



The monthly publication  
of the Lewis and Clark  
County Green Team

# County Conservation News

November 2011

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## On November 15 America Recycles

On Tuesday, November 15, Lewis and Clark County's Green Team will host an educational open house, joining thousands of local organizers holding recycling events across the country to celebrate America Recycles Day, the only nationally recognized day dedicated to promoting and celebrating recycling in the United States.

Informational tables will be in the lobby of the City-County Building where you can learn about area plastics recycling from the S.A.V.E. foundation and curbside pickup from Helena Recycling LLC. Pacific Steel and Recycling will provide information on what they accept. The City of Helena will also participate, providing information on current and new recycling programs at the transfer station. The County

Green Team will be giving away America Recycles Day and Don't Waste Montana swag; they are also sponsoring a display of recycled art, as well as having other recycling information available to all citizens.



"We are very proud supporters of Lewis & Clark County's America Recycles Day event and commend their efforts to promote recycling in their communities. Recycling is the easiest thing we can all do to save energy, conserve natural resources and create green jobs. Collectively, through events

like these, we aim to make recycling bigger and better 365 days a year," said Brenda Pulley, Vice President of Recycling Programs at Keep America Beautiful and national program manager for America Recycles Day.

### About Keep America Beautiful, Inc.

Keep America Beautiful, Inc., established in 1953, is the nation's largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. With a network of over 1,200 affiliate and participating organizations, Keep America Beautiful forms public-private partnerships and programs that engage individuals to take greater responsibility for improving their community's environment. To learn more, visit [kab.org](http://kab.org).

### About America Recycles Day

America Recycles Day<sup>SM</sup> is a national program of Keep America Beautiful, and is the only nationally recognized day and community-driven awareness event dedicated to promoting and celebrating recycling in the U.S. Since its inception in 1997, communities across the country have participated on November 15 to educate, promote environmental citizenship and encourage action. Learn more at [AmericaRecyclesDay.org](http://AmericaRecyclesDay.org).

## 9 Tips to Improve Your Recycling

Adapted from America Recycles

### 1. Know your local recycling system.

Different communities have different standards for what can be recycled and how to do it. Visit [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com) and enter your zipcode for local information and resources.

### 2. Plastic recycling: it's all in the numbers.

#1 and #2 plastics are accepted by almost every recycling program, but it is important to confirm if any other types are accepted.

### 3. Can it!

Metals are among the most valuable materials in the waste stream. Aluminum and steel cans are always welcomed by recyclers, and most metals can be recycled infinitely with no loss of quality.

### 4. Make recycling easy on the road.

Keep two bags in your car to contain your trash—one for garbage and one for recyclables. Pre-sorting makes it easier to transfer your recyclables to the proper container once you've reached your destination.

### 5. Answer the call to recycle your wireless phone!

Hundreds of millions of out-of-service phones are waiting to be reused or recycled. Do you have any in your home? Find a local charity with a phone recycling program, or visit [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com) to find resources in and around Helena.

### 6. Look beyond the daily paper.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, paper and cardboard are America's most recycled materials by weight. In addition to newspaper, most communities accept corrugated cardboard, and some accept junk mail, catalogues and phone books.

### 7. Improve your community with a cleanup event.

Clean communities are better places for everyone to live, work, shop and play. Join or organize a local cleanup event, and be sure to sort out the recyclables you pick up. You'll be amazed at the difference you can make.

### 8. Teach your children well.

Do your part to create the next generation of environmental stewards. Involve your kids in recycling and make it fun. Even preschoolers can help with sorting recyclables, and they'll learn a lot about the world around them. Someday, they may even help take out the trash!

### 9. Don't forget to reduce and reuse.

Reducing the amount of trash we throw away, and reusing products BEFORE recycling or trashing them creates the least impact on the planet and our resources. Consider if you can reuse your products before they enter the waste stream.

## The Landfill’s Expanding Role in Processing Waste

The Lewis and Clark County Landfill is located approximately 10 miles northeast of Helena. The total area licensed by the County for solid waste operations is approximately 160 acres, of which roughly 80 acres will be ultimately used for the disposal of municipal solid waste.

The landfill is divided into six construction phases totalling 80 acres with an original design capacity of 50 years at a disposal rate of 45,000 tons/year. Operational improvements, design changes and dropping waste disposal rates (only 41,000 tons last fiscal year) have increased the capacity by an additional 75 years.

Nonetheless, the landfill is near completion of the 8.9 acre, \$1.2M phase 3 expansion. The landfill began accepting wastes in October 1994 and phase 1 reached capacity in December 2002. The County has been placing wastes within phase 2 since then. Phase 3 should open at the end of November 2011 with an anticipated four to six years of capacity.

The site is excellent for a landfill because it lies in a semi-arid area that receives less than 12” of precipitation per year and has soils that consist of low-permeability clays. The majority of the site’s soils have a recompacted permeability of less than  $1 \times 10^{-7}$  cm/s, a rate that provides excellent natural protection of the groundwater.

In addition to accepting solid wastes, the landfill also has a robust composting operation. Every year, the Lewis and Clark County Landfill composts 1,600 tons of wood waste, 920 tons of green waste and 2,260 tons of biosolids, much of which is sold to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality or used for mine reclamation projects.

The mission of the Lewis and Clark County Landfill is to dispose of Class II solid wastes employing reasonable science at the lowest per capita cost possible while maintaining a strong stewardship of the earth through recycling, reduction and reuse.

### Recycling at the City-County Building

Recycling provides a myriad of benefits to communities including (but not limited to) reducing pressure on landfills, diverting used products out of the waste stream and back into production and reducing the energy and pollution associated with the manufacture of products from raw materials. It is only good sense that we make an effort to promote recycling.

At the City-County Building, efforts are already underway to make recycling easier for employees and the public. Helena Recycles has partnered with the building by offering to collect recyclables from bins placed throughout the City-County Building at no on-going cost to the county, the city, or the building.

The only up-front cost required was the purchase of 27 bins, in nine sets of three, for a total of \$270.

The bins are organized into recycling stations placed at various convenient locations in the building. Each station, pictured at right, allows employees and visitors to recycle paper, aluminum & steel cans, and plastic (types #1—#7). This free service is a great opportunity for city and county staff to improve their recycling habits.

Recycling our waste has been demonstrated again and again to provide valuable social, financial and environmental boons to our communities. The Helena Recycles bins at the City-County Building offer us all a way to contribute to those benefits.



Recycling bins at the City-County Building.

## Caught Green Handed



This quarter's winner is:

**Eric Spangenberg**

Congratulations Eric, you won a T-shirt from S.A.V.E.! Next quarter's prize is 3 months of free curb-side recycling service from Helena Recycling!

Many thanks to S.A.V.E. and Helena Recycling for donating these great prizes!



## Check out our website!

Want to know more? The Green Team now has a page on the County website. Follow this link, or go to the County website and click on Green Team!

<http://www.co.lewis-clark.mt.us/departments/admin-finance/green-team.html>



## The Green Team

The Mission of the Lewis and Clark County Green Team is to promote sustainability and stewardship of environmental resources in daily government practices to save money and reduce the environmental impacts of county operations.

The Green Team meets the first Thursday of each month. If you would like to be involved, contact any Green Team member or go to the County website and choose the Green Team link. Fill out the comment form and click the contact me button!

The County Conservation News is published electronically each month by the Green Team. You can make suggestions for topics by filling out the comment and suggestion form on the Green Team website.