

October  
2009



Welcome Katrina! Pg. 2

MARION COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

# Master Recycler Newsletter

## Bioplastics Buzz



The debate whether bioplastics, specifically polylactic acid (PLA), can be recycled with mainstream PET continues to rage on. Released studies seem to contradict each other, with one indicating PLA does not contaminate the PET recycling stream and another indicating it does.

Bioplastics are used to create products typically made from petroleum-based products. They are biopolymers, derived from renewable biomass sources such as corn starch or vegetable oil. PLA is one form of bioplastic, produced from glucose.

The National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) recently announced its concern for potential contamination of the PET recycling stream associated with PLA bottles. The trade association for the PET plastic industry in the U.S. and Canada cited its concerns involving cost of separation, increased contamination, yield loss and impact on recycled PET (RPET) quality and processing.

"We don't doubt that PLA can be recycled," said Tom Busard, NAPCOR Chairman, "but there are unquestionably some big issues yet to overcome."

NAPCOR's Technical Director, Mike Schedler, added, "The entire premise that you can simply add PLA containers into the PET recycling stream, successfully sort them out and eventually find markets for the material, is like advocating that mixed ceramic materials can be thrown right in with the recyclable glass stream to be sorted out, and that eventually there will be enough of this mixed material that someone will want to buy it. It's really no different from this and just isn't a viable solution from anyone's point of view."



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*"If you think the efforts of one individual will be nothing, then you have never been to bed with a mosquito".*

*~ Betty Reese*



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On the other side of the debate are the manufacturers of PLA bioplastics. NatureWorks, LLC, a commercial manufacturer of PLA bioplastics, released the findings of a two-year bioplastics recycling study earlier this year, concluding that automated systems currently being used in the recycling industry are capable of sorting bioplastic bottles from petroleum-based bottles with an accuracy of nearly 100 percent.



“Demonstrating that natural plastic bottles can be brought seamlessly into the recycling stream through the use of automated sorting equipment available today is a major finding and another step toward greater sustainability,” said NatureWorks director of communications and public affairs, Steve Davies.

A mixed plastics recycling study, *Domestic Mixed Plastics Packaging Waste Options*, conducted by U.K. based Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), also found that current NIR (near-infrared) recycling systems can effectively sort PLA from a mixed packaging stream.

-From Earth911.com



## Where the Rubber Hits the Road

Marion County Public Works – Environmental Services welcomes a brand new AmeriCorps member to the Waste Reduction Team. Kat Franken, a self described “Junk Junkie,” has begun a yearlong term of service as a Recycling Outreach Specialist.

Kat is the third and final AmeriCorps member leading the 3-year Multi-Family Recycling Project with Public Works. Her mission is to launch the outreach campaign designed by the two previous AmeriCorps members, with an ultimate goal of doubling the number of multi-family complexes participating in onsite recycling. She will also be participating with a number of solid waste outreach efforts and become a familiar presence in the Master Recycler classes.

Kat is a Marion County native but has spent the last several years living in Portland, Oregon where she earned an Environmental Science degree from Portland State University. Before joining AmeriCorps, Kat worked as a Hazardous Waste Technician with Metro Household Hazardous Waste and also completed an internship with Free Geek, a non-profit committed to computer reuse and responsible recycling. She is very excited to be involved with Oregon’s leading county recycling program and knows that there is a lot of valuable knowledge to be gained over the next year.



Kat can be reached at 503-566-4159 or via email at [kfranken@co.marion.or.us](mailto:kfranken@co.marion.or.us).

## New Electronics Ban Goes Into Effect Jan. 1, 2010

Oregon E-Cycles, Oregon's free electronics recycling program, will become even more popular when the state's disposal ban on computers, monitors and televisions goes into effect on January 1, 2010. After that date, Oregonians must recycle these electronics – they will no longer be allowed to be disposed of in the garbage or at disposal sites such as landfills, transfer stations and incinerators.

"After the ban, throwing away these items will be illegal," says Kathy Kiwala, Oregon E-Cycles Project Lead. "Anyone knowingly violating the ban may face penalties up to \$500 per item. With Oregon's convenient recycling system for electronic waste, it should be easy to keep it out of the trash."

