



2010

## Maryland Green Registry Leadership Award Winner



### NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center



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*The Maryland Green Registry Leadership Awards recognize organizations that have shown a strong commitment to the implementation of sustainable practices, the demonstration of measurable results, and the continuous improvement of environmental performance. Read here how these award winners achieved their environmental successes and continue to move their organization forward along the path to sustainability.*

#### ***What innovation or set of results are you most proud of?***

With increased environmental awareness by the Green Team, particularly in the area of recycling, we are proud of the fact that we have had a 25% reduction in waste going to the landfill compared to 2005 levels. This puts us significantly ahead of our original goal of a 20% reduction by 2010. With catchy posters, slogans, an internal website, and outreach events, Goddard employees are more in tune with the three Rs – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle – and the emphasis on that order of priority.



*Goddard's Green Team was the winning parade participant in Celebrate Goddard Day*

#### ***How do you involve employees in your environmental programs and projects and keep them motivated?***

Goddard has implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) that incorporates people, procedures, and policies into one overarching system. Through the EMS and regular outreach initiatives, Goddard engages senior management and employees alike to care about the



***Goddard's new and first LEED rated building.***

environment and work hard to reduce our negative environmental impacts. Senior management sets the tone by developing policies and providing resources to implement environmental programs. These policies are carried out by programs and employees. Goddard has also established voluntary teams comprised of employees who are passionate about sustainability and environmental programs. These groups or teams use every communication tool available to rally fellow employees and encourage initiatives back up the chain with management.

Goddard often uses a variety of electronic communications to conduct outreach to employees, such as newsletter announcements and websites. The teams also take advantage of all Center-wide activities to reach out to employees in person and have conversations about Goddard's environmental programs and services. We use special recognition days such as Earth Day in the spring and America Recycles Day in the fall to develop creative ways to promote environmental management. On Earth Day we engage volunteers with down-to-earth activities, such as cleaning up the Center, planting a rain garden, or pulling invasive weeds. These efforts help get people out of their offices or labs and get them thinking about how their work impacts the environment.

### *How do you measure and ensure continuous improvement in environmental performance?*

Goddard's Environmental Management System (EMS) has an overall goal of continual improvement of environmental performance. Through the EMS, Goddard has selected six significant environmental aspects for which it has developed objectives and targets to reduce their impact on the environment. Metrics have been developed for each aspect and their status is closely tracked and reported to senior management quarterly. Goddard analyzes the metrics for trends in the right or wrong direction so that the Center can take timely corrective action, when necessary. We have learned that it is important to look for the right data to ensure that we are getting an accurate picture of how we are performing.



*Earth Day unveiling of the LEED Gold certification plaque.*

Numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Improvement can be seen in employee behavior and awareness of environmental initiatives. Management has also shown a greater interest in sustainability initiatives, such as energy conservation and recycling.

### *What have been your biggest obstacles and how did you overcome them?*

It has been challenging to get Goddard's Environmental Management System (EMS) out of the environmental office alone and to generate buy in with other organizations onsite. Environmental initiatives are often viewed as solely the function of the environmental staff. The challenge is to get employees from all occupations to understand that each of them impacts the environment and that each can do something positive about it. Overcoming these challenges requires constant attention. Our environmental team and special environmental

working teams work tirelessly to promote environmental initiatives and engage employees. These groups enable a wide variety of Goddard employees with diverse backgrounds and functions to evaluate and discuss the Center's environmental challenges, as well as develop action plans



*Earth Day 2010 employee volunteer planting.*

to overcome them. Still, resources are tight and people are busy conducting the work that contributes to the success of Goddard's mission. Our goal is to integrate environmental considerations into daily practices so that good environmental stewardship becomes second nature and the way we operate, rather than just another environmental initiative.

### *What's the first step you would recommend that someone take when starting to green their organization?*

The first step is to evaluate what is already in place, what is working, and what is not working. Once an organization has a good idea of its resources, successes, and opportunities for improvement, it can intelligently begin to develop a plan to become greener. Organizations should encourage senior management to visibly and audibly show support and enthusiasm for environmental programs. Managers can inspire their employees to become involved and to follow their examples. A strong outreach program is also important. It takes a lot of time, effort, and creativity to determine what will engage employees and encourage new behaviors. A passionate and creative advocate is essential for rallying employees and getting new programs off the ground.

*For more information on environmental best practices at NASA/Goddard, visit the Maryland Green Registry website at [www.green.maryland.gov/registry](http://www.green.maryland.gov/registry) and click on List of Maryland Green Registry Members to view member profiles.*

*The Maryland Green Registry is a voluntary program that promotes and recognizes environmentally sustainable practices in organizations of all types and sizes across the State. Visit the Maryland Green Registry website at [www.green.maryland.gov/registry](http://www.green.maryland.gov/registry) for tips and resources designed to help organizations set and meet their own goals on the path to sustainability.*

