

2016 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards Ceremony



April 7, 2016

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GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

City of Richmond & Virginia Green Travel Alliance

Greening the 2015 UCI Road World Championships

The City of Richmond's Sustainability Office and the Virginia Green Travel Alliance (VGTA) partnered to make the 2015 Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Road World Championship (Worlds) the greenest event of its kind. Waste management practices including food donation, composting, repurposing, and recycling diverted 65,000 pounds. The City and VGTA were dedicated to providing composting at the event, even though many thought the risk of trash contaminating compost collection was high. When compost is contaminated with non-compostable items, a composting vendor will not accept the material. Therefore, keeping the compost contamination free is a critical task. This was accomplished by working with vendors to ensure that only compostable disposables were used and creating an RVA Green Team Volunteer Network to ensure volunteers were onsite to assist spectators' properly dispose of waste. In total, 76% of the waste generated by the event was diverted from landfills. In addition, through source reduction techniques like reusable cups and water-filling stations the generation of 14,500 pounds of waste was avoided. The Worlds encouraged sustainable transportation by providing complimentary shuttles and bike valets. The carbon footprint was calculated and Renewable Energy Credits were purchased to offset 100% of the events' operations. Community improvement projects included street tree plantings, sidewalk completion, and bike rack installation. The 2015 UCI Road World Championships was the first ever Road World Championship to receive the UCI's reCycling eco-label. As part of the City's goal to leave a positive legacy, a Tool Kit is being created to serve as a resource for other events.

Luray Hawksbill Greenway Trail

Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

The Luray Hawksbill Greenway Trail is being recognized as an example of exemplary implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan. Bordering the Hawksbill Creek, the Greenway is a 2-mile walking and biking trail that runs through the Town of Luray connecting neighborhoods and parking areas with the downtown shopping district. The 10-foot corridor is protected by ownership or easements. The Greenway protects water quality with riparian buffers, community creek cleanups, J-hook structures to dissipate stream energy, and monofilament fishing line and bait container recycling. Using informational kiosks and interpretive signage, the trail educates users on local history, native species, and pet waste cleanup campaigns. Funding for the Greenway has come from Virginia Department of Forestry and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) grants as well as community based individuals, organizations, and businesses. The Trail encourages wellness and connectivity by partnering with area health facilities, establishing community exercise classes, and offering free health screening. To motivate youth to participate in outdoor activities, another goal of the Virginia Outdoors Plan, Luray hosts an Annual Youth Trout Fishing Derby, 4th of July children's activities, and school field trips along the Greenway.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Land Conservation Program

Since its inception in 1966, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) has conserved land roughly equivalent to the size of Rhode Island. Ninety-five percent of all Virginians live within 10 miles of VOF conserved land. Currently, the organization protects more than 750,000 acres in 107 counties and independent cities throughout Virginia, making it not only the state's largest land conservation agency but also one of the largest land conservation organizations in the nation. Since its creation, VOF has preserved open space in Virginia at a rate of about 2 acres every hour, primarily through the use of open-space easements. VOF manages nearly 4,000 open-space easements, which are voluntary agreements with landowners that restrict certain types of development on land in perpetuity while keeping the land available for farming, forestry, recreation, and other compatible uses. VOF managed easements account for approximately 80% of all the open-space easement acreage in the Commonwealth. VOF also accepts donations of land, which it either protects with an easement and transfers to another landowner, or owns and manages for public benefit. The foundation currently owns four open-space reserves, with the largest being the Bull Run Mountains in Northern Virginia, which is a 2,350 acre publicly accessible property that is also managed cooperatively with DCR as a Natural Area Preserve. VOF has been instrumental in the conservation goal set by the Chesapeake Bay Agreement to conserve 20% of the Bay's watershed in all six states; of the 572,000 acres conserved to date across all six states, VOF has contributed over 175,000 acres.

SILVER MEDAL WINNERS

Chesterfield County

Wastewater Treatment Process Optimization

Chesterfield County's Department of Utilities is committed to providing the highest quality water and wastewater services. The Department uses their Performance Plan, which includes over 100 performance measures, and their environmental management system (EMS) to identify opportunities for improvements. The EMS has become an integral part of their business culture and is an effective tool to safeguard the environment and public health. By tracking chemical consumption and process parameters, the Department identified excess air in the aeration tanks which lead to approximately a 520,000 KWH savings when the air demand was decreased. One facility was able to reduce concurrent peak demand by staggering the startup of key pieces of equipment, saving over \$325,000 dollars. Another project involved cleaning equipment to increase efficiency and reduce natural gas usage by 6.6 mmcf. Also, department staff designed and built a filtration system to use treated effluent, which reduced the total water usage by 2.3 million gallons. Staff involvement in identifying and implementing process changes has been key to the success of the program.

