

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

(219) 326-0014
(800) 483-7700

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Spring 2004



Household hazardous waste collection dates set for 2004

Again this year, the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County will sponsor mobile collections of household hazardous waste (HHW).

HHW includes a variety of household products, such as cleaners, automotive fluids, oil-based paints and stains, pesticides, waste fuels, and mercury-containing items. Because of the chemicals they contain, these products cannot be disposed with household trash. To help residents dispose of them properly, we offer monthly drop-offs for HHW during

the spring, summer, and fall. Residents can drop off materials at no charge.

All mobile collections begin at 9 a.m. and conclude promptly at 2 p.m. Materials are only accepted during these hours. Mark your calendar now for this year's collections:

- Saturday, March 27 — Michigan City Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall
- Saturday, April 17 — LaPorte County Fairgrounds
- Saturday, May 1 — Wanatah Town Hall, 104 Main Street
- Saturday, June 19 — Michigan City Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall
- Saturday, July 17 — Michigan City Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall
- Saturday, August 7 — LaPorte County Fairgrounds
- Saturday, September 25 — Michigan



City Kabelin Ace Hardware,
Marquette Mall

- Saturday, October 16 — LaPorte County Fairgrounds

Some businesses that generate small quantities of hazardous waste may also participate in this mobile collection program. However, there are disposal fees for businesses. For details or to pre-register your business for an upcoming date, call Tom Buford at 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425.

"Sharps" also accepted

To help residents dispose of these items more safely, the Lake Michigan Districts Household Hazardous Waste Program accepts sharps at the mobile HHW drop-offs. This "Sharps" Program, which is a FREE service to residents of LaPorte County, collects and properly disposes of items such as needles and lancets used by diabetics for in-home treatment. When placed into household trash improperly, sharps put trash collectors at risk.

This program is for households only and is NOT open to businesses.

This program is funded entirely by your Solid Waste District.

For information about the Sharps Program, call Tom Buford at 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425.



Mark your calendars for **Electronics Recycling Days** at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds—Thursday, August 5 through Saturday, August 7. Thursday and Friday hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Look for and follow the signs at the Fairgrounds.

Tire and White Goods Recycling Day set for May 15

Have you been doing some spring cleaning? Tired of walking around the old stove sitting in your garage? Have a set of snow tires that have been around a few too many seasons? This spring, take advantage of our Tire and White Goods Recycling Day. At this event, residents will be able to drop off tires and white goods (large appliances) for recycling. The day-long event will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 15 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds.

There is no charge to drop off up to 10 tires of any size and large appliances, such as washers, dryers, stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, humidifiers, and water heaters. Freon will be extracted from refrigerant appliances at no charge.



If you have more than 10 tires, you must make arrangements in advance with the District Recycling Coordinator. If you do not make arrangements in advance, we

will only accept 10 tires. In addition, a driver's license and vehicle registration must be presented to the officer at the collection prior to dropping off tires. The District reserves the right to refuse any loads.

This drop-off event is for residents ONLY. No businesses or industries may drop off items.

Last year, we collected a total of 252.4 tons of tires and white goods during our

spring and fall events. In fact, our spring collection alone brought in 103 tons of tires—the largest tire collection we've ever had in the seven-year history of this event!

The right time

It's 6 a.m.—and that means it's the right time of the morning for recycling.

On your scheduled collection day, your blue or red recycling bin MUST be at the curb by 6 a.m. Don't try to guess when the truck will come. Different trucks and drivers might take different routes. The only way to be sure that your recycling will be collected is to have it at the curb by 6 a.m.—the earliest that any truck or driver would be by for it.

When you're setting your recycling at the curb, be sure that your red or blue recycling bin is clearly visible from the street. Your bin is like the flag on your mailbox—it lets the driver know that



you have a pickup. If you have more recyclables than will fit into your bin, great! But set the bin out and place the additional material, in a container clearly marked "Recycling," right next to the bin.

Recyclables are collected at the curb every other week. If you aren't sure which week is your scheduled week, call our office or visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com. The monthly collection calendar is available when you click on "Curbside Recycling." The weekly recycling calendar is also printed in the LaPorte *Herald-Argus* by township. Look on Page 2 of the newspaper under the heading "Did You Hear."

Recycle these items at the curb!

