



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

September 2004

Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle

(Editor's note: In this issue we feature waste collection and recycling in Clark County, Washington.)

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

Vancouver debates a landfill for construction and demolition waste

The idea of creating the "Fruit Valley Community Landfill" is the brainchild of Paul Christianson, a developer and founder of the Hough Foundation in the Vancouver area. His plan is to take over a former Boise Cascade landfill near the Port of Vancouver and use the operating revenues to support local educational and cultural projects and organizations. Boise Cascade operated the pulp sludge landfill until 1997, then donated it to the Hough Foundation. In an era when government agencies and private companies are striving to increase recycling of construction, demolition, and landclearing (CDL) waste, an individual and a community foundation are proposing the development of a landfill that would bury it.

State, local, and industry concerns

The Washington Department of Ecology stated in July that it could not recommend that Clark County permit the development of the landfill. Additionally, Clark County staff have concluded that the proposed landfill would violate the county's solid-waste plan because it doesn't include any process for recycling the materials collected.

Currently, construction and demolition waste is collected in part by Waste Connec-

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Trash on the Other Side of the Columbia

Audit allows glimpse into Clark County's throwaway habits

According to the recently completed Clark County Waste Stream Analysis report, each Clark County resident throws away an average of 1,250 pounds of trash every year. About 250 pounds per citizen, or 20 percent, of this material is comprised of recyclable items that could easily be recycled at the curb or dropped off, free of charge, at local recycling centers. Recyclable materials include mixed paper, cardboard, newspaper, plastic bottles, glass containers, and tin cans.

The study estimates that in Clark County 50 million aluminum cans are thrown away each year. Just recycling these aluminum cans alone would save enough energy to run every television in Clark County continuously for three weeks.

The study also found that Clark County residents throw away 240 pounds of food scraps each year, a resource that could be composted into valuable soil amendments. Another 290 pounds of other materials (per Clark County resident, annually) that could be reused or recycled instead of thrown away include:

- 130 pounds of wood
- 100 pounds of building materials including gypsum wallboard, roofing, and concrete
- 30 pounds of reusable products including clothing, toys, books
- 20 pounds of plastic film and shrink wrap
- 10 pounds of household electronics.

Recycling, reusing, or diverting the materials listed above would keep close to 300 million pounds out of landfills.

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Welcome Betty and Rhett

Two new board members, new energies and perspectives

Betty Patton is an environmental consultant with her own company, Environmental Practices, LLC, in Portland, specializing in solid waste, recycling, and waste prevention. She returns to the RA Board after a seven-year hiatus. Betty has been a member of RA since 1992 and served as the RA Board Chairperson from 1994-97. In recent years she has served on the Association of Oregon Recyclers board as a special projects chair. She also worked on the Western Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative (WEPSI), which RA administered.

Betty will be a great resource for Recycling Advocates. She brings a wealth of knowledge about recycling, waste prevention, policy and legislation. She also has many contacts in the field. Welcome back, Betty!

Rhett Lawrence is an environmental advocate with OSPIRG, the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group, where he directs the clean water and toxics programs. In that role, he has lobbied and testified in the state legislature on the Willamette River and other public health and toxics related issues, including last session's E-Waste bill. In addition to these issues, he advocates to the legislature and state agencies for citizens' right-to-know about toxic use and release, clean water enforcement, pollution prevention, prohibiting toxic ingredients from fertilizer and other products, and the elimination of persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs) from Oregon's environment.

Though relatively new to recycling and solid waste issues in Oregon, Rhett is excited to become more involved in them as a member of Recycling Advocates' Board.

Landfill, continued

tions. According to a story in *The Columbian*, the company reportedly grosses more than \$4.3 million a year from construction and demolition debris in Clark County. Waste Connections currently recycles 30.8% of the construction and demolition waste that it collects. Clark County's solid-waste manager recommends that the planned landfill initially recycle at least 30% of the waste it collects, increasing to 50% by 2007.

The *Columbian* quotes Christianson as saying that the county's recommendations are "silly," but that he and Idaho Waste Systems, the proposed operator for the landfill, would try to comply.

Four years of "planning" – and then public hearings

Paul Christianson maintains he has been working on the proposed Fruit Valley Community Landfill for four years. On July 28, the Clark County Solid Waste Advisory Commission and city officials held an initial public hearing, which drew about 50 people. A second hearing took place on August 10. Christianson and proponents of the landfill had until August 31 to respond to the county's questions. The public may submit written comment on any new information the developers present through September 22.

