



# Diversions

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• The Waste-Cutting Edge •

## Over-Recycling: Too Much of a Good Thing

You wash out your pet food cans; you remove staples and plastic windows from your mail; you would never think of putting an old newspaper in the trash. But is it possible you're recycling too much?

Believe it or not, even those of us who are in the business of promoting recycling don't want people to "over-recycle" - by that we mean putting things into the recycling bin that don't belong. Examples include ceramic dishes, broken drinking glasses, plate glass (like a broken window), "waxed" cardboard, film plastics (shrink wrap and dry cleaning bags, for example), polystyrene (more commonly known by its trademarked name, "Styrofoam"), and scrap metals (including wire hangers). Jim Damele, District Manager of Waste Management's Davis Street Recycling Center, has seen it all. Some of his all-time contamination highlights are an ironing board, a sledgehammer and an engine block!

When items like these get into your local "recycling stream," they cause quality and safety issues for the recycling company, increase processing costs and lower prices paid for the materials sent to market. In the long run, this contamination could result in higher recycling costs for you. So, now is the time to adopt a mantra: "When in doubt, throw it out!"

To find out where you can recycle unusual items like those mentioned above, please visit our website at [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) and click on *Recycling and Reuse Directory*. If you have questions about what is recyclable in your curbside cart, call Valley Waste Management at 935-8900.



Putting things in the recycling bin that don't belong can cause safety issues as well as devalue the recyclable materials. When in doubt, throw it out!

## REUSEASHOE

### Shoe Recycling Program Comes to CCCSWA Area

Get your old shoes back in the game.

Want to reward your worn-out sneakers for a job well done? Then, recycle them with the Nike Reuse-A-Shoe program. They'll be ground up and used to make brand new athletic surfaces like soccer fields, basketball courts, and running tracks. Clean out your closet and your gym bag and bring any brand of athletic shoe to any of the locations listed below from Sept. 1 - Oct. 31.

**Please no metal eyelets, cleats or lights.  
No wet or muddy shoes.**

**Club Sport**

3737 Valley Vista Rd., Walnut Creek, 934-4050

**Gold's Gym**

1853 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, 935-1132

**Lafayette Health Club**

85 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, 284-7732

**Oakwood Athletic Club**

4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 283-4000

**24 Hour Fitness**

2033 N. Main St., Walnut Creek, 930-7900

**Crow Canyon Country Club**

711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville, 735-5700

**Walnut Creek Recycling Center**

480 Lawrence Way, Walnut Creek, 937-4992

### Congratulations 2003 Mini-Grant Winners!

**San Ramon Valley High School Environmental Engineering Academy** will start a food waste composting program.

**Hospice of Contra Costa** will expand marketing efforts for its bulky item collection pickup service.

**The East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse** will provide reuse education through creative eco-art activities at events.

**The Green Resource Center** will expand its "Ask an Expert" green building technical support services.

**Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation** will install ten recycled plastic benches along the Shell Ridge Open Space trail.

**The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority** will install 15 recycled plastic benches at bus stops in the CCCSWA service area.

### Wastebusters Are Rewarded



Last May, principals of the first "Wastebusters" schools received plaques from the CCCSWA at a ceremony held at its monthly Board meeting. From left to right are: Principal Elaine Frank, Donald Rheem Elementary (Moraga); Principal Neil Jennings, Camino Pablo Elementary (Moraga); Principal Paul Simonin, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate (Moraga); Principal Bruce Burns, Los Perales Elementary (Moraga); and Science Teacher Kim Brast, Springhill Elementary (Lafayette).

Thank you, Wastebusters schools, for helping to reduce a significant source of landfilled waste.

## The Future of Central Contra Costa Recycling

### Results of CCCSWA "Single-Stream" Pilot Program

Unsorted or "single-stream" recycling has been implemented successfully around the Bay Area. In 2001, Valley Waste Management (VWM) removed the dividers from burgundy recycling carts in 2,000 homes in Central Contra Costa to help decide whether to join this trend. Residents in this pilot area placed all their recyclables - both containers and paper - into the undivided burgundy cart. Over the following year, the CCCSWA and VWM studied the cart contents to determine if the new process would affect participation rates, contamination, collection and processing costs and recycling markets.

- This is what we learned:
- 20% more recyclables were collected in the pilot area.
  - 5% more households recycled.
  - Contamination increased by 3%.
  - Collection efficiency increased.
  - Processing costs did not increase.
  - Prices for materials were not adversely affected.
  - Feedback indicates that residents loved the increased capacity and convenience.



Say goodbye to your cart divider. Paper and containers could mix it up in 2004!

### Contract Negotiations for Collection Services Continue

The CCCSWA continues to negotiate with VWM and Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal for collection service contract renewals. Proposed new recycling services include:

- **Single-stream recycling** for the entire service area;
- **New materials accepted** at the curb, such as anti-freeze, oil filters, and batteries in addition to the currently accepted used motor oil; and
- **More recycling** at municipal offices and fairs and festivals.

Garbage service will continue with the following enhancements:

- Trucks will meet upcoming requirements for **clean air quality** emission standards,
- **Web-based customer service** will improve; and
- **More materials received at the transfer station and landfill will be recycled.**

The future of electronic collection events are also being discussed. See "E-waste Update" on reverse for more on this topic.

# Mini-Grant Winner Spotlight

The CCCSWA recently awarded the Green Resource Center a grant to expand its services to include residents and businesses in Central Contra Costa County. The local non-profit, established in 1999 by the Northern California Chapter of Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR), is dedicated to promoting high-performing, resource-efficient building, aka "green" building. Today the Center is the Bay Area's central hub for information on sustainable building alternatives.

