



East Pikeland Environmental Advisory Council

E-newsletter, Edition #3

Thanks to those of you who stopped by our table at the Kimberton Fair!

If you have ideas for workshops or events please reply to this email.

When in Doubt, Throw it Out!

Do you put items in your recycling bin that do not have recycling signs on them or are just plain trash?

I know that I have been personally guilty of this in the past. I thought “it’s better that these plastics are sent to a recycling facility—maybe they’ll recycle them even though they don’t have a number.” Later, I learned that by including those few pieces of plastic that I wanted to save, I was actually polluting the entire batch of recycling, making it worthless. Instead of those few pieces of plastic being recycled, the entire batch was probably thrown into a landfill as a result.



Properly prepared and collected recyclables are actually valued commodities sold on a global market, but when too many non-recyclables are mixed in it all becomes trash because it’s too costly to separate. Scrap metal, hangers, pieces of rope, yard waste, and children’s toys are just a few of the items that contaminate recycling.

Plastic bags are also a common culprit. People often include plastic store bags, bread bags, ziplocs, cereal bags, etc. in their recycling. Not only are these bags not recyclable but they will actually clog up the machines, equaling costly repairs. Luckily,

all of these bags can be rinsed and returned to the bag recycling bins located at the entrances of local grocery stores (see image).

Although it may feel bad to throw away plastic of any kind, next time think about the amount of good plastic that will be dumped in a landfill as a result. Always remember, “when in doubt, throw it out!”

Something to Consider:

We’ve all heard the old adage, “**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**” but have we ever taken time to examine what that statement really means to us as consumers and global citizens?



In our society today, people seem to be mostly on board with one “R” in particular, **Recycling**. Although there are still many people who do not recycle (only 9% of the world’s plastics are recycled), overall the rate of people recycling has increased in the last 20 years. Driven by reports of plastic pollution in our waterways, litter in ditches, and overflowing landfills many people have successfully added recycling to their To-Do lists. Recycling bins are often made available in public spaces, and in our area, residents are mandated to recycle at home (Ord. 136).

For some people, **Reusing** things is second nature, but for other it take some creativity. Unfortunately many of our options at the store are single use plastics and do not give us the opportunity to reuse them without getting crafty or (hopefully) recycling them. Here are some links to fun ideas for reusing materials:

<https://recycledcrafts.craftgossip.com/>

<https://www.weareteachers.com/earth-day-crafts-classroom-activities/>

<https://www.favecrafts.com/Green-Crafting/659-Recycled-Crafts-Crafting-with-Recyclable-Items>

A different way to look at reusing waste is creating compost. Instead of throwing food scraps away, you are taking something that provided sustenance and,

through the composting process, turning it into a nutritious food source for plants!

Arguably the most important “R” is the one listed first, but the one most often ignored, **Reduce**. It’s hard to ignore the constant pressure in our society to buy, buy, buy. The need to “Keep up with the Joneses” by buying the newest technology, new clothes, new cars, new decor, etc. make us feel like we will never catch up—but we sure try! If we reduce the amount of things we buy we won’t have so much to reuse or to recycle, creating less clutter in our lives and less waste for the planet.

<https://www.theminimalists.com/minimalism/>

<https://zenhabits.net/living-simply-the-ultimate-guide-to-conquering-your-clutter/>

The order is clear, we should first reduce the amount that we buy, reuse what we already have, and recycle what’s left!

Landfill Facts:

- Landfills are much more regulated today than they were in the 1980s, making them safer for the environment and nearby communities.
 - Fun fact: Trash used to be sent to “open dumps” that leaked dangerous liquids into waterways and groundwater, attracted pests, were fire hazards, and smelled bad.
- 50% of all landfill space is taken up by paper products like printer paper, cardboard, etc., which could have been recycled!
- Landfills contribute to climate change because decomposing material creates methane. While we often hear about CO₂ being the worst greenhouse gas, Methane is actually 25x more harmful.

Want to do something about this issues? Try to keep as much out of the landfill as possible by practicing the 3 R’s mentioned above!

Volunteer:

Fall Trail Clean Up: Saturday, November 3. 9-noon @ Rapps Dam Bridge (Rain date, Saturday, November 10)

Volunteers meet in the parking lot next to Rapps Dam Covered Bridge. Wear work clothes and heavy shoes, and bring work gloves, bow saws, shears, clippers, long handles pruners, pole saws, shovels, and/or pickaxes. ***If you plan to participate, please reply to this email.***



Other Resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>

<https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/topics/reduce/index.htm>