- **Glass:** food jars; juice, pop, soda, and water bottles; beer and wine bottles
- **Metal Cans:** "tin" (steel) food cans and aluminum beverage cans
- **Paper:** newspapers plus any inserts, tabloids, or small flyers that originally came with the paper; catalogs; phone books; magazines; cardboard boxes of no more than 2-feet square; stationery and copy paper; cereal and snack boxes
- **Plastic:** all plastics with the chasing-arrows recycling symbol and marked with a number code (#1-#7)

Visit us at our new web address:
www.solidwastedistrict.com

We've come a long way

But we've miles to go before we sleep

In the early 1960s, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed a nationwide conservation tour to President John F. Kennedy. The tour, which took place in September 1963, was overshadowed by other events. However, six years later, in the summer of 1969, Nelson got the idea for a national "teach-in" about the environment. Planning began for this teach-in, which was dubbed Earth Day and set for April 22, 1970. A call went out. And Americans responded.

Going into that first Earth Day, no one could have predicted what was about to occur. School children, college students, community leaders, public officials, and citizens mobilized a huge, grassroots effort. By April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans, or 10 percent of our nation's population in that year, took part.

This demonstration for the environment brought about sweeping changes at the federal and state levels. Later that same year, President Richard Nixon established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by Executive Order. In the years that followed, dozens of environmental laws were passed, protecting our coastlines, clearing our air, and cleaning up our water supplies.

Today, more than three decades later, the successes of Earth Day are readily apparent. The worst of our day-to-day environmental problems have been addressed. However, we're left with much to do.

- At least 218 million Americans, more than 75 percent of our population, live within 10 miles of a polluted body of water. Much of this pollution results not from treated end-of-pipe waste, but from what we now call "non-point source" pollution. In other words, small quantities of pollutants coming from many unidentified sources, includ-

ing our own backyards where runoff includes pesticides, pet waste, and litter.

- Energy use continues to grow. In fact, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that global demand will increase by 60 percent over the next 20 years. At the same time, global oil production is expected to peak and begin to decline in the same period.
- In a typical year, 4.5 billion pounds of chemical pesticides are used in the U.S. alone—about 17 pounds per person. Meanwhile, concerns continue about the persistence of many of these chemicals in the environment, as well as the health effects of their combination in the environment and the human body.
- Our computerized society has become anything but paperless. In fact, office paper consumption is rising by about 20 percent per year. By 2050, as much as half of the industrial timber harvested may be turned into paper.

This year, and every year, Earth Day rolls around as a reminder that we still have work to do. The founders of Earth Day believed that it would take many decades to "catch up" with the pollution that already existed. We still have some of that catching up to do. And, of course, we've created new problems along the way.

The good news is that Earth Day—then and now—is about individuals acting to make a difference. Today, you can make that difference. Get involved. Reduce the amount of waste in your life—conserve energy, save water, and create less trash. Recycle all that you can, providing useful materials to the manufacturing process. And, spread the word, especially to children and youth. Someday soon this will be their environment. Show them how and why to take care of it now.

Food habits filling waistlines and wastebaskets

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's most recent annual report, Americans discarded 26.2 million tons of food waste, resulting in a rate of about 187 pounds per person. This food waste comprised 11.4 percent of all municipal solid waste (household and commercial trash) that year. However, a U.S. Department of Agriculture study the same year estimated that we may be throwing away even more food, perhaps as much as 474.5 pounds per person per year.

- Efforts to reduce food waste include:
- Preventing food waste by encouraging consumers to plan ahead, make a list, and buy appropriate quantities.
 - Rescuing edible food to feed the hungry. This includes capturing the 12 to 20 percent of food sitting on pantry shelves that was purchased but will never be used, as well as overstocks from retailers and prepared foods from restaurants.
 - Recovering food scraps and leftovers to be turned into animal feed.
 - Recycling food scraps through composting.



Paper or Plastic?

You know the feeling. You're still staring at your list—sure that you've forgotten something. Suddenly, a perky voice interrupts your reverie, "Paper or plastic?" Oh no, you think. How should I answer this time? Which is better? Which is worse? What do I say?

The answer is actually simpler than you think. While paper and plastic each have certain advantages, they have even more disadvantages. Plastic bags use less energy to produce and handle, cost less, and create less waste, but result in more litter. Paper bags hold more, can be reused many times, and can be recycled or composted, but they cost more and are bulkier. But there is a third bag you perhaps haven't considered and should—your own. Maybe it's time to boycott store bags altogether. Institute your own "BYOB" program—and bring your own bags.

