



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

September 2005

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

## DEQ Settles with Portland Recycler Over Disposal of Recyclable Materials

**FROM: DEQ news release  
August 8, 2005**

*The settlement between DEQ and Smurfit-Stone includes a penalty and a contribution to a regional recycling program*

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Smurfit-Stone Container Enterprises, Inc. have settled alleged violations related to disposal of recyclable materials processed at the company's material recovery facility at 6328 SE 100<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Portland. The incidents occurred from January 2003 through August 2004.

The settlement stems from Smurfit-Stone's shipment of recyclable materials (non-fiber materials such as plastic and metal that were accepted at the facility from residential curbside collection) to the Wasco County Landfill for disposal. Under Oregon law, recyclable materials may not be disposed. Prior to 2003 Smurfit-Stone sorted its paper and cardboard fiber materials and

marketed its non-fiber materials to Columbia Resource Co. in Vancouver, Wash., for further processing.

These shipments were detailed in Smurfit-Stone's annual Material Recovery Surveys to DEQ solid waste officials. Smurfit-Stone's 2003 survey, however, showed that while it continued to accept recyclable materials, it did not market any of the non-fiber materials that year from curbside sources.

In subsequent investigations last fall, DEQ determined that on many occasions between January 2003 and August 2004, Smurfit-Stone disposed of bales of allegedly recoverable solid waste to the Wasco County Landfill and marketed little, if any, of the non-fiber materials from curbside sources.

While Smurfit-Stone does not agree that the disposal was illegal, the company cooperated with DEQ in reorganizing its operations to ensure that more

materials would be recovered from its sorting process.

Under the settlement terms, Smurfit-Stone will pay a \$4,800 penalty and also contribute \$19,200 to a Metro government regional program designed to improve local recycling efforts by reducing the amount of garbage that contaminates recyclables in curbside recycling bins and carts.

"Recycling is very important to Oregonians and it is important for Oregonians to have confidence in the state's recycling system. That is one reason why DEQ took this enforcement action," said DEQ Director Stephanie Hallock. "We are pleased that Smurfit-Stone has stepped up to improve its operations and also that the company is contributing to a Supplemental Environmental Project which will provide tangible benefits to the residents of Portland and the region."

Smurfit-Stone, based in Chicago, Ill., is one of the world's largest recyclers and marketers of paper, and its Portland plant has been in business for more than 100 years. ■

## Waste reduction grants

Grants of \$500 for waste reduction projects are available to schools in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties through Metro's waste reduction education program.

Visit <http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleID=663> to view a 4-page brochure which includes selection criteria and the application form.

For more information on elementary school grants, call Freda Sherburne at (503) 797-1522 or send e-mail to [sherburnef@metro.dst.or.us](mailto:sherburnef@metro.dst.or.us).

For information about grants for secondary schools, call Amy Wilson at (503) 797-1521 or send e-mail to [wilsona@metro.dst.or.us](mailto:wilsona@metro.dst.or.us).

## Plastics — the Inside Story

There are an infinite number of recipes for formulating any given plastic type, dependent on what properties are desired for the final product and what additives are needed to provide those properties. There are also many types of processes in use to form the final plastic products, for example blow molding and injection molding, which in turn require specific additives and specific processing temperatures to be successful.

This means plastic tubs, plastic bags, and plastic bottles that are identified by the number on the bottom as the same plastic type, probably are not actually identical materials. For example, the resins used to manufacture plastic bottles (such as milk jugs) are formulated for an injection molding process, while those used for plastic tubs (like margarine containers) are designed for a stamping process.

Currently, in our region of the country, plastic bottles (the neck of the bottle is smaller than the base) and milk jugs have viable markets that support collecting them curbside for recycling. This opportunity is offered in most urban curbside programs in our region.

For some plastic products - such as yogurt tubs, lids, and bags - markets are not widely available and costs of collection, storage, and transportation can outweigh any recycling value. Some of these materials can be recycled locally if you look for opportunities, but not in your curbside bin. In other cases, such as PVC, recycling options are nearly non-existent. ■

*Based on information from: Washington County Cooperative Recycling Program*

## MEMBERS CORNER September guest writer Rick Craycraft

### “Use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without”

I think that was my rural western Kansas grandmother’s notion of “reduce, re-use, recycle.” At least that’s what I heard in my childhood home.

I was raised in a working class, post-depression household where we didn’t have the luxury of participating in a throwaway society. Although it was my job to take out the trash, we also saved newspapers to take to some processor now lost in memory where I would be always rewarded with shiny new coins for my efforts.

