

Tri-County Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program

Summary of activities June - September 2009

- **Organics Study**

Our program hired Cascadia Consulting Group to perform a comprehensive study to determine the best solution(s) for handling Organics in the solid waste stream of the Tri-County area. Task #1 (Organic Materials Inventory) has been completed. Next comes analysis of regional infrastructure, presentation of recommendations at a January stakeholder meeting, then further analysis and a final report due February/March.

- **Safety at School & Business**

We sponsored a special hazardous chemical clean-up for school district D-21 in The Dalles. We retrieved 1,178 pounds of potentially dangerous/reactive chemicals out of the schools prior to classes starting this fall. We also occasionally handle emergency calls regarding hazardous waste spills, and direct companies to the proper response, in order to protect groundwater and therefore community health.

- **Rural Recycling Depots**

Our program invested in two additional 30-yard recycling containers, which were delivered to Mel's Sanitary Service in early September. These containers will greatly improve a more efficient flow of recyclables from both Maupin and Tygh Valley to The Dalles Transfer Station. Also, we are coordinating a review of site problems associated with the Mosier Recycling Depot.

- **Remodel at our Hood River HHW facility**

We just upgraded our facility located at Hood River Transfer Station. The improvements which rectify safety and capacity concerns include an additional slab, substantial pavement, overhaul of drainage, and overlay of traffic striping.

- **Semi-Annual newsletter sent to all households in tri-county area**

Topics included sustainability & recycling, compost bin availability, fall HHW schedule, disposal of home medical waste, Oregon E-cycles, stuff NOT to put in the blue bin, how to recycle plastic shopping bags and notification of our Master Recycler program.

- **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection**

- HHW direct mail piece sent to all households in tri-county area
- Fall season began September 11th with eight HHW events including Hood River, The Dalles, Odell, Tygh Valley, Mosier and Cascade Locks.
- Monthly service starts Hood River and The Dalles, Jan 2010.

- **Compost bin sales**

Over 390 distributed in tri-county area since March 2009, \$11,860 in sales through end of August.

- **Event Recycling**

Our beverage recycling campaign (print ads & radio) for summer 2009 encourages people to recycle cans & bottles at events, using our Clearstream container lending program. For more information about event recycling and how to borrow a Clearstream recycling container, go to: http://www.tricountyrecycle.com/Recycle_events.asp

- **“No plastic bags in blue bins” campaign** so far has included article & photo in ½ yearly newsletter and print ad in Columbia Gorge Magazine, this campaign will help in receiving 2% “extra credit” from DEQ for each county’s waste prevention efforts.

- **Grant award: Gorge Security Shred**

In support of local efforts that reduce solid waste, *Tri-County Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program* awarded a grant to ‘*Opportunity Connections*’ (formerly *Columbia Gorge Center*), who supports people with disabilities throughout the Mid Columbia and with locations in both Hood River and Wasco counties. *Opportunity Connections* will use the \$57,636 grant to start a local paper shredding business whose operation will reduce resource use, prevent increased landfill material and create jobs. To find out more or to sign up your local business for secure shredding service, contact: Rita Rathkey, Columbia Gorge Center, (541) 386-3520

- **Grant award: Mosier Community School**

Mosier School is the first recipient of our targeted grants which foster composting in area schools. Great timing: Announcement of the grant award coincided with a complaint of obnoxious odor from the existing compost system at the school, which we replaced with two double-bin composters, thermometers, and moisture sensors. Compost is consistently cooking at 140 degrees.

- **AmeriCorps Intern**

We have a 900-hour (half-time) AmeriCorps intern (Jodi TePoel), September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2010. Supervised by Cindy Brown, this intern focuses on these tasks that complement and aid the current staff for the Tri-Co HWR program:

1. Assisting with the Master Recycler class
2. Coordinating Master Recycler volunteer activities and reporting of hours
3. Providing hands-on recycling and composting assistance, especially to schools

- **Master Recycler Program**

Started September 8th, with eight classes and two field trips, plus numerous speakers including Steve Kramer, Erwin Swetnam, and Bruce Lumper. Fourteen folks enrolled. Importantly, our program has created substantial capacity thru the thirty hours of community service per attendee (30 hours x 14 participants= 420 hours). Our program has the responsibility (and privilege) of coordinating those community service hours towards further fulfilling our mission.