

*An article from the Eugene City Council's newsletter about the achievements of the Wastewater Division's EMS system towards one of its target - reducing paper.*

The new Environmental Management System at the Wastewater Division helped save more than half a ton of paper in the past year using simple reduction strategies.

Wastewater's Environmental Management System established targets to reduce paper use and increase the post-consumer content of paper products that are used. The division has employed a number of simple strategies over the Past year in an effort to accomplish these goals. These strategies include reducing the default margins for printed documents, using duplex options on the division's printer, reformatting reports to use less paper, and installing cloth towel dispensers in restrooms. In addition, the division has written guidelines for the use of paper and established purchasing requirements for post-consumer content. Staff is encouraged to use electronic media for correspondence, and computers or overheads are used at meetings instead of handing out paper copies of agendas and informational materials. These efforts have been supported with reminder stickers on equipment and training for all employees on paper reduction targets and objectives.

The division's goal for last year was to reduce overall consumption of paper goods by 30%. A monitoring report shows that the actual reduction was approximately 20%, and the 30% target will be retained as next year's goal. In terms of specific reductions, the amount of paper used was cut by 0.6 tons or around 120,000 sheets of paper. The goal for using recycled paper was that 70% of the gross amount of all paper goods purchased would be made from recycled material with a minimum of 30% post-consumer content. The Wastewater Division exceeded this goal by using 97% recycled paper and will change the goal for the next year to 99%. The environmental benefits from these efforts can be stated in the following terms: ten 50-foot-tall trees saved, 12,300 gallons of water saved, 6,470 kilowatt-hours of electricity saved, and 2.6 cubic yards of landfill space that did not have to be used. Using recycled content also saves water and power since each ton of paper made with recycled fibers saves 7,000 gallons of water and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity.