



Maryland
Green Registry
MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

The River Gem Bed & Breakfast at the Littleton T. Clarke House



407 2nd Street
Pocomoke, MD 21851
443-437-7577
www.therivergembnb.com
Bed and Breakfast accommodation
Member since May 2018

Management and Leadership



Environmental Policy Statement

The River Gem Bed and Breakfast is committed to reducing its impact on the environment. We strive to improve our environmental performance over time and to initiate additional projects and activities that will further reduce our impacts. Our commitment to the environment extends to our customers, our staff, and the community in which we operate. We are committed to: Comply with all applicable environmental regulations; Prevent pollution whenever possible; Train all of our staff on our environmental program and empower them to contribute and participate; Communicate our environmental commitment and efforts to our customers, staff, and our community; and Continually improve over time by striving to measure our environmental impacts and by setting goals to reduce these impacts each year.

Signed: Mona Margarita, PhD

Date: May 3, 2018

Title: Innkeeper/Owner



Environmental Team

My team consists of my two daughters and me. We meet every day and find new ways to recycle and reuse our food waste (compost/worm bin) and merchandise. Being green has always been our policy - at home and at the inn - and we strive to be good examples for our guests.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

We have a purchasing policy to encourage the purchase of environmentally-friendly products and services: We do not use disposable dinnerware, utensils, or cups. We launder our cloth napkins (at home) and use the clothesline whenever possible to dry linens. Paper towels are used as a last resort (hazardous waste spills). And when possible, we use non-virgin paper toilet paper.

We do not use gas powered equipment to mow the lawn (we purchased a GreenWorks mower w/rechargeable lithium battery to avoid noise and air pollution). We do not use pesticides and grow food organically in our garden. We use salt crystals to control the driveway weeds when hand cultivation is impossible.

We avoid purchasing commercial cut flowers from overseas. In Winter, we use plants for parlor decorations and during Spring, Summer and Fall, our gardens provide table and room flowers for the guests, depending on the season (daffodils, lilacs, Virginia bluebells, sunflowers, asters, marigolds, daisies, and zinnias- to name a few).

Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

We helped establish the Downtown Pocomoke Community Garden, using middle schoolers to work the land. We were successful in persuading our town to provide blue recycling bins at our town's monthly street festivals. When our Chamber of Commerce accumulates those free weekly newspapers that come no matter what, we deliver them to our town recycling bins. Also, the Maryland Bed and Breakfast Association is encouraging each member B&B to participate in the Maryland Green Registry.

We also have multiple native plantings to attract pollinators, including sunflower, poppy, buttercup, geranium, fennel, cilantro, crocus and zinnia in our own flower/vegetable garden!

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

We track our waste and performed a waste stream audit to determine baseline waste data and identify waste reduction opportunities and currently follow these waste reduction practices.

Guest Rooms

- *We use bulk soap dispensers in the bathrooms. We also make our own soaps that are so cute the guests take them home. Guests need to bring their own shampoo and conditioner (we only provide upon request).*
- *Instruct housekeeping to save and reuse unopened items.*
- *Use coffee/tea mugs and absolutely no polystyrene products.*

Kitchen and Prep / Dining

- *Use effective food inventory control to minimize waste.*
- *We have an arrangement with the local shelter to bring extra food after breakfast. We usually plan well enough to not have excess, but on occasion we deliver surplus to the homeless families.*
- *We package food for our guests if they cannot eat all that we serve - in paper wrappers tied with a pretty cotton string bow. We also offer plates to guests who bring food in to eat in our cafe, rather than using paper or styrofoam.*
- *Purchase locally grown, organic produce and other foods.*
- *Purchase/grow organic foods.*
- *Purchase sustainably grown foods.*
- *Do not use polystyrene coffee cups.*
- *Do not use any disposable containers, dishware, cutlery or cups.*
- *Use disposable food service items are eco-friendly - polystyrene is avoided.*
- *If disposable containers are used, they are made from - bio-based materials, recycled content, and/or compostable material.*
- *Use cloth napkins and tablecloths and avoid use of paper towels.*
- *Use reusable dishware and glassware and minimize use of disposables.*
- *Use metal coffee filters (no paper).*
- *Use water pitchers and filtered water to minimize the use of single-use bottles. We refill guests water bottles for them.*
- *We post the menu on a chalkboard and do not need to print menus.*
- *We do not dry clean; our uniforms are simply homemade aprons, which we launder on site.*
- *Only use reusable bags when shopping for groceries and supplies.*

