



Recycling and Waste Management: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Instilling value in community residents having pride of good use of resources, repurposing and extending the shelf life of our land-fills, is a conservation minded approach! With all new programs being added to the conservation district's community offerings, it is important to gather that there is public interest and capacity to have a Recycling and Waste Management Program.

Here are a few ways your Conservation District **Board and community focus groups** (community leaders including city & county government, land fill staff, Extension Service, educational community, urban (both urban and rural), environmental groups, local businesses, youth organizations, civic organizations and natural resource partners can work cooperatively and collectively to make a big difference in our environments (both land use and ground water protection).

6 + Ways Communities Can Creatively Make A Difference on Land Fill Reduction and Increase the Protection of Our Valuable Ground Water Resources:

1. Having **Community Recycling Collection Centers** at high traffic frequency locations makes it convenient for busy people to drop recyclables rather than dispose. In addition to the land fill, often towns and cities have drop locations for recycling of different grades of plastics, glass and aluminum. Some pay the recycler for their items and others are an invitation to not toss in your trash can and feed the growth of the land fill. Extending the shelf life of our land fills saves taxpayers and municipalities over time. Progressive municipalities and trash / refuse companies often provide recycling containers, yard debris along with the varying size of trash cans.
2. **Advocating Reduce, Reuse, Recycle messaging** throughout the community for both youth and adults alike is a great way to get information, education and training about the value of utilizing resources and repurposing when possible rather than a drop off at the land fill. There are recycling business in many communities and a number of earth friendly organizations like postings on Craigslist and Free Cycle where items can be obtained cheaply or free and posted on web sites for quick /timely exchange between donor and recipient.

Reuse, Recycle and Refuse: Understanding the R's in our Communities!

Reuse – repurpose products for new uses or donate products for further use by others

Recycle – collect and process materials to turn them into new products

Refuse – municipal solid waste (household garbage)

3. **Coordination with elected officials and City Land Fill staff** on creative ways to enhance greater organization of land fill locations that are depositories for categories of scrap metal, cardboard, trees & leaf matter, plastics and other items rather than dumping into the trash zone of the landfill. Some big box stores, grocery stores, appliance businesses and even local government own a cardboard baler that compresses tons of cardboard that can be re-purposed.



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Page 2

3. **Hazardous Waste Reduction Days** are safe haven days to collect pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals, pharmaceuticals, old batteries, used motor oil and even water and oil-based paints. Natural resource partner agencies and government agencies like Weed and Pest, Department of Health, local businesses (tire shops and automotive repair) are but a few of several that can come together to gather un-used items and other objects that would be dumped at the land fill – and on occasion illegally. Across the landscape, there are countless automobiles and machinery & associated parts that can be cleaned up; it pays to coordinate with auto dismantlers and partner with them to collect items that may never be used for years and decades to come.
4. **Utilize Thrift Shops and Consignment Stores** to repurpose products for new uses or donate products for further use by others is a great civic and humanitarian approach to our fellow mankind needs! A number of accessories, books, furniture, clothing / shoes, furniture, household goods, kitchen items, jewelry, garage -storage, books / newspapers and other items of excess and/or in storage for months to years, can often be donated and / or consigned in your local communities. With a little care, spring and fall cleaning can turn into valuable tax deductions and help other families.
5. **Partnering with community groups** like Habitat for Humanities Re-Use stores saves tons of building supplies from the land fill. When businesses and families can salvage building supplies that might other wise be burned, dumped or scattered across the landscape, it's a good thing. Spending 30 cents on the dollar for flooring, roofing, hardware and other building products saves on every one's pocket books and helps out great organizations that help others.
6. **Wood Chipping Trees and Grinding Rubber Tires** into mulch, barn yard base are a couple of popular activities several communities utilize. Wood chipping on heavily wooded acreages that need fuel mitigation and even handling Christmas trees come January are examples of mulch products.

For more information on recycling and waste management resources, log on to National Association of Conservation Districts at <https://www.nacdnet.org/?s=recycling> and/or Montana DEQ at <https://deq.mt.gov/Land/recycle>.