



VOLUNTARY TRANSFER STATION PILOT: FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION AND UNIT-BASED PRICING (UBP) FOR TRASH

QUICK FACTS

Population: 4,415

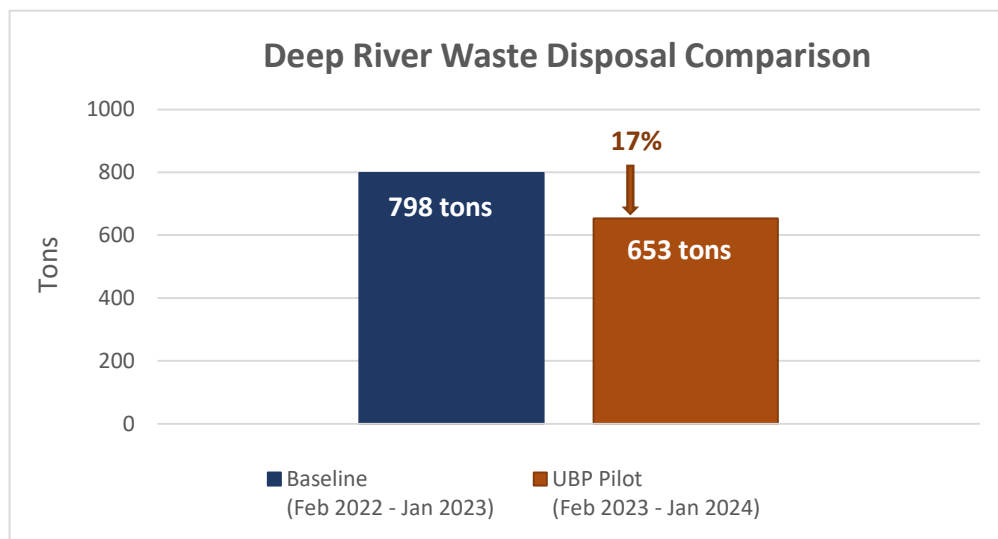
Estimated Transfer Station users: 1,300

Pilot Duration: 52 Weeks, Feb 2023 - Jan 2024

DEEP Grant Funding: \$104,500

PILOT RESULTS

- Trash tonnage at the Transfer Station dropped by 17% during pilot from previous year. Of that total tonnage reduction, 41% was diverted as food scraps and 59% was diverted to recycling and other source reduction pathways.
- Food scrap capture rate at the Transfer Station was 38% of available food scraps¹.
- 120,540 pounds of food scraps were captured during the pilot (52 weeks) and diverted to Quantum Biopower, an anaerobic digester in Southington, CT.
- Food scrap contamination rate was less than 1%.
- In December 2023, two months before the pilot's conclusion, residents voted against the proposed ordinance to establish a mandatory UBP and food scrap program at a Town referendum. The proposed ordinance projected an annual savings of \$135,000 to Deep River's General Fund.



Source: Data provided by Deep River and Waste Zero, DEEP's SMM Grant Program Consultant

¹ Connecticut DEEP's 2015 Waste Characterization study estimated 22% of the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream (by weight) is food scraps. Food scrap capture rate represents the percentage of that portion that is collected and diverted.

PILOT OVERVIEW

- Pilot was implemented at the Deep River Transfer Station, where residents can dispose of household trash, the expense of which is paid for by resident property taxes. Residents also have the option to contract with a private subscription hauler.
- Transfer Station users were instructed to place trash and separated food scraps in free Town-distributed orange and green bags, respectively.
- Residents were supplied with free orange trash bags and green food scrap bags with the message to limit trash to two bags per week. The program was a voluntary version of traditional UBP which would require residents to purchase the bags to cover disposal costs.
- The residential trash (orange bags) was either sent to a CT Waste-to-Energy Facility or out-of-state landfill, while the food scraps (green bags) were hauled to Quantum Biopower for digestion into renewable energy and soil amendments.

PERMANENT PROGRAM EFFORTS

- Deep River formed a Waste Committee to review pilot results and to evaluate the future of an ongoing UBP program with food scrap drop off for residents. In Fall 2023, the Waste Committee made a formal recommendation with a detailed proposal to the town's Chief Elected Official. The recommendation was to establish a mandatory UBP and food scrap program at the Transfer Station. The proposal included creating a two-tiered rate structure by introducing a UBP bag fee and free food scrap collection at the Transfer Station. The tax base would fund basic fixed costs to operate the transfer station and allow for the drop-off of recyclable items. The revenue from the UBP user fees would fund the disposal costs. This system created a fair and equitable policy where residents that use the transfer station would now be responsible for paying their share for disposal costs. Currently, residents that choose not to use the transfer station are subsidizing transfer station user disposal fees through their taxes.
- Deep River's form of government establishes that the Board of Selectman approves any budget and ordinance change. However, the final decision is made democratically by public vote.
- In December 2023, two months before the pilot's conclusion, Deep River residents voted against the proposed ordinance at a Town referendum.
- Deep River continues to offer food scrap drop-off at the Transfer Station.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Deep.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov

Deep River's pilot was funded by CT DEEP's Sustainable Materials Management Grant Program.