



Supporting Sustainable Tourism

Application for Full Virginia Green Travel Certification

Refer to [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#) for additional guidance

Section 1: Register Your Business Online

This application is part of the Virginia Green Travel certification process. To certify your business, register online and upload this application during the registration process.

If your business is **already registered** with the Virginia Green Travel Business Directory:

1. Complete this application form.
2. [Log into your Virginia Green Travel Business Profile.](#)
3. Upload this application while completing the certification process.

To **register your business** with the Virginia Green Travel Business Directory:

1. Complete this application form.
2. [Register your business with the Virginia Green Travel Business Directory.](#)
3. Upload this application while completing the certification process.

Section 2: Background

Applicant Contact Information:

Name of Business: Virginia Zoo
 Website: <https://virginiazoo.org/>
 Address Line 1: 3500 Granby St
 Address Line 2: Click or tap here to enter text.
 City: Norfolk
 State: VA Zip: 23504

Contact 1

Name: Michelle Lewis
 Phone: 757-441-2374 x232
 Email: michelle.lewis@norfolk.gov

Contact 2

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
 Phone: Click or tap here to enter text.
 Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Facility Type (please check one):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attraction | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brewery* | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Facility / Service Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campground | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Center / Visitor Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conference/Convention Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Winery* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Course* | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click or tap here to enter text. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging* – if so, how many overnight rooms? Click or tap here to enter text. | |

*Also, complete Section 12 (sector-specific additional activities)

Why is committing to be a Virginia Green facility important to you?

The Virginia Zoo is committed to engaging our community in taking action to save the world's wildlife and their ecosystems. It is important to be a Virginia Green facility to show that we not only talk about the environment and sustainability but also do action ourselves.

Section 3: Leadership

All Virginia Green Travel members must have a leadership structure that assumes responsibility for maintaining the Virginia Green Travel program commitments.

Green Team

It is ****REQUIRED**** that you check at least one of the boxes below.

- We have a Green Team in place consisting of employees representing core operational functions.
- We meet regularly to discuss environmental efforts.
- We have a written plan in place mapping out future goals and projects.
- Virginia Green/environmental efforts are included in staff training.
- We have a designated Green Team Leader responsible for Virginia Green/environmental commitments.
- We have developed an environmental policy or mission statement.
- Other (details below)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 4: Recycling

The following waste reduction activities are required for all Virginia Green Travel members.

Tracking

- We track waste and recycling costs.
- We have calculated a recycling rate for our facility (this can be an estimate).

We recycle the following items ****REQUIRED BY LAW****

Item	Recycle	Do not use
Fluorescent lamps and ballasts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NiCad and Lead-Acid Batteries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Customer Recycling

Please tell us how your guests recycle. Include pictures of collection areas (e.g., recycling cans in rooms, trash and recycling bins in the lobby, trash and recycling at outside entrances, behind bars, etc.). It is

****REQUIRED**** that you check at least **one** of the boxes below.

- We provide customers with the opportunity to recycle.
- We use an "eco-station" approach with co-located and well-labeled trash and recycling containers.
- Staff makes sure that all guest recyclables are managed properly.
- We have other ways that we allow customers to participate in recycling. **Please elaborate below.**

We are also a drop-off site for cell phones and other electronics through Eco-cell

Items Recycled by Your Facility

Mark the items that you are recycling. ****MINIMUM OF 3 REQUIRED****

Collected?	Item	Recycling Vendor and/or Details
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Glass bottles	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plastic bottles	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aluminum cans	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steel cans	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paper	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cardboard	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pallets	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Compostables / food waste*	Tidewater Compost – we compost in the staff and animal diet kitchens
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plastic bags & wrap (<i>vendor ex: grocery store</i>)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: Click or tap here to enter text.	

Virginia Green Travel members are encouraged to provide the following information:

Our recycling rate is: Unfortunately, our provider no longer provides us with weight.

We know the weight of trash and recycling and are providing it here:

Unfortunately, our provider no longer provides us with weight.

