

A Quarterly Newsletter of



**Spokane Regional
Solid Waste System**

(509) 625-6580
www.solidwaste.org

Spring 2011



Washington Green Schools program receives “Organizational Excellence” award

The Environmental Education Association of Washington has presented its “Organizational Excellence” award to Washington Green Schools, a statewide program that promotes environmental stewardship in public and private schools.

Washington Green Schools provides resources and tools to involve students, teachers, and community members in assessing and taking action to increase resource conservation and waste reduction in schools. A non-profit program, Washington Green Schools envisions that all schools in Washington will model environmental sustainability and that students will be engaged as stewards and leaders in their schools and beyond.

Currently, 127 Washington schools participate in the Green Schools program, including four schools in Spokane County.



Spokane Regional Solid Waste System is an active partner in the program, which provides a free web-based structure, tools, and resources for primary and secondary schools to use in reducing their environmental footprint and utility costs. Ann Murphy, education coordinator for Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, serves on Green Schools’ five-person steering team.

“The Washington Green Schools program provides a great way for students and teachers to learn more about the environ-

ment,” Murphy said. “They earn recognition points by taking action at their school, all while having fun!”

Student leadership and community service are key program goals. Each school evaluates and takes steps to promote energy efficiency, increase recycling, reduce solid waste and toxic substances, improve indoor and outdoor air quality, promote efficient transportation, protect water quality, and encourage conservation.

Of the 127 participating schools in Washington, 28 have achieved Level 1 status and two have earned Level 2, the highest level achieved so far by any school. In Spokane County, Reardan-Edwall Middle School in Reardan has earned Level 1 status.

Any K-12 school in Washington can register to participate in the Green Schools

program. For more information, visit www.wagreenschools.org.

The Environmental Education Association of Washington is a membership-based association that works to increase awareness of and support for environmental education. The association presented awards to Green Schools and other programs that provide “examples of dedication and sincere devotion to students and educators and the role of education in the development of sustainable communities.”

Earth Day Celebration in Spokane

Join dozens of organizations in celebrating Spokane’s Earth Day 2011! Come to Main Ave. (between Browne and Division) on Saturday, April 23, between 11 a.m. and midnight to enjoy earth-friendly community booths, “green” activities for children of all ages, local food vendors, live music, art, and much more. Everyone is welcome at this free and fun annual event! Visit www.earthdayspokane.org/ for more information.

Spring Compost Fair coming up!

Interested in creating your very own compost while reducing your yard and garden debris? Attend the Spring Compost Fair at Finch Arboretum on Saturday, April 30, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Future composters will be able to take part in hands-on demonstrations that teach the basics of home composting. Spokane County residents (with identification verifying residency) can receive a free plastic compost bin after completing the various activities. There is a limit of one bin per household. Please arrive at the Fair by 1:30 p.m. to complete all activities by the 2 p.m. closing time.

Master Composters/Recyclers, who will be conducting the demonstrations, are volunteers who have participated in a training program sponsored by the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System. Training classes to become a Master Composter/Recycler are held each spring.

There will also be a Compost Fair at the Fall Leaf Festival in October 2011. Please call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800, for details.



The Master Composters/Recyclers are ready to help you start a compost pile.

EnviroStars-certified businesses are doing their part

EnviroStars is a voluntary program that certifies small businesses which demonstrate proper management and reduction of hazardous waste. Auto body and repair shops use paints, solvents and oils that can impact our water and air quality if not handled properly. Dave Jeffries, owner of AutoCraft in Spokane Valley and President of the Auto Services Association Spokane Unit, was instrumental in bringing EnviroStars to Spokane. “EnviroStars certification lets our customers know we’re doing our part to protect the environment. We consider EnviroStars part of our Blue Ribbon service,” said Jeffries.

These Spokane area auto shops and car wash are certified EnviroStars and have demonstrated stewardship by reducing, replacing, and recycling hazardous materials:

- American Way Auto Body
- AutoCraft
- Country Vista Car Wash
- Ed’s Premier Auto Body
- Flash’s Auto Body & Paint

- J.J.’s Auto Collision
- K & M Unibody Works
- Maaco Auto Body & Collision
- Martin Motors
- Precision Collision
- Preedy’s Tire and Automotive
- Washington Auto Collision

As a consumer, you’re shopping smart when you choose EnviroStars-certified businesses. You’ll be helping to protect the Spokane River and the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. Restoring the health of the river and keeping the aquifer clean go hand-in-hand with a vibrant community that’s good for people and businesses, too.