The purpose of the ban isn't to make it difficult to clean out your stash of electronics, but to require reuse or recycling instead. Reuse and recycling save energy, conserve re-



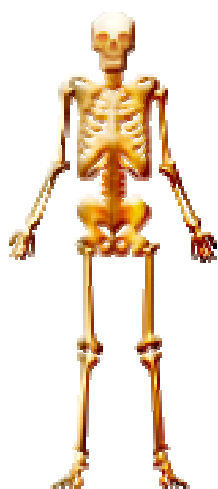
sources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts. In addition, requiring manufacturers to take responsibility for end-of-life management of their products encourages them to design products with less waste and fewer toxics. Cathode ray tubes found in televisions and computer monitors typically contain about four pounds of lead, while printed circuit boards and batteries in computers contain toxic heavy metals such as cadmium and mercury.

"Ultimately, the goal is to reduce environmental impacts over the life of these electronics and ensure they are safely managed when discarded," Kiwala says.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!

If your garbage or recycling is picked up at the curb:

Don't place computers, monitors and TVs in your trash, recycling bin or at the curb. These items require special handling and cannot be collected via your regular curbside service.



**Help us...**  
*Sort it out!*



Please don't contaminate mixed curbside recycling with plastic bags, they get tangled in the sorting machinery. Take them to your nearest participating recycling center or grocer instead.

**Thanks for helping recycling in Marion County work!**





## TASTY TIDBITS



### Tip fee increase



Garbage fees at Marion County's two transfer stations are increasing to \$15.00 minimum for the first 340 pounds. This is the second in a planned two-step increase to bring rates more in line with those in adjacent counties and discourage people from hauling waste across county lines in search of cheaper rates.

### Another Winner



Dan Lowrie of Salem, Oregon, won a brand new Earth Machine composter that was on display at the Marion County booth at this year's Oregon State Fair.

### Reusing the Reused

Chicobag, makers of reusable bags that are stuffed into a small pouch to fit in purse or pocket, has made a commitment to keep all reusable bags out of landfills (and incinerators!). Unwanted bags of any make or condition can be sent to:

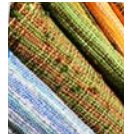
ChicoBag Company  
C/O Zero Waste Program  
349 Huss Drive  
Chico, CA 95928



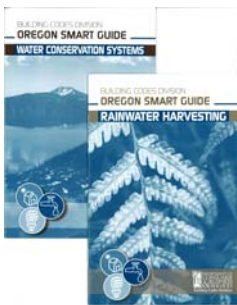
Usable bags will be donated to low-income families, and worn out bags will be donated to Grateful Thread, a business in that weaves and sews them into new products to support victims of domestic violence.

[www.chicobag.com](http://www.chicobag.com)

[www.greatfulthread.org](http://www.greatfulthread.org)



### Smart H<sub>2</sub>O



There are two new booklets available from the State of Oregon Building

Codes Division to aid in the planning of newly approved rainwater and gray water harvesting systems in Oregon. To order the booklets Contact Gabrielle Schiffer, Green Building Services Coordinator for BCD at 503-373-7418 or [gabriele.m.schiffer@state.or.us](mailto:gabriele.m.schiffer@state.or.us)

### Recycle Brita®



Recycling of used Brita® water filters is available through Preserve, makers of 100% recycled products.

1. Dry the filter by shaking off excess water and setting it in a dry place for at least three days.
2. Wrap the filters in a plastic grocery bag, then pack it in a box. If possible, send multiple filters at a time.
3. Mail filters via ground shipping to: **Preserve Gimme 5 823 NYS Rte 13 Cortland, NY 13045**

Preserve also collects them at drop off locations around the country but none exist in Oregon. Master Recycler payback project anyone?

### Trash-Trackin'



A team of researchers from the MIT SENSEable City Lab recently embarked on a project called Trash Track,

which aims to get people thinking about what they throw away and how it impacts the environment. The project uses custom-designed electronic tags to track different types of waste on their final journey through the disposal systems of New York, London, and Seattle.

