



Diversions

Fall 2005

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority

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Visitors from all over the Diablo region gather at the center for America Recycles Day 2004.

Walnut Creek Recycling Center Needs New Home

As most of you know, the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA) is seeking a new convenient central county site for the Walnut Creek recycling center. After 10 years on the Lawrence Way property, our lease with the City of Walnut Creek expires at the end of February, 2006. We appreciate Walnut Creek for hosting the center for so long.

The recycling center is truly a regional facility. In addition to residents from Danville, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Walnut Creek, 25% of the users come from other local cities such as Pleasant Hill and Concord. People travel to the recycling center when they have extra recyclables, want to use the efficient buy-back system, live in apartments with no recycling program, own a small business or work at a school and want to earn money for club activities.

Tonnage collected at the center helps each CCCSWA member city keep its recycling levels high. In 2004, the center collected 450 tons of paper and beverage containers, 5,300 cubic yards of yard waste, and 316 gallons of used motor oil and anti-freeze. The amount of paper and beverage containers collected annually has remained constant over the last 5 years.

We promise to continue looking for a convenient, freeway-accessible new site. If you know of at least half of an acre of suitable flat land, please call us at 925-906-1801 or e-mail us at authority@wastediversion.org.

CCCSWA Supports the Community

Congratulations Mini-Grant Winners

Each year the CCCSWA funds local projects that promote waste reduction. The following are the 2005 mini-grant winners:

- **Heather Farm Preschool** and the **City of Walnut Creek** will use funds to purchase recycled-content picnic tables and recycling containers.
- **East Bay Regional Park District** will continue installing beverage recycling containers on trails in the CCCSWA area.



- **The Green Resource Center** plans to start a Build It Green Buyer's Co-op that will enable builders to purchase green building products at lower costs.
- **Pacific Rim Recycling** will create a video for the new education center at their Benicia recyclables processing plant.
- **St. Vincent De Paul Society** is hoping to operate a site to collect books and refurbish appliances and computers. The mini-grant funds will go towards building a shed and a fence.

The CCCSWA Board also set aside funding to make sure each high school in its service area has a beverage container recycling program.

Congratulations winners! Organizations like yours help make waste reduction an everyday reality in our community.

The Waste-Cutting Edge

Can Landfills Become a Thing of the Past?

Zero Waste Gathers Momentum

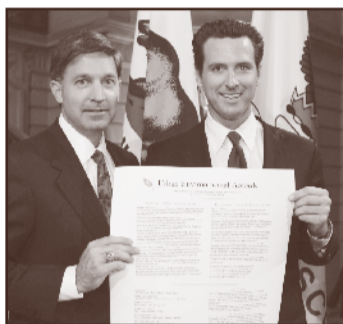
In the last issue we explored the concept of zero waste—striving to eliminate waste rather than trying to manage it once it's generated. Can we learn from nature where discards from one organism are food for another? Yes, say many communities, businesses and organizations as they voluntarily redefine and redesign the way they use resources.

An example close to home is the John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek. This health care provider has

won several awards for water pollution prevention and energy conservation and has implemented a zero waste goal into its operations. In 2002, the center reduced waste that was destined for the landfill by 702,216 pounds.

Local and state government agencies are joining in, too. In November, 2001 the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) adopted a zero waste goal as part of its Strategic Plan. This is not just a California fad. At the recent United Nations World Environment Day held in San Francisco, mayors from cities around the world signed the Urban Environmental Accords—goals set for environmental improvement. These goals include a pledge to aim for zero waste going to landfills and incinerators by 2040.

Applying the idea of zero waste to our industrialized society means redesigning our manufacturing processes so that technical "nutrients" are not rendered useless but rather re-enter the cycle of production. Sound complicated? Impossible? It's easier than you'd think. In the next issue we'll look at a zero waste success story.



Mayors Will Wynn (Austin, TX) and Gavin Newsom (San Francisco) were among the 50 international mayors who have agreed to establish a zero waste policy in their cities.

Wastebusters Welcomes New Schools



2004/05 was the first year that high schools were eligible for Wastebusters certification. The CCCSWA is pleased to announce that Acalanes High School in Lafayette took the challenge, becoming the first high school in the area to become Wastebuster certified. High schools face particular challenges when it comes to reducing waste that middle and elementary

schools typically don't encounter. These include large campuses, complex sites, sizeable (and sometimes defiant) student bodies, and often challenging litter problems. These factors make high school program coordination and student participation challenging. Not only do high schools face these difficulties, but they have to complete more activities to certify as Wastebusters.

Acalanes science teacher Janet Thomas, her Environmental Club and Environmental Science students have tackled these issues and completed the required Wastebuster activities with amazing success. They made paper and container recycling available throughout the school, organized the collection of recyclables on campus, and promoted the program to the student body, staff, and faculty through various means (posters, flyers, school newspaper articles, etc). To certify, Acalanes also developed a school garden, composted materials on site, and developed an EarthTeam video documenting a school waste audit.

Congratulations to Acalanes High School for being a local environmental leader, and for raising the bar for other high schools in the CCCSWA service area!

Other newly certified schools include **Stanley Middle School** and **Walnut Heights Elementary**.

Recertified Wastebusters include:

2nd Year: Buena Vista Elementary, Foothill Middle School, Orinda Intermediate, Walnut Creek Intermediate, Happy Valley Elementary and Lafayette Elementary.

3rd Year: Donald Rheem Elementary, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate, Springhill Elementary and Camino Pablo Elementary.