Other Details?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Numeric Goal

We have a numeric goal to reduce overall materials that go to the landfill.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other Items Recycled

*Items in these categories can have specific management requirements. Ensure waste items are managed in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

Collect other specialized items for recycling via [TerraCycle](#).

Please list items: Click or tap here to enter text.

Collect cigarette butts through [Keep Virginia Beautiful](#) or another vendor.

Printer/copy machine toner cartridges.

Grease/ used fryer oil. *

Waste paints and solvents. *

Corks

[Oyster Shells](#)

Other: Electronics – we are a drop-off location for EcoCell

Contamination of Recycling from Plastic Bags & Non-Recyclables

For most recycling haulers, plastic liners/bags are not allowed and loose recyclables must be dumped into the central recycling dumpster.

- We have trained our staff to dump recyclables out of plastic liners so that no plastic bags are included with other recyclables.
- We have placed clear signage on or near recycling dumpsters/containers reminding staff about the need to keep plastic bags, food wastes, and other non-recyclables out of recycling dumpsters.

Recycling is Not Feasible in Our Locality

- We are in an area where a comprehensive recycling program is not feasible.

Please provide a written explanation of the recycling opportunities you do offer.

Click or tap here to enter text.

The Issue of Combined Trash & Recycling

Is your vendor allowing you to mix trash and recycling together and then sorting recycling at their facility? This is not a preferred practice, but it is allowable only if it is effectively communicated to guests/customers. If you are instructing guests to put everything into 1 container, you must instruct them that you are sending it to a facility that sorts out the recyclables. Otherwise, you must continue to provide separate, co-located recycling and trash containers.

- Yes, we are being serviced by an “all-in-one” service provider.

Please provide details below on how you are communicating this to guests. A photo is required.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 5: Waste Reduction

The following waste reduction activities are required for all Virginia Green Travel members.

- Do not use polystyrene ****REQUIRED****

If there are any items of this nature that you must use for some reason, please provide an explanation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Straws (REQUIRED** that you check at least one of the boxes.)**

- We eliminated the use of plastic drinking straws.
- We only provide straws upon request.
- We provide non-plastic straws such as paper, bamboo, etc.

In addition to the required activities, all Virginia Green Travel members must identify at least four activities they have implemented to reduce waste. List the activities below. Use the [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#) for ideas on waste reduction strategies.

- | |
|---|
| 1. We have eliminated all plastic lids, straws, and bags. |
| 2. We have replaced plastic bottles with aluminum cans in all vending machines. |
| 3. We have replaced plastic water bottles with Open Water in aluminum cans |
| 4. All disposable utensils have been changed to biodegradable |

Doing more? Let us know: **Our main vendor, Cisco, has removed all plastic packaging from their shipping. In the Gift Shop, the majority of our vendors use non-plastic or sustainable packaging. We participate in**

Project Wild, a challenge for staff, volunteers, and social media followers to join us in eliminating or reducing their plastic waste.

Section 6: Energy Efficiency

The following activities are required for all Virginia Green Travel members.

Tracking

It is ****REQUIRED**** that you check at least one of the boxes below.

- We track our energy costs.
- We track our energy usage.
- Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

Virginia Green members are encouraged to provide the following information:

Data/Progress

If you are willing, please share a summary of annual energy use, costs, and progress.

In 2025, the Virginia Zoo used 3,053,060.73kWh. This was close to the 2024 usage of 3,030,391.73kWh.

Numeric Goal

Have you established a numeric goal to reduce energy usage over time? Tell us about your goal.

We have not established a numeric goal to reduce energy usage at this time.

In addition to the required activities, all Virginia Green Travel members must identify at least four activities they have implemented to reduce waste. List the activities below. Use the [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#) for ideas on waste reduction strategies.

