

REAPS REPORT

RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING SOCIETY

Hotline: 250-561-7327 Box 444, Prince George, BC V2L 4S6 www.reaps.org July 2005

Join the Environmental Extravaganza

Prince George has been invited to enter the national 2005 Communities in Bloom after winning top marks at last year's provincial competition and is gearing up to host two judges. Judges will be arriving July 14th and on July 15th they will evaluate the accomplishments of every sector of Prince George (local government, private citizens, corporate and institutional sectors) in the following eight categories:

- Community Involvement
- Tidiness
- Environmental Effort
- Turf Areas
- Floral Arrangements
- Urban Forestry
- Heritage Conservation
- Landscaped Areas

There are a number of environmental programs in our city being carried out by our local government, industry, businesses, service groups and individuals. Their efforts will be showcased at an Environmental Extravaganza at the REAPS Compost Demonstration Garden on Friday, July 15th.

The judges will visit this event which is open to the public and which will include recycling activities for children and the construction of the "Waste Worm". The Waste Worm is made from garbage that would end up in our landfill.

The Communities in Bloom competition has many benefits including growing civic pride in our City by involving the whole community in recognizing and celebrating our successes in the eight categories. Prince George's entry into this national competition would not be possible without the support of all of our sponsors including Terasen Gas.

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The newsletter of the

RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLANNING SOCIETY

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The R.E.A.P.S Report is published six times a year, on the first of January, March, May, July, September and November.

Articles, originals or reprinted with permission, are submitted by members and represent the opinions of the authors only, not necessarily those of the Society, Board, or members as a whole.

Deadline for submission is two weeks prior to publication date. Articles, suggestions for articles, or comments in general can be submitted to the R.E.A.P.S office, or directly to Peter Williamson, the new Newsletter Editor:

Peter Williamson

Phone 250-563-6977

e-mail peteratwilliamson@yahoo.com

We are pleased to welcome Peter as the new editor of the REAPS Report. Peter comes to us from Bowen Island and edits two other community magazines. I have greatly enjoyed the experience of editing the newsletter for the past five years, and will undoubtedly continue to be involved.....”

Barbara Rayment

R.E.A.P.S. News

Sustainable Landscaping Update

The SLI project:

- the first mowing of Moore's Meadow has been completed
- trial planting at RCC has been planted with ground covers
- hog/tilling/ compost trials are completed along Massey and University Way, will continue to weed whack down the weeds until the fall when the permanent grass seeds will be planted
- UNBC – behind / beside the EFL building, a drainage bog is being installed and the Bentley Centre is receiving a face lift
- Studio 2880 will have a Trellis and planting installed at the end of this month or early July
- There is a trial planting going to start at RCC end of this month in which they are contributing \$5000 towards
- In September Hwy 97 and University Way embankment will have plugs and seeding applied
- The Botanical Reserve / Arboretum is going to the Board of Governors in September to have the land use designation changed so that it can be created. Pretty good chance this will happen
- UNBC research Professors have started their salt trials and completed the soil analysis on the MOF, Carrie Jane and University Way sampling
- Salt trials at UNBC consist of 3 solution concentration applied to 3 types of grasses, yarrow and Jacob's Ladder
- REAPS is conducting the same salt trial with the YCC crew on daylilies
- Lorraine is developing a questionnaire with 6 questions to go out with a mass mail out in September (free) with Alex (political Scientist at UNBC)
- Annie and Lorraine are also working on a questionnaire that will be placed on the website
- Signs for the sites have been delivered. The city of PG will be installing.

Around B.C.

RCBC's 31st Waste Reduction Conference Germinates Ideas

RCBC Recap July 2005

Almost 200 delegates, speakers, exhibitors, and guests got a worm's eye view of organics, recycling and other diversions at the Recycling Council of B.C.'s (RCBC) Annual Waste Reduction Conference June 1-3, in Harrison Hot Springs, B.C.

More than 30 presentations and workshops covered a variety of waste reduction and sustainability issues, including e-waste, paper recycling and compostable organics, this year's primary focus. In the opening plenary, the regional districts of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) and Central Kootenay (RDCK) presented a joint plan to remove organics from their municipal solid waste streams. RDKB solid waste manager Raymond Gaudart said compostable organics comprised more than 40 percent of the solid waste going to landfills in the two Districts.

The Kootenays' organics management plan includes collecting and processing the material into a variety of compost and soil remediation products. Details of the study can be accessed at www.rdkb.com.

