



2011

## Maryland Green Registry Leadership Award Winner



### National Aquarium



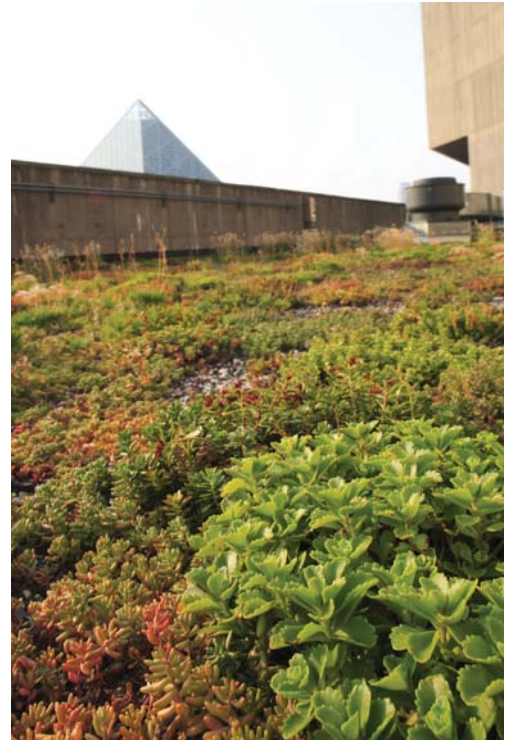
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[www.aqua.org](http://www.aqua.org)

*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 this award winner achieved its environmental successes and continues to move forward along the path to sustainability.*

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

The National Aquarium has developed several interesting environmental projects/programs over our past 30 years, but one of the highlights would have to be the 40,000 gallon cistern (adapted from our old seal pool) that helps irrigate our Maryland native plant garden on the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Waterfront Park. The old seal pool was a major attraction to Baltimore Harbor visitors and the sight of the famous “swim” by then Mayor William Donald Schaefer on our opening day in 1981. When the seal pool was covered over to make room for the expansion in 2005, it was decided to use the space to collect rainwater from our roof to water the native plants on our plaza. The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Waterfront Park is a 90,000 square foot urban park and an attractive new addition to Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. In addition to serving as a distinctive plaza entrance to the Aquarium, the park provides a carefully conceived educational setting that explores Maryland’s diverse ecosystems—from the ocean, coastal plains and Chesapeake Bay through the Piedmont region and west to the Allegheny Mountains. Native plants are installed throughout the park. The coastal zone includes salt marsh grasses, loblolly pines and shrubs like salt bush and winterberry. In the park’s Piedmont region, magnolia and swamp

tupelo trees share space with swamp rose, Allegheny blackberry, highbush blueberry, cinnamon ferns, wild ginger and bog plants including pickleweed and arrow arum. Eastern redbud and red cedar trees, witch hazel, wild hydrangea, sassafras, grasses and groundcovers take people to the mountainous portions of Maryland, leading them to the 35-foot waterfall representing the Allegheny Cascades.



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

The National Aquarium engages staff and volunteers in the development and facilitation of environmental projects through our Internal Conservation Committee. This committee is comprised of individuals from each department and touches all levels of leadership within the organization. To maintain motivation, we only have to take a walk through our buildings. Through our exhibits and programs, we hope to inspire our visitors to enjoy, respect and protect our aquatic world. It is only

fitting that these same exhibits also inspire us to use our resources wisely and to make thoughtful choices in our everyday business practices.



***How do you measure and ensure continuous improvement in environmental performance?  
What have you learned from this process?***

Whenever possible we try to measure our conservation efforts (tons of food composted, gallons of water used, pounds of batteries recycled, etc.). This gives us a good comparison to past year's work and helps us adaptively manage our efforts. But does more mean better??? If we composted less food this year than last year, do we need to revisit our collecting practices/education efforts, or are we simply wasting less? There is no easy answer in this business and we must constantly be aware of changing practices, attitudes, technology, etc.

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

When just beginning to green your organization, it's important that you recognize the diversity within your staff, accommodate different starting points and to celebrate small victories together. Each small step is an improvement and can lead to significant changes down the road if your staff is motivated to make progress.



***For more information on environmental best practices at the National Aquarium, 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.*