You can start with the bags that stores have already given you. Use them as many times as you can before recycling or discarding them. When they run out, choose sturdy reusable bags, such as canvas totes or mesh bags. You probably already have several around the house.

How about No, thanks?

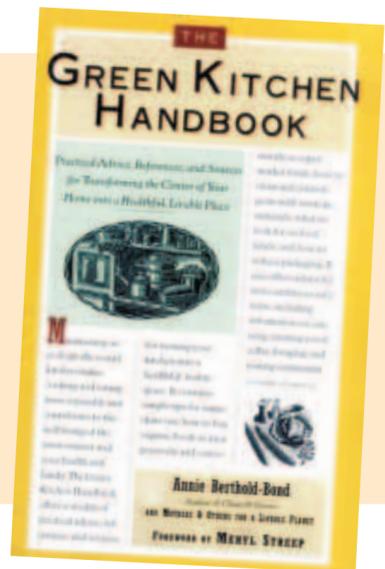
Each year, Americans take home more than 100 billion store bags, about 80 percent of which are plastic. Since they were introduced in the late 1970s, plastic bags have taken over the bag market and tumbled across our landscape. These plastic "kites" caught in trees, among weeds, or frolicking along on air currents are a common sight along our roadways and shorelines. Although unsightly, the greater danger is that animals may mistake these bags or small pieces of them for food, causing serious injury and even death. The lightweight bags don't stay close to home, either. One marine scientist believes that within this decade plastic bag waste will wash ashore in Antarctica.

In fact, around the world, plastic bag litter has become such a concern that several countries have levied a tax on the bags or banned them outright. In Ireland, a plastic bag tax of 15 cents per bag has resulted in consumers choosing to use 90 percent fewer bags. Australia and England are considering their own bag taxes. Other nations, including Taiwan, Bangladesh, and South Africa, now have bans in place on some or all store plastic bags.



A pinch of kitchen wisdom

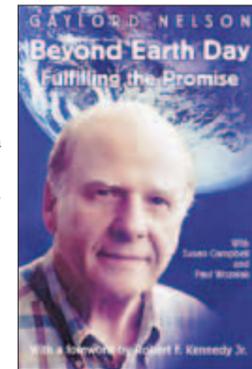
Wondering which advice you should take? Is it canola oil or olive? Which packaging for peanut butter? What is organic food? Check out *The Green Kitchen Handbook: Practical Advice, References, and Sources for Transforming the Center of Your Home into a Healthful, Livable Place* by Annie Berthold-Bond (HarperCollins, 1997).



Quick Quotes

Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise

By Gaylord Nelson with Susan Campbell and Paul Wozniak



"Where our planet's health is concerned, I have always believed that a public armed with knowledge is a public armed with the means and the determination to find a solution."

Introduction

"The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment. All economic activity is dependent upon that environment and its underlying resource base of forests, water, air, soil, and minerals. When the environment is finally forced to file for bankruptcy because its resource base has been polluted, degraded, dissipated, and irretrievably compromised, the economy goes into bankruptcy with it. The economy is, after all, just a subset within the ecological system."

Chapter 2, Report Card on the Earth

"The sustainability movement in this country is growing, recognizing that a healthy environment is the foundation for a healthy economy and society."

Chapter 6, Complacent Planet?

"American acceptance of the ecological ethic will involve nothing less than achieving a transition from the consumer society to a society of 'new citizenship'—a society that concerns itself as much with the well-being of present and future generations as it does with bigness and abundance. It is an ethic whose yardstick for progress should be: is it good for people?"

Appendix 2, Introduction to "Environmental Agenda for Earth Day 1970"

What were they reading?

The Americans who planned and celebrated the first Earth Day already knew a thing or two about the environment. Here are two of the books they were reading:

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There by Aldo Leopold

Major Federal Environmental Initiatives in the Decade after the First Earth Day

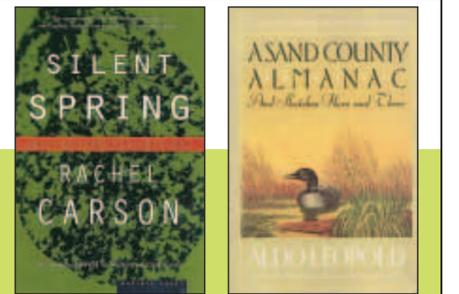
1970	Environmental Protection Agency established
1970	Clean Air Act passed
1972	Clean Water Act passed
1972	DDT, an extremely dangerous pesticide linked to fish kills and bird deaths, banned
1972	Ocean Dumping Act passed
1973	Endangered Species Act passed
1974	Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act passed
1974	Safe Drinking Water Act passed
1975	Energy Policy and Conservation Act passed, establishing Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for passenger cars and light trucks
1976	National Forest Management Act passed
1976	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act passed
1976	Toxic Substances Control Act passed
1977	Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act passed
1977	Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act passed
1978	Aerosol Fluorocarbons, used as propellants in hair spray, deodorants, and spray paints, banned
1979	Archaeological Resources Protection Act passed
1979	Manufacture of PCB, an extremely toxic insulating fluid, banned
1980	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund) passed