On the e-waste front, Brenda Southam, executive director of the B.C. Bottle Depot Association and Bert Monesmith of Genesis

Recycling, announced they have forwarded a joint proposal to Electronic Product Stewardship Canada and related brand owners to provide an e-waste stewardship program for B.C.

To view all the presentations made and the annual awards handed out at the conference, please visit www.rcbc.bc.ca.



Around the World

JASPER: KITCHEN ORGANICS PILOT PROJECT

Submitted by Nicole Ward, Environmental Stewardship Coordinator, Municipality of Jasper

On April 18th, 100 households in Jasper began composting their kitchen organics as part of an eight-week pilot program. The project is two-fold; a commercial composting program has been in place since the early 1990s and while there are two recycling depots that have containers for compost, a more formal residential program is needed in order to achieve better waste diversion.

Earlier this year Jasper's Municipal Council passed a motion to endorse the composting project. Over the eight week time period participating households will collect and measure their kitchen organic material.

The pilot's primary goal is to investigate the feasibility of a residential kitchen organics collection program in Jasper and to measure the attitudes and acceptance of residents towards composting.

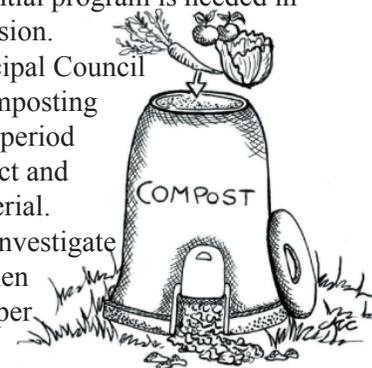
Participants were chosen based on returned surveys that were mailed out to all residents. When the pilot begins, each participant will be provided with compostable bags and collection containers (a small one for under the sink and a larger green bin for week-long storage).

Educational materials will indicate the acceptable kitchen organics for composting: coffee grounds and filters, eggshells, fruit/vegetable peels and rinds, and tea bags/leaves. Items that are not compostable include: animal waste, dairy products, plastic, tin, glass, meat products and bones. Those participating will be responsible for weighing their organics before depositing them at one of the several residentially located bear-proof containers. There is no curbside collection!

Feedback that is gathered from participants following the trial will help to determine the need for increased collection points in the town, assess practicality and usefulness of the Biosak™ compostable bags and collection containers, and estimate the potential capture of organic material.

In 2004, the municipal census revealed that 68.8% of residents supported a more convenient and accessible composting program. Jasper is a unique mountain community where backyard composting is not feasible because of the potential to attract wildlife. Increasing participation in composting is crucial in order to reduce the amount of solid waste that the town sends to the regional landfill.

This pilot, as well as the existing recycling program and revitalization in the commercial composting program will help the town achieve its waste reduction goals.



ENGLAND: TRADING SCHEME FOR MUNICIPAL WASTE

England has launched the world's first allowance trading scheme for municipal waste. Councils which exceed their quotas for biodegradable waste will have to buy disposal rights from those councils which come in under target.

A new trading scheme encourages municipal councils to move to more sustainable waste management practices, like composting, for biodegradable waste, such as kitchen and garden waste.

It will benefit councils, such as Isle of Wight District Council, Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council and Dorset County Council who have taken the lead in dealing with kitchen and garden waste by collecting, composting and recycling over a quarter of household waste produced in their region during 2002/03.

The scheme has been developed by Government to help local authorities meet tough targets under the EU Landfill Directive to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill sites.

Under the scheme, authorities will be set allowances for the amount of biodegradable waste they can landfill. Waste disposal authorities will be able to trade their allowances with other disposal authorities; selling allowances if their waste has been diverted to other disposal routes, e.g. recycling, or buying allowances if they exceed their set allowances.

Waste disposal authorities will also be able to save unused allowances (bank) or bring forward part of their future allocation (borrow).

The scheme, now approved by both Houses of Parliament, is the first of its kind in the municipal waste sector, but trading schemes have already been

used successfully across the world in other sectors, most notably to reduce emissions to the atmosphere.

The diversion of municipal biodegradable waste from landfill is a key objective under the Landfill Directive. One tonne of biodegradable waste produces between 200 and 400 cubic meters of landfill gas. Landfills released 25% of the UK's methane emissions in 2001, which represents 2% of our total greenhouse gas emissions.

By 2010, biodegradable waste going to landfill must be 75% of the amount produced in 1995; by 2013 this is reduced to 50% and by 2020 to 35%.

