

Columbia River Gorge Master Recyclers

JUNE 2012 EDITION

TRI-COUNTY HAZARDOUS WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM

Upcoming Events:

- **Green Drinks**—a monthly networking event for professionals, community leaders and residents interested in sustainability issues. **Tuesday, June 12th, 6pm-7:30** at the Gorge Pavilion in the Cascade Locks Marine Park featuring a presentation on both electric vehicles and solar industry with Andy Kerr, Executive Director of Solar Oregon leading the discussion. The Electric Vehicle Association will bring in a sampling of electric vehicles and the HRVHS Electric Race Team will demonstrate their vehicle.
- **Wednesday, June 13th at 2pm** Seth Tibbott, president of Turtle Island Foods, (famous for their Tofurky) will lead us in a sustainability tour of their new facility and its' building progress and plans. Meet near Waterfront Park in HR. Look for TriCounty HW&RP Prius!
- **Farmers' Markets** that need Master Recycler Representation:
 - 1) **Thursdays from 4pm-7pm** at the HR Middle School until Nov. 15
 - 2) **Saturdays, HR News Parking Lot on State Street, 9am-3pm** until September 24th,
 - 3) **Wednesdays** at The Dalles City Park on Union Street, **4pm-7pm** from June 13th-September 26th,
 - 4) **Saturdays**, at The Dalles City Park on Union Street, **9am-1pm** until October 13th.
- **Check out the rest of the scheduled Farmers' Markets in the area!**



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Tri-County Hazardous Waste and Recycling Program is part of the North Central Public Health District.

The Future of Garbage by David Skakel

Historically, efforts to reduce negative effects relating to our consumption have focused primarily downstream (recycling). That's changing towards a more holistic life cycle approach coined 'materials management'. As important as recycling is, research tells us that the lion's share of harmful impacts to resources and the environment occurs upstream during extraction and production when making our 'stuff', versus end-of-life impacts.

By example, if the United States recycled and composted 100% of our generated waste, our greenhouse gas emissions would decrease by just 6%. Don't get me wrong. Recycling is quite important, especially as we move to a future where we can't afford to waste (ex., *rare earth metals*). Yet by building upon the familiar concept of 'reduce, reuse, recycle', the emerging 'Materials Management' approach systemically seeks to reduce materials use and their related environmental impacts over their entire life cycle of products and packaging, starting with extraction of natural resources and product design and ending with decisions about recycling or disposal. This approach changes how we think about resource protection and recognizes the full impacts of what we consume.

How will change beckon, if the bulk of solutions are upstream and out of reach of our consumer influence? I suggest that the three main upstream drivers for change are: life cycle comparison, policy and innovation.

Life cycle analysis is a technique that assesses environmental impacts associated with all the stages of a product's life from-cradle-to-grave (i.e., from raw material extraction through materials processing, manufacture, distribution, use, repair, maintenance, and disposal or recycling). Eventually, this analysis may result in labeling on products that goes beyond size, ingredients, and nutritional content to inform consumers about levels of resources, energy and toxicity used in making that product. Currently though, life cycle comparison is most effectively providing brand owners with information that they use to reduce environmental impacts. Recently, large retailers have started using a form of life cycle analysis (environmental scorecards) to compare specific products of competing suppliers. The State of Oregon has also commissioned several life cycle analyses, looking at comparative impacts of e-commerce packaging, drinking water, residential housing, and a carbon footprint of all Oregon consumption.

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... and in its supplier scorecard



Example of Walmart scorecard to compare specific products of competing suppliers.

Garbage continued...

On the policy side, get acquainted with the terms ‘product stewardship’ and ‘extended producer responsibility’. Product stewardship refers to a broad umbrella of actions where producers minimize harmful impacts across the entire life of their product. Extended producer responsibility is a specific application of product stewardship, where state or federal laws shift responsibility and/or cost of end-of-life management of goods and hazardous materials away from local governments towards the designers and manufacturers.

Here in Oregon, we already enjoy the benefits of extended producer responsibility for deposit containers, paint, and electronics. Yet if we look to trends in other states, and Canada and the European Union (E.U.), our future is likely to include end-of-life management plans that aspire to re-loop most all of the remaining ‘waste’ (appliances, tires, carpet, mattresses, construction and demolition materials, paper and packaging, batteries, plastics, pharmaceuticals, and hazardous waste).

