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# A Home Run for Sustainability

In March 2011, six teams formed the Green Sports Alliance, a nonprofit organization designed to help sports teams, venues, and leagues improve their bottom lines. Today, the alliance's membership includes more than 50 teams, 100 venues, and nine leagues. Three major league baseball clubs talked to gb&d about their latest sustainability home runs.

By Lynn Russo Whylly

The composting program at Safeco Field provides mulch and usable soil to area residents, and recycling rates are expected to reach 100 percent by 2014.

## Seattle Mariners

Turning peanut shells into soil may seem like magic to kids, but it's really just a basic biological process—one the baseball club is using to help explain the value of going green

As influencers go, sports teams and their players carry a lot of weight. And the potential for moving society toward better environmental behaviors is not lost on the Seattle Mariners, a founding member of the Green Sports Alliance.

When Seattle's Scott Jenkins, vice president of ballpark operations, arrived at the ball club in 2006, the Mariners' green game was just ramping up. That year, 12 percent of Safeco Field's waste was recycled. Contrast that with the 2011 season, when waste recycling rocketed to 81 percent, bringing the ball club significantly closer to its goal of zero waste by 2014.

The oranization crossed the tipping point in waste management when it began composting its concession waste in 2007 and changed its serviceware to compostable materials. As a result, Jenkins says, Safeco Field reversed its waste streams "to the point where compost and recycling are now the majority and garbage is the minority."

Where does the non-garbage go? Cedar Grove Composting makes it into mulch it then sells to area residents. Food-services company Aramark sorts the remaining 20 percent to identify items that can still be recycled. Last year, during baseball season, the Mariners gave away bags of Safeco Field Soil sponsored by Cedar Grove on four separation occasions. "Our tagline was 'Peanut shells today, Safeco Field soil tomorrow'—to show not just our dedication to recycling and composting, but why," Jenkins says. "We're creating a usable, valuable product and giving it to our fans."

At the same time they addressed solid waste, the Mariners also turned their attention to water conservation. To reduce operating costs while improving environmental performance, the club began by encouraging employees to change their behavior, turning off lights and shutting doors. They added weatherstripping to doors and windows, set back the thermostats, and turned equipment off. The result? The organization saved $275,000 the first year.

Adding aerators on faucets "cost next to nothing," Jenkins says, but reduced both water flow and natural gas use. Urinals were changed from gallon flush to pint flush, faucets were inspected for leaks and repaired, and a cooling-tower water-treatment system was installed to reduce total water usage. Collectively, these efforts reduced water use by 25 percent.

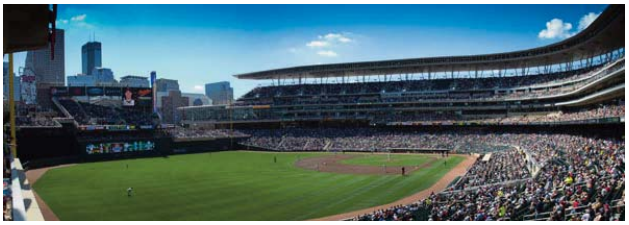
In the parking garage, a major lighting upgrade has reduced energy consumption by 50 percent, while solar panels installed on a nearby bridge structure that connects the garage and the park are expected to further reduce consumption. In addition, four electrical charging stations were installed in the garage for electric and hybrid cars.

Safeco Field isn't an island; like-minded companies are vital to large-scale success. Contractors such as BN Builders are encouraged to recycle all of their construction-debris waste, and Seattle City Light has provided rebates for many of the club's energy-conservation improvements. Fans are equally important. As part of its Earth Day celebration in 2011, the Mariners educated fans about what small steps can do for the environment by creating a rough carbon footprint for a game. The footprint included air travel and hotel stays for umpires and the visiting team; car transportation for fans; the event's natural gas, electricity, and water usage; and the garbage generated at the stadium. The organization then purchased an equal amount of renewable energy and carbon offsets through the Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

The Seattle Mariners currently are doing a joint study with Seattle Public Utilities and Century Link Field, where the Sounders and Seahawks play, to determine the optimal way to capture and reuse rainwater. A utility dashboard is helping the club monitor its green efforts in real time. The information also will be contributed to an MLB aggregate database on water and energy use, called Green Track, to help teams learn from their own performance and that of others.

"We're averaging $400,000 in annual savings in energy and water costs and another $95,000 in waste," Jenkins says of the sum of the team's efforts. "That's half a million dollars added back to the bottom line."

