



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

November 2003

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

If It'll Rot, It's Hot

Food waste diversion takes off at PDX

By Kevin Drake

In January 2003, the Portland International Airport (PDX) launched a groundbreaking Food Waste Diversion Program that has already diverted more than 45,000 pounds of pre-consumer food scraps and food contaminated paper from the landfill. Now when staff at airport restaurants prepare fresh vegetables or brew coffee, the scraps and grounds are no longer going into the garbage but are collected in separate containers to be turned into compost by a local composting facility.

Twenty-one food and beverage vendors at PDX, ranging from fast food and coffee shops to fine dining, are participating in the program. The program collects pre-consumer vegetative food scraps, coffee grounds, baked goods and compostable paper fibers such as waxed cardboard and contaminant-free paper towels and napkins. The compostable material is taken to Nature's Needs, a food waste composting facility in Washington County, where it is processed into a nutrient-rich soil amendment used in farms, gardens and landscaping.

The PDX Food Waste Diversion Program is the result of a unique partnership between the Port of Portland, Metro regional government and Portland State University's (PSU) Community Environmental Services (CES). Partial funding for the new program was provided by a matching grant from Metro that helped offset the costs of new containers, bags and other equipment. The grant also allowed the Port of Portland to partner with CES to design and implement the program and provide ongoing education and technical assistance to airport food and beverage vendors. The Port of Portland is the

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It's not "In the Bag" yet for Ireland

By Chery Sullivan

"...once a ubiquitous scourge along the nation's bucolic lanes, quiet rivers and twisty highways" (from "Irish take the lead with plastic bag levy," by Sean Federico-O'Murchu, MSNBC, August 4, 2003)

In July this year, I accompanied Susan Barrett and her niece to Ireland. Susan and her husband own a family cottage in County Longford and have been vacationing there since 1998. Susan said that when they first started visiting, plastic grocery bags positively plastered the hedgerows, fluttered from fences and tangled in trees. In general, litter is a huge problem in Ireland, but plastic bags seemed the worst because of their mobility, visibility and persistence.

One way to tackle the plastic bag problem is to get rid of the bag, so in 1990, Friends of the Earth in Ireland and other environmental groups began a campaign to convince the government to impose a levy on plastic "carry out" grocery bags. After 12 years of lobbying, the Irish Department of the Environment implemented a plastic bag levy in March 2002. With a few exceptions, all shoppers must carry their own reusable bags, or pay 15 cents (17 U.S. cents) per bag. On our multiple grocery excursions to the city of Longford, I only heard one person asking to purchase a plastic bag. Susan said that in all their visits, they had heard no complaints from locals or grocery clerks. "The

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Find a SWAC near you!

Volunteer opportunities to participate in local government

By Lori Stole, RA Board Member

What is a SWAC? Many of our local government solid waste and recycling departments have them. SWACs, or *solid waste advisory committees/commissions*, help these agencies by reviewing and discussing various issues related to that jurisdiction's solid waste management and recycling. They study issues, allow for public input and make recommendations to a board of commissioners or solid waste department, but do not themselves pass ordinances or establish policy. These groups are comprised of an assortment of stakeholders such as government, solid waste industry, environmental organizations, public interest groups, haulers, recyclers, and citizens. Their meetings are generally open to the public and provide an opportunity for public comment.

You can follow their activities by getting onto their notification list, or following activities online in many cases. You can become even more involved by volunteering to be a member of your local SWAC. Several have openings now. If you are interested in serving on a specific SWAC that does not currently have an opening, call to ask when one will come up and express your interest. Visit one! Portland Metro area SWACs are summarized below.

Metro SWAC

Serves: Metro's Garbage and Hazardous Waste Program (www.metro-region.org/pssp.cfm?ProgServId=1).

Meeting day and time: Third Monday of the month, 3-5 PM.

Membership: 25 members, 2-year terms.

Agendas/minutes: Agenda packets, including previous minutes, are available on the web site or by request.

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SWAC, continued

Contact: Michele Adams at 503-797-1649 /adamsm@metro.dst.or.us or Janet Matthews 503-797-1650.

SWAC Web site: www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=420.

Comments: An RA board member is a citizen member.

Current openings: Yes, for a Washington County citizen ratepayer.

Washington County SWAC

Serves: Washington Co. Solid Waste and Recycling Group, housed within the Health and Human Services Dept., (www.co.washington.or.us/deptmts/hhs/health.htm#environ).

Meeting day and time: as needed, time varies.

Membership: 9 members, 5-year terms.

Agendas/minutes: Agendas available by request. There are no minutes.

Contact: 503-846-8609.

SWAC Web site: None.

Link to related county code:

www.co.washington.or.us/code/index.htm, Chapter 8.04, article II.

Comments: A member of RA's board is a citizen member. Citizen members must be residents of Washington County.

Current Openings: There is currently one citizen opening.

