

New Jersey Department of Transportation
Bureau of Research

Technical Brief



Green Marine Products

This report is intended as an aid to marina owners and boaters who wish to operate in a more environmentally sustainable manner. It provides a supplemental, objective resource for making environmentally-informed purchasing decisions for 39 products and materials common to marine applications. Each product or material was evaluated against five key sustainability attributes covering everything from initial material harvesting/extraction to manufacture /processing, shipping and delivery, installation, and final disposal. In addition to providing a resource for considering the sustainability of specific products and materials, the sustainability attributes and framework developed for this project can be adapted for almost any marine product or material.

Background

Marina owners and boaters, as direct product users, are well positioned to determine which products to consider for various marine applications, based on factors like product quality and effectiveness, lifespan and upkeep, and cost. However, the environmental sustainability of a product—or even what sustainability means in the marine context—is often challenging to assess. The Green Marine Products project helps potential users to better understand the multiple dimensions of sustainability for a host of common marine products and materials.

Research Objectives and Approach

The purpose of this project was to assess the sustainability of a selection of common products and materials for marine applications in order to provide marina owners and boaters with an objective resource for making informed purchasing decisions.

This project was undertaken in three steps:

- Identify marine products and materials for assessment, as well as informational sources.
- Generate potential attributes that encompass the broad concept of sustainability.
- Evaluate the selected products and materials using the sustainability attributes.

Findings

A unique assessment for 39 common marine products is included in the final report.

For many products, a full assessment proved challenging or impossible. Several product reports have more blanks than ratings, demonstrating the need for more transparency from manufacturers throughout the product lifecycle. Despite these limitations, it is anticipated that this effort will provide a valuable informational resource for marina owners and patrons. The material assessments themselves, despite the gaps, provide a solid basis for considering the sustainability of many products and materials—in addition to providing open questions, in the form of blank cells, for concerned users to address directly with manufacturers or distributors.



More fundamentally, however, the sustainability attributes and framework developed here can be used for any product or material, whether formally or informally. It is hoped that these tools will serve to prioritize the importance of sustainability for future procurements of marine products and materials throughout the State of New Jersey.

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A final report is available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/research/>. If you would like a copy of the full report, send an e-mail to: Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us.

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