Happy Spring and Happy Earth Month!

April 2024

We are excited to provide another quarterly update on sustainability and climate action efforts here at CU Anschutz.

This month's topic is waste diversion, and it is a timely subject for Earth Month. As we all look to do our part to protect the Earth's valuable resources, waste diversion efforts are a way that we can all be a part of the solution on campus and beyond. While a lot of what we do on campus to affect sustainability is done through energy, facility and transit planning, successful waste diversion is dependent on the entire campus community participating in disposal protocols and collection efforts.

There are many benefits of diverting materials from landfills. Not only is valuable landfill space saved, recycling also reduces greenhouse gas generation and energy consumption, and typically creates a stronger economic impact than disposal. Using the EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM), the projected savings from waste diversion can be evaluated in a different light. In 2022, the WARM model estimated that Colorado prevented 2,005,853 metric tons of carbon dioxide from being generated, by preventing material going into Colorado landfills. This equates to the emissions from 425,871 passenger cars. The energy savings from diversion were equivalent to the energy used in 153,503 homes in a year.

With those numbers in mind, consider that the Front Range of Colorado has a waste diversion rate of only 16.1% in 2022 with a goal of 39% by the year 2026. Waste diversion is measured by dividing tons of landfill-diverted materials by the total materials collected. Cardboard has long been the most diverted material from landfills due to its recycled value, but organic materials (food and landscape waste, or compost) have recently surpassed cardboard as the most-diverted material in Colorado.

For CU Anschutz, we currently have a diversion rate that averages better than the greater Front Range rate at 26%. With the recent addition of compost to our diversion streams, we hope to see significant increases in this rate - and we are also excited to be hiring two new ,full-time positions to redouble our efforts with waste diversion on campus: a Sustainability Resources/Waste Diversion Coordinator and a Green Labs Program Coordinator.

The Sustainability Resources/Waste Diversion Coordinator will play an integral role in finding and applying funding for various sustainability initiatives at CU Anschutz, as well as providing education, marketing, outreach, and training on waste diversion efforts across campus.

The Green Labs Program Coordinator will develop a program for research lab efficiency programs and lab community partnerships to save water and energy and reduce solid and hazardous waste in hundreds of labs on the CU Anschutz Campus.

While these positions will both contribute greatly to general campus sustainability, we still need your help. The first step is making sure that all items are disposed of properly in the correct bins to avoid contamination. Following the instructional signage we have around campus for recycling, compost and landfill is a great start. If you need that signage for your work area or to become more familiar with the disposal protocols, you can click here. Next, you can let us know when there are areas on campus that need attention or if you think collection is not happening appropriately. If you are hosting events, make sure to request recycling and compost service and seek out food vendors that use less plastic and more compostable service ware. If you have large amounts of recycled materials that need to be collected, call dispatch at x41777 and they will send a team to assist.

All these things can and will make a difference in our waste diversion efforts and metrics. It is a great way to stay involved and a perfect opportunity to protect finite resources right here on campus. **Also, check out these Earth Day events happening here on campus just for you!**

E-Waste Collection Event, April 18th & 19th:

Bring your personal e-waste to have it responsibly collected and recycled at no cost to you. Details on location, times and items to be collected here.

Earth Day Celebration, April 22nd:

Come join us for food trucks, music, and giveaways (including veggie starter plants) at Bonfils Court in front of the Fitzsimmons Building. More information here.

As always, let us hear from you about ideas and questions regarding campus sustainability: https://www.cuanschutz.edu/ /sustainability

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