If your small business in Spokane County would like to apply for EnviroStars certification, contact Tonilee Hanson at

Dave Jeffries (second from left) and the staff of AutoCraft in Spokane Valley proudly display their EnviroStars certification.

847-4337 (cell), 535-7084 (office), or tonilee@spokaneriver.net. An onsite consultation, at no charge, will take you through a local source control checklist and the EnviroStars application. When the requirements are met, your business will qualify for EnviroStars recognition.

Learn more about the EnviroStars program at www.spokaneenvirostars.org.



Discovering Spring

A celebration of environmental awareness and the season opening of Discovery Playground

Join in a Spring Celebration at Discovery Playground in Spokane Valley on Friday, April 15. This event will serve as the spring opening of the Playground and also address what we as citizens can do to help protect our environment.

The festivities will begin with a tree planting ceremony as the mayor and city officials of Spokane Valley join the public in planting trees along the Discovery Playground berm. The Playground will then be opened for the season!

Around the picnic shelter area in the playground there will be vendors set up with interactive displays. You’ll be able to pick up a tree seedling to take home and plant, as well as find information on recycling, energy conservation and other ways to live green.

All ages can be part of the fun on Friday, April 15, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Discovery Playground, 2426 N. Discovery Place, Spokane Valley.

EARTH DAY CONSIDERED



My principles are simple: protect the earth, serve the people, and explore the universe.

Rusty Schweickart, 1935-
American Astronaut

This image, I think, was maybe the most reproduced image in American history. We suddenly realized that the earth was a very small thing. Much as if you live on an island, you are much more acutely aware of the limitations of your resources and on your ability to pollute. That photograph of the Earth in this vast sea of space did pretty much the same thing for the whole planet.

Denis Hayes, 1944-
Coordinator of the first Earth Day

The photographs of the earth from space were a different kind of mirror than we had ever looked in before. It flips you from the world that we are in, to a planet that we are on.

Stewart Brand, 1938-
Editor of *Whole Earth Catalog*



We've come a long way

As human beings, we have a tendency to get used to the way things are and believe that they have always been this way. For instance, what year did you get a cell phone or email? Hard to remember, isn't it! Taking the time every now and then to remember the past and note the changes that have occurred helps us understand our own actions and make better plans for the future.

Think about Earth Day. For some of you, the time before the first Earth Day in 1970 is your own personal "pre-history," a vague time before you were born. For others, your memories of the era may or may not be filled with the environmental problems that led to a national "teach-in" for the environment.

Take some time this spring to explore the origins of Earth Day. Learn more about the pollution in our air, water, and soil that were part of everyday life prior to 1970. In the introduction to the children's book *Earth Day* by Linda Lowery, former Senator and Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson wrote: "Who wants to breathe dirty air or swim in a polluted lake? I don't, and I'm sure you don't either. When I was a senator, I noticed that our

country's air, water, and soil were getting polluted. Plants and animals were dying. People around the United States were upset about this. They wanted to change things. But our country's leaders were not listening. They were not making laws to protect the environment."

The energy of 20 million people speaking up on the first Earth Day changed that. Discover what the first Earth Day meant and the actions, large and small, that followed it. We have come a long way, but we certainly aren't "done." We continue to find and face new challenges. We can best plan for our future by reflecting on our past.

These websites explore the history of Earth Day and the impact that it has had:



Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution
www.earthdaysmovie.com



Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day: The Making of the Modern Environmental Movement
www.nelsonearthday.net/



Earth Day: The History of a Movement
www.earthday.org/earth-day-history-movement

Crowds gather by a George Washington statue in Union Square for an Earth Day celebration in New York City, April 22, 1970. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Tube-free toilet paper

Kimberly-Clark, maker of Scott brand paper products, is testing a tube-free toilet paper in a limited market area. The tube-free rolls fit on a standard spindle.

In the U.S., households use an estimated 17 billion toilet paper rolls per year. Probably less than one-quarter of those paperboard tubes are currently being recycled when the rolls are empty.

Unfortunately, the Scott Naturals tube-free tissue for the test market does not contain recycled-content paper. Most of the products in the Scott Naturals line are 40% recycled content. If the tubeless toilet paper hits a wider market, Kimberly-Clark plans to include more recycled content.



Recycled-content paper makes up less than 2% of the toilet tissue used each year. Recycled-content tissue products, including toilet paper, paper towels, and facial tissues, are readily available at grocers, pharmacies, and national retail chains. Not only does recycled-content tissue reduce the demand on forests and tree farms, but it also provides an essential market for our recyclable mixed paper. Next time you shop, give recycled-content tissue a try.