Restrooms

- *Use bulk soap dispensers in our one public restroom.*
- *Purchase recycled-content paper towels and toilet paper.*

Registration / Office

- *We provide guests with recycled River Gem pens - the body is recycled paper and the clip is made from sustainable bamboo.*
- *Use electronic, paperless registration.*
- *Use electronic correspondence and forms.*
- *Purchase from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment.*
- *Encourage suppliers to minimize packaging and other waste materials.*
- *Purchase recycled paper with a high percentage recycled content.*
- *Make 2-sided copies / printed materials and avoid making extra copies.*
- *Use recycled content paper for copies / printed materials.*
- *Remove facility and staff names from junk mail lists when possible.*
- *Reuse scrap paper for notes.*
- *Reuse or donate shipping and packing supplies (peanuts, bubble wrap, etc.).*
- *Offer green travel education to guests.*
- *Promote other green attractions, activities and Maryland Green Registry facilities.*



Recycling

We recycle the following:

- *Glass*
- *Aluminium Cans*
- *Steel Cans*
- *Plastic*
- *Office Paper*
- *Printer and copy machine toner cartridges*
- *Newspaper*
- *Cardboard*
- *Packing Supplies*
- *Food Wastes*
- *Food Composting*
- *Fluorescent Lamps (required by EPA regulations)*
- *Batteries (required by EPA regulations)*
- *Electronics equipment (required by EPA regulations)*

Our recycling bin is located in the dining room, next to and in front of the trash bin (with a green sign from Trip Advisor on the wall to make it look like important fun). We remove discarded water bottles from the trash in guest rooms and we provide water and glasses on the landing between rooms, and water in a pitcher (or tea) is provided in the guest refrigerator.

Our town has recycling bins in two locations. We save all of our recycling to deposit at these sites on a weekly basis (co-mingled until we separate it). We cannot recycle plastics beyond 1 and 2 and 5, so we try not to buy anything in those containers.

We've monitored our average monthly trash, recycling and food waste diversion weights by counting containers filled and using the conversion rates. We calculate that our annual totals are 1,450 lbs. of recycling, 2,500 lbs. of composting and 4,400 lbs. of trash which gives us a landfill diversion rate of 47%.



Composting

We collect kitchen waste including egg shells, coffee grinds, tea bags, uneaten/ spoiled vegetable, fruit and rinds/peels, flower stems and decay. To our delight, our compost soil has produced several melon plants over the past two years! We also add grass cuttings and yard waste to the compost pile.



Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

- *Use [green cleaning chemicals](#).*
- *Dispense cleaning agents in bulk to reduce quantities used.*
- *Purchase durable equipment and furniture.*
- *Purchase low-VOC carpets and fabrics.*
- *Install carpet with sustainable or recycled content.*
- *Use low VOC adhesives.*
- *Use latex paints that are low or no-VOC.*
- *Reuse paint thinners.*
- *Properly recycle and/or dispose of thinners and solvents.*
- *Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing and vehicles.*
- *Use less toxic materials.*
- *Use integrated pest management - IPM. We do not use a commercial pest control company. When the spring ants enter, we apply a homemade solution on cotton balls at the point of entry inside (by sink) and it works within 24 hours.*
- *Minimize the use of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers in landscaping. We only use our home-grown compost as fertilizer and add no chemicals.*
- *When smoke alarm batteries need to be replaced, we upgrade to the new 10-year model.*

