



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Easton Utilities



Life. Made better.™

201 North Washington Street

Easton, MD 21601

410-822-6110 x1295

eastonutilities.com

Utility

Member since July 2017

Management and Leadership

Environmental Policy Statement

Easton Utilities is committed to enhancing the quality of life in our community by making environmental stewardship a priority. While remaining financially responsible, our organization proactively seeks out cost effective projects which help support our vision to conserve the environment.

Annual Environmental Goals

As part of meeting our annual corporate goals, Easton Utilities executes two specific environmental stewardship initiatives each year. The first is to plant 24 trees of 1 ½ - 2" caliper within the Easton Utilities service territory. Since 2008, Easton Utilities has planted over 330 trees within the town limits.

The second initiative is employee participation in 200 hours of conservation work aimed at regaining ecological integrity through education and restoration projects. In recent years education has been focused on invasive species control including training on how to identify and remove invasives safely and effectively.

Environmental Team

The Easton Utilities Environmental Stewardship Committee meets quarterly to discuss the current initiatives as well as plan and implement new programs. Within the Committee there are 5 areas of focus: tree planting, recycling, habitat restoration, community involvement, and waste reduction.

Environmental Restoration and Community Environmental Projects

Easton Utilities is responsible for several environmental restoration projects that help reduce negative impacts on the environment. Some key projects at our Sustainability Campus, which contains our wastewater treatment facility and our solar array, include using one section of field to create a habitat for an endangered species of bird called the Black Rail, another is the planting of a bee and butterfly habitat around the solar panels. In 2021 the Sustainability Campus site was certified as a pollinator friendly destination by the State of MD. In past years Easton Utilities has partnered with the University of Maryland Bee Squad to establish two colonies of honeybees at the site, providing opportunities for pollinator research and study. Recently, four more colonies of honeybees have been added to the pollinator site.

In 2023 Easton Utilities teamed with the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP) to build 125 oyster cages for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Marylanders Grow Oysters (MGO) Program. ORP distributes the cages and spat on shell (baby oysters) to members of the MGO Program to be placed in local waterways. When the oysters grow to about an inch in size, ORP collects the cages and places the oysters on local sanctuaries, creating living oyster reefs which improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay. To learn more about ORP and the MGO Program visit [Marylanders Grow Oysters - Oyster Recovery Partnership](#).

Other notable projects include streambank restoration, trash clean-up events, and invasive species removal work.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

To reduce plastic waste, we recently added high efficiency water fountains with bottle fillers to our office buildings. To date, we have saved over 70,000 plastic bottles from entering the landfill!

Our Wastewater Treatment Facility is a state-of-the-art system designed to remove 85% - 95% of pollutants from wastewater before it is released to local waterways. The byproduct of the treatment process is converted into a dry, manageable product known as biosolids, which is sold to local farmers as fertilizer. Selling the biosolids limits the amount of waste we put in the landfill.

Recycling

Our company-wide recycling program, which has been in effect for several years, includes both waste from the office and from the homes of those employees who do not have recycling programs in their towns. In 2021 we offered an opportunity for employees to bring in old electronics from their homes and offices to recycle them. In total we collected 300 pieces of e-waste to recycle. Another e-waste recycling event is planned for the Winter of 2024 – 2025.

As part of our daily operations as a utility company, we recycle bulk materials such as steel, cooper wire, batteries, corrugated cardboard and used motor oil. On average, over 70 tons worth of materials are recycled each year.

In 2023 Easton Utilities employees collected and recycled over 600 lbs. of plastic bags, soft film plastics, and packaging in 6 months as part of the NEXTREX Recycling Challenge, earning Easton Utilities a recycled plastic Trex® bench. Recently NEXTREX has upped the challenge to a 12-month collection time frame with a minimum of 1,000 lbs. of recycled plastics. To learn more visit [School & Community Recycling Programs | NextTrex](#).

In 2023 Easton Utilities held the first community-wide, free shred day. Community members recycled old documents by way of shred truck, protecting their personal identity information and helping the environment. The event was so successful, the second annual shred day is planned for April 2024 in celebration of Earth Day.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

Since 2014, Easton Utilities and the Town of Easton have been replacing streetlights and traffic lights with LED bulbs using grant funding from the Maryland Energy Administration. On average the replacements have resulted in a 30% reduction in electric consumption for streetlights in Easton, conserving over 1,800,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

In 2020, Easton Utilities installed an EV charging station to encourage residents and visitors to charge electric vehicles (EVs) while visiting the downtown area.

In support of Maryland's Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure initiative, Easton Utilities utilized grant funding from the Maryland Department of the Environment's Charge Ahead Grant Program and Easton Utilities capital funds to construct an EV Charging Station at Easton Utilities' campus

headquarters, creating the opportunity for employees to drive EV's conveniently and affordably to and from the workplace. The EV Charging Station project was completed in 2023.

Renewable Energy

Grant funding was used to build a 2 megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar array on our Sustainability Campus which produces more than 100% of the Wastewater Treatment Facility's (WWTF) annual electrical consumption. Using grant funds to offset construction cost plus the cost savings of the WWTF operation, benefits the community by keeping utility rates affordable and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Transportation

Fleet Vehicles

In our fleet of vehicles, we have one vehicle powered by compressed natural gas. These vehicles produce less exhaust emissions than a comparable gasoline vehicle.

Employee Commute/ Customer Travel

With the tagline "Stop Your Engines! Give the Planet a Head Start!" Easton Utilities' Environmental Stewardship Committee proudly promoted Easton Utilities' first 'Car Free Week' in September 2024. Easton Utilities employees saved over 950 miles in emissions by carpooling or choosing alternative modes of transportation such as biking or walking.

Water

Water Conservation

Water conservation is the easiest and most inexpensive way to support our environment. In the past, on the Easton Utilities' main campus, we used rain barrels connected to building roof leaders to collect water during rain events. The water collected was used to irrigate our employee garden.

Easton Utilities has plans to use rain barrels at the various buildings around campus headquarters to irrigate campus landscaping. Not only does this help preserve a vital natural resource, but it also helps to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff during large rain events.

☑ **Stormwater Management**

In 2022 Easton Utilities completed a restoration project for the stream that runs behind our electric plant. The streambank walls were fortified to protect critical infrastructure and widened to increase stream capacity. Native grasses and trees were planted to help stabilize the bank from erosion. This promotes effective stormwater management as over 1/3 of Easton's stormwater infrastructure empties to the stream.

In 2023 Easton Utilities' new crew building was completed with a state-of-the-art stormwater submerged gravel wetland BMP to manage runoff to the Tanyard Branch from Easton Utilities' maintenance yard, parking lot, and new building.

As mentioned above, other stormwater management improvements include the pollinator habitat at the solar array, the black rail habitat at the Sustainability Campus, and the employment of rain barrels at the Easton Utilities' main campus.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, & Other Activities

☑ *Environmental Management for Sustainability Professional Certification from University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science*

Maryland Municipal League – 2021 Achievement Award for Environmental Stewardship

Profile Updated April 2024



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

