San Diego’s Historic Museums and Zoo Collaborate to Cut Carbon

Through collaboration and community building, the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership’s Balboa Park Sustainability Program (BPSP) has developed a shared vision for “greening” Balboa Park. It continues to advance solutions that will help protect Park resources and strengthen economic viability, while enhancing staff and visitor experience and enjoyment. Established in 2008, the Sustainability Program’s purpose is to save money and natural resources through teaching and implementing energy efficiency and other conservation best practices, benefiting business, buildings, and museum artifacts. Working with San Diego Gas & Electric® (SDG&E®) and The Climate Registry’s Cool Planet Program, BPCP is achieving its goal to lower the carbon footprint of the Park through extensive energy management projects.

At the San Diego Zoo, purchased electricity is the largest contributor to the Zoo’s carbon footprint. Replacing all of the lighting in the main Zoo gift shop is now saving $15,000 annually. The Zoo is installing energy efficiency technology such as Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs) on several of its filtration systems, which has reduced overall energy consumption by 15%.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Energy Efficiency Projects

- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) retrofit projects have been installed at 11 cultural institutions, including the Mingei International Museum, House of Hospitality building and the Timken Museum of Art.
- A 30-year old HVAC unit at the historic Old Globe Theater was replaced with a water-cooled, screw compressor chiller that is 30 percent more efficient, saving $4,000 - $8,000 monthly in energy costs.
- An upgrade of lighting in the exhibition galleries at the San Diego Natural History Museum reduces the number of lamps by more than half.

These energy efficiency projects result in an annual energy savings of 87,000 therms and 6 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) and an energy cost savings of over $1 million. Through these energy efficiency initiatives, Balboa Park’s carbon footprint is reduced by 4,137 metric tons of CO2 annually, which is the equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of 811 passenger vehicles.

Councilman Todd Gloria

“I am very proud of the progress that has been made in the Park over the last few years. The Balboa Park Cultural Partnership has provided leadership through collaboration, which has helped bring this issue to the forefront. With the help of corporate sponsors like San Diego Gas & Electric®, the partnership with the City of San Diego and numerous Park stakeholders, we have succeeded in making sustainability a TOP priority in the Park.”

For more information, visit www.bpcp.org

www.theclimateregistry.org