

WASTE BYTES!

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

The Big Picture – at Least with Us

As municipalities entered into discussions about single stream recycling options, there were a few concerns on the environmental side - with curbside pick up, there would be no sorting at the truck and less idling with only a single trip to the processing center? Why should this be important?

Within the Maine Green Campus Consortium, there have been many meetings and conversations focused on the carbon footprint of each institution. It all relates to climate change, which only periodically pops up in our recycling associations' meetings.

“Since the 1990 baseline for the Kyoto Protocol was established”, a recent report from Germany’s Institute for Renewable Energy notes, “CO2 emissions have increased 40%, including an almost 2% increase in 2008”. The big picture is in the world, and we as individuals can and do play a part.

In Maine the institutions of higher learning are taking a broad approach to sign on with the President’s Challenge to Save the Environment guided with the tools of the Clean Air / Cool Planet organization.



The exercise of forming goals and plans for each campus has given to an energy, motivation, and collaborative spirit to help Maine and the World. Action days are now recognized as Earth Day (April 22), 350 (October 24) and MRW (November 8 -15).

A few cities are recognized for their beautiful city programs. News releases have brought LEED construction to our attention by both institutions and governments.

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Once Upon a Time in Maine: A Single Sort Study

As the days close on September, so do the numbers count down on the stay of our interns. This year, the SPO Waste Management and Recycling Program lucked out again. Sadie Kitchen from Yarmouth joined the “team” for the summer with a list of things that she would like to research and undertake for us. Lurking in the attic though were thoughts of a need to take a look at the impact of single stream or single sort recycling. Sadie was game and the ambitious polishing of the crystal ball was started.

The SPO has been indeed fortunate with the interns that we have received in recent years. This was no exception. Once more, the SPO was looking for a command performance by a young student. Following Nick’s challenge last year, Sadie was being singled out this year to perpetuate the need for scholarly reflections. The selection of communities, the interview of participants, and the actual visits seemed to go off like clockwork. Sadie was writing before the month of August was on us. Maybe the rain had its added benefits of letting budding writers generate like nothing before.

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Cool Role – Continued from Page 1

The new Hannaford store in Augusta brings this attention toward environmental issues and willingness to educate the public formally into ‘Green’ businesses in Maine; however more has to be done - openly done.



The new Hannaford store in Augusta is the first LEED grocery store in the country and brings back the old term “Super Market”. Like all LEED buildings, they not only are but they teach.

The EPA has webinars about the subject for their Green initiatives, which I generally only hear about on their broadcasts. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection is a charter member of the MGCC; however they are viewed in a regulatory role and always seeking remedial action.

“Out of sight/out of mind” is the peaceful approach of the ostrich burying their head in the sand hiding from the World and the DEP and would say that whatever is the problem, it just isn’t my problem. The poet Wordsworth said: “The world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: Little we see in Nature that is ours.” Someone in a reuse center asked me not too long ago how they could go about being a Green business. I told them not to worry about – they were indeed a Green business and those that used them recognized it. Maybe we do have to be a little more aware of the world around us though and never stop teaching.



MRRA Meets on the Coast

Picture a wraparound porch on a villa overlooking a picturesque harbor on the coast of Maine. The rocking chairs await the faithful of the Maine Resource Recovery Association on September 21st.

If you notice anyone on the board rocking to a different tune from your humming, this would be your chance to vote for a fresh perspective or someone to rock at your pace – This is the Annual Meeting and Workshop of the MRRA!

Point Lookout was a retreat for the MBNA. Now great minds will face other decisions when the quarterly meeting arrives this year. This will especially be a meeting to network and find out what and how municipalities are doing. There should be space for relaxing retreats within this retreat so come join the gathering of the clans or just rock with a few in hopes that answers and inspirations will come to you. Registration materials and information can be found at

http://www.mrra.net/admin/assets/2009_Annual_Meeting.pdf.



Once Upon a Time in Maine
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A lot of questions met this 'single sort' review. While exciting, this strategy for recycling was totally new to Recycling in Maine. Other parts of New England had Material Recovery Facilities; however the ecomaine venture in Portland is fairly new to us.