Clackamas County SWAC

Serves: Clackamas Co. Garbage and Recycling Group (www.co.clackamas.or.us/dtd/garb/index.html), which is housed in the Dept. of Transportation and Development.

Meeting day and time: as needed, about 6 times/year, usually late afternoon.

Membership: 7 Members, 4-year terms.

Agendas/minutes: Both are available on request.

Contact: Ken Spiegle, 503-353-4450.

SWAC web site: None.

Link to related county code:

www.co.clackamas.or.us/about/code/Title10.pdf, Section 10.03.090 – 10.03.110.

Comments: Residents of cities within the county cannot be citizen members of the SWAC unless that city has an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the county. There are only two such cities, Barlow and Happy Valley.

Current openings: None.

City of Portland SWAC

Serves: City of Portland's Solid Waste and Recycling Division, (www.sustainableportland.org/default.asp?sec=recycle&pg=home), housed in the Office of Sustainable Development.

Meeting day and time: 6-8 times per year.

Membership: 9 members, 2-year terms.

Agendas/minutes: Both are available upon request or there is a notification list.

Contact: Bruce Walker, 503-823-7772.

SWAC web site: Will be added soon; watch the above web address.

Link to related city code: The SWAC is not in the city code.

Comments: SWAC members are appointed by Solid Waste and Recycling Division Office, not by City Council.

Current openings: None.

Gresham Environmental Services Council Advisory Committee, ESCAC

Serves: Gresham's Dept of Environmental Services (www.ci.gresham.or.us/departments/des/), which includes their Recycling and Solid Waste Group. They don't have a SWAC; the focus of this group is broader.

Meeting day and time: First Wednesday of month, 6:30 PM

Membership: 10 members, 2 year terms.

Agendas/minutes: Agendas are on the web site. Both are available on request.

Contact: Tam Driscoll, (503) 618-2623.

SWAC web site: www.ci.gresham.or.us/departments/des/descac.htm.

Comments: RA board member, Tanya Schaefer, represents RA. Citizen members must be a Gresham resident. The cities of Fairview and Wood Village may each appoint representatives per intergovernmental agreement.

Current Openings: None, but applications are always accepted.

Clark County SWAC

Serves: Clark Co. Solid Waste and Recycling Program,

PDX Compost, continued

first Metro grant recipient to implement a pre-consumer food waste diversion program in the Portland area.

According to recent figures, around 1.5 tons of food waste is being taken to Nature's Needs each week. PDX vendors have been very supportive of the program, even though it means breaking old habits in the kitchens and establishing new systems for dealing with waste. The program was designed to complement the airport's existing garbage and recycling system, with the central food waste collection container located in the main garbage and recycling area. Establishing a common collection area for all materials has helped minimize the number of daily trips to the food waste collection container, which has helped restaurant managers keep labor costs down.

The PDX Food Waste Diversion Program was implemented to minimize the amount of waste taken to the landfill each day. The program is also contributing significantly to the Port's waste reduction targets, which are part of a comprehensive Environmental Management System. In an effort to close the materials loop, the Port is currently using Nature's Needs compost, created in part from the food waste collected at PDX, in landscaping of Port-owned properties.

PDX is believed to be the first airport in the country to implement such a program. It is hoped that PDX Food Waste Diversion Program will serve as a model for waste reduction in other large institutions, businesses and airports around the country.

(Kevin Drake works with Community Environmental Services as the PDX Food Waste Diversion Program Coordinator)

Recycling Advocates is proud to be...



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Bag levy, continued

transition was seamless,” added Susan. Now, Ireland’s plastic bag levy is attracting international attention. From all appearances, Ireland has created a “win - win - win” situation with the support of its residents, commercial grocers and the government. In the last 17 months, plastic bag usage has dropped 95%; bags that once comprised 5% of litter (by weight) along Irelands’ countryside, now only account for 0.3%; the levy has also raised 13.5 million euros (\$15.15 million) to be deposited in a green fund. The monies from this fund are already being sunk into new recycling facilities around Ireland. Nations around the world are now scrutinizing the program to see how it may apply to their country.

While they may have the plastic bag levy wrapped up, Ireland still suffers from a landfill crisis. In the last six years, tipping fees in and around Dublin have increased from 10 euros/ton to 200 euros/ton today. Consequently, illegal dumping and litter continue to plague the bucolic lanes and twisty highways. A battle is raging between the government that proposes an incinerator as the solution to the landfill crisis and environmental groups that propose waste reduction, recycling and composting as an alternative solution.

To date, waste reduction, recycling and composting are stepping to the forefront, thanks to the plastic bag levy. In Longford Co. alone, 22 Bring Banks (a.k.a., recycling depots) will be set up by the end of the year. While these depots are set to accommodate containers only, the Environmental Officer in County Longford promotes composting all paper waste. And home composting is quickly catching on; compost bin sales have increased in the county from 40 in 2002 to 400 so far in 2003.

