



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.

James and Anne Robinson Nature Center Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks



6692 Cedar Lane
Columbia, MD 21044
410-313-0400
www.howardcountymd.gov/Robinson
Nature Center
Member since September 2019

Management and Leadership

Environmental Policy Statement

Robinson Nature Center operates with the following mission statement: to facilitate the enjoyment and understanding of our natural resources and to bridge the gap between people and nature. By inspiring sound environmental awareness, we promote responsible stewardship of all of our natural resources and strive to connect people of all ages with nature through experience-based education.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

At Robinson Nature Center, we strive to practice good stewardship of our natural resources and have worked to reduce waste and packaging in our operations. Whenever possible we look for multi-use or recycled and recyclable items. This has included purchasing bird-friendly coffee in bulk, compostable packaging from a local roaster, using PODDS plastic-free laundry detergent, and bulk recycled printer paper, and recycled, BPA-free receipt tape among other things.

Environmental Restoration and Community Environmental Projects

Robinson Nature Center is dedicated to working with community volunteers to maintain our 18 acres of land with healthy forest, native plant gardens, rain gardens and a green roof. In 2019 we replanted our green roof

replacing non-native sedums with native plants. Each year we work with volunteers to remove invasive understory plants and improve the diversity and health of our forest planting many native trees. In September of 2021 we hosted a Girl Scout Gold Award project, planting a forest garden adjacent to our trail system complete with educational signage.

We also host multiple cleanups each year – one on Howard County’s Family Volunteer Day and another in conjunction with Project Clean Stream. These cleanups take groups along the open space trail beyond our property to improve the environment for the neighborhood surrounding Robinson Nature Center. In FY 2020, 10 volunteers contributed 30 hours with collecting 120 pounds of trash. In FY 2021, 18 volunteers contributed 54 hours with collecting 120 pounds of trash. We planted approximately 350 trees on site from Fall 2020 through Fall 2021.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Staff collects all reusable packaging materials (like bubble wrap and air-filled packets) and provides them to our local UPS store for reuse. We also collect many waste materials for reuse in programming and for crafts.

Since 2013, Robinson Nature Center has maintained a partnership with the Oyster Recovery Partnership. The Center has been working as an official drop-site for oyster shell recycling. Members of the public can drop their oyster shells at the Center’s shell recycling caddy and staff from the ORP retrieves the shells for use in oyster reef recovery programs in the Chesapeake. The recycled shells provide substrate upon which new oysters can grow, thus helping revitalize the oyster population and its valuable ecosystem service of filtering the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Robinson Nature Center has recycled over 50 bushels of shell. That shell will provide homes for nearly 250,000 baby oysters to be planted back into the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Recycling

Robinson Nature Center maintains a recycling bin beside every trash can at our facility. In this way, we encourage the public to recycle whenever possible and our staff is dedicated to recycling efforts.

Composting

Robinson Nature Center maintains organic compost to divert food waste for staff and volunteers. We maintain both outdoor compost and an indoor worm bin. We also transitioned all programs in which we serve food or beverage to zero

waste through Howard County's curbside compost program beginning in 2019. As of summer of 2019, we also offer room rentals the opportunity to utilize this curbside compost program with an add-on of compostable flatware and drink cups. Through this program, from January 2018 through December 2021, we diverted 318.4 lbs. of compostable material from the landfill.

In addition to these efforts, Howard County Master Gardeners hold free compost demonstrations at the Center during which residents of the County are provided with instructions on how to create and manage their own backyard compost piles. Howard County's Office of Recycling provides free compost bins to residents at these demonstrations. The residential composting operations allow families to use organic, natural fertilizer in place of commercial and chemical fertilizer.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

While our facility was built with energy efficiency in mind and achieved LEED Platinum certification, LED light bulbs had evolved and become even more efficient since our building was constructed. In 2016, as part of a County-wide effort to increase lighting efficiency, additional lightbulbs were switched from fluorescent to LED. In 2017, more than 80 bulbs in our main exhibit space were replaced with new LED bulbs using half the electricity as the previously installed bulbs.

Water

Stormwater Management and Site Design

Stormwater mitigation is achieved on the property through a pervious concrete parking lot, four separate bio retention/rain gardens and a green roof. These items are highlighted on our LEED tours which we offer by group reservation as well as during special events throughout the year. The parking lot is vacuumed as needed during the year to maintain its pervious nature. Our maintenance staff monitors and maintains the plantings within the four bio retention areas. In FY18 we received support from the READY program to complete significant maintenance of these rain gardens. This year we added a large, graphic interpretive panel about one of our most visible rain gardens. We also have installed rain barrels on our pavilion beside native plantings allowing us to water these plants as needed with collected rainwater.

Green Building

LEED Platinum

Robinson Nature Center, which opened to the public in September 2011, received LEED BD+C Platinum certification in 2012 from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Profile Updated January 2022



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Learn more at green.maryland.gov