Sources:

Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise by Gaylord Nelson with Susan Campbell and Paul Wozniak

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/earthday)

The Wilderness Society (www.wilderness.org)



Greener gardening

In this country, yard waste accounts for about 12 percent of our trash, down from 18 percent little more than a decade ago. The reasons for the decline? Americans are leaving more grass clippings on their lawns (grasscycling), turning more brush and leaves into mulch, composting more yard waste in their backyards, and doing more xeriscaping and natural landscaping (using native and drought-tolerant plants that generate less waste). Meanwhile, of the yard waste that is disposed, about 57 percent is being turned into mulch and compost—and being reused.

While yards and gardens have gotten less wasteful in the trash department, they are still often big users of water, fertilizer, and pesticides. Cut down on waste in these departments, too!

Shout down my rain barrel

Harvest rainwater with a rain barrel. This water can be used to water your gardens and flower beds. Like a compost bin, your "rain barrel" can be as simple—or

as complex—as you desire. Check at your local garden store, search the Internet for "rain barrels," or go to the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association's website, www.arcsa-usa.org.

Use a rain gauge (or rely on the local weather service) to monitor rainfall. Don't water grass or other plants when Mother Nature has already given them enough water for the week!

Till we mulch again

A combination of low-till (or no-till) gardening and a healthy layer of mulch will provide you with the best and most active soil. When you allow the plants and soil to work together, you create a home for earthworms, mites, bacteria, and fungi that promote healthy soil and help prevent disease. Tilling, including digging, hoeing, and plowing, disrupts these relationships. With each thorough tilling, your garden soil and its inhabitants have to start over, so they provide

less benefit to your garden plants. This is why low-till and no-till gardening requires fewer chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Mulching is another way to protect your soil and plants. By using a layer of mulch at least 2 to 3 inches deep, you will suppress weed growth, as well as prevent the soil from crusting and protect it from erosion. In addition, you'll also keep more rain or irrigation water near your plants by eliminating most runoff.

Birds, Bees, Flowers & Trees

Make your backyard (and front yard, too) a wildlife habitat. Birds, bees, butterflies, rabbits, squirrels, and more will provide hours of entertainment for your family if you make them welcome. They need food plants, water, and cover. If you supply those, they will come.

To learn more about creating your own backyard wildlife refuge, check out *Attracting Backyard Wildlife: A Guide for Nature-Lovers* by William J. Merilees, or visit the National Wildlife Federation's website, www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat.

April showers bring May...grass

Yes, it is almost that time of year when the grass seems to grow overnight. Make mowing easier for your family this spring—grasscycle. When you grasscycle, you let the clippings drop back onto the lawn when you mow. Grasscycling is also called “mulching.”

Grasscycling can save your family money and time. Grass clippings provide your lawn with nitrogen, a food that it needs. In fact, letting your grass clippings drop back onto the lawn each mowing season may cut in half the amount of fertilizer that you'll need. Grass clippings, which are 80 to 90 percent water, also provide some of the moisture your lawn needs, meaning you water less often. You won't need bags for your clippings, either! Grasscycling takes about one-third less time on each mowing than stopping to bag clippings. Even if you need to mow more often in the spring, you'll still save time over the whole growing season.

If your family is ready to grass-cycle, here are the two most impor-

tant things that you'll need to know:

- **Mowers:** Any mower can be a mulching mower. Mulching mowers will chop the grass blades into tiny pieces. Other mowers can mulch, too. Simply remove the bag attachment from your mower and insert the “chute cover,” a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally attached. The pieces will not be chopped as small as with a mulching mower, but as long as you mow often, this still works just fine.
- **Trimming:** Each time you mow, you should trim the top one-third or less off your lawn. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. However, the small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. Chopping off more than one-third in a single mowing is hard on the grass plants and leaves behind long clippings that take longer to break down.