We invite you to visit with Sam Morris at the MRRRA Annual meeting to hear how Sadie's efforts were interpreted. Did it answer such questions, as:

- ❖ Despite the prescription for the most effective single sort recycling, how many communities ventured into the new system by only adapting old ways?
- ❖ Did anyone give thought to the difficulty it would be to switch back from single stream?
- ❖ Was there added cost to changing to single sort in a closer partnership with the regional waste system - ecomaine?
- ❖ Was the major strategy of the role players presenting the single sort system increasing the number of accounts rather than raising recycling rates?
- ❖ What goals were set as it appeared to be contentment in achieving a 15% increase in the recycling rate in almost every situation?
- ❖ Did everyone appreciate that the Introduction of single sort recycling proved to be a major public relation item for drawing attention to recycling and might have dwarfed advertising campaigns to raise public awareness?
- ❖ Was it expected that Pay per bag or pay as you throw strategies would be a new focus of interest to maximize several single stream efforts?
- ❖ Was there an education campaign planned for communities to the importance and value of clean materials?
- ❖ Was it a surprise when transportation did not appear to be the barrier (outside of environmental benefits) that many had originally thought with single sort?



Maine Recycles Week
Loyal Sponsors and Hard Times

It's nice to know that you have friends! The Maine Recycles Week Posters are being prepared for the printers and the 'last call' has been issued for potential sponsors. Without a question, the economy this year has been the hardest that each of us has experienced recently. With individuals laid off from work and businesses fighting the difficult times, we expected that finding sponsors would be a challenge. When our sponsors step up at any level or even when they talk, apologize, or ask not to be forgotten next year, we know that we have a special following and a more than worthwhile mission that is understood by many. We would like to thank our sponsors, past and present, and ask each reader of Waste Bytes to show preference to these wonderful concerns by purchasing their products and services.

Maine Recycles Week Sponsors

Maine Resource Recovery Association	Boralex
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Waste Management	Poland Spring Bottling Company
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Lewiston Sun Journal	Mid-Maine Waste Action Corp.
Office Max	Dragon Cement Products
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Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram	

“Metal Recycling” – It Kind of Has a Ring to It!

About a year ago, in our “Golden Era of Trash”, one would pick up any of the daily papers and check the local crime blotter to find out where the metal magnet hit most recently. With jobs turning, the metal from the scrap heap meant that there was a fortune in “dem thar hills”. A softball game could have been called on account of darkness after they had discovered that the wire had been stolen from the park lights. Take it up a notch and the street lights darkened along a large city street became a lesson for all that underground wiring doesn’t always pay – unless it paid the crooks.



With the reality check of materials, one material returns to the front page - we look for car sales to rebound from car rebates and ‘cash for clunkers’. At *One Steel*, their yard foreman, John Short, was quoted in the Portland Press Herald: “It’s kind of depressing, actually, because some of them are really nice vehicles – a lot of them are better than the vehicles our employees are driving, it’s been a big boost for us, business-wise.” This time it is legal, as the gas guzzlers are earning their weight in metal prices. The used car business now is hurting as a trade-in now is really a recycling game where one has to wait and see as to what their old car comes back. Reuse has always been a hard sell. Meanwhile it is interesting to watch the price of metal on the market. As with other materials, we can see improvements.

Maine Recycles Week 2009 Posters Soon to Be Available

In the first couple of weeks in September, the Maine Recycles Week poster is distributed to the municipal offices and schools throughout Maine. The posters will once more be at Common Ground Fair and the Maine Municipal Association fall meeting at the Augusta Civic Center.



The 2009 Calendar cover by Livermore Falls High School Student.
The 2009 Maine Recycles Calendar cover adorns this year’s Maine Recycles Week poster.

Additional copies of the poster can be ordered on the MRW 2009 web site, attached to the Maine Waste Management and Recycling Program of the State Planning Office. We invite you to check our web site for this year’s sponsors and the availability of the posters. Let us make this year’s Maine Recycles Week the best ever. Remember that MRW is not about competition with other students and communities but it is rather about Recycling - doing the best we can to raise the public awareness toward recycling and working together to have recycling benefit each and everyone of us.

Posters can be ordered on the State Planning Office’s Waste Management and Recycling Program web site, www.recyclemaine.com or contacting Bruce White at (207) 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov.

**Here’s wishing everyone an exciting school year and a great
Maine Recycles Week 2009
November 8 to 15**

Reusable Plastic Bottles – Again!

In May, Waste Bytes was promoting the Reuse Centers when the story kind of wandered – no, it did wander to thoughts of tap water versus bottled and metal versus plastic. Recently the discussion came back and this time it was concerning the safety of plastic from leaching of particular hormone inhibitors. The story then continues and here is another reply to whether or not plastic water bottles are safe.