Take it slow

Earth Day is a good time to think about how you are living on the earth and with its inhabitants, human and otherwise. It's a good time to slow down and enjoy the natural world. It's a good time to evaluate your daily actions.

Here are some things that you might do to slow down as you celebrate Earth Day:

- Create a "no carry-out food" day each week and make a meal together as a family. You'll reduce your packaging waste and have time to laugh and talk.
- Plan your errands or your commute so that you aren't rushing from place to place. If you will be stopping to shop, think about what you need and make a list. You'll reduce unnecessary purchases, which often become waste within days, weeks, or months.
- Listen to what others have to say. Rather than spending your "listening" time planning what you will say next or interrupting, really listen. You might learn something — from a great reuse idea to a current event — and you will be building a relationship.

- Shop in your own closets and cupboards. We often head to the store to purchase storage containers or recipe ingredients because we don't know or can't find what we already have. If you clean out closets, drawers, and cupboards, you may find a supply of usable items, saving money and reducing waste.
- Visit the library. Libraries are a reuser's paradise. Not only can you check out books, DVDs, and more, but you can also meet your neighbors.
- Spend time in nature. Whether it is a short walk, a long bike ride, or a seat on the porch, take time to relax and breathe the fresh air. You might be inspired to start a garden, plant flowers, or begin composting.
- Listen to the sounds of children around you. Think about the world that we will be leaving them. Find a way to make a positive difference in your neighborhood or community.

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One Change

If you were going to make one change this month, what would it be? We have a suggestion! Keep your existing cell phone longer and then recycle it when you replace it.

Worldwide, there are 5 billion cell phones in use, about 1 billion of which are “smartphones,” which provide calling, texting, wireless Internet, and other services. In the U.S., there are about 270 million cell phones in use. Each year, about 130 million cell phones are discarded nationwide. Unfortunately, only about 10% of those cell phones are recycled.

Many consumers use their cell phones for only about 18 months. In most cases, these 18-month-old phones are still in good working order. A study published in the *International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* reported that keeping a phone in use for four years could reduce the environmental impact of that phone by 40%, conserving natural resources, saving energy, and reducing pollution.

Recycled cell phones are either refurbished or

remanufactured. Refurbished phones are cleaned, checked, and repaired, if needed, and then used in the U.S. or in countries with rapidly growing demand for cell phones, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and several nations in Africa. Unusable cell phones are disassembled and the parts are recycled into new phones or other electronics. One ton of mobile phones (about 6,000 phones) contains about \$15,000 in precious metals, which are used in the manufacture of new phones.

Next time you upgrade, ask your wireless provider about take-back programs. Some wireless providers will even offer you a discount on your new phone based on the trade-in value of your old phone. Many organizations accept cell phones to help raise funds for youth, domestic violence prevention and assistance, and other programs. You can also recycle phones with other electronics. If you aren't sure how or where, contact us.

Remember to cancel your wireless service on any phone that you will no longer be using and to remove personal data before recycling the phone.

Greening your celebrations



Greening

We love to celebrate. We celebrate marriages, graduations, retirements, and other rites of passage. In the U.S., weddings alone are a \$60 billion industry. Unfortunately, many of these events, whether they are destination weddings or 40th birthday parties held at home, lead to a lot of waste. A great party doesn't require a lot of waste. However, a low-waste party does require some planning.

Here are some ideas to consider as you plan your next celebration:

1. Reduce Paper

Use evites or emails instead of printing paper invitations. If you do want to send printed invitations, choose recycled-content paper and eliminate extra paper, such as reply envelopes or tissue inserts. If a mailed reply is needed, opt for a postcard.

2. Get Creative with Centerpieces

Use locally grown, seasonal flowers, trimmed limbs from blooming shrubs, fruit, or potted native plants as centerpieces. Borrow vases, bowls, and candlesticks from family and friends, purchase them at an antique store, or rent them. Don't be afraid to mix and match. Harmonize by sticking with a color theme.

3. Go with “Something Old”

Keep in mind that most clothing purchased for a special occasion is seldom, if ever, worn again. For a wedding, a vintage dress or a remade family heirloom for the bride is a lovely alternative. For

attendants, ask that they select something in a specific color which they can either pull from their own closets or purchase with the intention of wearing again. If you are a guest at a celebration, there is no need to buy all new clothes. Add a new accessory, such as a scarf or tie, to create festive, “new” party-wear.

4. Favor Consumable Party Favors

You could skip the party favors, but if they are a “must have” for your event, select something that is reusable or consumable. Candy is always a good take-home treat. Depending on the celebration, reusable mugs or bags may be perfect. Avoid the imprints—your friends love you, but they really don't want a coffee mug with your retirement date on it!