The Green Sports Alliance will hold its annual summit in Seattle in September. Jenkins says he is looking forward to collaborating with other professionals to improve environmental and financial performance not only at his home field but also across the industry.
At Target Field, a waste-to-energy program is operated with a neighboring garbage burner, and more than 400 bicycle stations are located within 200 yards.
Minnesota Twins



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### Sometimes one LEED certification just isn't enough

The Minnesota Twins were early leaders in sustainability—so early, in fact, that the ball

club was able to build it into the construction of Target Field, which opened in April 2010. Located on a brownfield site, the building used limestone quarried locally for 60 percent of its exterior, while 80 percent of the wood was sustainably sourced and more than 70 percent of construction waste was diverted or recycled.

One of the field's more innovative endeavors is a partnership with the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center, through which the stadium uses captured waste energy to heat some of its indoor spaces and playing field. Other systems are more standard: a storm-water system captures and treats 90 percent of rainwater runoff.

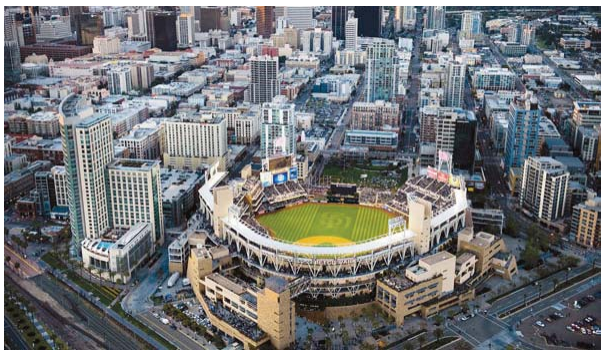
High-efficiency park lighting saves nearly $6,000 a year. And the stadium uses environmentally friendly refrigerants in its cooling systems and conserves more than 4.2 million gallons of water per year.

A two-year agreement with Renewable Choice Energy will offset 70 percent of energy consumption, saving nearly 9 million pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. Quantifiable cost savings are evident as well. The club saved thousands of dollars last year in energy costs. "Electricity use alone saw a 14 percent reduction," says Kevin Smith, executive director of public affairs. The Twins plan to increase that percentage this year by 5 percent.

Attendees can reduce their own carbon footprints by using one of 400-plus bicycle stations installed around the park and participating in the team's recycling campaign. The Twins also donate unused concession food—totaling more than 7,500 pounds in 2011—to local charities.

Prior to opening day in 2010, the club brought in sustainability consultant Paydirt and engineering firm Questions & Solutions Engineering to ensure all systems were working optimally, and then in April Target Field was rewarded for its efforts with LEED-NC Silver certification, the highest rating achieved by any ball club—and only the second to receive it—with the most number of points collected. In 2011, due to its vast spectrum of environmental initiatives, the club received a second LEED certification, under the Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance rating.

At Petco Field, a recycling program diverts 56% of waste—working toward a goal of zero waste by 2014, and high-efficiency lighting, window film, and automated systems reduce indoor energy use.



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### San Diego Padres

Southern California's beacon of sustainability aims for zero waste by 2014 and donates waste for reuse

When Petco Park opened in 2004, the San Diego Padres already were thinking green. "We began planning some of our efforts prior to the opening, including waste reduction and recycling," recalls Mark Guglielmo, vice president of ballpark operations. The ball club has been improving its green programs annually since then.

That first year, the Padres recycled 15 percent of its waste. In 2011, it diverted more trash and waste from the landfill than it put in it. In

other words, recycling reached 50 percent, and, "Our goal is to increase that to 65 percent this year," Guglielmo says.

Like at Safeco Field, a food-composting system turns waste into mulch, which Miramar Greenery gives away to the public. The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department advised the development of processes and procedures to ensure the composting program's success. The Padres also began recycling cooking oil, which they send to Buster Biofuels so it can be turned into biodiesel and sold to a local school district for buses. The ballpark also uses biofuel in its janitorial equipment.

Several interior endeavors are reducing energy, including fluorescent lighting, automated controls with motion sensors, automatic air-conditioning turnoff switches, sun-control film on windows—which removes 99 percent of UV rays and reflects up to 80 percent of heat gain—and an astronomical clock that turns ballpark lights on and off based on solar activity.

Time-controlled faucets automatically shut off after a pre-determined time period, while the park's irrigation system is a drip system and adjusts for seasonal moisture.

Education is vital. The Padres hold a "Green Night" game and other events, such as an e-waste recycling day in the off-season, to educate fans and employees on the benefits of sustainability. The club manages an employee recycling center and donates employee uniforms to a company that recycles them into paper products.

Going forward, the Padres are looking into high-efficiency park lighting and solar energy and hopes to achieve a zero-waste initiative by 2014.

This article was reset for my portfolio. No content was changed.

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