



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

October 2005

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

## Sustainability and the RSWMP

by Lori Stole

Every ten years Metro updates its regional solid waste management plan (RSWMP), and a revision for 2005-2015 is currently underway. In order to investigate how sustainability might be incorporated into the updated plan, a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) subcommittee was formed in the spring of this year. That subcommittee, representing diverse interests, explored what sustainability is and how it should apply to the Metro area solid waste system.

It was an interesting journey, culminating in a set of recommendations presented to the full SWAC this past month. Once subcommittee members started to understand the issues and concepts of sustainability they all agreed that it was necessary to move that way. After some discussion SWAC in turn voted to pass these recommendations on to Metro Council for their consideration.

The group chose to adopt the State of Oregon definition for sustainability: *using, developing and protecting resources in a manner that enables people to meet current needs and provides that future generations can also meet future needs, from the joint perspective of environmental, economic and community objectives.* [ORS 184.421 (4)]

The subcommittee looked at various common frameworks for sustainability, recognizing that each has its pros and cons. Ultimately, they selected the Natural Step as the primary decision-making framework for implementing sustainable practices, as follows:

The sustainable operation of the solid waste system considers economic, environmental and societal resources and is consistent with the Natural Step system conditions so that nature is not subject to systematically increasing:

1. Concentrations of substances from the Earth's crust,
2. Concentrations of substances produced by society, or
3. Degradation by physical means; and in that system
4. Human needs are met world-wide.

Nine goals were established, each with a set of objectives (see sidebar).

Discussion continued to the end about how much of the solid waste system the goals should apply to, but it was determined that this group was only tasked with evaluating the facilities portion of the RSWMP, and not, for instance, the waste reduction or hazardous waste sections. This was a matter of concern, and a recommendation was included to assess the entire RSWMP for sustainability via a process that ensured consistency.

## GOALS

- Goal 1: Reduce greenhouse gas and diesel particulate air emissions.
- Goal 2: Reduce storm water run-off.
- Goal 3: Reduce natural resource use.
- Goal 4: Reduce use and discharge of toxic materials.
- Goal 5: Implement sustainability standards for facility construction and operation.
- Goal 6: Adopt best practices for customer and employee health and safety.
- Goal 7: Provide training and education on implementing sustainable practices.
- Goal 8: Support a Quality Work Life
- Goal 9: Employ sustainability values in seeking vendors and contractors.

Also not yet considered: sustainability requires a long-term view of an entire system, and should, in fact, culminate in a system which does not even

*(continued on page 2)*

## Contribute to ESOR at your workplace: it's so easy

As summer comes to a close, we all think back on the beautiful places we had the chance to enjoy during the great outdoor season – the beaches, high desert, crystal clear rivers and craggy mountains. The treasures of this state endure because we protect them. And now as the sunny months leave us, we do what we can in other ways.

It's fundraising season.

Recycling Advocates is a proud member of Earth Share of Oregon (ESOR). What does this mean to you? You and your fellow employees can choose to have contributions sent automatically to your favorite Oregon conservation groups, including Recycling Advocates. Since your contribution is spread out over the course of a year, the amount deducted from your paycheck is minimal, and all gifts are fully tax deductible. You can make a difference!

If your workplace is not currently involved in an ESOR giving campaign, establishing one is easy. ESOR will work with your employer to set up a program that meets your company's needs.

Oregon's natural beauty and livability is legendary. With your contribution to ESOR, you can help ensure that it stays that way. For more information, please contact Ron Shoals at ESOR: (503) 223-9015 or [ron@earthshare-oregon.org](mailto:ron@earthshare-oregon.org); or visit [www.earthshare-oregon.org](http://www.earthshare-oregon.org). ■

(RSWMP continued from front page)

generate solid waste.

The four recommendations that were presented to and approved by SWAC are:

1. The subcommittee recommends that SWAC approve the sustainability definition, sustainability framework, and goals and objectives for the solid waste system to be included in the RSWMP. The subcommittee members would then present the sustainability recommendations endorsed by SWAC to the Metro Council.

2. The subcommittee recommends that the sustainability definition and framework be implemented throughout the RSWMP and be reviewed for consistency with the work of this subcommittee.

3. The subcommittee recognizes that the RSWMP is a 10-year plan and



### CORRECTION:

Our last newsletter incorrectly stated in "Plastics -- the Inside Story" that plastic bottles are injection molded. They are formed with a blow molding process.

