

WASTE BYTES!

Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management and Recycling Program

Beware the Ides of March??



Not this time! March 15, 2010, is the day marked as the beginning for the newest member of the State Planning Office Waste Management and Recycling Team – Suzanne Duplissis. Suzanne is an Auburn native with a new degree in Public Administration from the University of Maine. As one of her final projects, she interned at the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments with Ferg Lea and Janet Cummings.

Suzanne picks up the assignment to help municipalities promote recycling and waste reduction in their communities. The entire SPO team will be at the Samoset this spring, and we can make personal introductions then. Don't be surprised though if you get a call, and it is someone from SPO asking if we can't drop by and have Suzanne meet you and see your facility. Please help us make Suzanne feel welcome.

First Task: Give Away Some Money

In the fall of 2009, the Recycling Program offered a \$500 matching grant to municipalities interested in promoting recycling in their communities with a deadline for completion of March 31st 2010. The grant program was begun by Jetta Antonakos but when she left, the task of managing the grants was divided among the remaining three office members.

As the newest member to the team, and Jetta's replacement, the very first task I was assigned was to take over management of the final stages of the grant application process. My colleagues eagerly handed the project over to me. With their guidance and the valuable help from Rhonda Carl, our office support person, I forged ahead.

Continued on Page 4

Upcoming MRRA Conference

Each of us here in Maine has our favorite annual events. The Super Bowl (at least the commercials and halftime show) is right up there on many lists. The World Series in Baseball and All Star Game used to be a national standard. A longer history might be found in the following of the Kentucky Derby (less for the Triple Crown) or the Indianapolis 500 (now NASCAR races). These are sports events though. First on each of our platters though should be the 17th Annual Conference of the Maine Resource Recovery Association. This year the gathering of the municipalities is scheduled for April 26 and 27 at the Samoset Resort and Hotel in Rockport overlooking Rockland Harbor. The Theme for this year is "Understanding Economic Impacts".

The familiar three track program will be featured once more. On day one the importance of the safety track should not be diminished by the setting. The all day long training will be capped by the crowning of the winner of the Recyclathon.

The remainder of the speakers and sessions will address our concerns over markets, materials, and the operation of facilities. Speakers this year include Susan Collins, Executive Director of the Container Recycling Institute as well as leaders in the Stewardship movement, including Sierra Fletcher from the Product Stewardship Institute, Todd Ellis from Call2Recycle, Elizabeth Bedard,

Continued on Page 3

Jetta heads West, to the Northwest

The Waste Bytes newsletter has had an unusual distribution from its beginning. Often, even news of the SPO Waste Management and Recycling Program has been hard to spread to our compatriots. This is also true of our interns and team members. You may, or may not have heard, that Jetta Antonakos gave her resignation last November to return to Washington State.

Jetta secured a position in Tacoma, Washington, working in an environment with which she is very familiar. While Jetta grew up in Maine and in the last five or six years spent about four years in Southern Maine, she did come to us enriched with much experience gained from working in Seattle, Washington. She has told us that she has retained ties to Maine and will keep in touch.

It is difficult to list Jetta's contributions to the program, the SPO, the MRRA, and the State of Maine, in the time that she was here. She certainly brought an expertise from the West that added a new perspective and showed a huge commitment toward recycling. In just a short time, she helped her town of Old Orchard Beach by serving on its Recycling Committee. Her oversight and guidance of The Maine Recycles campaign remains as a gift of creative genius from Jetta and her interns. We thank her for all that on that she worked so hard and wish her well.

*Each of Us Can Make a Difference**When was the last time that someone asked you "why do you do what you do"?*

The first time it happened was at the Common Ground Fair a few years ago. Students had an assignment to find a preselected booth and interview a person. As it happened, the students expected Victor Horton, Executive Director of the Maine Resource Recovery Association, and got me (Bruce White) instead. Last year, I noticed that they didn't ask specifically for Victor. Just recently, a call from a student came to the team asking if she could come to the SPO and ask about recycling in schools. We offered to go to her school, but the assignment was evidently clear.

Although the interview was about recycling in schools, it still was a bit unclear. Working for the public and with public, one is always identifying their audience and trying to help them realize that we are here to help. You don't think of yourself; however with this interview the approach was almost like having a job interview – after more than 25 years! Sooner or later the student's questions took a turn - - and made me think about my choice of work.