Energy

Energy Efficiency

We track our energy bills and use the following best management practices:

Kitchen:

- *Regularly evaluated existing ovens and other kitchen equipment for temperature settings and energy efficiency opportunities.*
- *Confirmed that all refrigerator, freezer and oven gaskets provide a good seal, or replaced.*
- *Implemented a startup / shutdown procedure which specifies timing for lighting, kitchen equipment, room temperature, etc.*

Lighting:

- *Use lighting sensors to turn on/off lights.*
- *Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.*
- *Use of directional, downward-facing, lighting in parking areas and other outdoor areas.*
- *Use high efficiency compact fluorescent light bulbs in rooms, canned lighting or wherever possible. The electric/power company replaced all of our light bulbs with energy efficient (CFL) bulbs (for free).*

Heating and Cooling:

- *We use ceiling fans in all of the guest rooms, dining room, and kitchen before AC is turned on. In this big old, solid house, this is usually enough to avoid the room air conditioner (we do not have a whole house AC unit).*
- *Have programmable thermostat for the house in the innkeeper's room and each guest room has a steam radiator that may be adjusted.*
- *Keep office doors and windows closed if HVAC system is on.*
- *Housekeeping closes blinds and resets optimal temperatures.*
- *Have installed additional insulation in the attic.*
- *We freeze in winter and sweat in summer (not when guests are here) in an effort to be efficient!*

Energy Efficiency:

- *Turn off all electrical items in unoccupied rooms when not in use or at the end of the day.*

Renewable Energy

- *We replaced our path lights and signage lights with solar lighting.*

Water

Water Conservation

We track our water bills and implement the following water-saving practices:

- *Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks.*
- *Discourage water-based cleanup, ie. sweep first and use other water-conserving opportunities during cleaning procedures such as using microfiber mops.*
- *Offer water versus serving automatically.*
- *use low flow restrictors on shower-heads.*
- *use low flow toilets (1.6 gpf or less).*
- *installed a tankless hot water heater.*

Have an effective landscape management plan which utilizes:

- *native species.*
- *drought tolerant species.*
- *minimizes lawn areas.*
- *We do not water our lawn (it gets a little brown but survives). We do not own a sprinkler. We water our vegetable garden by hand held hose or bucket (using collected rainwater when possible - i.e., no mosquito issues so far Use melted ice and unused water to water plants.*
- *Our hanging baskets are planted with succulents and watered with waste water and melted ice.*

Have an effective storm water plan management including the use of:

- *Rain gardens,*
- *Pervious pavement, and/or minimization of impervious areas like paving and concrete, and*
- *a rain barrel.*

Linen Service and Laundry

- *Provide optional linen service - Change linens only upon request.*
- *Train staff on the process for optional linen service.*
- *Have signage in each room explaining the linen reuse procedures.*
- *Have water - and energy-efficient washers and dryers.*
- *Use non-phosphate, non-toxic and biodegradable laundry detergents.*

- *Minimize the use of bleach and chlorinated chemicals.*
- *Use linen service providers that employ wet versus dry cleaning.*
- *Line dry items whenever possible.*

Stormwater Management and Site Design

In 2018, the parking lot was repaved with 20 tons of local gravel.

Transportation

Employee Commute/Customer Travel

We live on the property. We even walk to town to pay our bills and post mail. When we do our grocery shopping, we combine other errands as well, and we almost always work in pairs and carpool.

Fleet Vehicles

When each of us needed a new car (replacing cars with more than 150,000 miles), we purchased one new car that is ECO rated and two that were preowned hybrids.

Efficient Business Travel

We carpool to our Annual Maryland Bed and Breakfast conference each year.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities

- In 2015, The River Gem B&B received the Worcester County Green Award. We were recognized because of the great effort it takes for an historic house (1857) to step up to the Green Plate.*

Profile Updated January 2023



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