Clean and green

Take a toxic inventory of your home. Not sure where to begin? Peek under the kitchen sink. Check the laundry room shelf. Look in the bathroom closet. You will probably find many products, some of which have never been used, that contain a host of mysterious ingredients.

In fact, even if you read the labels, you may not be able to figure out the chemical contents. Unlike food producers, the manufacturers of cleaning products are not required to list all ingredients.

You can clean without leaving toxic traces around your home. Here are some suggestions:

- Think mechanical first. A scrub brush, a dish scrubber, and a retired toothbrush can provide a lot of cleaning power with no chemicals at all. Drain baskets keep drains free of debris that can lead to clogs.
- Use up chemicals that you have on hand before purchasing or making replacement products.
- Consider cleaners made from common household products such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemon juice, and mineral oil. Many of these cleaners are easy to make, effective, and less expensive than pre-mixed chemical solutions. (Remember that even homemade cleaners can be toxic if ingested in large quantities or irritating to skin and eyes. Always use caution in mixing, storing, and using these homemade cleaners.)
- If you choose to purchase a cleaning product, choose the mildest and most benign chemical product available. Although it is not mandatory, some manufacturers do voluntarily provide a complete list of ingredients. Try to select products that provide you complete information on ingredients, offer the most clear instructions on use, and don't require extraordinary safety measures for use or disposal. Also, try to find products that are packaged in recycled-content containers.
- Keep leftovers in their original, labeled containers. Never pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Store all cleaning products out of reach of children.
- Dispose of containers and unused chemicals properly. Follow the label instructions. If the instructions are unclear, call the manufacturer for more details or call our office.

Yard Waste Drop-off open year-round to residents

The Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's Yard Waste Drop-off Site is located at the north end of Zigler Road, just past the grandstands on the west side. (Zigler Road runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds.) The site is open during daylight hours, seven days a week.

You can drop off any of the following material:

- Leaves (whole or shredded)
- Chipped wood
- Clean lumber (no nails)
- Grass clippings
- Yard trimmings

- Brush
- Branches up to 6 feet long and 12 inches in diameter
- Pine needles and pine cones
- Corn stalks
- Bark
- Sod with no more than 4 inches of soil attached

You may drop off materials in special kraft paper leaf bags, which may be purchased at local grocery and hardware stores. You must unload your own material at the site.

If material is transported to the site

in plastic bags, the plastic bags MUST BE emptied. You MUST take your plastic bags away from the site. The plastic bags will not decompose in the compost and will contaminate the organic materials. Please, help us create clean, usable compost—take your plastic bags home!

We cannot accept any of these items: construction debris, rubble, wooden skids, wire, nails, rope or twine, glass, metal objects, plastics (any type, including plastic trash bags, flower pots, and Styrofoam), treated or painted wood, plywood, particle board, or other non-organic materials.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to your club or organization about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

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Homegrown compost available

The yard waste collected at the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's Yard Waste Drop-off Site on Zigler Road is taken to the Westville Correctional Facility, where it is turned into compost. When this compost is finished, it is made available to residents at several sites throughout the District. While supplies last, the compost is available on a first-come, first-served basis to LaPorte County residents.

Pick up compost at the following self-serve locations during daylight hours:

- Fish Lake — Fish Lake Community Building (Old Lions Club property), on 800 East
- Hanna — County Highway Barns
- Hudson Lake — Hudson Township

Park

- Kankakee/Rolling Prairie — County Highway Barns, corner of 700 E. and 400 N.
- Kingsford Heights — Grayton Road on left (cement slab by sewage plant)
- LaPorte — City Street Department, 1206 Second Street
- Michigan City — Hitchcock Street
- Union Mills — Mill Pond, off Water Street
- Wanatah — At sewer plant, 12562 S. 1050 W.
- Westville — Prairie Meadow Park

Remember—compost is a soil amendment, not topsoil. Mix compost in equal parts with soil before use.

Homemade cleaning recipes go high-tech

In many ways, the Internet is the backyard fence of the 21st Century. Neighbors share news, tips, and how-to's via e-mail and websites. One of these neighborly sites is www.TipKing.com. There are a multitude of free, online tips for taking care of your family, home, and garden without hazardous chemicals.

In addition, TipKing offers four online books, available for a flat fee of \$40, that provide much more detailed information. The online books include “Room by Room Chemical Free Cleaning,” “Great Uses for Vinegar,” “Resourceful and Ingenious Uses of Baking Soda,” and “The Secrets of Salt.”