It's time for a reality check. Ask yourself what is it you do? Who is your audience, as a rule when you try to get the word out? See if your goals are consistent, whether general or specific? Then just when you feel like you would like to lecture - anticipate the next questions: How did you find yourself in this position, and why do you love doing what you do? Have you always worked for the environment or when did you know you wanted to work for something as important as sustainability?

Got your Bags, Maine? You Betch Ya!

There are twists to everything and recently I learned about the twist tied to at least one option of reusable bags. While I grew up more in a time when stores were just beginning to print their names on the paper bags, I was still partial to the canvas bags that most of my relatives seemed to live by. More than reuse or L.L. Bean, my assumption was that they were Maine.

The canvas bags seemed to fit. George C. Shaw had not begun their contribution to the shopping center craze – at least not in Portland. There was still an upper Congress Street Shaw's and a lower Congress Street Shaw's. The bus started at Monument Square and proceeded up to Congress Square before heading down State Street and over the Million Dollar Bridge. But I digress. The topic is bags.

By the time the "Got Bags Maine?" campaign was underway, I was already fully immersed in reusable bags. My timing seemed perfect with a personal collection of reusable bags being the focus of SPO's display at the Common Ground Fair. Of special pride were my Hallowell reuse bags – the book bag from the Hubbard Free Library, the rolled up bags from Boynton's Market, and the designer bags from Paper Kicks. Later, these were joined by a tiny pocket bag, a folding bag, and an insulated bag from Hannaford. As the collection grew past 50 or so for displays and demonstrations, the small bags found their way into my pockets, so they wouldn't be considered gifts on display tables.

Now then comes the conundrum. The style of the day goes to ski parkas. With pockets and lining and pockets in the lining, one understands why men don't need handbags or pocketbooks. Planted securely in the jacket are: a pair of gloves, earmuffs, appointment book, pocket secretary, three key rings of keys and five small shopping bags. Nevertheless, the bags are never forgotten in the car. In the stead, I finally reach the register and the checkout counter, throw open my coat, which must startle the clerk. I then start searching the folds for the bags, the bags within the bags, and the "origami" bags. In the meantime, the shy clerk has efficiently bagged almost everything in plastic before noticing the unfolded reuse bags on top of my groceries.

If that isn't enough, most clerks then seem to smile, apologize, and go about correcting the oversight of not using my reusable bags. It is only when I get back to my apartment that I realize that the bags in bags no longer have their little bags to store the big bags in. This produces two pony tails hanging out of one of my coat pockets. Always resourceful, I am ready to suggest that the stores sell little bag replacements or produce a space on a wall for old bags and lost little bags.

So, the moral of this story is that reusable shopping bags are another way we can reduce the amount of solid waste that is generated - - though 'be prepared' to tell clerks that you have them!!

Understanding Economic Impacts

Continued from page One

former Director of the Northeast Recycling Council, will return to Maine with her 'take' on plastics, based upon her new work with the Association of Post Consumer Plastic Recyclers. Ron Perkins, Ag Container Recycling Council, is another familiar face we welcome back to Maine and who will join the others for their view of the future.

It is almost too natural to Be Green

As businesses look to be recognized as 'Green', we shouldn't overlook the natural beauty of our State. License plates have naturally sported the nickname "Vacationland" for decades and we realize the importance of Tourism to the economy. Some places leave educational pamphlets in rooms for tourists. We hear how effective recycling is, even with vacationers, in the Maritime Provinces. In the last decade, it was only this year that the office received a call from the owner of a camp ground and wanted some advice on recycling. With as many camps and campgrounds in Maine, it seems like a natural area to increase recycling rates.

Continued on Page 3

It is almost too natural to Be Green

Continued from page Three

Even though we are talking about businesses, we are almost talking about the natural Green Businesses. The web site for our Baxter State Park sports a page of waste reduction tips that begins:

Forethought and a little preparation are key elements to a successful and enjoyable camping experience. This holds equally true for your trash as it does for your camping equip and supplies.

