

# County of Santa Cruz

# CURBSIDER

JULY 2011

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**Recycle**



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## Recycle 1-2-3 at the Buena Vista Landfill

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If you have paints, chemicals, fertilizers, fluorescent bulbs, etc., in your load, your first stop will be the Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat) building to the right of the main entrance. Haz Mat is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays from 7:30a.m. to 3:30p.m. Do not bring Haz Mat materials on any other days.

Your next stop will be the recycling center. Take **LANE 3** to the recycling center and drop off all bottles, cans, cardboard, paper, books, CDs, tapes, DVDs, motor oil, film plastic, batteries, metal items, rigid plastic, and electronic waste. Recyclable items are not allowed in the landfill; pack your load so you can easily drop off these items before going to the Scale House. Now you will proceed to the Scale House.

**LANE 1** is for all cars, pickup trucks and trailers, and vans that have a cargo area of 8 feet or less. These vehicles are charged by the height of the load.

**LANE 2** is for all weighed vehicles including flatbeds, U-haul type trucks, roll-offs, garbage trucks, dump trucks, end dumps, and trailers and vans with cargo areas over 8 feet in length, as well as any vehicle that has been issued a County tare weight

sticker. These vehicles are charged by the weight of the load, and different rates apply to different materials that go to different areas, so it is important to let the cashier know what items are in your load.

Important reminders to save you time and keep the lines moving:

- Go to the Haz Mat and recycling centers before arriving to the Scale House or you will be redirected once you get to the Scale House.
- Always bring proof of load origin. This can be your driver's license or electric bill if the load is from your residence, or a work order or note from the homeowner if you are hauling from a job site or for someone else.
- Know what is in your load. Different materials go to different areas and are charged at different rates.
- Get in the correct lane. Cash, check, and credit cards are accepted.
- Ask for informational flyers at the Scale House that go into more detail on these items.

**Buena Vista Landfill, 1231 Buena Vista Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076 | 831-454-5153**



Away with all Waste  
by Jeffrey Smedberg

# What is Recycling Anyway?

Some decades ago when I was developing a serious interest in recycling, I came home one evening from a meeting on the subject. Upon learning of my whereabouts, my daughter, a new Branciforte Junior High student, queried, "How could you talk about recycling for a whole hour?" Even then recycling must have been so commonplace and unremarkable a concept as to bore a 12 year old.

Today recycling has just about achieved apple pie status, at least in our corner of the world. On the Central Coast, recycling has been integrated into daily life and is pretty universally accepted as proper behavior, even though its practice may fall short from time to time. It has not always been so.

So just what is recycling? The term, popularized since the first Earth Day in 1970, has become a catch word for a whole range of warm, fuzzy environmentally-friendly activities and concepts. Even the third graders I spoke to recently knew the Three Rs of Recycling: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. The symbol with the three chasing arrows is well recognized too, and reminds us of this green triplet. These are three distinctly different strategies for reducing waste, but in common parlance

they are all subsumed under the term "recycling." Technically, recycling is the re-utilization of the component materials from one product as feedstock in the manufacture of a new product.

The classic example is the discarded aluminum can which is melted and reformed into a new can, arriving back on the grocery store shelf eight weeks after the empty is dropped in a recycling bin. Farther afield but still abiding by this definition, composting is recycling. Carrot tops and rotten tomatoes turn into dirt in which we grow more carrots and another tomato plant. In recycling, the original product becomes unrecognizable as it is completely broken down into more basic building blocks.

In "reuse," by contrast, the product is maintained in its original form. For many durable products like washing machines, reuse is an expected and essential feature. Brands stake their reputation on how long-lasting and reliable their washers are. However, in the field of waste management, reuse becomes significant as an alternative to the discard of items designed for single use.

Every year in the U.S. we buy 20 billion plastic water bottles

(less than a quarter are recycled nationally -- we do much better locally). Packaging engineers have spent decades perfecting this bottle, designed to be used only once. It's actually a pretty sturdy bottle. I tried to flatten one that had its cap on securely. I drove over it with the car and it didn't pop. So I carry one of these around and refill it daily from my water filter at home. I can usually keep track of a bottle for about six months before I lose it someplace. It's never hard to find another.

Others more concerned than I about plastic leaching into the water they drink prefer a reusable metal water bottle in place of plastic. This is another reuse strategy that also avoids the daily consumption of single-use plastic bottles, though it does require new production of a product to replace the plastic.

Of the three Rs, "reduce" is the hardest to describe, because if you are successful, there's nothing to show for your effort. Don't hold your breath waiting for this praise: "Hey, the garbage can is empty. Nice job!" As a waste management strategy, "reduce" means to stop waste before it happens. This reduction at the source can be achieved by avoiding consumption of items that would result in waste. Paying a bill on-line can eliminate the use of a paper check and envelope, which would later be discarded. Hand carrying a single-item purchase out of the store completely avoids the question, "Paper or plastic?"

While all three of the Rs are important, their effects on the

environment are not equal. When discards are recycled into new products, environmentally destructive mineral extraction and logging required to produce virgin products are avoided because the raw materials are essentially "mined" from the local waste stream. Reuse of products in their original form has the additional benefit of avoiding the energy and labor intensive industrial processes of manufacturing the product over again.