My life segued historically with the birth of the environmental movement when, years later, we finally realized there really are limits to the resources of this planet. When recycling became “hip” it was familiar ground to me.

How I became the self-avowed fanatic, I freely admit to being, I’m not sure. I used to consider myself an “eco-boy scout,” running about tidying up the culture, a real “save a tree” kind of guy. But as I have become more aware of what’s at stake, and how we as a society are wantonly and literally trashing the landscape, I have morphed more into a recycling guerilla.

I realize the ultimate solution is through legislation and education, but I am content to be on the front lines in a hands-on way. I spend most of my time recycling from the bottom up, that is, REDUCING where I can and cleaning up the mess (where I see it) when I can’t.

My focus when I took the Master Re-

cycler class was diverting construction debris. I work in the trades as a “low-end” remodeler. Not necessarily “green,” mind you, but often looking to the Rebuilding Center as my first shopping option.

My pick-up truck is my recycling center on wheels. I think nothing of pulling over to pick up block styro-foam people have mistakenly thought could be set out as curbside recycling.

I can hardly drive down any major street in Portland without spotting a consistent string of discarded single serve plastic bottles. When I have time and don’t create traffic problems, into the truck they go.

Although I am not perfect in my habits (I heard that the Jeanne and Dick Roy produce one garbage can of trash per year - my heroes), I try to do everything I can to divert as much as possible from the waste stream.

Instead of just talking about this particular cause I choose to BE this cause. And it inevitably has an impact on those around me. Even if I’m looked on as “that recycling nut” it can spur people on to do what they know is right, even if it is out of guilt.

“Act locally, think globally” unfortunately is now a tired old cliché but in this arena I seem to do that instinctively. Every time I spot a discarded plastic item headed for the watershed or the landfill I think “10,000 years.” Every time I hear someone say that their actions don’t matter in the big picture, I reflect on what I read about McDonald’s throwing out enough styrofoam cups every year to fill both the late twin towers.

Maybe it’s a curse holding the bigger vision like that. Certainly it can be frustrating and painful, but understanding the scale of our material waste and the finite limit of our resources **I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.** ■

Rick is a long-time RA member. He lives in Portland and runs his own remodeling business

*Share your story with other RA members and supporters. Contact editor Betty McArdle, [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org) if you want to share your experiences and enthusiasm.*

## From the President with Betty Patton



Dear Members,

This summer the RA Board got together for an annual planning meeting. The following month at the full membership meeting we discussed future plans for this organization. We have come away from these discussions with some real priorities for us.

We are still very interested in implementing real product stewardship with electronic waste. Even though SB740 did not pass, the bill had a lot of support from our members and local governments, and from many of the industry leaders. And the problem did not go away. Neither did our interest. This very pressing issue requires a very complex solution, so we need to continue to educate voters and legislators about the value of shared responsibility for this line of products.

The Board and members have also been concerned about Oregon’s beverage container recycling rate. You would think that in a state with a bottle bill, we wouldn’t need to be concerned. Well, our legislation is 33 years old. It places a five-cent deposit on beverages that are carbonated or malt-based. The deposit has not kept up with inflation and the beverages included have not kept up with our consumption habits. We drink bottled water, tea, sports drinks, and fruit juices on the go. Recycling facilities aren’t always available when it is time to dispose of that container. So it gets sent to the landfill. What a shame.

Other pressing issues include: do what we can to improve the quality of the commingled recycling stream that is being collected at homes and businesses; decrease our per capita waste generation; it’s an unsustainable rate and climbing; inspire employers to be as efficient as possible with raw materials and energy.

Daunting tasks, all of them. But Recycling Advocates can play a role. Please help us prioritize these issues, focus on areas where we can make a difference, and create opportunities to involve our members so that we can progress towards a sustainable lifestyle. Send us ideas. Give us suggestions. And keep working as you always do towards reducing, reusing, and recycling.

Betty

## RECYCLING ADVOCATES

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**Back to SCRAP IV  
Celebrating Educators,  
Students & Families**

**Saturday, September 24, 2005  
11 AM to 6 PM.  
3901-A North Williams (2 blocks N  
of Fremont at Failing)**

The School and Community Reuse Action Project (SCRAP), a 501 (c) 3 non-profit specializing in creative reuse arts education, is hosting an event targeting educators that celebrates the power of re-use as an educational and cost saving tool.

Back to SCRAP is a day of FREE workshops especially for K-8 teachers and K-12 students, but all are welcome.

Workshops include: notebook making, puppet making, musical instruments, starting a reuse center in your classroom, and more.