The question was first asked about reusing bottled water bottles. These bottles are made from #1, PET, and are made for a single use as with soda and almost everything. Number 1 will leach when subjected to heat such as when even exposed to the sun; however they are not the problem source that you were asking about. In some foreign countries, there are some containers made with thicker plastic and meant to be reused. We will continue to tell people to turn in our bottles for a deposit and you don't have to worry about bacteria and proper cleaning that is a worry to me with our active people.

We used to teach transfer station operators and attendants that they could take anything with a neck, which normally would be plastics #1 or #2. Because of the redemption law in Maine, drinking bottles (#1) had the value of the deposit, so they would be collecting only #2. Number 2, HDPE, is high density plastic that we normally associate with milk bottles and jugs in a natural form or laundry detergent as colored. Again it is meant usually for single use and milk jugs specifically for the characteristic to breathe. Laundry bottles present enough of a problem for sterilization that I doubt that it is even considered for reuse (A milk bottle is not very chic as a water bottle).

Number 3 plastic has always been associated to some with problematic uses. You will find it with STP engine treatment, shampoo, and some chemical products. We wouldn't even enter these into this discussion normally.

At #4 plastic, you have a low density polyethylene, or at #5 you are entering into the polystyrene arena - you are fine; however you can see that you aren't looking into water containers right now. While they may be safe as with Styrofoam® cups, they are not recyclable but a system may pop up to make it work though

Number 6 is more packing material, so I will drop that from our discussion.

Number 7 is our problem. With seven plastic resin categories, this is the “all other”. In many cases, it is the hard plastic that gets an additive for its use. A computer may not even get the number because of the fire retardant that has been added. It may be corn plastic or a biodegradable plastic and argued by some as to whether it is a plastic. It may also have BPA added and that may leach.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a xenoestrogen, a known endocrine disrupter. BPA is the problem. The response is that when they were made it, it was a good use for the science known at that time. Now that there has been an issue identified with BPA, we need to develop products without the BPA.

If reusable bottles are made out of plastic resin types 2, 4, or 5, the bottle should be safe. Better to play it safe and remember to clean whatever bottle you are using and use any bottle properly. There are enough varieties available, so pick something you like that is safe. Be sure to clean it regularly and fill it properly.

Register now for the MRRA Annual Meeting!

Composting - DEP and SPO will discuss new Trends in composting and answer troubleshooting questions

Within the last decade, composting has not only been identified in the Waste Management Hierarchy but has taken a full step forward. Composting is now firmly in people's backyards, municipal programs, commercial operations as well as pilot projects, and taught at the Maine Compost School.

What composting issues could possibly be discussed at an MRRA annual meeting?

1. With such a rainy summer, is compost useful in rice paddies or cranberry bogs?
2. If you have flies around the compost pile, is the pile sufficiently aerated?
3. When a cow carcass is composted, is it homogenized or pasteurized compost?

Meet us at the MRRA Annual meeting and learn more about composting or ask the important questions! See you there.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: PAUL

MAINERS URGED TO SIGN UP FOR FREE DISPOSAL OF BANNED, UNUSABLE PESTICIDES

Hundreds of Maine citizens live unaware of a quiet crisis lurking in or near their homes. In barns, basements, sheds, or garages throughout the state reside tons of banned and unusable pesticides: old chemicals with infamous names like DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5 -T, and chlordane.

Often, new owners of older homes or farms discover they have inherited hazardous waste. When they do, citizens face a dilemma: hire an expensive hazardous waste disposal service or dump the chemicals illegally, inviting harm to the environment and public health.

Fortunately, there's a third option that's both legal and responsible. Even better, it's free, simply by contacting the Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC). This fall, the state regulatory agency will dispose of banned pesticides or pesticides that have become caked, frozen, or otherwise rendered unusable. And, again, there is no cost to homeowners.

"We urge people holding these chemicals to contact us immediately to register," says Paul Schlein, BPC Public Information Officer. "There will be four sites throughout the state where folks will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides." The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the US EPA where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

"While offering free obsolete pesticide disposal is expensive for us," notes Schlein, "it's a bargain, compared to the cost of cleaning up contaminated soil or water. However, it's worth noting that future funding is not guaranteed, so be sure to take advantage of this year's collection while you can."

Preregistration is required by September 25, 2009. To register, find out collection dates and locations, and learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to the BPC Web site at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org. Or, call the BPC at 287-2731.

The Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) is the lead state agency for pesticide regulation. It is an administrative unit of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources with policy decisions made by a seven-member, public board. The BPC is creator of "YardScaping," a statewide program that recognizes the connection between backyards and watersheds, and calls for Maine citizens to make lawn care choices that don't compromise the environment or the beauty of their lawn.