

WASTE BYTES!

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



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Tourism claims that we can identify a successful summer by the amount of trash that is collected. May each of you at the transfer stations have a hectic but safe summer and hopefully we will see you at the fall meeting of MRRA.



The 16th MRRA Spring Conference Concludes with the 25th Anniversary

The Maine Resource Recovery Association held its 16th Annual Spring Conference at the Bar Harbor Club on May 4th and 5th. All five of the State Planning Office recycling staff attended the meeting which focused on sustainability along with sessions addressing the nuts and bolts issues, and items such as safety and reporting requirements. About 180 attendees took advantage of beautiful weather on Monday in the preseason setting.

Featured guest speakers were: Jerry Powell, editor of Resource Recycling magazine who addressed the crash in the market and what adjustments have been made; Brenda Platt, with the Waste to Wealth & Sustainable Plastics Program at the Institute for Local Self Reliance; and James Bohlig of Casella Renewables. The three each did their part to reinforce a drive toward zero waste.

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News from Augusta



CFLs Plugged into Maine

Those ‘curlicue’ lamps - CFLs - have had some light shed on them – and responsibility defined for their ‘end of life’ management.

The Maine State Legislature recently passed L.D. 973. This is the country’s first extended producer responsibility bill for compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. [LD 973](#) requires CFL manufacturers to set up - and pay for - a recycling program for the mercury-containing light bulbs, as well as setting mercury limiting standards for the CFLs. Manufacturers of the new lamps will be responsible for setting up convenient drop-off sites for consumers. The industry will also develop the education and outreach campaigns for the public. Mercury limits begin January 1, 2010, and the recycling programs one year later.



Waste Bytes will take a look at a review of the Legislative session in the next newsletter, as the Legislature is expected to adjourn somewhere around June 12, 2009.

Reusable Bottles Lined Up

This article at one time was planned to be on our Maine-based reuse centers. Since the green zones have appeared, I will often wander toward coffee cups or reusable water bottles. In picking up display materials for the MRRRA conference and a booth that the MRRRA had kindly supplied for the reuse centers, I happened upon Diane Doe in the middle of preparation for one of the Auburn SHARECenter’s annual yard sales. Our meeting materialized right in the middle of piles of reuse bottles. What better example would there be for reuse than for the modern day canteen or water bottle?

On Earth Day this year, the SPO was invited to set up a display at Colby College. In the Maine Green Campus Consortium, there had been some discussion about bottles and preferences for metal, plastic, or what-have-you, reusable bottles. What amazed me most however was a comment from the head of their food services. When asked what he wanted to change or make ‘green’ next, he replied ‘something about water bottles’. “Do you know how many cases of bottled water it takes to supply a football team – even on the road?” he asked. This sent my mind reeling. There are maybe sixty to eighty men on a team? What does this do to your carbon footprint?

Years ago, we were made aware about cautions and suspicions of keeping number 1 plastic (PET) bottles in hot vehicles or reusing them in other countries. Having come full circle, some found themselves back liking reusable bottles and wondering about the preference of bottled water over tap water. This notion also acknowledged that water was a naturally wonderful resource and maybe the very best drink for each of us.

In looking at the literature, one discovers that bottled water is regulated by the FDA. It is comforting to note that Maine’s standards often surpass the federal requirements.

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Reusable Bottles Continued from Page 2

So it is fair to toast or thank our lucky stars to be able to have a true appreciation of our water supplies.

Now back to our reusable resource centers and our individual preferences for a reusable water bottle.

A search of the literature confirmed that reuse bottles can be important for promoting Reuse. The abundance of reuse bottles, sport bottles, and canteens suggests that there are numerous styles and shapes that each efficiently and effectively promotes reuse and good health!

Why not select a bottle to fit you from the green zone of a reuse center near you?

***MARRA Conference (Continued from page 1)***

The facilities provided an enjoyable setting for the meals provided at the conference (The food waste from the conference was collected for composting at the Sandy River Recycling Association's municipal facility in Farmington.) and networking with those who made the pilgrimage for this year's event. With representatives from Eliot to Aroostook County and Oxford to Matinicus Island, one of the high points (in our opinion) was the awarding of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Sam Morris of the State Planning Office. Now with summer and the tourist season approaching, the attendants and managers return to their facilities hopefully energized for the months ahead.

How Well Do You Know Your Community?

Just recently, a member of a local recycling committee called and asked if municipalities were required to periodically survey their patrons at the transfer station. Considering the statutes, the immediate answer seemed to be "no"; however the better that you know your community the easier it is to serve them. Communication and education do have to be on-going, and certainly surveys are useful form of communication and they can be educational as well.

A short time later, I was corrected. It was pointed out that communities are required to show the extent of their services. In order to get credits for composting for instance, the most common method of documenting composting at home is to do a survey and simply ask about composting.

We would like to thank the caller for the inquiry. It might be a good idea to ask for an annual survey or at least suggest it. Recently a student in Cape Elizabeth had a project to determine the impact on the environment of curbside collection versus station drop-off. With so much attention lately to our carbon footprints and justifying expenses, it may not be a bad idea to make evaluations such as surveys a regular part of the operation or tasks assigned to our recycling committees or school environmental clubs.

We would like to thank the Town of Litchfield for sharing their survey instrument with us. You might try it out and please share your results with us.

May 2009 Transfer Station Survey

1. How often do you visit the Transfer Station?

- 1. Once a week
- 2. Twice a week
- 3. Once a month
- 4. Twice a month
- 5. Every other month
- 6. Quarterly
- 5. Twice a year
- 6. Once a year

2. How far do you live from the transfer station? Best estimate is _____ miles
Or your address _____

3. Vehicle type?

- 1. Car
- 2. Pickup Truck
- 3. Trailer (Size _____)
- 4. Other _____

4. How many are in your family? _____

5. When you visit the Transfer Station do you (please check one of the following)?

- 1. recycling
- 2. drop off bulky house hold items
- 3. drop off brush piles
- 4. visit the Swap shop
- 5. pick dumpster
- 6. catch up on the local news
- 7. Other _____

6. If applicable, what do you recycle? How much could be "part of a grocery bag or whole bag.", or number of items or the specific amount, if you know it. By how often, we want to know weekly, monthly, every three months or?

Item	How much	How often
Single Stream	_____	_____
Scrap Metal / White goods	_____	_____
Bulky Items	_____	_____
Mercury Items	_____	_____
Batteries	_____	_____
Fluorescent Lamps	_____	_____
Universal Wastes	_____	_____
Waste Oil	_____	_____
Waste Antifreeze	_____	_____
Tires	_____	_____
Refrigerated Units	_____	_____
Drop for Swap Shop	_____	_____

7. Currently we accept the following at the transfer station: tires (fee), refrigerators (fee for CFC removal), used oil, metal, oversized furniture. Would you like to add more materials? _____

8. How should we pay for these services? user fees property taxes

9. If you don't recycle, can you tell us why? _____

10. How many bags of garbage do you dispose each month? 1 to 4 5 to 9 more than 9

11. How do you dispose of it? curbside dumpster

12. Who is your current waste hauler? _____

13. Do you like the current curbside collection system using private haulers? yes no

14. Currently the transfer station is open Saturday and Sunday. Would you be willing to pay to have it open more often?
 no change 1 day/week 2 days/week 3 days/week other _____

15. Do you compost? yes no If yes, what materials? _____

16. Are you interested in learning how to compost leaves and food waste and getting a backyard composter at a reduced cost (\$10-\$20):
 yes no

17. What do you like most about the T.S.? _____

18. What do you like least? _____

19. Do you have some suggestions for improving waste management in Our Town? _____