### RECYCLING ADVOCATES

PO Box 6736

Portland OR 97228-6736

(503) 777-0909

info@recyclingadvocates.org

www.recyclingadvocates.org

Betty Patton, President  
Lori Stole, Vice President  
Rhett Lawrence, Secretary  
Rick Paul, Treasurer  
Rob Guttridge, At Large  
Wayne Rifer, At Large  
Katy Daily, At Large

Betty McArdle, Administrator and  
Newsletter Editor  
Tanya Schaefer, webmaster

has proposed goals and objectives for that timeframe. The subcommittee recommends that a vehicle for long-term sustainability planning be investigated.

4. Implementation: The consensus of the subcommittee is that these goals and objectives apply to all government-regulated solid waste facilities and services while recognizing that the authority for regulating collection lies with local government.

The full RSWMP update is behind schedule and an interim plan is being prepared. It could be a while yet before we see just how sustainability goals become incorporated in the revised 10-year plan. The next step will be a presentation of these four recommendations to the Metro Council. ■

### NOTICES

#### Snail Mail or Email?

If you are receiving this newsletter via snail mail would you prefer to receive it via email? Using email is one way to Reduce waste at the source. If you would like to join those members receiving the newsletter electronically, let us know:  
Email: info@recyclingadvocates.org  
Phone: 503-777-0909

#### What Articles Would You Like to See in the RA Newsletter?

Dear Recycling Advocates newsletter readers: What kinds of articles would you like to see in the RA Newsletter? Is there information you would find useful? Is there something you have been wondering about? Let us know and we will try to include articles to answer your questions.

Email: info@recyclingadvocates.org  
Phone: 503-777-0909

Recycling  
Advocates  
is proud to  
be a  
member of



### From the President with Betty Patton



Dear Members,

On July 2, 1971, the first container deposit legislation was signed into law by Governor Tom McCall. It created a 5-cent deposit on carbonated and malt-based beverages sold in Oregon.

Since then, only ten other states have followed suit. Many have tried; few have succeeded.

Oregon and the other ten states have proven that these Bottle Bills work; we have reduced litter substantially and increased recycling. In fact, when the recycling rate for the 10 bottle bill states is averaged with the very low rates elsewhere, we are left with a national average that is mediocre.

With all this good news, one would think we could just rest on our laurels. But we can't. In the 33 years since this deposit system began, our consumption habits have changed drastically.

In 1972, bottled water was for trips to foreign lands. Sports drinks were consumed only by football players. The options for tea were with or without sugar, and some actually opted for instant.

Now we drink water that costs up to \$4.00 a gallon. It comes in 16 ounce plastic bottles shipped to Oregon from elsewhere in the nation. We enjoy these drinks both at and away from home, then dispose of the containers wherever we may be. Very often that means at a public place or work place, rather than at home where we have curbside pick up.

Some organizations and legislators in Oregon are beginning to put together information to use for expansion of our container deposit legislation. We need to hear the public's opinion on today's bottle collection system. A simple survey is available as a downloadable pdf file from the Association of Oregon Recycler's website, www.aorr.org.

Please fill out this survey and return it to Recycling Advocates, PO Box 6736, Portland OR 97228-6736. We will compile these responses and submit them to AOR.

Keep your eyes on this column for updates.

We need to have our voices heard to keep Oregon the leader in recycling.

Betty



by Betty McArdle

Remember when “the three Rs” meant reading, ‘riting and ‘rithmetic? Maybe they still do but they also mean Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, also referred to as the recycling hierarchy.


“Reduce” simply means buying, consuming and throwing away less. This would include: choosing products with longer life-spans, discouraging the use of single-use disposable items and buying concentrates to cut down on wasteful packaging. Unlike recycling or waste management methods, there is no need to re-process or transport materials.

“Reuse” means a thing is used again in its current form, either in a new application or by somebody else. Re-using products is better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again.

