

RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Reducing Waste, Building Awareness

A recycling and solid waste management program was the first organized sustainability initiative on campus. One student began the effort in 1982, and five years later, following a plan created by an environmental policy class, the Recycling Crew set up and operated the first drop-off recycling center in Buncombe County. The Crew now deals with over 500 tons of recyclables and trash annually, and reclaims more than 25 different types of materials. The National Wildlife Federation named Warren Wilson “a leading school in several areas, in particular recycling and reducing waste.”



Notebooks made from recycled paper are for sale at the College Bookstore.



The Free Store supports the philosophy, “Don’t buy new—reuse!”



The Recycling Crew conducts “garbology studies” to pinpoint trash that should have been recycled.

Baling cardboard at the Recycling Center creates income and reduces off-site hauling.

Sustainable Practices

- Collecting, sorting, monitoring campus trash
- Baling cardboard on-site to eliminate unnecessary fuel consumption
- Offering items reclaimed from trash at campus Free Store
- Offering cleaned-up scrap wood to the community
- Running campus campaign to stop junk mail
- Working toward establishing institutional norms for purchasing
- Buying as few new items as possible
- Collecting and processing compost for campus use
- Executing waste management monitoring plan for new construction



The Recycling Woodshop prepares scrap lumber for community use.



The GreenDrum: A Model of Waste Management

Instead of adding garbage to the landfill, composting enriches the soil in the College landscape, which in turn provides food, shade, recreation, and healthy surroundings for the community. Responding to problems with open composting (including scavenging black bears), the College purchased an in-vessel “GreenDrum,” which rotates to produce highly aerobic conditions and isolates odors and pathogens from the environment. Students from the Recycling Crew collect and load campus food waste, add sawdust donated by the Carpentry Crew and woodchips from campus wood waste, and in five days unload a nutrient-rich material. Warren Wilson is the first institution of higher learning to use this innovative system for both pre- and post-consumer food waste.