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5. Break Out the Glassware

Choose washable and reusable glassware, plates, silverware, and napkins. Do you really need the bright “Congratulations, Graduate” paper napkins? If you buy them, be sure to pair them with your washable dishes, glasses, and mugs.

6. Remember to Recycle

We get so busy planning celebrations that we sometimes forget the basics—like recycling. Be sure to have recycling bins next to the trash containers. If you'll be using a caterer, ask about their recycling policy.



Starbucks sets goal for cups

Starbucks Coffee Company has set an ambitious goal for its cups. By 2015, Starbucks wants 100% of its cups to be either reusable or recyclable. That goal has two parts.

First, the company plans to continue to encourage customers to choose and carry reusable mugs and cups. By 2015, they hope to be serving 25% of all drinks in customers' reusable cups.

Second, following a 2009 “Cup Summit,” the company has been working with paper manufacturers to test the recyclability of its paper carry-out cups. In some areas, manufacturers are experimenting with cup-to-cup recycling, and, in others, old cups are being turned into new napkins and similar products. Test results have been promising. As the project continues, Starbucks hopes to offer more in-store recycling bins for used paper cups.

Currently, Starbucks hot beverage paper cups are 10% post-consumer recycled paper, and the cup sleeves are recycled cardboard. Starbucks operates over 15,000 stores.



If you regularly purchase carry-out coffee or other drinks, carry your own reusable mug or cup. You'll often save a few cents on your purchase, and you'll save a paper or plastic cup each time!



what's up?

It's easy to recycle at public events

Washington State law requires that recycling receptacles be provided at all official gatherings and sports facilities. You've probably seen containers for empty cans and bottles at Spokane-area events, such as Bloomsday, Hoopfest, and Pig Out in the Park, and even at Avista Stadium.



The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System has a lending library of receptacles and materials available. Spokane County organizations, individuals, or groups can borrow ClearStream recycling containers and materials for their special events. The receptacles are designed to collect aluminum cans and plastic beverage bottles.

For information on requesting the ClearStream containers and how to set up recycling stations at your event, call the Recycling Hot Line at 625-6800.



Free compost samples!

Starting Sunday, May 1, you can stop by one of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System's three facilities—the Waste to Energy Plant, Valley Transfer Station, or North County Transfer Station—for a free sample of compost processed by Barr-Tech in Sprague, Wash.

See what becomes of the food scraps and yard debris collected curbside in Spokane County or dropped off at a Spokane Regional Solid Waste System facility. Bring your own container (up to 32 gallons) and take advantage of this great offer, while supplies last!

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

Questions about your residential curbside trash, recycling and Clean Green collection?

Not sure when your curbside pickup day is? Or maybe your carts or bins didn't get emptied when you expected. Perhaps you'd like to start subscribing for the optional curbside Clean Green collection. (Not offered by all haulers. Fees vary.) For these and other curbside collection questions and issues, please contact your hauler:

- Empire Disposal, Inc. — Serves Spangle, Rockford, Fairfield, Waverly, Lataha, and the southeast portion of Spokane County. Call (509) 397-3200 or (866) 865-3200.
- City of Cheney Solid Waste Service — Serves City of Cheney residents. Visit www.cityofcheney.org/site/departments/works/solid_waste or call (509) 498-9293.
- City of Spokane Solid Waste Management — Serves City of Spokane residents. Visit www.spokanecitysolidwaste.com or call (509) 625-7878.
- Sunshine Disposal & Recycling — Serves the cities of Airway Heights, Fairchild AFB, Medical Lake, Newman Lake (north of Trent), and unincorporated Spokane County (west and southwest of the City of Spokane and north of Deer Park), as well as providing commercial waste and recycling service in Millwood, Liberty Lake, Spokane Valley, and unincorporated eastern Spokane County. Visit www.sunshinedisposal.com or call (509) 924-5678.
- Waste Management, Inc. — Serves the cities of Deer Park, Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, and Millwood, and most of the unincorporated areas of Spokane County (north and east of the City of Spokane). Visit www.wastemanagement.com or call (509) 924-9400.

With other solid waste questions, call the Recycling Hot Line at 625-6800 or visit our website at www.solidwaste.org.

Attention, Spokane County residents!

All Spokane County residents may bring trash, recyclables, Clean Green, and food-soiled paper and food scraps, as well as household hazardous waste (which is not accepted at the curb by any haulers), to the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System Facilities. All facilities are open seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

You can also bring your Clean Green to a community Yard and Garden Debris Collection event near you! Some limitations on types of materials accepted may apply. For specifics on these seasonal events, as well as year-round Clean Green collection options, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800 or email solidwaste@spokanecity.org.

