff divers that must be replaced are kept out of landfills by being upcycled into bottle cozies.
- Tattered staff uniforms are turned into cleaning rags.

### Food service

- The coffee available onsite at the National Aquarium is grown and processed through a process that supports bio-diversity while providing habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- Plates, cups, utensils and napkins available in Aquarium cafes are made of biodegradable and compostable materials.
- Sustainable fish is a menu feature, and Seafood Watch Pocket Guides are available to guests.
- Waste sorting stations encourage visitors to thoughtfully sort their waste into compost, recycle and landfill bins.
- To reduce waste, condiment pumps have replaced small plastic containers, and visitors are encouraged to request straws and beverage lids only when necessary.

Office and animal supplies: The Aquarium uses paper with 100-percent recycled content—the highest in the industry—manufactured using non-polluting wind power. In addition, vegetable-based ink is used for printing. The Aquarium also purchases office supplies based on their eco-friendly production and environmental sustainability and office supply purchases have been dramatically reduced through the establishment of an office supply swap station. In addition, toilet paper tubes, used towels, half-gallon jugs, etc., are collected by staff for education programs and to construct enrichment toys and stimulation items for animals.

Green roof: In 2006, the Aquarium installed a green roof on the top of its 4-D Immersion Theater. The roof measures approximately 120 by 40 feet and is about 4 feet deep and is filled with native sedum plants, which help to naturally cool the building, reducing energy consumption. The green roof has a better life span than standard hard-surface roofs and offers the additional benefit of helping to reduce stormwater runoff.

Bridge connecting Pier 3 to Pier 4: When the bridge that connects Aquarium Piers 3 and 4 needed to be replaced in 2009, the Aquarium worked with Baltimore City to ensure that the bridge was made from recycled materials.

Staff conservation days: To promote conservation practices and green behaviors, staff members are given one paid day off per year to participate in conservation-related activities and events.

For up-to-date information about all of the Aquarium's recent conservation work, please visit <http://www.aqua.org/care/thoughtful-choices>.

*Updated June 2016*