

Trout Springs Winery

Sustainability Achievements

Trout Springs Winery has received additional recognition for sustainability through the Lake Michigan Stakeholders as Business Champions of Conservation in 2017.

Our efforts include installation of a Geo-Thermal ground water system that has reduced our carbon emissions footprint by 68%. Our various techniques employed in the vineyard have shown a nearly one ton carbon sequestration per year, and spray reduction of 66% through the use of our flock of bug-eating chickens. Water usage in the trout hatchery was turned into a single pass system for 6 separate raceways instead of a 6 source system.

What role has the GMP played with regards to these sustainability achievements?

The Green Masters Program has helped with doing a class project on viticulture Best Management Practices that was implemented for self-diagnostics and testing for the viticulture industry; shown on our www.wisconsinledge-home site. Continued work with GMP has shown more avenues of sustainable practices, along with exposure to media, and other top 20% businesses in Wisconsin.

Do you have any advice that you would give to a fellow small business that is interested in sustainability, however, may have limited resources to dedicate towards it?

As resources become available for small businesses, it is wise to make sustainable investments, that give a good return economically. This improves the bottom line for profitability, along with showing higher standards for stewardship of natural resources, and sustainable practices to your customers. It is important to know for a small business, that you can proceed as funds become available, and that it cannot happen all at once. If you only do one thing a year towards your goal, it adds up and will make a difference.

Have your sustainability achievements impacted any other aspects of the company? (profits, community feedback, employee engagement...etc)?

Our sustainability achievements have had a "snowball" effect on our business and in the way we are viewed from our peers, and our community. Networking with businesses, community outreach, schools, non-profits, and the like has skyrocketed our social footprint on the business stage. Trout Springs Winery has been at the forefront of the Viticulture industry on sustainability for many years now, and we strive to continue to find new innovative ways to lead by example.

Working toward sustainability does not have to be political, but in fact the opposite; it becomes a way of life in the day to day decisions made by small business where it gets easier to make the right choices toward stewardship, once you make the commitment, in this great state of Wisconsin.

Steve J. DeBaker

Trout Springs Winery/ Branch River Trout Hatchery