In addition to concerns that the landfill would reduce CDL recycling, other questions remain, such as whether the leachate would impact the aquifer. The existing pulp sludge in the landfill is relatively benign, but the aquifer is already stressed by leaching solvents from an old Cadet Manufacturing

property, and the area is a potential major well field for the community. Construction and demolition waste could leach lead, mercury, and solvents into the aquifer.

At this time, it's unclear who would provide financial assurance for the project in the event of landfill closure or the need for environmental clean-up.

Also, the landfill would likely divert CDL waste from the Portland metro area.

What you can do

The Fruit Valley Community Landfill has been floating under the radar screen of many Vancouver area residents. Citizens and environmental groups that wish to comment on the project can take action through September 22. RA members in Oregon who have conservation-minded contacts in Vancouver and Clark County can alert them to the public comment process. Those interested may send in comments *if they pertain to the applicant's responses to Clark County's questions.*

Concerned citizens can also send letters to the editor of *The Columbian* at P.O. Box 180, Vancouver, 98666, or by e-mail to letters@columbian.com. The newspaper accepts faxes at (360) 699-6033.

The Hough Foundation's application is available for viewing at the office of Clark County Public Works, Solid Waste, on the first floor of the Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver. It can also be viewed at the Fort Vancouver Regional Library, 1007 East Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver.

The applicant's responses to the Clark County Solid Waste Advisory Commission should be available from Clark County Solid Waste by September 2nd. Anyone looking for more information or for copies of documents related to the project can contact Clark County Solid Waste at (360) 397-6118. Questions can also be directed to Gary Bickett, Clark County Health Department, PO Box 9825, Vancouver, WA 98666-8825, (360) 397-8428 ext. 3031.

For alternate formats or to request auxiliary aids, contact the Clark County ADA Office: voice (360) 397-2025; TTY (360) 397-2445; e-mail; ADA@clark.wa.gov.

Thank you, Tanya!

Tanya Schaefer ends RA Board tenure

With regret we announce Tanya Schaefer stepped down from the RA Board last month. She had served as an at-large member of the Board since September 2002, including serving for several months as interim board treasurer. Prior to that time, she had been RA's contract administrator for two years. In those capacities Tanya has been an invaluable asset to our organization, volunteering for countless jobs and greatly improving the way we do business.

Just to mention some of the many ways Tanya helped RA:

She authored or co-authored many RA publications, including the "RA Packaging Survey," "Ten Ways to stop Junk Mail," and revisions of "Recycling at Events: A Guide to Reducing Waste at Any Event." She wrote countless newsletter articles and helped with newsletter review each month.

Tanya maintained Recycling Advocate's web site since coming to RA, including coordinating a redesign of the site, and we're pleased to report that she has offered to continue this volunteer service. She volunteered time and donated materials to initiate the year-end giving campaign, which has helped increase financial support for RA's education and outreach activity.

Tanya also created or revised many of our policies and procedures, including our bylaws.

As she looks back on her service, Tanya appreciated the opportunity to serve and looks forward to being a member volunteer: "I am forever enriched by the people I met who taught me so much, and the opportunities I was given to be creative, try new things, and use my skills for a cause I strongly believe in. I look forward to continuing to help with the web site and print publications. I encourage our members and friends to volunteer - there is something for everyone!"

RA Board members will greatly miss Tanya. Thank you, Tanya, and best of luck in your future endeavors!

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Betty Patton, At Large

Rhett Lawrence, At Large

Jeffrey White, Newsletter Editor

Trash audit, continued

There is some good news from the study. The amount of potentially hazardous materials disposed by all Clark County residents is relatively low – less than one percent of the total waste stream. The study estimates that 150,000 oil filters are disposed of in Clark County annually. To reduce this percentage even more, Clark County residents could bring oil filters and other household hazardous wastes to the transfer stations at no charge. Motor oil, antifreeze, and household batteries can be recycled at the curb in Clark County.

For more information about Clark County Solid Waste and Recycling or to obtain a copy of Clark County’s 2003 Waste Stream Analysis, please call (360) 397-6118 ext. 4352.

News In Brief

Portland and Recycling Bins

As of August 1, the City of Portland’s Office of Sustainable Development stopped purchasing replacement recycling bins for residents. Instead, haulers will replace the bins. The cost of replacing bins is included in the garbage collection rate. According to Bruce Walker of OSD, the change will allow the agency to devote more resources to promoting and improving recycling in Portland. For more information about the change, contact Bruce Walker at (503) 823-7772.

