

August
2010



Is this job for YOU?...p3

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Master Recycler Newsletter

Bioplastics Revisited

Sarah Grimm, a Waste Reduction Specialist for Lane County, graciously agreed to share this excellent article she wrote a couple of years ago on the challenges of bioplastics. This has again become a particularly relevant topic with the launch of the new food waste collection program here in the Salem/Keizer area *Thanks, Sarah!*



There's a new plastic on the block, perhaps you've heard of it. On the street (and on the container) it goes by the name of PLA. This Acronym refers to Polylactic Acid, a derivative of corn sugars that serves as the basic building block of this new, rather amazing material. Plastic made from plants, not petroleum! How great is that?

As prudent preparation for a world without petroleum, I've been an enthusiastic fan of this new material. As an event coordinator with a passion for Zero Waste events, I am doubly enthusiastic about its ability to successfully disintegrate in the hot piles of a commercial composting operation.

But as a recycler, and coordinator of local recycling programs, I have significant reservations about the broad spectrum use of this material without more directed and proactive attention to end-use and disposal instructions for it.

In most cases this new plant-based plastic is virtually indistinguishable from the petroleum based PET plastic. Looks just like it. Beer cups at local festivals and the tubs used at my favorite grocery store deli counter are two prominent local examples. In the first example, thanks to the cooperation of a local composter, many local events are able to achieve impressive 70-80% recovery rates. Using corn-based PLA plastic for food serviceware, this portion of an event's waste can be composted, not landfilled.

However, in the second example—used as deli tubs -- there is no education to let customers know what to do with the container when its empty. While they are compostable, they don't break down in back yard compost piles that rarely maintain the high temperatures of a commercial compost operation. Marked

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"Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others."
-- Danny Thomas



with a #7 and looking JUST like #1 PET, most people just put them in regular recycling bins unaware of the distinction. But this material is not PET, it is a contaminant that must be sorted out somehow, at some point, or the resulting PET will be inferior or unusable.

To their credit, the manufacturer NatureWorks® has conducted extensive research and provided technical data describing how this material will interact with existing plastics recycling plants—how much PLA can be absorbed without degrading quality and what methods of sorting (mechanical, human, infrared) can remove it most successfully. The only sort system that is consistently capable of capturing 93-95% of the PLA is the near-infrared optical scanning equipment which is very, very expensive and not viable for most sort facilities.

This places an unfair burden on the existing plastic recyclers who pay good money to receive PET feedstocks for their processing plants but then have to spend time and money to sort out the PLA. As the use of this material in recyclable look-alikes increases, this burden of sorting contaminants threatens to damage PET processing and erode the prices local collectors across the country need to provide the recycling service.

NatureWorks® is studying and piloting various recycling efforts of their material. In 2005, they announced a buy-back price for loads of 40,000 lbs or more, but to date, they have not yet bought back any loads of post consumer plastic. Recyclers across the country have called on them to discontinue use of their material for containers that look just like PET. If they can't or won't do that, certainly they could be more aggressive and proactive in assisting collectors/recyclers in getting their material diverted directly to compost operations or back to their plant for recycling back into new products.

Here's what we as concerned citizens and consumers can do. We can keep an eagle eye out for this #7 symbol and PLA printed on containers and NOT put it in our recycling bins. Nor should we put it in curbside compost carts. Consumers who would like to see this material diverted from the garbage for special events may be able to arrange a special collection of separated, approved compostable material with their hauler.

If you would like to see this material recycled, send a message to the vendor who sold/gave it to you, or to the manufactures and vendors of products/packages containing this material—let them know of your

commitment to recycling and desire to see a successful closed loop system that does not contaminate other recycling systems. Urge them to provide information and facilitation toward composting or recycling it. Unless of course, if their intent is to have the material sent to landfill, they should clearly state the instruction to keep it out of regular recycling systems.

For my part, I will be investigating possible opportunities to be the first community collection in the nation to send a load for recycling. I can't say that I think its possible at this point, but big recycle dreams is what this community is all about. Lane County has a long history of early involvement in nascent recycling programs, from milk carton recycling and styrofoam to electronics and mattresses. It would be great to add this material to the list.



Marion County Waste Reduction Job Open!

Don't worry, Alan, Bailey and Beth aren't going anywhere, but they are hoping for some help administering all of the wonderful waste reduction projects we have here in Marion County!

Environmental Services is in search of a 4th Waste Reduction Coordinator - might it be YOU? Review the job posting online at www.co.marion.or.us/BS/HR/jobopenings.htm to see if it is your cup of tea, then complete the application and turn it into Human Resources by **August 9th**.

As you will see from the position description, all the Waste Reduction Coordinators have a bounty of shared job duties, but the primary responsibilities of this position will be to oversee the Multifamily Recycling Program, coordinate the new Food Waste Composting Program and administer all waste reduction grants.