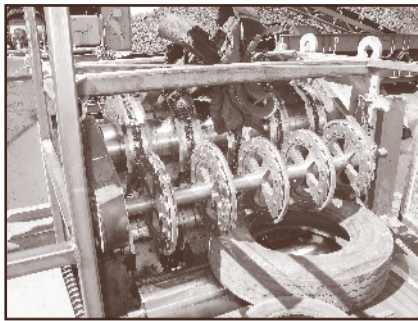


Students at Acalanes High School bust waste on campus.

Recycling Means Business for California

It is easy to see the environmental benefits of recycling, such as reducing land dedicated to landfills and consumption of raw materials. But is recycling also good for the economy? Absolutely! Recycling a ton of "waste" has twice the economic benefit of burying it in the ground. Here in California recycling is big business, accounting for 85,000 jobs, and \$4 billion in salaries and wages, plus \$10 billion worth of goods and services annually.

Take tire recycling for example. Californians run through 33.5 million tires each year. Instead of stockpiling them and risking disastrous tire fires, Golden By-Products in Ballico, CA shreds the tire rubber



"Trash to Treasures" is the business principle at tire recycler Golden Byproducts. Besides solving disposal problems, innovative companies in the recycling industry contribute to California's economy.

and sells it to processors who make various products. One of these recycled products is Rubber Bark, a material used for playground surfacing and landscape applications. Golden By-Product's operations diverted 38,644 tons of tires from landfills and employed 65 people in 2003 alone — and the numbers are growing.

Tire rubber is only one of many materials that can be put to work to improve our environment *and* our economy. Other discards that have become feedstock for new industries include electronic waste, construction and demolition debris and organic materials.

Green Homes Make an Impression

Last May over 1,700 people toured 31 beautiful homes in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Not only beautiful and architecturally inspiring, these homes are also healthy and environmentally friendly.



Patricia and Raymond Buck with Patricia's mom (middle) in front of their award-winning "Casa Verde", a truly green home in and out.

The Buck home in Alamo welcomed 156 visitors, who admired not only the stunning front door and entryway made from old redwood wine barrel staves, but also some of the more subtle features. These included the rainwater collection cistern to conserve water for irrigation and the use of clay plaster mixed with natural pigments instead of paint to avoid the "off-gassing" of harmful pollutants. Among the many environmental design aspects is the building's deliberate orientation and shading that minimizes summer heat gain while maximizing passive solar heating in the winter. The Buck family's "green" commitment doesn't end at the door step—the driveway surface is permeable to allow rainwater to be absorbed into the ground and the landscaping is all drought tolerant.

Reuse & Cleanup Days Fall Schedule

| Community | Date | Watch your mailbox for a flyer specifying dates and accepted items. Visit www.wastediversion.org for more information. |
|---------------|-----------|--|
| Unincorp. Co. | August | |
| Danville | September | |
| Walnut Creek | October | |

Composting Shows Kids the Cycle of Life

Does your child bring a scale to the kitchen, weigh leftover vegetable scraps, and insist you start a compost pile...now!? If so she's probably in Debórah Walker's fifth-grade science group at Buena Vista Elementary (BVE) in Walnut Creek. BVE is a Wastebuster certified school that gets an A+ for reducing waste.

As part of the Jiminy Cricket Environmental Challenge (a California Department of Education program), the students started collecting all the waste from school lunches, sorting it into compostables and trash. Every day they weighed each separately.



A student at Buena Vista Elementary feeds lunch scraps to hungry worms in the school's compost pile. The fertilizer produced will nourish the school garden.

Students then added the compostable fruit and vegetable scraps to yard trimmings in the compost pile. In January alone the students measured 1,973 pounds of leftovers. Happily, 305 pounds of that was biodegradable material and "diverted" to the compost pile.

Over the course of a few months, students watched as their lunch scraps—helped along by hungry worms and other organisms—changed into valuable organic fertilizer. This compost will be used to feed the garden at the before- and after-school care center.

"The students learned about the cycles of life," says Debórah. "Like how organic things break down and become part of the earth again, how we don't get 'extra stuff' from anywhere—there's no where else to get 'new' water, 'new' soil, 'new' air. They learned that we have to be responsible stewards of the resources we have."

Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

I heard about green building at UN World Environment Day in June. Where can I learn more?

Wondering in Walnut Creek



Dear Wondering:

We have good news for you! Green building resources are becoming increasingly available as interest grows in materials and techniques that create healthier homes and protect the environment. A good starting point is the Build It Green website, which recently merged with the Green Resource Center. Serving all nine Bay Area counties, Build It Green offers fact sheets on various green building materials and products. They also have a searchable materials database, a list of Bay Area certified green building professionals and customized responses through their "Ask an Expert" function. Visit www.builditgreen.org or call 1-888-40-GREEN.

If you prefer to read offline, try the bi-monthly Natural Home & Garden magazine for information and inspiration around green home design, earth-friendly décor and natural living. Find out more at www.naturalhomemagazine.com. The CCCSWA's new green building library is also a good place to start. Please call us before you visit.

Finally, you can see and feel green building materials and natural home furnishings first-hand at Green Fusion Design Center in San Anselmo (www.greenfusiondesigncenter.com) and Eco Design Resources in San Carlos (www.ecodesignresources.com).

Do you have a question for the Authority? Please send it to "Ask the Authority" 1280 Civic Drive, #210, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 or email us at authority@wastediversion.org.

Contact information

CCCSWA.....925-906-1801

fax: 906-1805 web: www.wastediversion.org

email: authority@wastediversion.org

PLEASANT HILL BAYSHORE DISPOSAL .. 925-603-1144

fax: 685-8153

web: www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com

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

VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT 925-935-8900

fax: 935-1617 web: 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. . . 925-906-1806

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

REUSE & CLEANUP DAYS 1-707-746-6067