

Wild Wolf Brewing Company

Continuous Improvement and Resource Conservation

Overview

Wild Wolf Brewing Company (Wild Wolf) is a small production brewery with a 300-seat restaurant and 140-seat event center. The 10-acre property is a leader in resource conservation in Nelson County. Wild Wolf is committed to minimizing the impact of its activities on the environment and making sustainability part of their mission.

What makes Wild Wolf a Green Brewery?

Wild Wolf has made “being green” a part of its culture. They continuously improve their sustainability efforts through innovation and training of their staff and customers. From waste reduction to energy and water savings, Wild Wolf has shown that the environment is part of all of their business decisions.

How has the brewery reduced water usage?

In addition to many best practices with water usage and efficiency, Wild Wolf implemented a significant improvement in 2019 by eliminating the filtration of almost all beers. Cleaning and sanitizing the filter required large amounts of water. By eliminating filtration, Wild Wolf has saved approximately 300 gallons of water per week, which is over 15,000 gallons of water saved per year. With the drastic reduction in water use, the brewery did not have to pump out the brewery tank at all in 2019. This decision has led to a cost savings as well because the tank used to be pumped out two to three times a year at a cost of \$850 each time. The best part of this is that everyone agrees – the beer is better!



Wild Wolf shares their environmental efforts with customers with innovative marketing on product packaging.

What are some best practices for energy reduction?

The brewery’s new canning building has a reflective metal roof that keeps the building cooler in the summer months, allowing Wild Wolf to forgo the use of air conditioning. This saved the brewery over \$10,000 by not having to install an HVAC to cool the building during the hotter months. Four Rinaii heaters throughout the property help reduce energy usage in both the brewery and the restaurant. In addition to these large energy savings projects, Wild Wolf has also increased energy efficiency by installing LED lighting when possible, adding auto on/off switches in restrooms and purchasing ENERGY STAR appliances. By consistently tracking their energy use, they have been able to quantify the results of their energy saving efforts. With each new project also comes a new Standard Operating Procedure and training so staff are ready and able to handle any changes to their day-to-day activities. Training is ongoing to ensure success of new projects.

How does the brewery inform customers about green practices?

- In 2019, Wild Wolf modified its logo to incorporate the recycling arrows and a new tagline, 'Virginia's Green Brewery' in order to show an ongoing commitment to being green.
- Wild Wolf is continuously training staff and customers on the importance of being green.
- The brewery has increased outreach through presentations at beer festivals, utilizing the Virginia Green logo in sales and marketing, and designing a line of promotional materials to educate the public about being green.
- The brewery has also posted articles in their weekly newsletter and shared their environmental efforts on social media to get the word out. Videos about the facility's various green projects like their composting efforts are on their website.
- The brewery also utilizes opportunities to engage the community in their efforts, through cleanups, Earth Day events, and recycling rewards.

CELEBRATE WITH US
EARTH DAY Saturday, April 22nd

FREE Green Brewery 2015/2016 Pint Glass with every purchase over \$25 (tax & tip not included)

Highway 151 Clean Up Sponsored by Friends of 151 8:00 am to Noon

FREE Virginia Green Brewery Growler with every Growler fill

Double Bucks Day \$1 Wild Wolf Bucks for every FIVE clean bottles (+22 ozs)

TEAM UP CLEAN UP

BREWERY OF THE YEAR 2015 & 2016

A portion of proceeds will go to Keep Virginia Green & The Virginia Green Travel Alliance

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WILD WOLF Brewing Company
HOME OF AWARD WINNING BEER

How does continuous improvement play a role?

Wild Wolf's environmental efforts are an excellent example of continuous improvement and innovation. Year after year, the brewery has found new ways to address their environmental footprint. These projects range from energy and water savings to waste and toxics reductions. As the brewery grows, they make sure sustainability is a key consideration. When they purchase new equipment, they seek out more energy and water efficient appliances. Even if the initial cost is more, the return on investment is short. Protecting the environment is ingrained in their decision-making and their business culture. It took some time to develop this culture of sustainability, but it is also the reason that they are able to make the progress that they have and the reason they want to help other businesses reduce their environmental footprint as well.

The company is discovering is that each year it is becoming more challenging to find new and innovative improvements because they have addressed so many of the obvious initiatives like recycling, composting, etc. One recent initiative was extremely unique – they started adopting cats from a local 'kill shelter' in order to relocate them on the 10-acre property to help with mice, thus greatly reducing the need for chemicals. Since the cats roam the property, they are often visible to guests, creating an opportunity for further education on being green.

How can similar facilities go green?

Wild Wolf has put a strong focus on the brewery waste and found ways to recycle all packaging, making them a zero waste producer. They were a pioneer in Virginia by being the first brewery to package all flagship beers in cans, rather than bottles; several years ago they sold their bottling machine so that all packaging is now in cans, growlers or kegs. This means that 100% of the beer sold inside and outside of the brewery is provided in a recyclable container and/or reusable vessel. Although every brewery and restaurant is different and will have their own unique challenges, it all starts with identifying the resources that are used and determining potential areas to implement efficiency measures. When facilities track their resource use they can assess the success or failure of a project in order to replicate successes and learn from failures to apply those lessons in the future.