We recently talked with Ed Gulick, the Center's Project Manager. Here's what he said:

**Q:** How will Green Resource Center use the funds?

**A:** The grant allows us to serve Central Contra Costa residents with a hotline service for anyone who might need support with a green building project. We're also expanding the information on our website.

**Q:** What are some of the resources you have?



Ed Gulick, project manager for the Green Resource Center, shows off some of the numerous samples of green building materials available for viewing at the Berkeley office.

**A:** We have "Green Materials Sheets" with information on everything from bamboo flooring to solar water heaters. Each sheet has facts on the material's energy performance, resource impacts, cost and even installation and maintenance considerations. We also have photos of the materials, so you can see what these greener, healthier alternatives look like.

**Q:** Why healthier?

**A:** A green building is a healthy building, with good air quality, natural light and so on. There have been a number of studies, for example, showing that people working in green office buildings are healthier and more productive. That goes for the home as well.

**Q:** How can Central Contra Costa residents find out more?

**A:** They can call the hotline at 510-845-0472 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or they can visit [www.greenresourcecenter.org](http://www.greenresourcecenter.org).



## San Ramon Valley High Students S.A.V.E. Waste

Members of the Student Activists for a Viable Environment (S.A.V.E.) wanted to make a case for expanding recycling services at the 2,000-student San Ramon Valley High School. "We have paper recycling, but we still throw away a lot of paper," said Jeff Gustafson, senior (pictured above). "We wanted to know exactly what was in our trash to see if the program was working, and find out what else should be recycled." To do this, students conducted two "waste sorts," - looking through and categorizing the school's garbage. The CCCSWA supported the effort by providing containers, protective clothing and scales.

By averaging the two sorts, S.A.V.E found their trash contained the following:

27% Paper and cardboard	22% Food waste
10% Plastic & glass bottles	4% Plant material
1% Aluminum & tin cans	14% Food packaging
3% Other plastics	19% Other

"Going through trash sounds disgusting, but it was fun," said Jeff. "We learned that over half of our trash is recyclable, and we need more education about our existing recycling program. We plan to do one more sort to take an average from three, then we'll take our data to the District."

## E-Waste Update

### SB 20 Moves Along

Cathode ray tubes (CRTs), the picture tubes in TVs and computer monitors, have been banned from California landfills because of the lead they contain. The cost to local government is \$25 or more per unit to collect and recycle electronic waste (e-waste).

In the past year, *Diversion* has reported on proposed legislation related to e-waste recycling issues. In early July, California Senate Bill 20, a proposed law that would require electronics manufacturers to accept responsibility for their obsolete products, passed in the Senate and two Assembly legislative committees and is now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.



Amendments have changed the bill considerably. As of early August, SB 20 regulations covers all CRT devices and sets an initial 50% recycling goal to be met by 2006. Consumers will be charged a fee on each unit they purchase. While manufacturers are responsible for the recycling of their products, if a company doesn't have a recycling program in place, it can pay a fee. All fees collected will fund collection and recycling program costs. For more information and the latest updates on SB 20, visit [www.cawrecycles.org](http://www.cawrecycles.org).

### The Future of Local Collection Events

In May and June, the CCCSWA held two Household Hazardous Waste/e-waste collection events. We gathered over 26 and 30 tons of electronics respectively. Each ton costs \$520 to process, making collection events expensive. The CCCSWA is evaluating its ability to continue to provide them at no charge to the participant.

In the meantime, Central Contra Costa residents can take unwanted electronics to the following locations. Not every location accepts all kinds of electronics, so please call ahead for more information.

Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal, 925-603-1144

Curbside collection for a fee

Books for the Barrios, 925-687-7701

Working computers and monitors only

Computer Renaissance, 925-827-1200

Working computer equipment only

Contra Costa Transfer Station, 925-313-8900

TVs and monitors

More listings are available at [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org).

## Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

My friend says just because a plastic container has a symbol with recycling arrows surrounding a number doesn't mean it's recyclable in my curbside cart. Is this true?

Dazed in Danville

Dear Dazed:

There is nothing more confusing about curbside recycling than which plastics you can and can't put in the cart. Much of this confusion stems from the fact that nearly every plastic object is stamped with a "chasing arrows" symbol. The trick, though, is what number is inside the symbol and what's acceptable in your local recycling program.

Each of seven possible numbers indicates a resin type. They are Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET #1), High Density Polyethylene (HDPE #2), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC #3), Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE #4), Polypropylene (PP #5), Polystyrene (PS #6) and "Other" (#7). This coding system was introduced by the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) in 1988 in response to recycling companies' and manufacturers' needs to identify plastic types, not for you and me. So no wonder it's confusing!

In Central Contra Costa, we're lucky to have a recycling program accepting all plastics numbered #1 through #5 as well as #7. (Many programs only take #1s and #2s!) Wide- and narrow-neck containers are acceptable; however, **absolutely no plastic bags** (no matter what number is printed on them) **or #6 Styrofoam of any type** should be put in the recycling cart.

It's important to remember that plastic resins are different from one another - as different as aluminum is from steel. Just one PVC container in a batch of PETs can ruin a load and make it unsaleable. For more questions about plastics, visit [www.plastics.org](http://www.plastics.org).



## Contact information

CCCSWA ..... 906-1801  
fax: 906-1805 ..... web: [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)  
email: [authority@wastediversion.org](mailto:authority@wastediversion.org)

PLEASANT HILL BAYSHORE DISPOSAL .... 603-1144  
fax: 685-8153

web: [www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com](http://www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com)

For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, new service or your blue garbage cart.

VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT ..... 935-8900  
fax: 935-1617 ..... web: [www.valleywaste.com](http://www.valleywaste.com)

For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil disposal containers, for recycling cleanups or information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.

CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE ..1-800-750-4096

HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING .... 906-1806

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE .. 1-800-646-1431