



Ridge Meadows Recycling Society

Recycling Report

OCTOBER, 2013

INSIDE:

RMRS Board Member Dennis Kinsey looks at the current climate of recycling.

Page 2

Waste Reduction Week! Check out our Litterless Lunch Challenge!

Page 3

Lunchtime School Waste Audit at Eric Langton Elementary

Page 3

Looking for some green Hallowe'en costume ideas?

Page 4

RECYCLE!

At Metro Vancouver's recent Zero Waste Conference, keynote speaker Dame Ellen MacArthur spoke extensively on creating a **Circular Economy**. The idea of keeping things in a loop, as opposed to linear, is key to creating sustainable systems.

This loop is seen extensively throughout nature - animal or plant protein & nutrients inevitably make their way back into the ground to provide for the next generation. We mimic this loop when we compost our food scraps and use the compost on our garden.



While **recycling** also closes the loop by making new products from old or used materials, the systems are never as perfect as the ones found in nature.

To start with, there is waste all the way along the production line, from extraction to transportation to manufacturing. Not all of the raw material is usable, and carbon from the vehicles transporting it is released into the atmosphere at a rate greater than nature's ability to process it back into oxygen. At the manufacturing level, there is often chemical effluent that cannot be absorbed back into the environment.

While everything accepted at the Maple Ridge Recycling Depot is recycled, not all **materials** that are used in products are able to be recycled. Either markets have not developed or are not profitable enough for companies to collect that material, or the product is made of a composite of more than one material that cannot be separated enough to recycle each different type of material.

Plus, not everyone recycles, and a lot makes its way to the landfill. Walking down the street or in a fast food restaurant, the lack of recycling stations means containers or paper more likely than not goes in the garbage.

During recent classroom lunch audits in our school district, we found on average 55% compostable material, 33% recyclable materials, and only 12% actual garbage being put in garbage cans. Imagine the savings of the School District being able to cut its annual garbage budget to just 12% of the current amount!

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While the Provincial Recycling Regulations work to ensure the greatest amount of recyclables go back into the manufacturing loop through Extended Producer Responsibility programs, they do accept incineration, also known as “Waste to Energy” as an acceptable method of “Recovery.” While this is held as a last resort, it is definitely not to the same scale of closed loop systems we see in nature.

Hopefully, Multi-Materials BC’s new Printed Paper and Packaging recycling program, set to begin in May, 2014, will eventually encourage product re-design to the point where we can emulate nature’s recycling efficiency.

Multi-Material
British Columbia



Packaging and printed paper recycling is changing in British Columbia



Dennis Kinsey Lays out the Changing Landscape of Recycling

Dennis has been involved in sustainability issues for over twenty-four years. He has worked in and has had an active involvement in all areas of sustainability in B.C. He has been on the RMRS Board of Directors for three terms and is a past president of the RMRS.

It would seem as a member of the Board of Ridge Meadows Recycling Society, having the topic of “Recycle” to write about should make my task easy. After all, our organization was built on the belief of the founding members that there was a more viable alternate to landfill. This belief, thanks to their vision and a lot of hard work by many people and organizations over the past forty years, is a belief that the vast majority of people now believe in and practice on a daily basis. So if recycling is entrenched in most people’s and businesses’ minds and practices, what is there to write or even worry about? As it turns out, a lot.

The landscape for recycling is changing. There is pressure from incineration advocates (who need things to burn to feed the beast), a continually diminishing market for recyclables (especially local), and pressure from organizations who advocate single stream collection (garbage in, garbage out). All of this makes the current climate one of the most challenging for recycling advocates and practitioners in a long time.

“The current climate [is] one of the most challenging... in a long time.”

RMRS is committed to meeting the challenges and continuing to fight the battles on all fronts. As supporters of RMRS and as consumers, it is important you get involved in understanding all of the issues and challenges that face recycling. There are several websites that will help you in getting the information you need to make informed choices.

Waste Reduction Week 2013

Waste Reduction Week
in Canada



To commemorate Waste Reduction Week 2013, Ridge Meadows Recycling Board Member Carly O'Rourke and RMRS Environmental Educator Dan Mikolay joined Mrs. Carly Johnson and her Grade 6/7 class from Eric Langton Elementary to give a presentation to Maple Ridge Mayor & Council on Tuesday, October 22.



After issuing a "Litterless Lunch Challenge" to Mayor & Council, tasking each of them to avoid having anything in their lunch that cannot be recycled or composted for two weeks, we gave each of them a head start with their very own "Litterless Lunch Kit."

The kits included a reusable lunch bag, different sized reusable plastic containers, reusable coffee cup, metal water bottle, cloth napkin, reusable chopsticks, reusable straw, and a reusable fork, knife, & spoon set. **Good luck, everyone!**

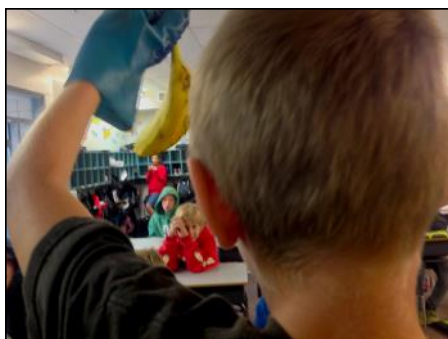


Photos by Amber Light Photography

Thank you, Eric Langton Elementary!



Mrs. Carly Johnson's class at Eric Langton has been learning a lot about waste lately. After going through their lunch waste through a Waste Audit conducted by RMRS Environmental Educator Dan Mikolay, they were asked to be part of our presentation to Maple Ridge Mayor & Council. We solicited ideas from them for things to include in the Litterless Lunch Kits, and the students formed assembly lines to help put the various pieces of the kits together.



Their teacher, Mrs. Johnson, gave part of the presentation, and four of her students joined us at the Council Chambers for the presentation and to hand out the Litterless Lunch Kits and Waste Reduction Week Challenge.

Thank you for all your help!



Green Hallowe'en Costume Ideas



There are many Green Hallowe'en ideas on the Internet, here are a few of our favourite:

1. **Greenwashing** - dress all in green, carry around an (empty) can of green paint & a paintbrush.

Optional tags: "Eco-friendly!" "3% recycled content!"

1. Make yourself into a CFL "**curly**" lightbulb by dressing in white and wrapping long, biodegradable white balloons around you.

2. "**Not A Plastic Bag**" - make yourself into a reusable bag by using cloth or burlap, then add handles.

3. **Overheating Mother Earth** - put on a green, brown, or blue dress, add leaves, then use makeup to make your face red. Carry around a fan and

spray bottle around to "mist" yourself occasionally.

4. Finally, recycle your costume from last year by adding "**Zombie _____**" to the title. Just wear the same costume, but add green makeup, black eyeliner, and dirt.

**Have a Happy
& Safe Hallowe'en
from Ridge Meadows
Recycling!**

*Recycled Cassette Tape Skull
by Artist Brian Dettmers*



Mission Statement

"Ridge Meadows Recycling Society is a community-based, non-profit organization, advocating zero waste, operating responsible waste reduction services and providing environmental education. We employ people with developmental disabilities assisting their integration into the community."

Vision

"A waste free, socially responsible community."



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