PET and HDPE Recycling Woes

Recycling Today and *Chemical and Engineering News* recently reported that plastic bottles continue to increase their market share in the beverage industry while collection of the bottles for recycling lags behind. The recycling rate of PET bottles stands at 19.8%. The rate for HDPE is 24.2%. The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR) announced in a press release an “urgent campaign to generate awareness, committed action and noteworthy results in reversing the waning North American plastic container recycling rate.” Robin Cotchan, executive director of APR noted that consumer apathy and the trend toward “single serve” bottles play a part in the trashing of recyclable plastic bottles. Additionally, exports to China are adding stress to the PET and HDPE markets in the U.S.

Contribute to ESOR at Your Workplace: It’s So Easy

...and it helps raise funds for RA

For thousands of Oregonians, the advent of fall means the changing of the leaves and cooler temperatures – and the arrival of charitable fundraising campaigns in the workplace. With the help of donors in the workplace, Earth Share of Oregon’s (ESOR’s) 68 nonprofit conservation organizations receive funds to protect human health, preserve habitat, and reduce the causes and effects of global warming.

Recycling Advocates is a proud member of ESOR. What does this mean to you? You and your fellow employees can choose to have contributions sent automatically to your favorite Oregon conservation groups, including RA. Since your contribution is spread out over the course of a year, the amount deducted from your paycheck is minimal, and all gifts are fully tax deductible. You can make a difference!

If your workplace is not currently involved in an ESOR giving program, establishing one is easy. ESOR will work with your employer to set up a program that meets your company’s needs.

Oregon’s natural beauty and livability is legendary. With your contribution to ESOR, you can help ensure that it stays that way. For more information, please contact Ron Shoals at ESOR: (503) 223-9015 or ron@earthshare-oregon.org, or visit www.earthshare-oregon.org

Help Wanted: Volunteer Your Graphic Design Skills

RA seeks a volunteer for doing layout for the new “State of Recycling Report.” For more information, call (503) 777-0909 or e-mail us at info@recyclingadvocates.org.

Question of the Month

Studies show that PET and HDPE bottles are ending up in trash cans as people drink beverages on the go.

What containers do you use to carry water and other beverages when you are on the move?

E-mail your responses to info@recyclingadvocates.org or call us at (503) 777-0909 and leave a message by September 20.

Do you have a question you would like us to publish? E-mail us your question at info@recyclingadvocates.org.



**RECYCLING ADVOCATES
Membership Application**

\$25 Advocate \$50 Friend \$100 Sustainer \$10-24 Living Lightly

*I’m giving a gift membership to the recipient below.**

Sign me up for Action Alerts *Contact me about volunteering for RA*

Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

E-mail _____ Send my newsletter by e-mail

*Your name, if this is a gift membership: _____

Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

As autumn approaches...give someone an RA membership!

MetroPaint Seeks Artisans

Waste paint as a medium for creative projects

Metro’s latex paint recycling program reblends 65 to 75 percent of the unwanted latex paint it collects. The rest, which is “gloppy,” spoiled, or otherwise unusable, is not processed for reuse. Currently, this waste paint is solidified and shipped off to a landfill. Any paint containing significant lead or mercury is disposed of as hazardous waste.

In a move toward zero waste, MetroPaint seeks artisans who would like to craft the unusable paint that is free of heavy metal contaminants into projects such as garden art.

From the national paint stewardship project, MetroPaint knows that waste liquid latex paint can be added to regular concrete mix. As an additive the paint supplies color and increases resistance to chlorides, and durability during freeze and thaw cycles.

The waste paint comes in various shades of gray. Artisans could tint it to darker colors for everything from sculpture to stepping stones.

Artisans wanting to experiment with the waste paint can receive 5-gallon buckets of it free of charge.

For more information, call Paulette Rossi of MetroPaint at (503) 797-1827 or by e-mail at rossip@metro.dst.or.us.

Recycling Advocates is proud to be...



Upcoming Events and Workshops

Recycling Advocates Board Meeting

Date: September 27, 2004.

Time: 7:30 p.m.

For location and information, call (503) 777-0909.

Profitable Sustainability: The Future of Business

Dates: September 26-29, 2004.

Location: Seattle, Westin Hotel.

The conference includes 12 forums and 36 workshops on a variety of sustainability and business topics. For more information, go to http://dev.prr-seattle.com/profsus/nl_8-5.pdf. The conference is organized by the Network for Business Innovation and Sustainability/NW.

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