When we reduce consumption, we avoid the related impacts of the entire long and complex chain in the life cycle of a product from resource extraction through refining, smelting, fabrication, distribution, retailing, and waste management. Inputs of energy, transportation and human effort are required while pollution and waste are created at every step along the way. Of the three Rs, "reduce" offers the best prognosis for the earth and thus ranks at the top of the waste management hierarchy.

Although waste reduction will also save us money, we mostly do it to save the planet. We won't get there if all we're doing is putting the empties in the blue bin. Recycling alone is not enough. We also need to practice all the other effective strategies that are sometimes confused with recycling.

**Jeffrey Smedberg** has been coordinating recycling programs for the County of Santa Cruz for two decades and can be reached at [recycle@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:recycle@co.santa-cruz.ca.us) or 831-454-2160.

# Santa Cruz County Honored for Green Leadership

Santa Cruz County was recently honored as a recipient of the 2011 Green California Leadership Award. Presented at Green Technology's Green California Summit and Exposition in Sacramento, the annual award recognizes outstanding environmental achievements by California public agencies. Santa Cruz County was recognized for its Zero Waste Program, which resulted in the county having one of the highest waste diversion rates in California. Congratulations to Santa Cruz County for playing a leading role in local governments going green.



# Stormwater

## Working together to protect our Bay

Hope Services and Save the Whales, both non-profit organizations in Santa Cruz and Seaside, have teamed together with the County of Santa Cruz Storm Water section to help raise awareness among adults about storm drain pollution, while also educating over 75 persons with developmental disabilities in Santa Cruz County about the dynamics of pollution control.

A hands-on model of a suburban community was used to show how materials such as antifreeze, motor oil, litter, dog waste, fertilizers, and pesticides get washed into streets and storm drains, which eventually flow directly to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and sometimes through surrounding rivers, streams, and estuaries that eventually flow into the Bay.

This innovative program puts Hope Services Santa Cruz clients to work at the inlet sites to observe site conditions and upgrade signage by applying a bright, colorful decal with a dolphin and fish that remind citizens (in English & Spanish) about the risk of dumping contaminants in the inlets, and how harmful this is to our watersheds.

Hope Services, through grant funding acquired by the Save the Whales Organization, under a National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration B-WET (Bay Watershed Education and Training) grant, was able to apply over 320 decals at Santa Cruz County inlet sites. Through these efforts, the Santa Cruz County Storm Water section, Save the Whales, and Hope Services raise awareness that the health of the Monterey Bay may be better preserved for future generations.

In addition, through the County of Santa Cruz Green Schools Program (GSP), the County has labeled another 350 storm drains. The GSP furthers the education of students, teachers, and staff on environmental topics including resource conservation, storm water runoff, water quality and conservation, energy conservation,



recycling, and waste reduction. The goal of the GSP is to support the county's schools as they evolve into "Green Schools" that model wise resource use, eliminate waste, reduce non-point source pollution, and train students to conserve scarce resources like energy and water. The GSP provides both in-class and school-wide presentations, educational assemblies, and technical assistance to member schools. As part of the curriculum, the students are asked to participate in beach and neighborhood cleanups and storm drain labeling.

The County has contracted Save Our Shores to provide classroom presentations to all elementary, middle, and high schools enrolled in the GSP. Part of the curriculum is to educate students about the connection between storm drain runoff and the health of the Monterey Bay. Students learn in the presentations about pathways of pollution and the impacts of that pollution on marine life. They are also asked to identify storm drains on their campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods to better deliver the message that trash on our school campuses and neighborhoods can easily find its way to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

For more information on the GSP or Storm Water education programs, please contact Ana Maria Rebelo at 831-454-2160.

**County of Santa Cruz Public Works**

701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2160

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# Recycling Resources

**Recycle Information Line . . . . 831-454-2333**

- What and where to recycle (recorded message)

**Curbside Refuse, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection 800-665-2209**

- Begin new service
  - Report missed recycling or trash service
  - Request delivery or removal of carts
  - Obtain oil recycling jugs
- (Operated by GreenWaste Recovery)  
[www.greenwaste.com](http://www.greenwaste.com)

**County Public Works Dept. . . 831-454-2160**  
[www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org)

- Apartments and business recycling inquiries
- Complaints, compliments or suggestions

**Household Hazardous Waste 831-454-2606**  
(recorded message)

- Schedule for free disposal
- Non-hazardous alternatives
- Free surplus paint

**Rotline Composting**

**Resources . . . . . 831-423-HEAP (423-4327)**  
[www.compostsantacruzcounty.org](http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org)

**Buena Vista Landfill . . . . . 831-454-5153**

- Recorded information . . . . . 831-454-2430
- Recycling Center . . . . . 831-479-1055  
(Operated by the California Grey Bears)

**Ben Lomond Transfer Station 831-336-3951**

- Recorded information . . . . . 831-454-2430
- Recycling Center . . . . . 831-338-1728  
(Operated by the Valley Women's Club)

**City of Santa Cruz . . . . . 831-420-6270**  
**Resource Recovery Facility (landfill)**

- Open to Unincorporated County residents in Davenport and Bonny Doon only



**Para información en español sobre el reciclaje en las áreas no incorporadas del condado de Santa Cruz, favor de llamar al (800) 665-2209.**