Today, Environment Minister Elliot Morley welcomed the scheme and highlighted how it is set to help local authorities in meeting waste targets:



Elliot Morley said: "These Regulations create a trading scheme that allows councils to cut the amount of waste going to landfill sites where it is most cost effective to do so.

"It is an innovative approach which moves Government away from the old tools of command and control by offering an alternative to the regulatory system of inflexible targets.

"Through the flexibilities of trading, banking and borrowing, authorities can find the most cost-effective means of meeting waste targets, tailored to their specific waste strategies and circumstances."

In England the scheme is designed to give local

authorities as much flexibility as possible, whilst still ensuring that the Landfill Directive targets are met.

Earlier this month, Government confirmed that the penalty for non-compliance with targets to divert biodegradable waste from landfill would be

reduced from £200/tonne to £150/tonne.

Mr. Morley concluded: "Experience from other trading schemes show that they work by helping to secure cost-effective solutions to meeting targets. This should not mean an increase of pressure on council bills."

AUSTRALIA: PLASTIC BAGS TO BE "BANNED" IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA IN 3 YEARS

Single-use plastic shopping bags will be banned in South Australia in three years with the State Government introducing a deadline to rid the state of the environmental scourge.

Zero Waste South Australia reports that the State Government will push for consumers to embrace reusable green bags as a replacement.

Speaking on World Environment Day, Premier Mike Rann says the State Government is taking the lead nationally with a decision to phase out plastic bags by the end of 2008. "This is a brave and progressive step for this state, no other state has so far gone this far. But this is a decision that this Government fervently believes is necessary to stop the damage plastic bags are doing to our environment and to protect our wildlife," he said. "And we believe South Australians will support this move.

Already up to 39 councils across the state have moved towards being plastic bag free, with \$700,000 in funding provided by the State Government to help their initiatives."

Environment Minister John Hill said up to 6.9 billion plastic bags were used in Australia last

year, including 8 per cent in South Australia - with the majority ending up in landfill. Up to 6.01 billion of those are the single-use bags which would be banned in SA. "Plastic bags take a very long time to break down in landfill," he said. "But not only are they ending up in landfill, they're also finding their way into storm-water, rivers and streams and floating out to sea, where they are killing our marine creatures and birds.

"South Australia has traditionally led the way in environmental reform, with our progressive container deposit legislation lauded nationally. This Government is determined to uphold this tradition - and we are leading the way again with a ban on single-use plastic bags."

In 2002 South Australia put the issue of plastic bags on the national agenda and has since secured an agreement from the Environment Protection and Heritage Council, which is made up of federal and state environment ministers, to phase out plastic bags by the end of 2008.

"Now we want the environment ministers to agree this year to an Australia-wide ban at the end of 2008," Minister Hill said. "At the next meeting of the EPHC in Perth at the end of June, South Australia will be calling for a vote for a national ban.

NOT QUITE “ZERO WASTE” AT MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 2005 WOMA Adelaide music festival held in Adelaide recently was declared to be a Zero Waste event. The Waste Management Association of Australia (WMAA) reports that caterers were only permitted to use biodegradable crockery and cutlery, while customers were asked to separate waste into recyclable or compostable bins.

A survey by Flinders Bioremediation found less than a quarter of the waste was biodegradable, as follows:

paper & card - catering 37%
paper & card - other 22%
biodegradable cutlery 3%
biodegradable crockery 6%
food 26%
non-biodegradable contaminants 6%

The consultants took 380 kg of this collected material to a composting facility where it was formed into piles and left (unturned) for nine weeks. Most of the bioplastics had begun to break down during this period (which saw temperatures of 55 - 70 degrees C).

Informed choices

What is Xeriscaping anyway?

by: M. Bulhura

The common misconception surrounding the technique of landscaping called *xeriscaping* is that it means ripping up your yard, laying down gravel, and maybe a cactus or two. Xeriscaping is actually an excellent alternative to traditional lawns. It is a brilliant way to conserve water, and it allows you to enjoy the beauty and diversity of the plants native to the Prince George area. Not to mention, no more mowing, raking, and hauling of grass trimmings.

The word ‘xeriscape’ can be translated from its Greek form to mean ‘dry-scene’, which is exactly what xeriscaping is as a gardening method. Traditional turf is removed in favour of slow-growing, drought tolerant plants. The benefits of this are plentiful. Water is conserved, as rain water is often sufficient for many of these plants. Yard and grass trimmings that may otherwise be sent to the landfill are avoided. Generally, less fertilizer and pest control is needed, which is always beneficial to you, your family, and our environment. Your labour is also conserved, as many of the plants used in xeriscaping are low maintenance.