Maine is facing a solid waste crisis that does not exclude Baxter State Park. The problems of waste disposal persist even as we are on vacation. As a result, Mainers and visitors who use Baxter State Park are urged to reduce the amount of waste brought into the park.

This is waste reduction and Baxter like many parks and conservation areas have a “carry in carry out” policy.

Camps are natural settings for education and Maine is particularly fortunate to have many environmental camps providing educational settings with their experiences with nature. Camp Tanglewood, the Maine Conservation School, Chewonki, and the Land Lab in Auburn are just a few of the many retreats that provide instruction as well as phenomenal settings. Add to areas set aside like this the more than 200 camp grounds around Maine and no one will argue about Maine being the home of many Green businesses before we even investigate retail stores and industries.

A dumpster costing more than a \$1000 a month is ample incentive to reduce waste at the campground. The threat of unattended waste in the summer is almost like a garbage strike in the big cities. Much like the camps have though, there are opportunities to look at camp grounds for recycling much as we would find at events, institutions, or most any campus. →

First Task: Give Away Some Money

Continued from page One

Working on this project was a wonderful way to be introduced to some of the members of the communities we serve and hear what they were doing with the grant money for promoting recycling. I was impressed to hear some of the creative ways in which participants were able to stretch that \$500. Through their efforts, many thousands got the message to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost via brochures, newsletters, advertisements, trade fairs, websites, presentations and even a couple of transfer station signs. In addition to these tangible items was something, in my opinion, far more valuable. It was the time and energy of everyone involved. They have earned my utmost appreciation. My thanks to everyone who made this program successful! We'll be posting a number of the products and ideas to the website early this summer!!

Keep an eye out on our website for future grant offers.

www.mainerecycles.com

Suzanne Duplissis can be reached at
Suzanne.Duplissis@maine.gov or (207) 287-9074.

Given the area of most camp grounds and the rural setting there may also be the opportunity to add composting or find a licensed compost facility near by. It would be nice to think that one day, we could have public schools composting through the school year and allow the summer outdoor recreation businesses to pick up the slack in the summer.

There are natural problems associated with camping and the outdoors; however it also seems like the solutions are catching up with us all the time. In looking at the advantages of “single sort” or “zero sort” recycling, we have reached a time where we are making recycling not only easy and convenient but also successful – indoors and out.

17TH ANNUAL MAINE RECYCLING & SOLID WASTE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please copy this form for additional registrants. Please Print Clearly. Deadline: Friday April 16th. Thank you.

Name: _____
Title: _____
Company / Organization: _____
Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____@_____

Join Today!: If your organization is not already an MRRA member, you can join today, pay the reduced member registration fee, and your membership will continue through June 2011!

Please circle one if joining today: Dues: Individual \$30 Municipal \$40 Business \$100

Registration: Members Nonmembers

Please list any special meal requirements: _____

_____ One-day (**Circle one: Monday or Tuesday**) \$110.00 \$125.00

_____ Two-day \$210.00 \$225.00

_____ **I will attend the Monday Dinner* (We need an accurate head count!)**

_____ I will attend the Forklift Training*

_____ I will attend the DEP Universal Waste Training*

***ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Hotel Reservations: MRRA will **only** accept reservations for MRRA marketing members who will have room fees deducted from marketing revenue. All others please book your rooms directly with the Samoset Resort as soon as possible @ 800-341-1650. Mention "Maine Recycling & Solid Waste Conference." Room rates are \$109 + 7% tax single or double.

Arrival date: 04/_____/10 Departure Date: 04/_____/10 Total Nights: _____

Single Occupancy _____ \$110/night

Double Occupancy _____ \$ 55/night Sharing with: _____

Payment Options:

_____ Deduct from Revenue (Marketing Members ONLY)

_____ Check payable to MRRA enclosed. Thank you.

_____ Valid company/municipal purchase order attached.

_____ Discover _____ Mastercard _____ Visa Acct# _____

Expiration: _____ CCV _____

Signature: _____

Registrations are refundable only if canceled by the registration cutoff date of Friday, April 16th.

Mail registration form to: MRRA, PO Box 1838, Bangor, ME 04402-1838 or fax to 207-942-4017.

For more information contact John Albertini, Program Coordinator at 207-942-6772 or john.albertini@mrta.net