Interested? Apply today!



Free Online Training

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services' (DAS) Sustainability Program and Human Resource Services Division has developed a sustainability training module for state government.

The module includes two sections: a basic look at concepts and the history of sustainability in state government and another advanced segment that includes ideas to improve workplace sustainability.

DAS is very excited at the learning potential of these modules and encourages both State agencies and the general public to take advantage of this online training. Both modules are available through iLearn and are accessible to anyone with a computer. Each module takes 10-15 minutes to complete with one essay question, as well as a follow-up email in three months that asks the participants if they've changed any behaviors as a response to the training. This will allow the Sustainability Program to track the effectiveness of the tools and make adjustments to enhance the viability of the program.

The links below will take you to the Sustainability Program's training page with information on how to access the modules and guides to navigate through iLearn. Once you have followed the link to iLearn, click on the "Create New Account" on the bottom of the screen.

<http://sustainability.oregon.gov/DAS/FAC/SUST/training.shtml>

<https://ilearn.oregon.gov/Kview/CustomCodeBehind/Base/Login/Login.aspx>),

Please contact Elin Shepard, DAS Sustainability Coordinator, at (503) 373-7132 or elin.d.shepard@state.or.us if you have questions or comments.



Master Recycler Picnic at Pringle Creek Community

Hey everyone, let's get together and catch up over a summer potluck picnic at a stupendous super-sustainable community located right here in Marion County!

Date: Thursday, August 26th

Hours: 6:15 til ???

Place: Painter's Hall, Pringle Creek Community
3911 Village Center Dr SE
Salem, Oregon 97302
503-315-1055 office

Bring: A side dish of something yummy to share. Salads, deserts, veggies, etc. We will have hot dogs and veggie alternatives available to throw on the grill. Don't forget to bring your own reusable table service and beverage container! Zero Waste is the name of our game, after all!



Pringle Creek Community is one of the most sustainable communities being built in the country. Their guiding principles integrate green building, energy efficiency and respect to our natural environment. Take a look around and you'll see a thriving community about to happen.

For more info about the Community visit:
www.pringlecreek.com/explore.htm

Dinner feed to begin at 6:30. At 7-ish a representative from Pringle Creek Community will lead a tour of the community and be on hand to answer questions. What a great opportunity to check out one of America's premier sustainable communities that's hidden right here in our own back yard!

Please RSVP to Alan Pennington—apennington@co.marion.or.us or 503-365-3188





TASTY TIDBITS



No Paint Left Behind

Oil-based paints are now being accepted at the Salem-Keizer and North Marion Recycling & Transfer Stations. The new oil-based paint & coatings accepted include:

Acrylic	Stains
Alkyd	Rust Preventatives
Enamels	Varnish
Deck Coatings	Urethanes
Sealers	

Latex paints and oil-based paints have separate areas for drop off.



Bike to the Fair!

Ride your bike to the State Fair, park in the staffed bicycle corral, and redeem your claim check for \$2.00 off the gate admission price! Located on 17th Street in front of the Americraft Center/ Jackman-Long Building.



Kudos to the Oregon Department of Transportation Public Transit Division for providing staffing for the bike corral during the state fair.

Fall Master Recycler Class

Tell all your friends! The dates for this fall's new Master Recycler Class have been announced.

The eight evening training sessions will begin on Thursday, September 9, 2010 and will continue on Thursday evenings through October 28th. They will be held from 6:15pm until 9:00pm at the Marion County Public Works office, located at 5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem. The training also includes three Saturday field trips to local recycling and composting facilities, which begin at

8:30am and finish between noon and 3:30 pm. Get all the info at mcrecycles.net



Bye Bye White Pages?



The New York times reports that Verizon has asked New York state regulators to allow them to stop

automatic delivery of White Pages to its customers there. Instead, the company would deliver books on demand with a digital option offered too.

Surveys suggest that only 1 in 9 people use the book form of the directory, and the move could save 5,000 tons of paper a year, not to mention the cost savings. Plans are still in place to distribute the Yellow Pages, although an opt-out option is available.

Green Teeth!

Preserve, a company that makes durable household and personal care items out of 100 % recycled plastic, is going one step further to ensure that their toothbrushes get recycled at the end of their life.



They have designed a new package that also serves as a postage-paid return mail envelope to make it easy to see your old toothbrush off to start life anew in building material products.

Preserve also offers a subscription. They mail you a new toothbrush every 3 months for a year and you mail back your old ones.

Visit preserveproducts.com for more information.

Keizer Joins the Fun

As of **August 2nd**, City of Keizer residents will also be participating in the curbside Food Waste composting program!

As in Salem, residents can now add all food waste to their green/brown cart (yep, just scrape the plate



right in there!). The name of the cart has changed to the *Mixed Organics* cart. For all the details on what is and is not accepted in the Mixed Organics cart, visit mcrecycles.net.