The preliminary results of Trash Track are on display at the Architectural League in New York Sept. 17—Nov. 7.

<http://senseable.mit.edu/trashtrack>

# Events of Note....

## Saturday, October 3

### SPROut's Green Roofs and Living Walls

8 a.m.-5 p.m

The Oregon Garden, Education Bldg  
Includes a lecture on green roofs and living walls, a tour of projects at The Oregon Garden that apply ecological horticulture to the sustainable landscape, a hands on workshop completing installation of a green roof on a tool shed and installing growing media and plants into a custom living wall. \$108 includes lunch & admission.

[www.sproutoregon.org](http://www.sproutoregon.org)

## Thursday, October 8

### Salem Progressive Film Series: *Crossroads on the Columbia*

Doors open 6:15 p.m., film at 7:00 p.m.  
Grand Theater, 191 High Street NE  
Energy speculators from New York, Texas and California have descended on Oregon with plans for three massive Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) port and storage terminals. Guest speakers include Bill Bradbury (Oregon's Global Warming Advisory Commission and former Secretary of State), Dan Serres (Conservation Director of Columbia Riverkeepers) and Olivia Schmidt (Citizens Against the Pipelines).

Adults \$3, Students \$2

**For more information:**

<http://www.salemprogressivefilms.net>

## Monday, October 12

### Recycling for Planet Earth-And Your Health *Bailey Payne, Marion County Public Works - Environmental Services*

7:00-8:30pm

Wellspring 1475

Mt.Hood Ave,  
Wooburn.

Find out how solid waste and recycling is



handled in Marion County, and why it is so critical that we reduce waste generation to protect our health, the environment, and as a strategy for addressing climate change. This presentation will highlight some of the innovative programs that have allowed Marion County to achieve Oregon's highest recycling rate. Bring your "How do I recycle?" questions. Free. Call 503-873-1785 to register.

## Thursday, October 15

### Native Plant Society Program: *The Changing Nature of the Willamette Valley*

7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Straub Environmental Learning Center  
Botanist and field ecologist Bruce Newhouse will discuss the enormous changes to the Willamette Valley since the arrival of the first European settlers. He will explain the challenges involved in restoring historic landscapes, how to prevent species invasion and regional conservation planning efforts, such as the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The program is sponsored by Willamette Valley Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon and is free and open to the public. For more information, please call 503-399-8615 after 7:00 p.m

## Saturday October 17

### Restoration Work Day

1320 A Street NE, Salem

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Help remove invasive species and plant natives at the Straub Environmental Learning Center's restora-

**Salem Green + Solar Home Tour**  
Saturday, October 3rd, 2009 + 9am-4pm

Visit with homeowners, green builders, contractors and architects who have incorporated green and solar techniques, technologies and materials into new and newly remodeled homes around Salem. For more information, visit <http://www.pringlecreek.com>

Purchase your ticket day of event at:  
Pringle Creek Community  
1831 Village Center Drive  
Salem, OR 97302

Cost: **\$15 Per Car**  
Carpooling encouraged.  
Bicyclists FREE!

**PUBLIC WORKS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**  
[www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es](http://www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es)  
503.588.5169 *Se habla español*

tion site! Beverages and gloves provided; bring a reusable mug.

## Thursday, October 22

### Straub Environmental Lecture Series: *Dr. Bill Ripple*

*"Linking Cougars to Butterflies"*

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Loucks Auditorium, Salem Public Library

The presence or absence of predators may be crucial to sustaining ecosystems. Dr. Ripple will talk about how the decline of cougar can set off an ecological chain reaction affecting everything from deer numbers, to trees, shrubs, streams, lizards, frogs, fish, flowers and butterflies. Dr. Ripple is a professor in the department of Forest Ecosystems and Society at Oregon State University. Free and open to the public, no registration required.



# Building a Worm Tower Part II



Thanks to Master Recycler Sally White for supplying these worm tower construction photos! Her instructions published in the last newsletter were very popular and I had many requests for photos. Have fun building!



Gather materials.



Measure.



Cut and ventilate.



Assemble & observe!

