



Center for Sustainable Systems

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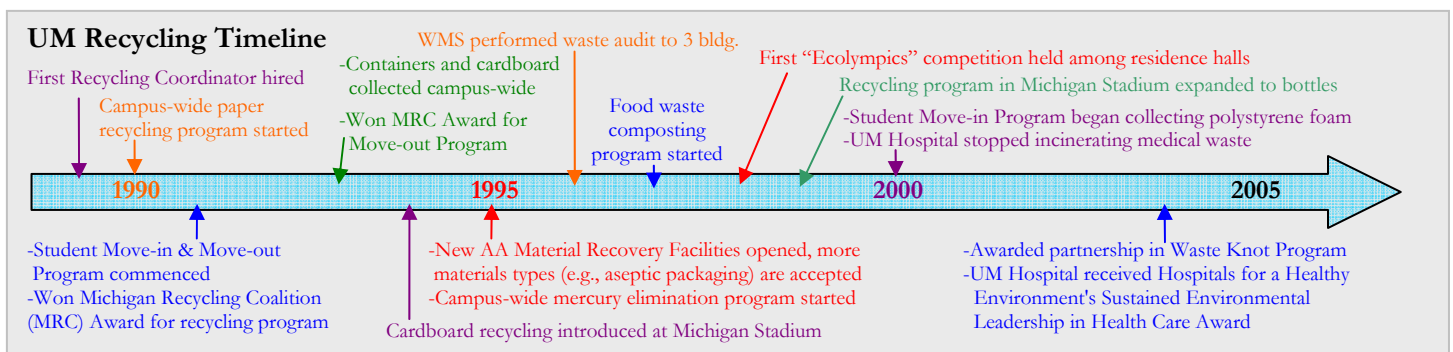
University of Michigan Waste Management and Recycling

factsheets

The University of Michigan faces the challenge of managing large volumes of waste generated by the UM community. Small-scale voluntary recycling activities existed in individual departments as early as the 1970s; campus-wide waste reduction and recycling programs were implemented in 1990. Widely supported by its faculty, staff, and students, these programs have been a success by steadily increasing the percentage of waste recycled and diverted from the landfills over the past 16 years. Here are highlights of the University's waste reduction and recycling efforts and its accomplishments.

Highlights in Waste Management and Recycling Efforts

- The first organized recycling program was launched by the UM Housing division in 1989. The recycling coordinator position was opened in the same year. The campus-wide recycling program commenced a year later.
- There are three UM departments responsible for collecting waste generated by the UM community. Waste Management Services (WMS) collects and recycles non-hazardous wastes, UM Health System Facilities Services manages all hospital wastes, and the Department of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health handles the hazardous waste and regulated recycling items.¹
- Over the course of 16 years, materials collected for recycling and reuse has expanded from only paper products to include scrap wood, scrap metal, mixed containers, food waste, block packing foam, and electronics.²
- Recycling bins were set up in residence halls, academic buildings, administrative complexes, and athletic arenas to collect general recyclable items like cardboard, newspaper, office paper, and plastic & metal containers.
- University Housing and WMS have sponsored the Student Move-out Program since 1991. Unwanted items collected from students at the end of winter semester are donated to charitable organizations. The Student Move-in Program was also organized to collect the discarded packing materials such as cardboard, polystyrene foam, and packing peanuts. As a result, over 14 tons of potential landfill wastes were diverted in 2005.
- Many departments hold "Green Clean Day" events annually with the assistance of WMS. These office-cleaning events raise the environmental awareness of the staff by encouraging them to recycle unwanted documents and reuse office supplies.
- The Property Disposition Office collects discarded but usable items (e.g., computers, electronics, office & dorm furniture) from University departments and sells them to other departments or the public at reduced prices.
- The Purchasing Department strongly supports and encourages departments to purchase recycled or re-manufactured materials.³
- Recycling Education at the University (REdU) was formed by WMS. REdU allows faculty and staff from other departments to provide feedback on how the University's recycling program can be become more user-friendly and effective.
- Sustainability issues have been considered in UM construction and renovation projects such as the Dana Building,⁴ the Ross School of Business complex, and the new Mott Children's and Women's Hospital. For example, construction and demolition waste materials are sorted and recycled or re-used in the construction.