Call to Serve



Saturdays August 1—October 31st

Salem Saturday Market

Help educate market shoppers about waste prevention, recycling, and composting in a happy, social, outdoor setting. Volunteers needed for 2 hour shifts every Saturday from July 24th – October 31st. Interested? Email zerowaste@friendsofsalemsaturdaymarket.org or leave a message at (503) 877-FSSM.

Tuesday, August 3th

Salem-Keizer Recycling and Transfer Station Tour

A Master Recycler is needed to assist in leading a tour of the Salem-Keizer Recycling & Transfer Station and the Earth Walk. There will be approximately 25 students ages 6th - 8th grades. There is one Master Recycler currently leading the tour, but a second would be helpful with the large number of students. If you would like to help with this tour (and to verify the date—your editor could not get confirmation at press time), please contact Jen Biel at pastorjen@christthegoodshep.org or 503-363-3726.

Friday, August 6th, Saturday August 7th and Sunday August 8th

Homer Davenport Days, Silverton

Master Recyclers are needed to staff recycling stations and educate festival-goers on proper recycling techniques. The festival hours are 10 am - 10 pm Friday and Saturday, and 10 am - 5 pm on Sunday. Contact Sheldon Traver 503-507-9953 or sheldonstraver@gmail.com for shift times or more information.

Friday, August 27 – Monday, September 6

Oregon State Fair!

Shifts: 10 – 1:30 and 1:30 – 5 (other hours can be arranged)

Come to the Oregon State Fair (for free, of course!) Help Marion County get the word out about our EarthWISE and composting programs. And it's, like, THE FAIR! If you can help with this event please contact Alan at 503-365-3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us

Saturday, September 11

City of Jefferson's 16th Annual Emergency Services Expo

Shifts: 10 am – 3 pm

The goal of this event is to promote safety and services that local governments have to offer. MR's needed to staff a booth to spin the fabulous wheel of waste with attendees and inform the public about our programs. If you can help with this event please contact Alan at 503-365-3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us.

Wednesday, October 6

Job, Safety, Health and Wellness Event at the Salem Armory

Shifts: Noon – 3 and 3 – 6 pm

Free job information, health & medical testing, prizes, and freebies. Flu shots! Marion County will join over 40 other vendors and promote household hazardous waste information. Wanna come? If you can cut class or take the afternoon off we could use a hand. If interested, please contact Alan at 503-365-3188 or apennington@co.marion.or.us.

Events & Occasions



Thursday, August 26

Master Recycler Potluck!

See details on page 4.

Thursday & Friday, August 26-27.

Workshop: The "Coastal Forests and Streams Water School"

Tillamook Forest Center, near Tillamook, OR.

The Oregon Master Naturalist Program and the Master Watershed Stewardship Program announce visit tracker.oregonmasternaturalist.org/ to sign up for a Master Naturalist user account and enroll in this course. Lunch and all course materials are included. **Please hurry. Space is limited! Pre-registration ends August 6th.**

Saturday August 28– Sunday November 7, 2010

Critical Messages: Contemporary NW Artists on the Environment

Hallie Ford Museum, Salem

Co-organized with the Western Gallery at Western Washington University in Bellingham, the exhibition explores how 26 contemporary artists respond to a host of environmental issues confronting the Pacific Northwest: growth management; waste management; land and sea; mass production and consumption; transportation; preservation of wilderness and wetlands; biodiversity; climate change; and energy. Included in the exhibition are works by artists from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, and British Columbia.

Sunday, August 29th, 2010 Time TBA

Kidical Mass Bike Ride - Hasta la Vista, Summer Break! A Green Ride & Green Potluck

Bush Pasture City Park, Salem

We'll be riding the Salem Greenway Ride, while wearing green, and eating green. It can't get much greener than that! Come play outside and say goodbye to a fun 2010 Kidical Mass season with an afternoon ride into the sunset followed by yumminess. Please bring green colored food to share.

GOT RECYCLING?
BE IN THE KNOW ON WHERE TO GO!

Our new and improved database helps you make the right decision on where to take unwanted items.

FIND IT AT
www.mcrecycles.net

PUBLIC WORKS
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503.588.5169 SE HABLA ESPAÑOL | www.mcrecycles.net

Other Master programs of interest:

Master Naturalist Program:

oregonmasternaturalist.org

Master Watershed Stewards Program:

extension.oregonstate.edu/watershed/watershed-stewards

Master Climate Change:

climlead.uoregon.edu/node/67

Master Gardener Program:

extension.oregonstate.edu/marion/master-gardeners

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Free Kitchen Compost Carriers Still Available!!



Tell your friends and family in Marion County that there is still plenty of time to get their free Compost Carrier! They are available at your garbage hauler's office. Just give them a call to arrange to pick it up!



Marion County Public Work—Environmental Services

5155 Silverton Rd. NE

Salem, OR 97305