What’s left? Looking upstream, other product stewardship initiatives could lead to healthier design and production. And looking at all wastes, the next term to get familiar with is “zero waste”. Sounds laughable, except it’s already happening elsewhere. An average of 32

countries of the E.U. (European Union) shows Europe disposes 38% of its waste in landfills, recycles 24%, incinerates 20%, and composts 18%. A closer look reveals that the poorer countries generate much less waste per person, but tend to recycle less too (Bulgaria landfills 100%). Inversely, six of the richer countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden Austria, and Switzerland) generate more per capita waste, yet they all send less than 1% to landfills. Oregon is right in the middle of that range of possibilities.

On the technology side, here are two local examples: Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber just signed a unique order to promote ‘green chemistry’, which strategizes to avoid toxic and poisonous substances from ever getting into our communities, by incentivizing manufacturers to make less harmful chemicals in the first place. Secondly, a company here in Oregon ([Agilyx](#)) has developed a process to distill any petroleum-based plastic (#1-7) back into crude petroleum. Agilyx then ships that waste-derived crude to a domestic refinery in Tacoma. They are currently breaking ground on a facility in Portland that will process 40 tons per day of difficult-to-recycle waste plastics (caps, lids, films, trays and tubs, toys and basically all things plastic...).

Oregon Department of Environ-

mental Quality (DEQ) is developing a road map for the future of our ‘stuff’. I highly recommend you read the background papers for their *2050 Vision for Materials Management in Oregon*, which offers definitions, reports and literature reviews spanning from upstream production to end of life recovery, as well as summarized and detailed versions of what *Sustainable Materials Management* is and how to get from here to there. DEQ plans to release a draft of its *2050 Vision* by early July, giving the public an opportunity to weigh in this summer on the future of materials (including waste) management policy and programs in Oregon. Check the project web page at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/materialsmgmtplan.htm>, or click on the green envelope in the upper left corner to sign up for periodic e-mail updates about the Vision project.

Meanwhile, I recommend yet another new term “conscious consumption” (also known as ‘thoughtful consumption’) which describes ethical decision making by shoppers. Conscious consumption challenges us to delve deeper into the meaning of ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ by further asking “Where does it come from? How is it used? Where will it end up?”

FLOWERS AND FRUITS IN THE GORGE—OH, MY!!!!



Another Incredible Waste Audit...

This Time at Westside Elementary



The wind was blowing that day in May, (May 9th) and it was almost automatic that the Waste Audit be moved in doors to the edge of the cafeteria. We had to be finished by lunch!!! Theo Parkinson, (parent volunteer extraordinaire) with the assistance of Tri-County Hazardous Waste and Recycling Program plus several Master Recyclers, moved quickly to train the teams of “student helpers” and to get the Audit underway. By mid-morning, all the classes in the school had filed by to view the Waste Audit and over 25 student helpers had finished the sorting, the weighing and the recording of the data.

The results will be presented to the Student Council and the school’s Green Team and hopefully recommendations will be made to reduce the waste in the school. Many questions still remain but one thing is for sure: Westside students want to reduce their waste and they see things they can personally do to be a part of the solution, not the problem! A special thanks to Master Recycler Lisa Knapp for all her extra assistance.



There was lots of Audit activity: sorting, questioning, observing. Notice the 2 tarps, the student helpers, the teachers with their classes and even Master Recyclers!



Theo Parkinson, the parent volunteer that initiated the audit shows students how many plastic straws were used in one day. **“Do we need to use straws? she asks”**



Student helpers were incredible!

