

Recycling in New Jersey, Where Does It Go?

Editor's Note: Editor Paul Peyton and Publisher Horace Corbin had a conference call Monday with NJDEP officials in Trenton: Bob Considine, press officer; Ross Hull, environmental specialist; and Tom Byrne, section chief; to learn about the complexity of recycling in New Jersey — where does it go from your home in Westfield, Scotch Plains and the county, by whom, at what cost, who monitors it and what is the final destination. This will be the subject of reports to be published over the next few weeks. If you have information for the reports, please send it to editor@goleader.com. State information is posted at the NJDEP website, www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/

Recycling Delivers both Economic and Environmental Benefits to New Jersey

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the state's milestone Mandatory Recycling Act this year, it's time to re-energize the recycling movement in New Jersey and go for the green. Recycling offers environmental benefits and dollars for municipal coffers — a real green win-win if there ever was one for our state.

Over the past 25 years recycling has become second nature to many New Jersey residents and businesses. Containers bearing the familiar recycling logo filled with bottles and cans, and bundles of magazines, newspapers and cardboard, placed at curbsides in neighborhoods across the state are part of the Jersey landscape.

State residents in large numbers have embraced recycling for its environmental benefits. In 2010 we saw an encouraging increase in New Jersey's recycling rate (recyclables that are not trashed or burned) — up from 37 percent in 2009 to 40 percent for municipal solid waste. But there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Even after 25 years of mandatory recycling and technological advances that make recycling convenient and cost-effective, we are still missing out on financial opportunities by not doing enough to reach our 50 percent statewide recycling goal. Many cities and towns are still not capturing the full economic benefits of recycling.

A key component to the Christie Administration's strategy for solid waste disposal is to recycle more materials, not to bury and burn them. So we intend to once again kick start the recycling movement in New Jersey. To get people and businesses and institutions who still have not embraced recycling to understand the benefits recycling bring to the environment and their communities.

Everyone has a role to play: the pizza shop in the strip mall, the small business in an office complex, the middle school in your town, and right down to the individual at his or her office or home work station.

To date, a third of New Jersey's municipalities recycle less than 25 percent of their municipal trash. Only 16 percent have reached the mandatory 50 percent recycling rate. Running an effective recycling program has a cost for municipalities, including recycling infrastructure, personnel, training, and recycling collections. However, the economics of recycling versus disposal demonstrates that recycling provides a net economic benefit to cities and towns that are diligent about recycling.

Our jump in recycling rates from 2009 to 2010 added up to real dollars for local and county government cof-

fers. The extra 364,000 tons of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and other materials recycled in 2010, instead of going to landfills or incinerators, equated to \$26 million in savings from avoided solid waste disposal costs, plus \$45.5 million in revenues from sales of recycled materials.

For New Jersey to reach the 50 percent recycling goal we must annually recycle another 1.1 million tons of material. Disposal of those 1.1 million tons costs New Jersey residents about \$75 million annually in disposal fees, most of which is financed by property taxes.

In short, many municipalities are leaving money on the table by not maximizing recycling. Municipalities save money for every ton of recyclable material that is not landfilled or burned. As county and municipal governments struggle to balance their budgets, improved recycling should be part of smart municipal fiscal management.

The Department of Environmental Protection is helping towns and counties improve their recycling. Last year New Jersey provided \$19 million in recycling grants, including \$13.5 million to municipalities and \$5.5 million to counties. These grants are used to fund various recycling activities, such as purchases of new recycling containers, public education, household hazardous waste collection events, staff to run recycling programs, etc...

The DEP also is engaging municipal and county stakeholders, and business representatives to develop new strategies to boost recycling. Through this effort, stakeholders are evaluating new strategies (single stream recycling, enforcement, food waste recycling, pay-as-you-throw, collection frequency) and sharing information on existing and new markets for recyclable materials.

On June 28, the DEP and the New Jersey Solid Waste Advisory Committee hosted an Urban Recycling Summit, a workshop designed to address recycling challenges unique to urban communities. The department is planning similar programs for rural communities. This partnership is critical as the DEP evaluates regulatory changes that may boost recycling.

I congratulate our towns and counties in New Jersey that are recycling superstars on their commitment to the environment and to fiscal responsibility. I encourage all towns in New Jersey to take the recycling commitment seriously. The contributions of recycling to environmental protection and sound financial management are too rich to pass up.

**Bob Martin, Commissioner
New Jersey DEP**

Caring for Your Trees During Drought

With more than half of the continental United States in some stage of drought, what can homeowners do to keep their trees healthy during hotter, drier summer months?

"While it's impossible to keep every tree in good health in times of severe drought, taking a proactive approach for a prized or sentimental tree can support its good health," recommends Tchukki Andersen, staff arborist with the Tree Care Industry Association. "A plan that is supported with good cultural practices, monitoring for pests and disease, and response to warning signs is more likely to survive."

Silent Suffering

A tree's first damage from drought occurs beneath the soil line in the form of root damage, long before any outward signs of trouble.

