

Butte County

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot

Recycling E-Newsletter



www.RecycleButte.net

Your on-line Recycling Guide

Summertime and the recycling is easy. The Summer 2014 Recycling E-newsletter has arrived.

- 🌱 Heading out on vacation this summer? Don't forget to check your tire pressure to maximize both gas mileage and tire life. (Actually, you should do this all year) Take a litter bag with you in the car. (Same thing – all year) and have fun. (Yes, all year).
- 🌱 Are the kids out of school and need an activity? Many fun recycling activities can be found at <http://www.ivillage.com/green-activities-kids-0/6-b-445225#566107>
- 🌱 Tire Amnesty 2014 will be coming this fall. The Highway 70 Industrial Park will again be hosting the event. Log on to www.RecycleButte.net in the next few months for more information.

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Butte County Recycling Coordinator



Archives

To review past edition of the Recycling E-Newsletter, go to www.RecycleButte.net

In this issue:

Special Edition: Recycling in Paradise (We're talking the Hawaiian Paradise)



*Keep Butte County
Butte-i-ful*



Ho'ēmi, Ho'ohana hou, Ho'opō'aiapuni
(Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

Recycling in Paradise

The Challenge: Lots of people – isolated – generating waste.

The Hawaiian Islands have a population of over 1.3 million permanent residents. Hawaii also receives over 8 million visitors a year that stay an average of 9 days. This adds the equivalent of close to 200,000 permanent residents to the islands at any given time. Together these folks generate over 2.5 million tons of waste annually.

By its' nature of being isolated, Hawaii's waste issue has taken on an immediacy that most states do not experience. If a landfill in California or Idaho or any mainland region reaches its capacity, the waste usually moves to the next available landfill. Exporting trash to the mainland was considered for a time but that option was deemed too costly and would have only addresses about six percent of the waste generated and was never considered as a long-term solution. In Hawaii, open space is rapidly disappearing and new landfills are not getting built at the rate the old ones are closing. The result is a realization that the cost of disposal will soon be far more than the cost of reducing, reusing and recycling. Given the nature of the topography, weather and population, new landfills will not be a viable option.



The Solution – Everything's on the table

The average Hawaiian generates about 10 pounds of waste per day. This figure does not count tourists in the population so the actual per person figure is somewhat lower. This is roughly about the same as your typical Butte County resident generates. And like Butte County, it recycles or diverts approximately half of its waste away from the landfill. So the "low hanging fruit" of recycling has largely been picked. (The pineapples are gone)

Hawaii's bottle and can recycling (HI-5) program began in 2005. Quite a bit after than most other state beverage container recycling programs. Since its inception, more than 5 billion beverage containers have been recycled. Bars and restaurants are now mandated to recycle bottles and cans. However, the cost of shipping glass, a relatively low value/high weight material to the mainland for processing exceeds program costs and is not sustainable in the long-term. Hawaii is looking at creating their own recycling infrastructure to address the shipping costs; but that gets to be expensive and thus is relegated to the high-hanging fruit category. (Think coconuts)



Poipu Beach Recycling station

Most of the urban areas have their curbside recycling programs. But much of the main islands are more rural in nature and curbside recycling is not a cost effective option. As a result, recycling centers are prominently placed in convenient areas where people tend to gather.

Right across the street from one of the most popular beaches in south Kauai, in the parking lot of a fine dining establishment, is a Kauai County Recycling Center. This recycle center is not placed behind a supermarket or in some industrial zone; it is placed where it is easily accessible and obvious so even the tourists can find it. It says a lot about the importance of recycling and the priority Hawaiians place on reducing waste.

Commercially generated cardboard is restricted from disposal, as is commercially generated greenwaste and food waste. Since most of the waste from tourists is generated commercially, (hotels, restaurants, transportation) this waste is mandated to be recycled.

Oahu, (City of Honolulu) has a waste to energy plant where over 40% of the municipal solid waste generated on the island is directed to the plant to produce over 7% of Oahu's energy.

While not a material that represents a lot of volume or weight, a plastic bag ban is now in place. When you are situated on the edge of the North Pacific gyre, where tons of trashed plastic from around the globe are washing up on your shores, you tend to be more sensitive to the plastic bag situation. The Big Island, in particular, receives massive amounts of plastic that is washed up on its shores. It was the final county (Island) to adopt a plastic bag ban thereby making Hawaii the first entirely plastic bag-free state in the country.



Shark carcass on Kamilo Beach, Hawaii, where plastic particles outnumber sand grains until you dig down about a foot Photo: ALGALITA MARINE RESEARCH.

There are many other programs in place in the state. Some programs are specific to a single island, some implemented statewide. The important part is that most all the residents are on board with the programs as is the business community. This is due to two main factors: first, there is the realization that a compromised environment will negatively affect the tourist industry that the Hawaiian economy relies on. Second, and more importantly, Hawaiians have a keen realization of their isolation relative to the rest of the world. This isolation compels them to take care of what they have. They just can't bury what they don't want anymore, as it will always be with them on the island.

The Results – Pending but promising

When it comes to solid waste management, Hawaii has a big challenge ahead of it in becoming a self-sustaining group of islands. There are a lot of people living on just a few volcanoes. However, Hawaii has made great progress in implementing its waste reduction and recycling practices that will serve them well in the future. Will Hawaii find solutions to their waste issues? Yes, they have to. There is no alternative.



Mahalo for Recycling

But as Hawaii's recycling and waste issues have an immediacy that compels their people to act quickly, we mainlanders will find ourselves not that far behind when it comes to the issues Hawaii is facing. There will be a day when the non-landfill alternatives, like waste-to-energy, composting and landfill mining will need to take on a bigger role in everybody's waste management.

Whether you're on a pacific island thousands of miles from the mainland or on a spherical island in space, light years from anything, we've got to take care of what we've got.

Landfill Tours – Book your tour now, slots are filling up.

Would your club, classroom or organization like a tour of the Neal Road Recycling & Waste Facility? Our staff will show you around the facility and be happy to answer questions about how the facility works and let you in on the County's plans for the future.. Call 879-2352.

Coming in the Fall/Winter 2014 Issue:

- **The Wildlife of the Neal Road Recycling & Waste Facility.**
- **Changes to the County recycling/trash services**
- **What do you do with old ... (Stay tuned)**
- **The sustainable holiday, 2014 edition.**

Questions, comments, suggestions? Email us at recycle@buttecounty.net. We will try to respond as soon as possible.



Mahalo for not printing this newsletter.