There will be a school supply giveaway (while supplies last), a fashion show of hot homemade styles, a puppet show by Mudeye Puppet Company, and raffles all day of specialty scrap.

**100% Reuse Fun!!!**

Workshops are FREE, but space is limited. Please pre-register for the workshops you wish to attend to save your seat! To register or to be in the fashion show contact Carol or Teri at 503-294-0769 or email education@scrapaction.org.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Carol or Teri at (503) 294-0769 or education@scrapaction.org.

*SCRAP (The School & Community Reuse Action Project) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that collects clean, reusable creative materials from businesses and individuals and provides these materials at low cost to educators, artists, kids, families and community members while promoting creative reuse. Every year SCRAP diverts over 70,000 pounds of material from the waste stream.*



**Master Recyclers Successfully Round-Up Five Tons Of Plastic By Katy Daily**

Over the span of two Saturdays in four locations around the Metro area, Master Recycler volunteers collected over **five tons** of every type of plastic imaginable including take-out containers, nursery pots, CD holders, kiddie pools and lots and lots of tubs and lids.

Some items were reclaimed for further use, such as over 100 buckets that will be used to collect recyclables in Vancouver schools, but the majority of the “would-be waste” was picked up by Agri-Plas to be recycled at their facility in Brooks.

Clearly there is pent up demand for these “Plastics Round-ups” which provided recycling opportunities for hard to recycle items. One recycler pulled up and unloaded 34 years worth of nursery pots while another brought out over 300 lbs of used plastic utensils collected from his years of running Picnic in the Park.

The key player in making the events successful was our reliable recycler. Agri-Plas, Inc. is the only agricultural plastic recycling center in the nation that collects most types of plastic – types that other recyclers won’t touch, like HDPE pots, pesticide containers and styrene trays.

At Agri-Plas, plastics are fed into large machines – the granulator, aspirator and extruder – where they are chipped and cleaned with high-pressure air. This process prevents the waste water discharge problematic to other recycling facilities.

The clean plastic pellets are then sold to a variety of manufacturers to be melted into new products. For example, polypropylene from old nursery pots is melted and blended into new plant containers, reducing the need for virgin material by 10-20%.

The most frequently asked question at all sites was “When will you be doing this again?” The Master Recyclers are committed to continuing, and hopefully expanding this Plastics Round-up program, with the goal of conducting them at least twice a year.

Stay tuned for the next event in an area near you!

To learn more about the Master Recycler Program go to: <http://www.masterrecycler.org>. For details about their upcoming classes see the related article in this newsletter.

For more information about Agri-Plas, contact Dari Jongsma, President, at 503 390-2381 or dariagriplas@yahoo.com.



**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*

## Upcoming Events and Workshops

### RA Board meeting

**Monday, September 26  
7:30-9:00pm**

For location and information call  
503-777-0909.

### Community Family Fest

**Sept 25, 1-4 PM**

**Community Family Fest  
Cooper Mountain Elementary School  
7670 SW 170th Avenue, Beaverton  
Trimet Bus #88, get off at 170th**

Recycling/waste prevention and the local watershed are key themes for this event.

#### Come learn!

Ink cartridges and old athletic shoes will be accepted for recycling.

For info contact: Lori Stole, 503-591-1454, [stole@hevanet.com](mailto:stole@hevanet.com).

### Master Recycler Fall Course Set

The Master Recycler Fall course is open for registration.

Classes begin on October 4, 2005 and continue every Tuesday through November 29 (no class on Nov. 22).

Classes will be held from 7 pm to 9:30 pm at the Catlin Gabel School, 8825 SW Barnes Road, Portland.

**The application deadline is Tuesday, September 27, 2005.**

You may register using our online registration form or you can print out a PDF of the form and send it to the address at the end of this article.

**Click to: <http://www.masterrecycler.org/classes.html>.**

If you have any questions, contact the Master Recycler office at:

503-823-7530 or email  
[masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us)  
Master Recycler Program  
721 NW 9th Ave., #350  
Portland OR 97209

### Back to Scrap IV

**Saturday, September 24, 2005**

**11 AM to 6 PM**

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### FREE Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle Posters

Metro has the following free posters for anyone who wants them:

- 1. Two Sides are Better Than One (~1400)**
- 2. Choose A Reusable Mug (~400)**
- 3. PC Files Not Paper Piles (~200)**
- 4. Make it Your Business to Buy Recycled Products (~175)**

Contact: Robin Hawley,  
Solid Waste and Recycling  
Planner  
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503-797-1535 W,  
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