NYSP2I Supports Outback Steakhouse with a Food Waste Diversion Pilot

Outback Steakhouse (Outback) is a restaurant chain with locations across the country including over 30 in New York State. The parent company, Bloomin’ Brands, Inc., also owns Carrabba’s Italian Grill, Bonefish Grill, and Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse.

Challenge
Outback serves a variety of menu items for both lunch and dinner; which also includes a bar. The food is prepped and cooked on-site, which inevitably leads to the generation of some food waste. Outback restaurants already donate food, but want to expand their food waste management to include food waste diversion from the landfill. Restaurant personnel are focused on their core responsibilities of preparing and serving food to customers. Taking on a new project, such as setting up a food scrap diversion system, can be daunting when there is little time to spare, due to the staff’s current responsibilities throughout the day.

Solution
Outback requested the assistance of New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP2I) to set up a pilot food waste diversion program at the Henrietta restaurant location, in Rochester, New York. After the success of the pilot project, the long-term goal for Outback is to roll out similar food waste diversion programs at their other New York State restaurant locations. Work performed included: (1) supporting the Henrietta Outback with a food waste diversion trial with training, signage, and data collection sheets, (2) connecting the restaurant with area organics haulers, (3) creation of an improvement plan for long term sustainment, and (4) a diversion program process tool for the restaurant chain to use at future store locations.

Results
The Henrietta Outback is well positioned to move into the next phase of its program by contracting with an hauler and creating new processes to reflect the improvements identified under this pilot project. Additionally, with the Process Guide in hand and learnings from the Henrietta Outback, other locations can look to replicate this effort.

Steps included in the Process Guide for new restaurant implementations

1 https://www.outback.com/about-us