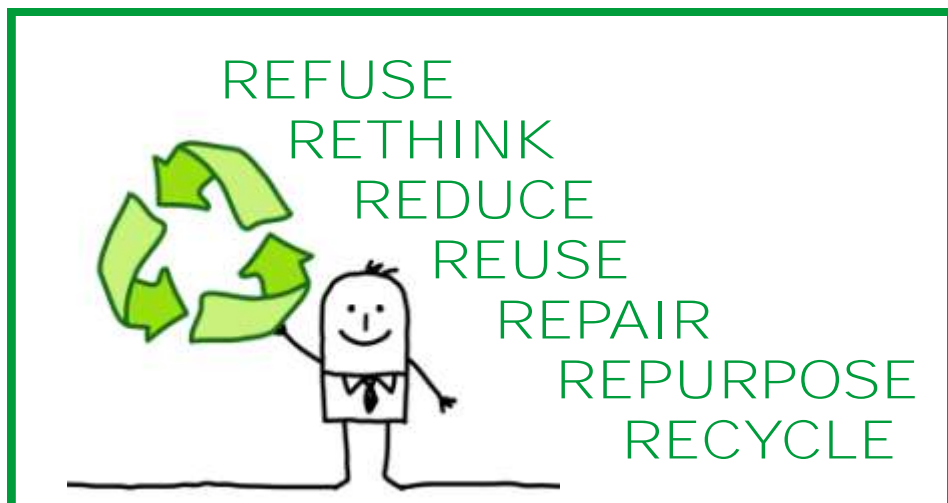
Anatomy of a Waste Audit

Waste Audit equipment (tarps, gloves, waste category signs, digital scale, plastic bags and containers for weighing waste) is available to borrow from the Tri-County Hazardous Waste and Recycling Program.

It is always a good idea to “start” with a Waste Audit so that a school or business or home can see what they have to start with. How can they improve on different waste reduction decisions? What is possible? What is realistic? Getting a Green Team started that can help make some of those important decisions is advisable and can be very rewarding.



“It does NOT smell that bad!! You just think it should stink!” Karen says to these little QTs.



Tabling for the Master Recycler Program

You Can Do It! Easy as 1-2-3!



1 It starts with a handy-dandy rolly bag, filled with brochures to display, table cloth, a banner, information sign-up sheets, and event bungee cords as well as cords to attach the table cloth and banner, even some Preserveware fit into the rolly bag.



2 Next, add a fold-up table. We have one you can borrow.



3 Put on the table cloth and banner (secured with bungee cords), set out the brochures, and put on your smile. You're all set and ready to go.

Yes, even Delia Skakel, David's 8 year old daughter, can handle the "rolly bag" for tabling at the Farmers' Markets. And, you don't need to try and sell our kitchen compost pails and Earth Machines. (But, you can if you want!)



Delia Skakel, tired after ballet practice, was willing to show how easy it is to roll in that supply bag!

It is important that Master Recyclers have a presence at the Farmers' Markets, so we can meet people where they are at to answer questions, inform, help and let people know of any changes in recycling: **Plastic lids and caps are OK to leave on recyclable plastic containers but aseptic and gable-top containers as well as clear clamshells are not OK in curbside blue bins.**

TriCounty HW&R Program will get the tabling supplies all ready for you and, in some cases, can even deliver them to you!!! You can take along your Master Recycler Handbook. There is a clipboard form to get people's e-mail, so we can respond to those hard-to-answer questions.

It can be lots of fun!! Check out the link, [Farmers' Markets](#), for schedules. **Call up another Master Recycler to join in on the fun.** I must admit, it is more fun with 2! Check out past newsletters for pictures of your fellow Master Recyclers tabling and see what they thought.



Earth Machine parts nestle in themselves, so they don't take up as much room as one would think. But, it's important to note that you do not have to sell them. Refer interested people to the Hood River or The Dalles transfer stations where they are for sale 6 days/wk.



You just never know who you might meet while tabling! Senator Ron Wyden poses for a picture with me at the first Farmers' Market of the season in The Dalles, Saturday, June 2.



Our newly labeled "kitchen compost pail" sells for \$7 now. We sell them when we are at

Farmer's Markets and events, but they are also available at the transfer stations.



Get "Social" and "Digital" with Tri-County!

By Heather Alexander

After several months of planning and visioning, Tri-County is now social and digital. As of May 10th, you have been able to find the Tri-County Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program on Facebook. I encourage all of you to visit our page, <http://www.facebook.com/TriCountyRecycle> and recommend it to friends, if you haven't already. Once we get 30 people to "like" our page, it will be much more public (that's the way Facebook works for business/organization pages). We will be posting information and thought-provoking questions, funny pictures, and links to great articles several times a week. I invite you to share your comments and any information you find helpful!