Opportunistic Pests and Diseases

Boring insects are thought to be drawn by the chemical and acoustic signals of stressed trees. The sound of water columns breaking cues the borer to invade the tree and lay eggs. Andersen recommends applying a three-inch layer of organic mulch or wood chips over the root zone at least out to the drip line. This will hold moisture longer for stressed roots to access, and will provide a long-term nutritional source for the soil. Prized or important trees may be protected from wood-boring insects with spray or injection treatments.

Another danger to stressed trees are fungal pathogens. Andersen notes that when a chemical change in the tree signals a weakened state, certain pathogens penetrate the bark, wood and cambial zone, with fan-like, leathery clumps, cutting off the water supply to the tree.

While all trees are at risk during long periods of drought, some are more prone to its effects. New transplants are highly vulnerable to drought stress, and supplemental watering for the first few years of establishment is necessary, to the extent that it's allowed. But even mature trees are suffering.

Watering trees deeply with soaker hoses or irrigation systems — as opposed to brief, surface watering — helps sustain trees. But it's very difficult to do much for a large tree because of the massive amounts of water it needs. With so many trees affected, Andersen recommends watering only those trees that you can help. How much water a

home landscape needs depends upon its soil, sun and shade exposure, plant types, irrigation system and local climate. How much water trees require depends upon the type of tree. Applying the right amount of water, based on the local weather and the tree's actual need, is the key to using water efficiently. But homeowners often over-water their lawns, which in turn surpasses a tree's real needs.

Drought exacerbates matters for trees already under stress, like those on dry slopes, surrounded by pavement, or improperly planted. In landscape situations, consider action, such as moving smaller trees to a better location, alleviating compaction, or replacing moisture-draining lawn with mulch. A two-three inch layer of compost will help trees in maintaining moisture.

Outlook

"The aftereffects of drought may last three to five years, with the strongest trees surviving. Trees have developed their own mechanisms for coping with these cycles, but some trees are on the brink of survival and could go either way. If it means the difference between keeping a tree around for your lifetime or losing it in the next five years," Andersen says. "It's worth doing something about."

What can you do?

A professional arborist can assess your landscape, provide information regarding the value potential of your trees and work with you to determine the best trees and shrubs to plant for your existing landscape. Contact the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), a public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture since 1938. It has more than 2,000 member companies who recognize stringent safety and performance standards and who are required to carry liability insurance.

TCIA has the nation's only Accreditation program that helps consumers find tree care companies that have been inspected and accredited based on: adherence to industry standards for quality and safety; maintenance of trained, professional staff; and dedication to ethics and quality in business practices. An easy way to find a tree care service provider in your area is to use the "Find Qualified Tree Care" program. You can use this service by calling 1-800-733-2622 or by doing a ZIP code search on www.tcia.org.

Letters to the Editor

Should Kids Be Stopped From Going To Shore House Parties After Prom?

Many will read this and ask yourself how stupid was this guy (me) for not knowing what goes on at the shore house after the prom. I am speaking to the other moms and dads. First off, understand the school has nothing to do with this shore house! To cover themselves they act as if they have no idea what's going on, and they do not warn any parent about it. Well it's time they get involved and get their heads out of the sand before one of our kids gets killed.

The prom is a big deal, however, every kid loses focus on that day because they are all thinking about going down to the shore house. I was told don't worry because there is security and no one is allowed to get into one of the three houses without a wristband. There is security the first day; the second day there is none. What about drinking and drugs? Well we were all once young and there are always bad apples, however, it gets out of control.

This past year there were several kids who were so drunk they needed medical care, one kid fell off the deck, one kid got very sick because he ate raw meat and one kid was stabbed, oh by the way this was a calm year compared to past years. There are three houses. One of the houses sleeps 70 kids, the other two sleep 25 each. After seeing the houses, I would not put my dog in it. I would be afraid my dog would get ringworm or something worse. Seventy kids. I guess that means there are at least 15 toilets, not! Now we are talking about Seaside not Bay Head. The area is crawling with kids

from other schools so there is the very possibility of trouble with other schools.

We all hope we have raised our children well enough so when they are on their own they will act like gentlemen and ladies. Forget about it! Too many act like idiots.

I suggest several things:
- Parents talk with each other, educate themselves and put a stop to the shore house.

- Schedule the Prom Night on a Monday or Tuesday so the kids will appreciate the day.

- The school should get involved to put a stop to the shore house.

In this town I would say there are a couple of attorneys who would love to take on a lawsuit against the school district if some kid got seriously injured. Oh, they can't be sued. First of all everyone could get sued, and second, since the school does not alert the parents to what goes on at the shore house, they will be sued.

Now you know what goes on, what do you plan on doing about it? Are you going to question the school when they have board of ed meetings? Are you going to ask the principal about what goes on down there and why the school does not inform the parents about past events?

Many do not know what goes on down there — if a kid gets killed, will you be shocked? "How could this happen to one of our blessed children? We are from Westfield."

**John Mancini
Westfield**

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