There are many planting options available for xeriscaping. Generally, indigenous plants

are the best choice, as the plants need to be compatible with the locally available resources (water, soil type, sunlight) to be effective. Xeriscaped landscapes are designed to minimize the effect they will have on the surrounding area, and native plants have already formed a niche in the local ecosystem.

A good choice for flowers is spring bulbs, as they are drought evaders. They will grow and flower in the cooler, moist months of spring and autumn, and lie dormant during the hot, dry summer months. Rock gardens (when done well) can be very attractive water conservers. However, it is important to avoid the “rock pile” look; put your rock garden in a logical area.

One downfall of rock gardens is that they tend to be quite labour intensive, with lots of weeding required. Low growing plants make an eye-catching addition to rock gardens.

Xeriscaping is a striking alternative to water-greedy lawns. As well as conserving water and helping the environment, you will save your own time and money! For additional ideas, come down to the REAPS demonstration garden and check out the indigenous plants display.

Kraft launches sustainable coffee brand:

Deal with Rainforest Alliance will see Kraft buying “sustainable” coffee beans

Kraft, the U.S. food group that owns mass market coffee brands such as Kenco and Maxwell House, is gearing up to launch its own “sustainable” brand, based on a deal with the Rainforest Alliance that will see the group buying a growing volume of sustainably certified beans.

But Annemieke Wijn, Kraft’s senior director for sustainability programs, says the purchasing commitment doesn’t actually have much to do with marketing. She says the addition of a sustainability element to an established brand may be more attractive to consumers who are not dedicated greens than buying a brand they don’t know, such as Cafedirect. But she suspects that growing conditions will just become a part of the background, like having an airbag in a car.

“I frankly do not believe that it will

be a majority of coffee sold, but there could be a market. There are people who are interested without being religious about it. Having additional reassurance about being sustainable will be more attractive for this group of people than a brand they don’t know or which is solely based on sustainability criteria.”



Wijn sets the Rainforest Alliance deal more in the context of quality and the plummeting prices in the past couple of years that have caused havoc on coffee farms. “Agricultural sustainability is quite fundamental for long-term good-quality supply. The downward price spiral means that farmers don’t take good care of their farms, and that affects quality. If farmers begin to work more sustainably they’ll be better off economically in the long-term.

“We are already seeing that once farmers get over their initial investment they will do better economically and will manage their farms better, and be better-prepared for the next crisis.”

RECYCLING and ENVIRONMENTAL
ACTION PLANING SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICARTION

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ Postal code: _____

Telephone: _____

Annual Membership Fee:

- Individual (\$8.00)
- Family (\$15.00)
- Business (\$25.00)
- Student (\$5.00)
- Senior (\$5.00)

I'm interested in volunteering: Yes No

Things I would like to take part in are:

- School Presentation
- Master Composter Program
- Spring Plant Sales
- General Garden work
- Information Booths
- Fundraiser Events
- Public Workshops and Presentation
- Board of Directors

Date: _____

Cheque payable to :
R.E.A.P.S.
Box 44, Prince George, B.C. V2L 4S6

COMING EVENTS

JULY

- 3 – 9** Go For Green Week at the Compost Demo Garden
- 11** World Population Day
- 15** Enviro Extravagazana at the Compost Demo Garden 1 – 4 p.m. showcasing, for the Communities in Bloom National Judges, our community groups that help the environment.
- 17** Prince George Art Gallery fundraiser: ARTISTS IN THE GARDEN

AUGUST

- 6** BC Hydro Conservation Event in Fort George Park 11- 3 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 16** World Ozone Day
- 28** Green Consumer Day

OCTOBER

- 3** World Habitat Day
- 17- 21** REAPS School Waste Reduction Challenge
- 17-23** Waste Reduction Week Canada

• ATTENTION •

Are you interested in joining our e-mail hotline to be notified of upcoming events and/or volunteer opportunities? Contact us at events@reaps.org or volunteer@reaps.org respectively.

Would you like to submit an article for the newsletter or suggest articles? Contact us at newsletter@reaps.org.

tip of the month

Plastic Bags:

- * **place in bottom of plant pots and hanging baskets –act as great drainage systems**
- * **scrunch them up and use like bubblewrap**