Just as our staff is shrinking due to budgets, we are amping up our outreach and communication efforts through digital and social media, including a

new, more engaging website which includes: a new blog, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and e-newsletters. These opportunities will help us to reach our community where they are, in a way that speaks to them today and can be easily shared. Likewise, our shift towards leveraging social media allows us to adapt to reduced staffing by enhancing dialogue with our community in more efficient and cost-effective ways.

Check out our new website on Wednesday, June 13th at our same web address, www.tricountyrecycle.com. This site sports a new look, an easier-to-navigate menu and up-to-date content.

Do you enjoy writing? Do you have a personable and easy writing style? We would love to have your help as Guest Bloggers on the Tri-County Blog, which should be up-and-running by July 1. There are so many topics to cover, from hidden hazardous materials in the home, to re-use secrets, to insights on new legislation. The spectrum is broad. If you are interested in submitting an article/s for consideration, please email it as a Word document to Heather at

heathera@co.wasco.or.us. Please include a brief bio of 3-4 sentences, and a .jpg photo of yourself. Feel free to include your favorite pet or your bicycle or something else about your life. Make it personal. If we choose to use your article in the blog, we will include your bio and photo.

Tips for a good blog:

- Think of questions you have about recycling, sustainability, hazardous materials, waste. Pick a question and answer it in your blog. You're likely not the only person who has ever had that question!
- Include a photo/photos that relates to and brings interest to your blog.
- Be passionate about your topic.
- Be personable.
- Be to the point.
- If it's a technical topic, put in easy every-day terms for folks.
- Be accurate.

If you have any questions or ideas about the blog, Tri-County's new social media campaign, or any other communication tools, give us a call or shoot us an email.

Are You Keeping Up with Cynthia's Repurposing Challenge?

What to do with old intertubes from bicycle tires? How about old cassette or VHS tapes?

What about the tires themselves? And those old malt bags from the breweries....what can they become? Find out some super creative ideas on how to "re-purpose" material that was being thrown away from Cynthia Caudill's blog at:

<http://rethinkcrafts.blogspot.com/p/repurposing-challenge-2012.html>

It is so amazing all the ways Cynthia is using material that was destined for the landfill. Each month she challenges us

to help create new ways to re-use and "up-cycle" different resources from our community. At the end of the month, she displays the "new" product at the Art Center in Hood River. Many of the items were re-purposed by Cynthia personally. School groups have been involved, as well.

With just a little bit of research on Cynthia's blog, you can get involved. Check out the blog's archives. June is repurposing Sustain clay plaster and wall pigment packaging. Just do it!!



Cynthia's Display Table at First Friday at HR Art Center showing creative uses for inner-tubes and tires

Napkin-Making Party A Success

It was a small group of Master Recyclers but a HUGE success!! I actually mastered 2 different napkins techniques and now my home collection is increasing instead decreasing. I now know to look for gently-used absorbent cloth at the second-hand stores.

Sandy Bisset and Cynthia Caudill were generous to share their time, material, talent and sewing machine or surger. Sandy gave us "homework" so with her donated material, Master Recycler gathering can have their own cloth napkins...when we get our homework completed! Thank you, Cynthia and Sandy!!



Sandy Bisset, Master Recycler from Class 4, shares directions for the "mitered corner" napkin technique that she likes to use.



Cynthia Caudill, Master Recycler from Class 1, shares the surged edge technique that she uses for napkins or almost anything.

KUDOS TO YOU

Thank you for all you do to help change minds and lifestyles in our community! You are reaching out to businesses, individuals, schools, friends, neighbors, and organizations to help them "walk more softly" on the earth. Keep up the good work and keep us posted on how we might help!

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Do you have ideas for our next Master Recycler Newsletter? We need your input and your creativity. Please contact Karen Murray.

Tip of the Month

- Use a shower cap to cover food dishes and/or plates instead of saran wrap. Then you can re-use it!
- I found something similar to a shower cap after unpacking some new smoke alarms. I could wash them and use them, too. Karen



Karen, showing off her 2 napkins, each with a different finish.