



**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.

Baltimore Community ToolBank



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www.baltimoretoolbank.org

Non-profit

Member since April 2019

Management and Leadership

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

In every purchase, we aim to use the most sustainable products, even if they cost slightly more. As an example, for our annual Hammers & Ales event, we purchase and use reusable beer mugs and give away to guests at the event and to take home. We also purchase compostable food and serveware, and take the used product to a compost facility. We use and loan refillable water jugs for our partners instead of wasteful bottled water.

Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

The ToolBank site and volunteers were the engine behind construction of 50 floating wetlands from 2014 to 2018. Each year, we managed the construction of 10 floating wetlands in partnership with [BioHabitats, Inc.](#), The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore and Clearwater Mills.

In 2023, we revived the initiative with a pilot program to construct 10 units for deployment to the Waterview Marina in Southwest Baltimore City, located on the Middle Branch River near its outflow to Baltimore's Inner Harbor. In April or May 2023, we will deploy these units with partner organization [Environmental Justice Journalism Initiative](#).

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Our core model of tool lending is a great example of waste reduction and a demonstration of our sustainable values. Consider the environmental benefits of reusing one tool over and over again—perhaps hundreds of times over its life—as opposed to partners purchasing new tools. Each tool has a manufacturing, transportation and packaging footprint that is spared when tools are reused.

We also reuse product pallets and plastic bottles. ToolBank volunteers construct compost bins for our partner organizations out of recycled pallets and we capture and recycle plastic bottles for the construction of our floating wetlands projects.

In 2023, we instituted a campus ban on single use plastic water bottles. Beyond practicing this as a staff, we broadcast it partners who may join us on campus with a focus on volunteer groups. We provide filtered water for reusable bottles on campus for all volunteer groups and guests as needed. As well, if the guest does not have a reusable bottle, we will supply them one. Thanks to a partnership with the Baltimore Convention Center, we had 2,400 reusable bottles donated to us in 2022 that we issue to anyone who comes to campus without one. We anticipate having enough bottles from this donation to serve guests at the ToolBank for the next two years.

If groups or guests do not want a refillable bottle, we encourage them to purchased boxed water as an alternative to plastic bottles.

Recycling

We actively recycle all possible material onsite as a practice.

Composting

We recycle yard waste and compost on site. We use the material for cover and fertilizer for our native plants in the rain gardens. We estimate 300 pounds per year.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

We actively conserve energy on site at the ToolBank. In 2015, we underwent an energy audit in partnership with Civic Works (the Baltimore Energy

Challenge). Under their guidance, we were able to reduce our energy consumption and cost by 40%! Practices employed after the audit include toilet tanks, weather strips for doors into and out of our warehouse, insulation of our water heater, installation of energy efficient lighting and use of power strips on timers.

In March 2020, we switched all fluorescent lighting to energy-efficient LED lights, which even further reduced our energy usage and utility bills.

Water

Water Conservation

As described below, we collect and repurpose rainwater for rain gardens and to clean our tools. We do not turn a tap to clean tools but rather use stored gray water.

Stormwater Management and Site Design

We have sizable stormwater management features onsite including two rain gardens and what we refer to as the ToolBank Stormwater Factory. These features help us reroute and repurpose more than 1,000,000 gallons of rainfall annually. Our runoff zone is two acres of rooftop, inclusive of neighboring roofs. Independent audits from BioHabitats, Inc. have shown that our rain gardens manage 7,526 gallons of water per inch of precipitation and our Stormwater Factory manage 17,024 gallons of water per inch of precipitation. Taken together and applied to average annual rainfall, we arrive at nearly 1,000,000 gallons annually and much more in recent years, including a record-breaking year of precipitation in 2018.

Our rain gardens create natural habitat for a range of pollinators in addition to repurposing rain water that would otherwise contribute to runoff pollution in Baltimore. Bees, birds, bats and butterflies all thrive in our gardens.

In 2014, we constructed two large rain gardens and installed native plants that use stormwater runoff from our roof. We also use the rainwater to clean our tools that we loan to our member agencies, and run the discarded contaminated water through biofilters prior to release into the municipal stormwater system.

In terms of measureable results, we engaged Blue Water Baltimore to conduct an audit of our stormwater management system. Below are the certified results, as were designed by our consultant, BioHabitats.

- *Biohabitats indicated that the rain gardens re-purpose 7,526 gallons of rainwater per inch of rain.*

- *Biohabitats also indicated that the Stormwater Factory re-purposes 17,024 gallons per inch.*
- *Since the rain gardens were established in March 2014 and calculating average rainfall per year since, we estimate 2,844,828 gallons have been re-purposed through March 2023 or an average of 316,092 per year.*
- *Since the Stormwater Factory was established in September 2015, we estimate 4,974,087 have been re-purposed through the end of March 2023 or an average of 702,224 annually.*
- *Taken together, these systems re-purpose close to or more than 1,000,000 gallons of rainfall annually!*

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities



- *Blue Water Audit certification, 2014*
- *Based on her guidance of stormwater management projects at the ToolBank, board president Susan Scotto Dyckman was recognized in 2018 for a Tawes Award by the State of Maryland.*
- *In 2015, the Chesapeake Stormwater Network recognized our rain gardens as the "Best Ultra-Urban BMP Project."*



[View our video](#)
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Profile Updated February 2023



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