

CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION RECYCLING

MARCH/APRIL 2026

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18

OPERATING
TIPS FOR
BREAKERS AND
PROCESSORS

30

A LOOK BACK
AT THE CDRA
CONVENTION

Seeing is
BELIEVING

Eco Materials turns
contaminated soil into clean
gravel and sand for contractors
in the Philadelphia area.

contents

VOLUME 28 | ISSUE 2

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◆ cover story



From left: Ken Griffin, managing partner and director of sales, and Andrew Paluszkiwicz, managing partner and director of operations, co-founded Eco Materials.

◆ on the cover

- 10 Seeing is believing**
Eco Materials turns contaminated soil into clean gravel and sand for contractors in the Philadelphia area.

◆ features

- 18 Operating with intent**
With years of experience under his belt, Brian Baumann, president of B&B Wrecking and Excavating, offers input into operating breakers and processors.
- 22 No dust ups**
Contractors must take a multipronged approach to limit the impact of dust generated from jobsite operations.



◆ departments

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 editor's letter | 34 ad index |
| 6 industry news | 36 conference corner |
| 32 equipment report | 38 by the numbers |
| 33 product spotlight | |

- 26 Coming together**
The Construction & Demolition Recycling Association brought together key stakeholders at its annual show in Tampa, Florida.

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Seeing is BELIEVING

From left: Andrew Paluszkiwicz, managing partner and director of operations, and Ken Griffin, managing partner and director of sales, co-founded Eco Materials.

Eco Materials turns contaminated soil into clean gravel and sand for contractors in the Philadelphia area.

BY **CHRIS SWEENEY**

PHOTOS BY PARIKHA SOLANKI PHOTOGRAPHY



[THE ECO MATERIALS] FACILITY REPRESENTS THE FUTURE OF CONSTRUCTION, WHERE SUSTAINABILITY AND PROFITABILITY GO HAND IN HAND.”

– LEO ADDIMANDO, CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER, ALTERRA IOS

Ken Griffin and Andrew Paluszkiwicz have been in the construction industry for decades. But every now and then, something comes along that blows away even the most seasoned industry veterans.

What started as a routine trip to New York ended with a vision for a new business. The two formed Eco Materials, a Philadelphia-based company that uses a soil wash-recycling process to remove several different types of contaminated soil, leaving clean stone and sand for use in construction projects.

“Ken and I’ve been talking about this for four-plus years with a lot of different contractors and developers in the area,” Paluszkiwicz says. “When we would finally get them here, and they would see what we’re doing, on more than one occasion, somebody would say they didn’t really understand what we were doing until they could see it. You have to see it to believe it.”

MIRACLE BREAKTHROUGH

Griffin, the firm’s managing partner and director of sales, and Paluszkiwicz, managing partner and director of operations, have deep ties to the construction industry, having built and fostered a professional relationship that stretches back at least 20 years. Paluszkiwicz previously owned a civil sitework and excavation company, while Griffin’s business focuses on concrete and masonry work. In 2020, a representative from Northern Ireland-based CDE Group showed them a piece of equipment in New York that sparked the idea that would become Eco Materials.



“When we went to New York, it was almost miraculous,” Griffin says. “We’ve worked around dirt our whole careers, and now we see that same soil we were used to working with on a daily basis going into a machine and coming out as six different cleaned and sized aggregates.”

Eco Materials broke ground in May 2024 and opened its facility 11 months later.

CDE Group manufactured the various components of Eco Materials’ wash plant.

The site, located in southwest Philadelphia, has been operating for just about a year. At full capacity, the company can divert 700,000 tons of material from landfills by renewing up to 85 percent of inbound soil into sand and stone for use in construction projects.

In addition to Griffin and Paluszkiwicz, Scott Homel, president of Pintzuk Brown Realty Group Inc., Philadelphia, formed a joint venture with Alterra IOS, a Philadelphia-based industrial outdoor storage firm, to provide capital for Eco Materials.

“Ken and I were both in a world where dirt was getting moved from jobsites all the time, and aggregates were also getting purchased separately from quarries. To see them taking soil and turning it into renewed sand and stone, that looked pretty interesting

to us,” Paluszkiwicz says. “We started down the path of developing the concept, then engineering the plans and submitting for permits, all while trying to raise the needed capital. It wasn’t until we got through all the design, development and permitting that we were finally able to bring the whole thing to life.”

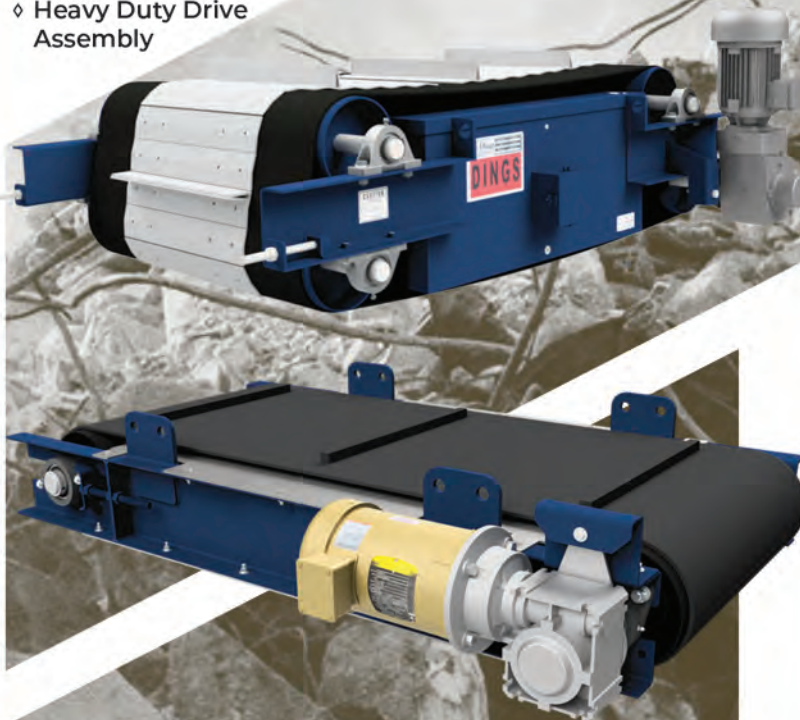
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THE PROCESS