The plastic bag levy may not be the answer to Ireland’s landfill and litter crisis, but it is part of the solution. Thanks to the income from the levy, recycling and composting opportunities have markedly increased, and visible plastic bag litter has dramatically decreased.

(Susan Barrett assisted with this article. Chery Sullivan and Susan Barrett are members of Recycling Advocates)

SWAC, continued from page 2

(www.co.clark.wa.us/pubworks/recycled/index.htm).
Meeting day and time: First Thursday of the month, 6:00 PM.

Membership: 9 members, 3-year terms.
Agendas/minutes: Both are available on request.

Contact: Anita Largent, 360-397-6118, x4484.

SWAC Web site: none

Link to related county code: www.co.clark.wa.us/commish/ORD/index.htm, chapter 24.16.

Comments: Citizen members of the SWAC must live in unincorporated Clark County. The SWAC includes a government representative from the City of Vancouver and a government representative of small cities in the county, but no citizen members from within an incorporated city.

Current openings: One for a public interest group representative.

If you are interested in learning about the state’s advisory committee, you can follow the DEQ’s SWAC.

Oregon DEQ SWAC:

Serves: DEQ’s Solid Waste Program (www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/rsw.htm).

Meeting day and time: At the discretion of the Solid Waste Policy and Planning Manager. Next meeting is 1/21/04.

Membership: 16 members.

Agendas/minutes: Both available on the web site, or by request.

Contact: Judy Henderson, 503-229-5521 or Henderson.Judith.A@deq.state.or.us.

SWAC web site: www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/swac.html.

Comments: RA’s president is a member representing RA. Members are selected by DEQ. There are no citizen reps.

Current openings: None.

Holiday Cards from Recycled Fiber

Conservatree posts products on Internet

Consumers don’t need to put aside their environmental concerns for the holidays. Conservatree has published on its web site a new list of environmental paper products that includes holiday cards.

Environmental contents range up to 100% post-consumer recycled fibers, as well as some with tree-free fibers and chlorine-free bleaching. Conservatree is a nonprofit environmental paper advocacy organization that provides tools, strategies, research and networking to promote environmentally sustainable paper manufacturing. Its web site, www.conservatree.com, is well known for its listing of hundreds of brands of environmentally sound printing and writing papers and newsprint. This is the first time the paper listing information has expanded to profile actual products that are made from recycled and other environmental papers.

To access the product list, visit www.conservatree.com/paper/AddlProducts.shtml.



**RECYCLING ADVOCATES
 Membership Application**

\$25 Regular \$10-24 Living Lightly \$50 Sustainer \$_____ Other

*I'm giving a gift membership to the recipient below.**

Sign me up for Action Alerts *Contact me about volunteering for RA*

Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

E-mail _____ Send my newsletter by e-mail

*Your name, if this is a gift membership: _____

Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Recycling Advocates' gift memberships: A green holiday gift!

Upcoming Events and Workshops

Oregon Environmental Council

“Toxics: What Every Parent Should Know & How Business Can Respond”

Date: November 5, 2003

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: Portland, Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon St.

Thousands of synthetic chemicals, many of them known toxins, permeate our environment and are carried in our body fat, blood, and even breast milk. Join biologist, Sandra Steingraber, PhD, author of *Having Faith: An Ecologist’s Journey to Motherhood*, to explore these issues in more detail.

For more information call (503) 222-1963 or visit www.orcouncil.org. Admission charged.

Electronics Waste Forum

Sponsored by the Oregon Recycling Markets Development Corporation, the Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association, and the Association of Oregon Recyclers.

Date: Friday, November 7, 2003

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Micah Building, Salem.

The forum will begin at 9:00 a.m.

Participants will consider legislation in other states as well as Oregon’s recently passed SB 867. Successful collection program case studies will be presented along with the issues of environmentally responsible management of materials.

The forum will wrap up with a discussion, involving the audience, of how Oregon’s electronic product stewardship initiative should function and what its ultimate goals might be. To register, call AOR at (503) 661-4475. Admission charged.

Oregon Natural Step Network

“Nickel and Dimed” in America, Thinking & Acting on the Social Dimension of Sustainability

Date: November 12, 2003

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Registration 7:10 - 7:30 a.m.)

Location: Portland, Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon St.

The Natural Step framework’s system

condition #4 is simple and elegant: “In a sustainable society, human needs are met worldwide.” Presenters will discuss how they incorporate this principle in their operations.

For more information, call (503) 241-1140 or by e-mail at events@ortns.org. Admission charged.

Recycling Advocates Board Meeting

Date: November, 2003 (TBA)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

For location and information, call (503) 777-0909.

Job Opportunity!

Master Recycling Program in Portland

The City of Portland’s Office of Sustainable Development is currently hiring a Conservation Program Specialist to lead the Master Recycler Program. For an application go to www5.ci.portland.or.us/jobs. For information about the program and position visit www.sustainableportland.org. The position closes Monday, November 10th at 4:30 p.m.

Copied on 100% post-consumer content recycled paper.

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