

THE LOOP



JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER

Recently we finished our BASELINE SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT of Hilton Head Island and reported the *good*, the *bad*, and the *needs improvement* at 13 public offerings to 177 individuals living and working in Hilton Head and surrounding communities

We asked those attending to answer 40 questions on a questionnaire and, 113 filled it out. The comments are taken very seriously and the Experience Green Board has decided to work on "Trash Recycling Management."

Nationally recycling is 30-35% however, Hilton Head Island is at only 5% and our landfill is getting full.

Board Member, Mike Bennett standing on top of bailed recycled cans from Sea Pines



The good news according to the "Smart Cities Readiness Guide", is that smart solutions are emerging in the solid waste management arena.

Why Managing Solid Waste Matters – First and foremost, cities manage waste to mitigate its public health impact. Accumulated trash has been linked to the spread of air – and water-borne diseases. Programs that promote waste prevention through recycling and material recovery directly support emerging sustainability goals by reducing demands on resources and energy and the need to create more landfills.

Today, most landfills are lined and the problem of landfill greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions garners more attention than leaching. Landfill gasses are produced by the breakdown of organic materials. They contain carbon dioxide, methane, volatile organic compounds, hazardous air pollutants and odorous compounds that can adversely affect public health and the environment.

Methane is of particular concern. It is 25 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

Controlling costs—**Managing solid waste can take a huge bite out of a municipal budget.** For cities in less affluent countries, trash collection and disposal often represent the largest single budget item.

The UK reports that the amount of municipal waste going to landfills has dropped by 60% in the past decade—thanks to recycling and waste to energy.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

Home recycling requires a trivial amount of time, yet offers substantial benefit to the homeowner as well as the environment.

According to the EPA, the national recycling rate is just 30%. Increasing materials recycling in the US to 60% could save the equivalent of 315 million barrels of oil per year.

Recycling is a great way individuals can make a difference, both locally and globally.

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CONTINUED, Page 2

Our job now is:

- . Educate through experiences
- . Connect community resources
- . Advance sustainability

Board Member, Sally McGarry has a story to tell . .

"In the 1970's, I was a Master Recycler in Montgomery County, MD. I started slowly, picking up recyclables along the roadside and, along with another mother, bringing a dumpster to my children's schoolyard to collect newspapers for recycling. The impetus for these efforts was the public recognition that the landfill to which our wastes went was filling fast and it would be difficult and costly to find another landfill site. This recognition also led the County to establish, within the Dept. of Environmental Protection, a Master Recycler Program. I signed up for it enthusiastically. The program offered weekly sessions to educate us about the whys and wherefores of recycling. After we were certified as "Master Recyclers", we served as ambassadors to the community, to spread the gospel of recycling."

Sally McGarry

So, what makes a MASTER RECYCLER?? It is sort of like a Master Gardner that is certified by peers for:

- knowledge
- sharing
- choosing wisely
- balancing nature
- training others
- leading teams
- supporting growth
- beautification
- harmony of plants
- reusing, recycling, composting
- decide what to recycle
- how to do it right
- put it into the right recycle stream
- recruiting
- show and tell
- assisting the professionals
- prioritizing the process

The zero waste movement represents an even broader push for sustainability. It not only advocates for eliminating waste through waste prevention and recycling, it works toward restructuring production and distribution systems to make everything reusable - the theory completely eliminating the need for landfills and incineration. This notion of intentionally designing products in a way that their materials can be continually returned to the production process is the basic tenant of what's called the circular economy.

Methane captured at San Diego's Miramar Landfill provides 90% of the fuel to power electrical generators at the local Metropolitan Biosolids Center and North City Water Reclamation Plant.

A number of cities—San Francisco—Austin, TX and Ljubljana, Slovenia among them—have officially adopted zero waste as a goal. So has the country of Scotland.

Experience Green would like to seek volunteers to go through a Master Recycler program so that we can get on track with our recycle programs and reduce our waste stream.

We can do this! If you are interested in giving of your time please send an email to:

sandra@experiencegreen.org

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