



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Winter 2026
*WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement.*

The Snow Will Be White, but the Winter Olympics Will Be Green

The 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics Games in Italy, which will run from Feb. 6 to 22, have been planned with sustainability in mind. Wisely, many sustainable strategies from past Olympic games have been considered and adopted for the upcoming Winter Games.

In order to reduce the carbon footprint of the event, a commitment to 100% renewable energy was adopted for the Milano-Cortina Games. In addition, with sporting events spread out over northern Italy, a significant investment in public transportation, particularly the rail system, was also made to reduce emissions from the transportation sector.

As was done for the recent Paris Olympic Games, existing facilities have been used as much as possible, along with some temporary facilities. Any permanent facilities built will be used as training facilities or will be converted to other uses. With reuse in mind, equipment from the Paris Olympic Games was purchased for the Milan-Cortina Games.

Recycling and waste reduction are also integral strategies adopted for this event. Recycling 80% of packaging waste and donating surplus food to local charities are two noteworthy goals for the Games. For further information about the sustainability program adopted for the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympic Games, visit <https://www.olympics.com/en/milano-cortina-2026/about-us/sustainability-now26>.



NJDEP's Plan for Sustainability a Great Resource for Businesses

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Plan for Sustainability is a tool that businesses can use to create a company sustainability plan based on measurable sustainable actions. The initiative is targeted at small and medium-sized businesses that do not have sustainability or environmental staff. The program includes a "sustainability roadmap" that guides users. It includes recommended sustainability strategies, information on benchmarking and setting goals, using metrics to measure progress, helpful resources and more. DEP's Bureau of Sustainability staff are available to provide technical assistance to businesses preparing plans. For more information, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/steps-to-sustainability/plan-for-sustainability/>.

CNN Young Hero Cleans Up Tennessee River

Cash Daniels, a 16-year-old boy from Chattanooga, Tenn., was recently recognized as the 2025 CNN Heroes Young Wonder for his tireless work to clean up the Tennessee River and the environment over the past decade. As a result of his efforts, more than 45,000 pounds of trash have been removed from the Tennessee River and other local waterways. In addition, he has recycled over 8,000 miles of discarded fishing line. Cash also established a nonprofit organization called Wild Earth Defenders, which is dedicated to protecting and restoring ecosystems. To learn more about this inspiring youth, visit <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1261139866064751>.

Did You Know...

- The new Toyota RAV4 will feature automotive weatherstrips that contain 20% recycled rubber content.
- The Rutgers Cooperative Extension's newly published "New Jersey Food Donation Guidelines" address food insecurity and the environmental impact of food waste by removing long-standing confusion about what food can be safely donated to those in need. The new guidelines are available at <https://sites.rutgers.edu/food-waste/home/nj-food-donation-guidelines/>. For any related questions, contact helene@sharemy meals.org.
- A new generation of recycling collection vehicles equipped with artificial intelligence camera systems that can measure recycling contamination in real time are now available. These systems can detect contamination at the moment the material enters the recycling truck. The AI system then determines the origin of the contamination and can send customized messages or postcards to residents at the associated address with tips on how to recycle correctly.
- The world's northernmost recycling center - located 746 miles from the North Pole - is in Ny-Ålesund, in Svalbard, Norway. Residents and visitors are required to sort a variety of recyclables, as well as waste, at the facility. Separated materials are then sent to the Norwegian mainland for recycling or disposal.
- NASA's LunaRecycle Challenge is a \$3 million, two-phased competition focused on finding innovative ways to recycle waste materials, like plastics and metals, into useful products for long-duration space missions. Thus far, NASA has recognized 17 teams from the United States and five other countries as Phase 1 winners. For more information, visit <https://lunarecyclechallenge.ua.edu/>.
- Print circulation of newspaper, once a mainstay of municipal recycling programs, has declined by 70% since 2005 due to the shift to digital news.

Spring 2026 WasteWise Webinar:

May 5, 2026

Details will be available soon at:
<https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/outreach-and-education/wastewise/>

New State Plan Supports Reuse and Recycling

The New Jersey State Planning Commission formally adopted a new State Development and Redevelopment Plan on Dec. 17. Among other things, the plan states that "efficient waste management and recycling are crucial to a sustainable future." The plan encourages reuse, recycling and composting and highlights the importance of educating residents about these practices.

The new plan will serve as a guide to inform the public and encourage state agencies, counties, and municipalities to align their land use policies with its vision. It aims to promote a balanced and inclusive strategy for managing and guiding growth across New Jersey. The new plan is available at https://www.nj.gov/state/bac/planning/documents/update-to-state-plan/sdrp_2025.pdf.

RCRA Marks 50 Years

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) – a landmark piece of legislation signed in 1976 - gave the US Environmental Protection Agency the authority to control hazardous waste from cradle to grave. This includes the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. RCRA also set forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid wastes. The 1986 amendments to RCRA enabled EPA to address environmental problems that could result from underground storage tanks. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/rcra> for detailed statutory and regulatory information.

Memorable Quote: "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." – Robert Swan, Polar Explorer and Conservationist



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<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>