

The Ohio State University Zero Waste Stadium Internship

Braeden P. Whaley | Environment, Economy, Development, and Sustainability

ZERO WASTE MISSION STATEMENT

“Achieve Zero Waste by 2025 by diverting 90% of waste away from landfills.”

INTERNSHIP LOCATION

This Internship was done through The Ohio State University with the Zero Waste program here on the Columbus Campus. This program has a broader presence on campus; however, I was focused on the zero waste events at the stadium with the Department of Athletics Sustainability program.



Above is a picture of the stadium after a typical day at the stadium, with most workdays happening in the evening this season. Photo taken by myself.

ZERO WASTE AT OHIO STADIUM



Quote from The Ohio State University Department of Athletics Sustainability Program. Photo taken by myself.

With Ohio Stadium being the largest in the country to achieve zero waste status year after year, this has diverted large masses of waste from landfills. The Ohio State University has continuously set high standards for other schools ranking #1 in diversion rate among the Big Ten conference for the past 7 years.

INTERNSHIP DUTIES



Above is one of many zero waste stations throughout the stadium where the first round of sorting would take place.



At a game, myself among a few other interns educated fans about proper disposal of gameday waste in terms of both recycling and composting. We had all the items fans would find and purchase while watching Ohio State take on another team.

In this image, you can see another Intern educating a pair of fans.

Towards the end of the games, usually around the fourth quarter, we found that having a presence at the cardboard compacter made a difference in our diversion rate. We would ensure the brown bins had only food waste and that the cardboard compacter had only cardboard.



Here I am pictured zip tying the food only compost bin after inspection.

PERSONAL INTERNSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Throughout my experience working with this internship, we have completed and are in the process of completing numerous accomplishments. These include, but aren't limited to:

- ✓ Benchmarking OSU's zero waste program with other Big Ten and Division 1 Schools.
- ✓ Diverting 90% of waste from landfills at the first stage, making football games a “zero waste” event.
- ✓ Added signage in club suites, showing which items are disposed in their proper bins.



View from the Press Box suites, which was one of the places we had duties. Other locations included B deck, C deck, Student Section, and the Huntington Club.

OVERALL ZERO WASTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| Diversion Rate Baseline (2015): | 29.2% |
| Diversion Rate Performance (2021): | 35.3% |
| Diversion Rate Goal (2025): | 90% |
| Diversion Rate Improvement (Recent Date): | 20.9% |

*Data pulled from The Ohio State University Zero waste page.

IMPACT OF INTERNSHIP

This experience working with zero waste thus far has been very beneficial to my career goals. It has shown me the side of working in sustainability that can be messy and hard work. I believe that this has given me skills that are necessary to be able to fully combat climate change in all aspects, even the hard parts.

Moving Forward, I have hopes of continuing with zero waste into the next semester. This Internship is very impactful to not only myself but the campus since games are such large events. I recommend this Internship to individuals who have a drive for sustainability and aren't afraid to get dirty in order to accomplish these goals.



Above myself and a few other Interns were pictured after a long day working at the stadium.

INCLUDED RESOURCES

<https://ohiostatebuckeyes.com/zero-waste/>

<https://si.osu.edu/campus/zero-waste>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While working this Internship I have gained a few people and entities I would like to thank. I would like to start by thanking my boss Cecil for all of his hard work. I would like to also thank the Zero Waste program and The Department of Athletics here at OSU.