Eco Materials outputs contractor stone (3/4 inch), contractor ballast (1-3 inches), coarse/C33 sand, fine mason sand and washed No. 8 and No. 57 stones, all of which meet the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (PADEP’s) Clean Fill Criteria Limits.

The company can accept several types of clean fill and/or contaminated soil by way of residual, regulated and urban fill. Eco Materials is permitted by the PADEP to accept more than 200 different types of contaminants, all of which are nonhazardous.

According to the firm, it is the second soil wash plant in the U.S. to accept contaminated soil.

“This facility represents the future of construction, where sustainability and profitability go hand in hand,” says Leo Addimando, co-founder and managing partner of Alterra IOS.

All inbound soils undergo rigorous sampling and environmental testing to confirm they are nonhazardous before coming to the facility. Eco Materials follows strict procedures, including random sampling, third-party lab validation and routine equipment calibration. Once the company determines it can accept the soil, the PADEP also reviews the project and gives approval, which Paluszkiwicz says usually happens within days.

The soil is weighed upon arrival and, once ready for processing, is fed through the wash plant, which uses advanced wet-processing technologies, including high-pressure washing and agitation; multiple magnets to remove metals; attrition scrubbing

to remove contaminants bound to useable aggregates; and a density separator to float out lightweight and organic materials, such as roots, wood and plastic.

“That’s where it comes back to customer confidence; they want to know that we’ve removed all the impurities, the contaminants, the waste and what we’re selling is clean sand and rock,” Paluszkiwicz says.

Eco Materials reclaims stormwater and has a closed-loop system that reuses 95 percent of its process water. Its underground stormwater management system collects water from the parking lot and other impervious areas.

“Following a rain event, we’re able to hold that water,” Paluszkiwicz says. “We can pump that water back into our process, and then, only if there’s no water in the tank, it will pull fresh water from the city domestic water system.”

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

One of the biggest advantages Eco Materials provides its customers is the company’s location in the heart of Philadelphia. Customers can drop off soil and pick up clean



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aggregates in the same trip, saving logistical costs and time. Paluszkiwicz adds that the Eco Material's recycled products are less expensive than quarry products.

"That's one of the drivers of why Ken and I got into this," Paluszkiwicz says. "We knew that the disposal sites that we used to go to in the beginning of our careers had closed. The rock quarries and the sand pits had closed, and new ones have opened, but they're farther and farther from the city. Traffic has increased, transportation costs have really gone up and so to be able to have a one-stop shop of disposal and aggregate sales below market pricing, it just really made the whole thing work in our minds."

Griffin says Eco Materials has

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— KEN GRIFFIN, MANAGING PARTNER AND DIRECTOR OF SALES, ECO MATERIALS

received soil from as far away as Brooklyn, Manhattan and northern New Jersey. Paluszkiwicz adds that another reason Eco Materials gets business from those neighboring states is that some of the facilities that operate within the New York market are at capacity.

SELLING THE VISION

It was one thing to build the system; getting people to come see it required vast outreach. Paluszkiwicz says early on, environmental engineers were skeptical about Eco

Materials’ processes—at least until they came to see it firsthand and met with the company’s compliance team.

“The testing that comes after our process proves the concept works,” Griffin says. “People could come out and see sand on the ground. Until you could see the end product, it was hard to convince people. Being a new facility, it took getting material on the ground, bringing people down and showing them.”

Kelly Whelihan, director of business development at Eco Materials, says Griffin’s and Paluszkiwicz’s connections in

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the construction industry were very helpful, but the company also leveraged social media and community outreach to gain traction in the Philadelphia area. The firm had success with online outreach as many contractors reached out after finding the company's website.

Eco Materials hosted lunch-and-learn presentations—Whelihan estimates about 30 throughout six months—and nearly 100 site tours.

She stresses that education was the most important factor: not just the knowledge that Eco Materials' process existed but education on how the process could help contractors with what they were already doing.

Once customers saw the benefits of the process, things started to come together quickly. And the more the word spread, the more business Eco Materials brought in.

"Once we get people aware of what we're doing, they catch on quickly, and they really see the benefits we can offer," Whelihan says. "Being within city limits and being a single location for both disposal and aggregate pickup is just immensely beneficial to them."

CONSISTENT BUILDING

As Eco Materials wraps up its first year of operations, the company is not resting on its laurels. Paluszkievicz says the firm will continue improving efficiencies so it can get material out just as quickly as it brings it in.

"We strive to make a consistent, reliable product at a fair price," Griffin says. "Our logistical advantages will help us, but we also need to be consistent in what the machine's putting out."

He adds that Eco Materials must continue educating the industry on the usefulness of its products to break the perception that quarry sand or aggregate is the only way to go.

"The more people we get in front of and explain what we're doing, the more they're excited about it, and that adds to the consumer confidence," Paluszkievicz says. "More people using it makes people confident that it's usable. That's really what we've seen." **C&DR**

The author is managing editor for *Construction & Demolition Recycling* and can be contacted at chsweeney@gje.net.



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