“Recycling” turns materials that would otherwise become waste, into valuable resources and generates a host of environmental, financial, and social benefits. Materials like glass,

**Minimize Packaging  
Maximize Function**

- ? Choose products with the least unnecessary packaging.
- ? Some hardware is often available in loose bins.
- ? Recognize and support store managers when they stock products with no packaging or reduced packaging.
- ? Economy-sized items usually have less packaging per unit of product.
- ? Concentrated products often require less packaging and less energy to transport to the store.
- ? Choose food in the largest size that can be used before spoiling.
- ? Buying in bulk will save you money (see Unit Price Comparison of Alternative Packaging at the RA website [www.recyclingadvocates.org/pdf/pubs/packaging.pdf](http://www.recyclingadvocates.org/pdf/pubs/packaging.pdf)).



**Join us as a Member of  
RECYCLING ADVOCATES**

\$25 Advocate  
  \$50 Friend  
  \$100 Sustainer  
  \$10-24 Living Lightly  
 *I'm giving a gift membership to the recipient below\**  
 *Contact me about volunteering for RA*  
  *Don't sign me up for Action Alerts*  
 Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland OR 97228-6736

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone, Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_  Send my newsletter by Email

\*Your name, if this is a gift membership \_\_\_\_\_

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

metal, plastics, and paper are collected, separated and sent to facilities that can process them into new materials or products.

Packaging serves many purposes. Its primary purpose is to protect and contain a product. It also can prevent tampering, provide information, and preserve hygienic integrity and freshness. Some packaging, however, is designed largely to enhance a product's attractiveness or prominence on the store shelf.

Since packaging materials account for a large volume of the trash we generate, they provide a good opportunity for reducing waste. In addition, keep in mind that as the amount of product in a container increases, the packaging waste per serving or use usually decreases. Buying products in bulk using your own re-use container eliminates packaging waste for that product.

**Benefits of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle:**

*Saves natural resources.* Material and energy resources are consumed throughout the life cycle of a product—from extraction of raw materials to processing, to product manufacture, distribution and use, and transportation along the way. Reusing items or making them with less material decreases waste dramatically.

*Reduces toxicity of waste.* Selecting least-toxic items is another important component. Using less toxic alternatives for certain items (e.g., cleaning

amount necessary are ways to reduce waste toxicity.

*Reduces costs.* Preventing waste can mean economic savings for communities, businesses, schools, and individual consumers.



*Reduces greenhouse gases:* The need for new products is reduced, so greenhouse gases that would have been generated in their creation and transportation, are avoided.

*Consumer benefit.* Buying products in bulk, with less packaging, or that are reusable, frequently means a cost savings. What is good for the environment can be good for the pocketbook.

It's up to us consumers to make wise purchasing decisions. As they say, “Let your dollars do the talking.”

*Future RA newsletter articles will address buying recycled and understanding “green” claims by advertisers.*

Article based on information found at The US EPA site [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

## Upcoming Events and Workshops

Association of Oregon Recycler's  
Annual Fall Forum

### Recycling's Perils and Potential in Recognition of New Energy Realities

November 2, 2005,  
9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
680 State Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Salem, Oregon

Speakers will explore a facet of sustainability; looking at the impact of energy consumption on recycling. The agenda includes presentations on peak oil, the impact of energy on recycling strategies and the hauling industry, as well as the impact on markets.

Transportation and energy costs are increasing. The days of cheap oil are over, as has been explored through the discussion of peak oil.

How can the recycling industry remain a viable player in a sustainable process when transportation is a dominant cost?

How can we manage collection costs and rates?

Can the rising cost of transportation help increase local and regional markets? What are the impacts on both domestic and export markets?

What kind of policy changes are needed as these costs increase?

This full day of presentations and discussion will instruct the audience on the effects of increased energy costs on recycling and solid waste management systems and will offer information and guidelines to keep Oregon businesses, industry and systems sustainable.



Registration includes the full day forum, Continental breakfast, and lunch.

\$45 for AOR, ORRA, WSRA, and SWANA members

\$55 for potential members

\$25 for students

Visit the AOR website for registration information and form: [http://www.aorr.org/aor\\_fall\\_forum.htm](http://www.aorr.org/aor_fall_forum.htm)

### RA Board meeting

You are welcome to join us at the next Recycling Advocates board meeting:

Monday, October 24, 7:30-9:30pm

For location and information call 503-777-0909.

### America Recycles Day November 15, 2005

Visit The America Recycles Day website at: [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org) for more information about activities and events.

*Copied on 100% post-consumer content recycled paper*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Portland OR 97228-6736

PO Box 6736

RECYCLING ADVOCATES