Waste to Energy Facility

2900 S. Geiger Blvd.
(West of Spokane, across from the Washington State Patrol)

North County Transfer Station

22123 Elk-Chattaroy Rd.
(Intersection of Elk-Chattaroy Rd. and Hwy. 2)

Valley Transfer Station

3941 N. Sullivan Rd.
(South of Trent Ave., across from Spokane Industrial Park)

Many alternatives to outdoor burning are available

Outdoor burning for disposal purposes has been phased out in most areas of Washington because of the negative health impacts of breathing smoke. Natural vegetation, such as lawn clippings, leaves, and pine needles, produce toxic air pollutants when burned in barrels or piles. When inhaled, these pollutants can have serious impacts on our lungs. Those at greatest risk are children, the elderly, and those suffering from chronic respiratory conditions, such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis.

In the past, an 8-day burn season for residential yard and garden debris was allowed in outlying areas of Spokane County; however, as of May 1, 2009, this ended. Safer and healthier alternatives to burning include:

- Setting up a home compost pile or bin;
- Chipping the debris to use as garden mulch;
- Subscribing to a Clean Green curbside

collection program; and/or

- Self-hauling the debris to one of Spokane County's solid waste transfer stations or a private collection company.

Burning garbage and using burn barrels have been banned in Washington for decades due to the detrimental health effects of uncontrolled burning of trash. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Open burning of household waste in barrels is potentially one of the largest sources of airborne dioxin and furan emissions in the United States."

For more information on outdoor burning in Spokane County, as well as other air quality issues, visit the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency's website at www.spokanecleanair.org. For information on Clean Green and composting, call the Recycling Hot Line at 625-6800, or visit www.solidwaste.org.

Annual emissions testing for Waste to Energy Facility meets regulatory requirements overall

Small increase in mercury level detected during one portion of tests

Annual testing, performed last summer by an independent agency, indicated that stack emissions at the Spokane Waste to Energy Facility are well within all regulatory and permit limitations, with the exception of one round of testing where mercury emissions were slightly above the permit level. In response to the elevated levels, the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (SRSWS) aggressively retested the Facility (twice the number of the initial test) as soon as possible during the following month. In the retesting, the Facility performed as in the past, well within the permitted limits. SRSWS considers this an isolated anomaly that should not cause concern. It is a rare occurrence, and SRSWS and Wheelabrator Spokane, Inc. are proud of the service given to Spokane County citizens during 20 years of operations at the Facility.


The Spokane Waste to Energy Facility is operated under an Air Operating Permit issued by the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. Annual stack tests are performed by an independent testing agency to verify that emissions are in conformance with the permit. SRSWS also monitors emissions continuously to assure compliance. However, heavy metals, including mercury, cannot be continuously monitored but can only be measured during the annual stack testing.

A carbon injection system, installed at the facility voluntarily by SRSWS in 1997, enhances the collection of heavy metals from emissions during daily operations. The excessive mercury emissions were detected during a portion of the testing which took place with the carbon injection system off. When the system was turned back on and emissions testing resumed, the results were well within compliance limits. "SRSWS is confident in the effectiveness of this system and will continue to use it," said Russ Menke, director for SRSWS. "We'll also be adding monitoring equipment to assure that the system is operating continuously and effectively."

Retesting of stack emissions in July verified that mercury emissions continue to be within allowed limits and reemphasized the highly unusual result of the one test run.


Mercury is found in many common household products, including batteries, thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs and tubes, older light switches, and more. SRSWS has proactive programs in place to divert mercury-containing products from the waste stream from household sources and randomly inspects incoming commercial waste at all of its sites as part of Spokane Regional Health District operating permit requirements. However, the source of the mercury that was detected during the June emissions testing is not specifically known.

In response to the Notice of Violation that was issued by the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency as a result of the mercury emissions, the SRSWS has agreed to pay a fine of \$5,000 and install additional controls to monitor the carbon injection system.



WASTE TO ENERGY REPORT CARD

Working Together!



October – December 2010

<p>Garbage In 72,691 tons disposed 72,909 tons processed at WTE Facility 2,325 tons of ferrous metal recovered from the ash for recycling 20,648 tons of ash disposed at Rabanco</p>	<p>Electricity Generation 46,566 MWh produced 7,777 MWh used to run the facility 38,789 MWh sold to Puget Sound Energy</p> <p>Notice of Violation One</p> <p>Revenues after Electricity Transmission Expenses \$4,054,099</p>
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