



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

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

JULY 2010

WWW.RECYCLINGADVOCATES.ORG

Efforts to Ban Plastic Bags Keep Rolling

Throughout Oregon a coalition of groups is working at the state and local levels on a number of initiatives that are aimed at banning plastic check-out bags and to greatly reduce the number of single use plastic and paper bags consumed by Oregonians. These efforts are paying off.

Statewide, Recycling Advocates is working with a coalition of environmental and recycling groups to bring the issue back in front of the legislature in 2011. We are working with Senator Mark Hass, who introduced a bill to ban plastic bags in the 2010 session and we are hoping to make this one of the top environmental priorities for the Oregon Conservation Network, of which RA is a member.

On Wednesday, July 14, the effort comes to the steps of Portland's City Hall for a day of action both inside City Hall and outside with a rally and later a pint night (details follow). Portland City Council will hear testimony in the morning which will hopefully result in an outright ban on plastic check-out bags in the coming months.

RA advocates for a reduction in both paper and plastic single use bags. We favor approaches that are designed to meet waste reduction benchmarks and secondarily recycling benchmarks and address all retail outlets that use single use bags. We recognize the particular problems caused by plastic bags on ecosystems and for our recycling processes.

>> By Katy Daily

Please join the Ban the Bag Day of Action...

What: Portland City Council Testimony
When: July 14, 2010, 9am-12pm
Where: Portland City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave., Portland

Followed by...

What: Rally
When: July 14, 2010, 12pm
Where: Steps, Portland City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave., Portland

And finally...

What: Pint Night Celebration
When: July 14, 2010, 6pm
Where: Keen Headquarters, 926 NW 13th Ave., Portland

Member of
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The fruits of our labors

Two years ago Recycling Advocates put together a single issue panel discussion at Portland City Hall to air multiple ideas around banning or charging for single use bags. Today there is a lot of momentum in Salem around a bill for the 2011 session that will ban plastic bags at checkout and add a five cent price tag to paper bags, which would greatly reduce the use of single use bags throughout Oregon. This bill has bipartisan support by Senators Mark Hass and Jason Atkinson. The RA Board urges our members and friends to support this legislative approach and contact your representatives in Salem to encourage their support.

>> By Betty Patton

EDITORS NOTE: The Oregonian has published a detailed article on this topic (12 July, 2010). You can access the article at www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/07/oregon_lawmakers_in_2011_may_b.html

Our new electronic “LOOK” . . .

Recycling Advocates has finally discontinued publication of a paper newsletter. We have published a hardcopy version of our monthly newsletter since the founding of Recycling Advocates in 1987 and only in 2005 did we begin also publishing the newsletter in electronic form although only as an option. We have since made an effort to wean our members and friends of the hardcopy publication with the board of directors making the decision to finally cease distribution of the newsletter by mail earlier this year.



Being free from the costs and limitations of paper, printing and mailing, we can now run wild with more room for news, information and inspiration for recycling advocates in Oregon and the Northwest. We even have room for more whitespace to unclutter our newsletter. We hope you enjoy the new publication. Please send us a comment or two regarding this change and what you would like to see covered in future newsletters.

>> The Editor

Recycling Advocates Lindsey Newkirk and Lane County's Sarah Grimm present on Zero Waste events at Sustainable Oregon Conference

I had the opportunity to present on "Implementing Sustainable Events" with the dynamic Sarah Grimm from Lane County at the Association of Oregon Recyclers' conference a few weeks ago. Sarah painted the picture of Eugene's event recycling and composting programs and I expounded on my experience working on zero waste programs in Portland. It was great to see the parallel strides that these cities are making in reducing waste at events.

Both cities have event recycling/composting "kits" containing bins, signage and guidance, making it tremendously easy for events to recycle at their events. Both Eugene and Portland have experienced an exponential rise in kit requests and assistance. As more and more of these events are including vendor and/or public composting, Sarah reminds us that it's been a journey, all based on small baby steps.

As we each then talked about some of the events that are leading the charge on composting at events and truly embodying the spirit of working towards zero waste, the keys to success were identified in both of our presentations here outlined at right.

I feel that trends in both Portland and Eugene in sustainable events shows that the movement towards zero waste is going to exponentially increase in the coming years. As we perfect our systems and the public continues to be educated, events have the opportunity to be leaders in waste reduction.

>> By Lindsey Newkirk

Key to Zero Waste success . . .

Leadership:

A committee, service provider, staff member or volunteer that is knowledgeable, committed and accountable for managing the efforts

Waste reduction:

Implementing a durable dish program or even creating policies for eliminating materials that aren't recyclable or compostable makes a tremendous difference in minimizing waste generated at an event

Vendor commitment:

The need to communicate with vendors to be part of the success of your waste reduction. Whether this means durable dishes or compostable food service ware. It's important to give notice, get them engaged and committed.

Public Education:

This is one of the trickiest components, with ever changing and varying programs; it is difficult to get the public to "get it". Signage helps but one of the most important aspects of educating the public is the use of green team volunteers to staff stations and direct the public towards proper disposal.

Back of House Sorting:

Inevitably the wrong materials will get thrown in the compost bins so it's often necessary to sort through every bag of compost to remove contaminants before it gets shipped off to the compost facility. Over 10% contamination means rejection and it's off to the landfill.

Measuring your results:

Working with your garbage hauler to calculate how much material was diverted from the landfill, compare that year-to-year in order to evaluate your efforts.

The Recycling Advocates Master Recyclers at the AOR Conference

Ten people living in five different cities in Oregon from eight different Master Recycler Classes all got together at one conference put on by the Association of Oregon Recyclers. All ten attended because of a scholarship offered by Recycling Advocates.

This group brings hundreds of hours of experience tabling events, teaching adults and children, working on green teams, writing articles, and staffing fairs. And based on what we heard, they all learned a lot and made some good connections at this conference. So now these motivated, experienced and informed Oregonians will be playing an active part in upcoming Recycling Advocates events and endeavors.

Some of these benefited from meeting Oregon Green Schools members. Others were inspired by the green building sessions, or the tips on using social media for marketing your message. There was a lot of interest in the session on creating sustainable events. Even with the diverse interests of this group, I believe all were satisfied.

Do you know any of these winners? If so, give them a call to offer your support of their ideas and projects that they are creating. And keep them inspired; our environment needs their knowledge and enthusiasm.

>> By Betty Patton



Scholarship winners . . .

- Kelly Bryan, *Portland*
- Joseph Crackenberger, *Salem*
- Katrina Franken, *Salem*
- Marian LaBounty, *Salem*
- Heidi Lambek, *Hillsboro*
- Karen Gartland Murray, *The Dalles*
- Felicita Montebianco, *Aloha*
- Nastassja Pace, *Portland*
- Holly Wolfe, *Portland*
- Rachel Zarfes, *Portland*

ADVOCACY CALENDAR

Portland City Council, 1221 SW 4th Avenue July 14, 9:00 am

The Council will hear testimony on approaches to dealing with single use plastic bags. *See details page 1.*

Cracked Pots Garden and Art Show, Troutdale, OR July 20-21

The Annual Cracked Pots Garden Art Show features stunning outdoor sculpture and furniture, as well as art and other objects for the garden, patio or deck. Browse and shop, and then enjoy the lovely grounds at McMenamins Edgefield. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is free.



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