Roanoke River Blueway

Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

The Roanoke River Blueway provides cost-free opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, tubing, wading, wildlife viewing, and watershed education with convenient access to other outdoor and cultural amenities in Virginia's Blue Ridge all year long. The 45-mile Blueway, which includes 15 public boating access points, aims to promote healthy living and economic sustainability through increased use and awareness. Access points are located in local parks allowing for shared parking. In addition, information is provided for using the Valley Metro and bicycle accommodations. Watershed management and stewardship through education are supported through a dedicated webpage to water quality. Another educational tool is the Roanoke River Blueway Interactive Map which provides a range of information to facilitate safe use and enjoyment of this regional resource. Funding for the Blueway was leveraged from a variety of sources including private donators, the Virginia Tourism Cooperation (VTC) Market Leverage Program, American Electric Power, and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF).

BRONZE MEDAL WINNERS

ABB

Stormwater Quality Improvements – Phase I

The ABB South Boston manufacturing facility builds and supplies liquid-cooled power transformers of 75 Mega-Volt-Amps (MVA) and 161 Kilo-Volt-Amps (KVA) to serve the energy infrastructure needs of the country. Although polychlorinated biphenyls (PBCs) have not been used in the manufacturing process since prior to 1978, stormwater runoff still contains PBCs. ABB committed to voluntarily and proactively addressing this contamination. ABB diverted the stormwater flow by eliminating an open channel, adding a detention system, installing a new energy dissipater, and establishing vegetated surface areas. PBC concentrations decreased from approximately 250,000 picograms per liter prior to the changes to approximately 25,000 picograms per liter upon the completion of Phase I. Understanding the environmental behavior of persistent and hydrophobic PCB compounds was a critical step in developing this cost-efficient project.

Waynesboro Water Trail

Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

The City of Waynesboro is being recognized for its exemplary implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan as demonstrated through the Waynesboro Water Trail. The Waynesboro Water Trail utilizes two new boat ramps to enable paddlers to travel on the South River through a 4 mile stretch of Waynesboro. Access is free for everyone. Design of the new boat ramps included optimizing the location by taking into account storm events and erosion, as well as future maintenance needs. A companion brochure was created to educate the public on the recreational opportunities including points of interest along the river like rapids, access, a fishing pier, and greenway, as well as providing entry level information on how to plan a paddling trip. The project was made possible through funding from a DGIF River Access Grant, a HUD Community Development Block Grant, and the City of Waynesboro.

Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Virginia, LLC

Zero Landfill Operation

Yokohama Tire Manufacturing Virginia (YTMV) has become a zero landfill manufacturer by reducing waste generation and working with non-landfill vendors. The facility's efforts are part of a larger initiative of the Yokohama Rubber Company's Grand Design 1000 Plan which set standards for company-wide operations to be harmonized with the environment. YTMV first looked at how to reduce the amount of waste being produced by limiting scrap material and reducing raw materials. By working to limit scrap, YTMV was able to reduce the use of carbon black and compounding from over 10,000 pounds in 2013 to 4,300 pounds in 2015. In total, the facility was able to reduce the amount of waste produced monthly by an average of 44 tons. Employee participation and upper management support, including monthly meetings to discuss issues and opportunities, were critical to the success of the project. YTMV will share their success story with other Yokohama facilities throughout North America.

HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS

The Hermitage Foundation Museum and Gardens

Conservation Easement

The Hermitage Foundation Museum and Gardens Conservation Easement preserves 16 acres, including over 4,000 linear feet of tidal frontage, from future division, as well as limiting new structures. The property is required to be open to the public for recreational, educational, or cultural activities for at least 100 days each year, which reflects the Hermitage's commitment to managing the property as a valuable community asset, natural resource, and open green space for the City of Norfolk, the people of Hampton Roads, and all citizens of Virginia.

James Madison University

Strategies for Residence Hall Energy Reduction

James Madison University's (JMU) Strategies for Residence Hall Energy Reduction project reflects an innovative partnership between Facilities Management, the Office of Residence Life, and faculty at JMU. The findings suggest that the majority of energy consumption in JMU dorms is outside the direct and indirect influence of student-occupants.

Tucker Park at Maidens Crossing

Outdoor Classroom – Virginia Outdoors Plan Implementation

Goochland County's Tucker Park is comprised of 36 acres of land including 1,200 feet of riverfront property. Tucker Park offers one of the few public access points to the James River that does not require crossing a railroad track. The park's "Nature Walkabout" Outdoor Classroom hosted 15 events in its first year. The Nature Walkabout includes a teaching stage, multi-use trail, seating along the James River, butterfly garden, and interpretive signage.