¹ Regulated recycling items include batteries, lamp ballasts, fluorescent light bulbs, and consumer electronics

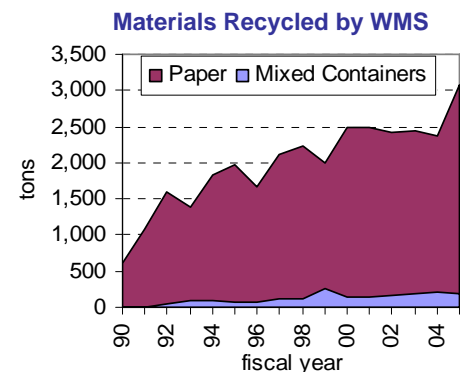
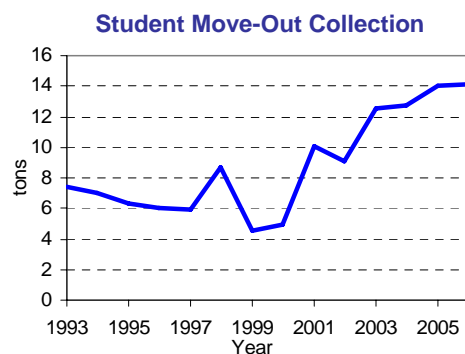
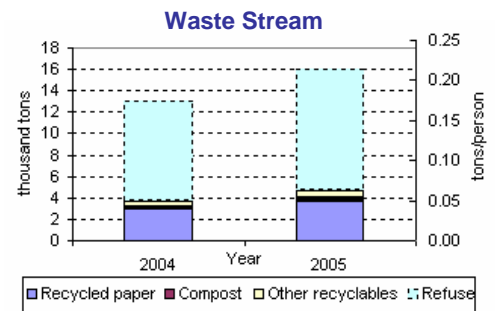
² Waste Management Services website maintains a comprehensive list of recyclable items <http://www.recycle.umich.edu/>

³ Procurement Stewardship Initiatives <http://www.umich.edu/~purch/Stewardship/buygreen.html>

⁴ "Greening of Dana" can be viewed electronically at <http://www.snre.umich.edu/greendana/>

Facts and Accomplishments

- UM generated 16,000 tons (0.22 tons/person) of waste in 2005, up from 13,000 tons (0.18 tons/person) in 2004.⁵
- 30% of waste originated from the UM Hospital, the remainder was mainly from dorms and academic buildings.
- Around 29% of waste was recycled and diverted from landfill in the past two years. In 2005, this included 3,600 tons of paper, 200 tons of compost, 170 tons of regulated recycling items,¹ 150 tons of construction waste, and 107 tons of glass containers. As a result, over 150,000 cubic yards of waste were diverted away from landfill.
- WMS has recycled more than 29,000 tons of paper since 1990, thereby saving over 430,000 trees.
- The Student Move-out Program successfully diverts approximately 20% of the potential landfill waste. Since 1993, more than 120 tons of household items, toiletries, non-perishable food, clothing, and bedding were collected and donated to charitable organizations through the Program.
- UM has received several awards over the past decades in recognition of its waste reduction and recycling efforts. Recent awards included the Partnership in Washtenaw County's Waste Knot Program (2004). UM Health Service also received Hospitals for a Healthy Environment's "Sustained Environmental Leadership in Health Care" Award in May 2005.



What you CAN DO to help...

- Reduce consumption — only buy what you need. If the entire world population consumed as much as the average American, it would require more than 3 Earths to fulfill everyone's needs.⁶
- Recycle. There are many items that can be recycled in UM and Ann Arbor, such as newspaper, office paper, #2 & #4 plastic bags, plastic bottles (PETE #1 & HDPE #2), scrap metal, cell phones, CDs, computers, inkjet cartridges, and more.^{2,7}
- Re-use — donate or sell unwanted items. UM provides a free online classified ad service (<http://marketplace.umich.edu>) and has boxes for donating items in the dorms at the end of the winter semester.⁸
- Every ton of virgin-fiber paper consumes 12-24 trees⁹. Buy paper with recycled content and use both sides. Put the waste paper in the appropriate recycling bins.
- Check out the "waste prevention tips" section and the latest issue of "Recycling Matters" at the WMS website (<http://www.recycle.umich.edu>).
- Be a student LeeDer. Join the "Living examples of eco-friendly Decision-making" Program organized by the University Housing and learn about how you can live in a more environmental-friendly way (<http://www.housing.umich.edu/services/environ/leeder.html>)
- Departments can join REdU (Recycling Education at the University) to help improve the University's waste management and recycling programs.
- Learn more about the latest waste management initiatives by accessing the websites at:
 - <http://www.recycle.umich.edu/>
 - <http://www.med.umich.edu/envsteward/>
 - <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/stewardship/>



⁵ The increase was primarily due to the increase in hospital waste by 2,400 tonnes in 2005

⁶ Are you living sustainably? Take the Ecological Footprint challenge at <http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp>

⁷ Recycling in Ann Arbor at <http://www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/PublicServices/FieldOperations/SolidWaste/recycle.html>

⁸ Student Move-out Program is organized annually by the UM Housing and Waste Management Services

⁹ Green Press Initiative. <http://greenpressinitiative.org/postconsumer-recycled.htm>