- | |
|--|
| 1. The Zoo participates in the City of Norfolk's Better Building Challenge to reduce energy consumption. |
| 2. Several Zoo employees participate in the City's Energy Champions program |
| 3. The Zoo promotes turning all lights off in rooms/buildings when not in use. |
| 4. The Zoo has several electric golf carts |

Doing more? Let us know: Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 7: Water Conservation

The following activities are required for all Virginia Green Travel members.

Tracking

It is ****REQUIRED**** that you check at least one of the boxes below.

- We track costs for water.
- We track the amount of water that we use.
- Other Click or tap here to enter text.

In addition to the required activities, all Virginia Green Travel members must identify at least four activities they have implemented to conserve water. List the activities below. Use the [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#) for ideas on water conservation strategies.

- | |
|---|
| 1. An estimated 40% of the Zoo's plantings are native, which require less water. |
| 2. The Horticulture team is working to increase native plantings by planting on average 3 natives plants to every 1 non-native plant. |
| 3. There are 2 rain barrels on grounds that are used to water gardens. |
| 4. Our bathroom faucets are motion-activated to help reduce water. |
| Doing more? Let us know: Click or tap here to enter text. |

Section 8: Support Virginia Green

All Virginia Green Travel members must identify at least two activities that support Virginia Green Travel, like displaying the Virginia Green Travel logo. List the activities below. Use the [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#) for ideas on supporting Virginia Green Travel strategies.

- | |
|--|
| 1. We will display the Virginia Green Travel certificate in our membership office and use the Virginia Green Travel placards |
| 2. We will display the Virginia Green Travel logo on our website with a link to your website. |
| Doing more? Let us know: Click or tap here to enter text. |

Section 9: Your Unique Business & Other Sustainability Practices

Please use this section to list any other practices that have not been covered above or to provide more detail on your business's or organization's efforts.

In 2025, the Virginia Zoo piloted the Habitat Heroes program for Zoo members. This was a behavior change program asking Zoo members to change 20 square feet of their yard into native habitat for wildlife. To support this behavior, the Zoo provided free native plant workshops and gave away nearly 1,000 native plants and seed packets to our members. In 2026, we will be opening the program to the wider Hampton Roads community and aim to give away 1,500 4-inch native plants, offer 6 native plant workshops, and create 3 different demonstration gardens throughout the City of Norfolk.

Section 10: Planning for the Future

Tell us two environmental projects or activities that you are planning to implement over the next 2 years. If you are looking for ideas, use the [Virginia Green Travel Application Resources](#).

1.	The Green Team is planning to do a waste and recycling audit that may potentially lead to a training for staff on how to handle recyclable materials.
2.	We have received a federal grant for an industrial composter and are hoping to install that within the next 2 years.
	Doing more? Let us know: Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 11: Pictures & Logo

Including pictures of the following activities are required for all Virginia Green Travel members.

Upload these photos when completing the application for the Virginia Green Travel Business Directory:

Photos

- Recycling containers
 - Include photos of the recycling collection in front and back of facility.
- Green Signage
 - Include photos of the signage used to inform costumers of what materials are recyclable.
- Logo
 - Include a copy of your logo.

Section 12: Do you need to complete a sector-specific Appendix?

If you are a LODGING facility, BREWERY, WINERY, or GOLF COURSE, please reference the appropriate APPENDIX listed / linked below. Please fill this out and submit / attach the Appendix + the Full Virginia Green Application when you are submitting [your new Virginia Green Travel LISTING](#).

Complete the sector-specific Virginia Green Travel Application Appendix:

[Lodging](#)

[Breweries](#)

[Golf Courses](#)

[Wineries](#)

GREAT JOB!

Upload this application, and any applicable appendixes, to your registration in the Virginia Green Travel Business Directory to finish creating your profile.

Once you have completed the profile, Virginia Green Travel Alliance staff will review your certification in 3-4 business days. You will receive an email confirmation, a pdf certificate, and Virginia Green Travel logo graphics. Next, your certification will be announced on social media and in the Virginia Green Travel Alliance newsletter.