

A Quarterly Newsletter of



**Buncombe County Solid
Waste Department**

828-250-5460

www.buncombecounty.org/green

Winter 2014



Cleaning up after the holidays

Soon, you will be packing up your holiday decorations, taking down the tree, and finding space for all of your new treasures. Buncombe County provides several programs to help you clean up after the holidays.

Holiday Trees

The tree that spruced up your home is probably drying out. After you pack away your keepsake decorations, you can recycle your tree. We accept real, fresh-cut Christmas trees at no charge from residents who are bringing trees from their homes. Please remove all decorations, ornament hooks, lights, garland, and tinsel, as well as the stand. Christmas trees are only accepted at the Buncombe County Landfill. These trees will be chipped and turned into mulch, so make sure that your tree is totally bare. The Buncombe County Landfill is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Commercial haulers and businesses will be charged the standard yard waste fee for Christmas trees. This fee is \$20 per ton of yard waste.

Wrapping Paper and More

The boxes that carried deliveries to your house or held gifts under the tree can be reused or recycled. If you recycle boxes, remember to break them down and flatten them before recycling them at the curb or a drop-off center.

Most wrapping paper is also recyclable in blue bags or bins and at drop-off recycling centers. The only wrapping paper that is not accepted and will need to be

thrown away is metallic or metal-flecked paper.

Holiday cards, like other greeting cards and mail, are generally recyclable. However, please do NOT place battery-operated musical cards, cards trimmed with metal, plastic, or ribbon, or photo paper into recycling bags or bins. As with wrapping paper, only plain paper cards go into the recycling bag or bin.

Ribbons and bows are not recyclable. You could keep these for reuse or place them into the trash.

Batteries

About 40% of household battery purchases occur during the holiday season. One of the best ways to reduce battery waste is by choosing rechargeables. Any battery that can be put into a charger or plugged into an outlet with a cord is a rechargeable battery. These can be used from 50 to thousands of times, creating less waste and requiring less energy per use than disposable batteries.

Even rechargeable batteries eventually die. Rechargeable batteries are "dead" when you can't recharge them anymore or when they don't stay charged as long as they did at first. When rechargeable batteries die, you should recycle them because they contain metals and chemicals that don't belong in landfills. Plus, the components in old batteries can be reused to make new batteries!

You can recycle rechargeable batteries at home improvement stores, such as Lowe's and Home Depot, or at the Friday-only Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) drop-off at the Buncombe County Landfill. During HHW drop-off hours, there is no charge for typical household quantities of batteries.

Appliances, Bulky Waste, and Electronics

After the holidays, you may need to make room for new items by getting rid of things that are broken or unneeded. If you have replaced furniture, appliances, or electronics, you may have items you no longer need.

Large appliances can be recycled at the Buncombe County Transfer Station or the



Buncombe County Landfill. There is no charge to recycle large appliances at the transfer station or the landfill.

Bulky items, such as old furniture and mattresses, must be disposed as trash at the landfill. Fees will apply and are prorated based upon weight. The current rate for residential waste is \$43 per ton, with a \$10 minimum for the first 460 pounds.

Old and broken electronics are accepted every Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at a special drop-off area at the landfill, excluding Fridays around a holiday. At these Friday-only drop-offs, you can recycle televisions, computers, and other electronics. We will accept up to three televisions per week from RESIDENTS for free (unless stripped or broken);

additional TVs will be accepted at \$8 per plastic TV, \$10 per wooden console TV, and \$20 for stripped or broken TVs. We will also accept up to three computers per week for free from RESIDENTS; after that, there is a charge of 30 cents per pound.

Old Toys and Games

Kids inevitably outgrow their toys. At this time of year, you may be cleaning out the toy room to make room for your children's new toys. Instead of tossing old toys, donate your children's gently used games, dolls, and other playthings. Toys, games, books, clothing, and coats are accepted by many charitable organizations, churches, and thrift shops. Check in your community or call us.



Frequently Asked Questions

What does it cost to dump at the landfill?

The fee for trash disposal is \$43 per ton, or a minimum of \$10, which covers the first 460 pounds. Bagged waste is charged at \$1.00 per bag.

What does it cost to dump at the transfer station?

Trash disposal is \$47 per ton, with a \$12 minimum that covers the first 460 pounds. Bagged trash is \$1.00 per bag.

What are your hours?

Hours at both the transfer station and the landfill are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you are hauling a load to the landfill that you will need to drive up to the disposal area, please arrive at least a half hour before closing time (by 4 p.m. on weekdays or noon on Saturdays).

What do I do with paint?

If the paint is dried out in the can and no liquid remains, remove the lid and throw the can and lid separately into the trash. Otherwise, deliver the paint to the Friday-only household hazardous waste (HHW) drop-off



at the landfill. There is a charge of \$2.00 per gallon, with a 20-gallon limit.

What are the Friday hours to drop off HHW and electronics?

HHW and electronics are only accepted at the Buncombe County Landfill from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays, with the exception of Fridays surrounding a holiday.



Who do I call if my garbage didn't get picked?

The number you call depends on where you live. Here are the numbers you need:

- If you live in the City of Asheville, call 828-259-5857.
- If you live in the Town of Woodfin, call 828-253-4887.
- If you live in the Town of Weaverville, call 828-645-0606.
- If you live in the Town of Black Mountain, call 828-419-9300, ext. 602.
- If you live in Biltmore Forest, call 828-274-3919.
- If you live in the Town of Montreat, call 828-669-8002.
- If you live in unincorporated Buncombe County, call 828-684-7790.

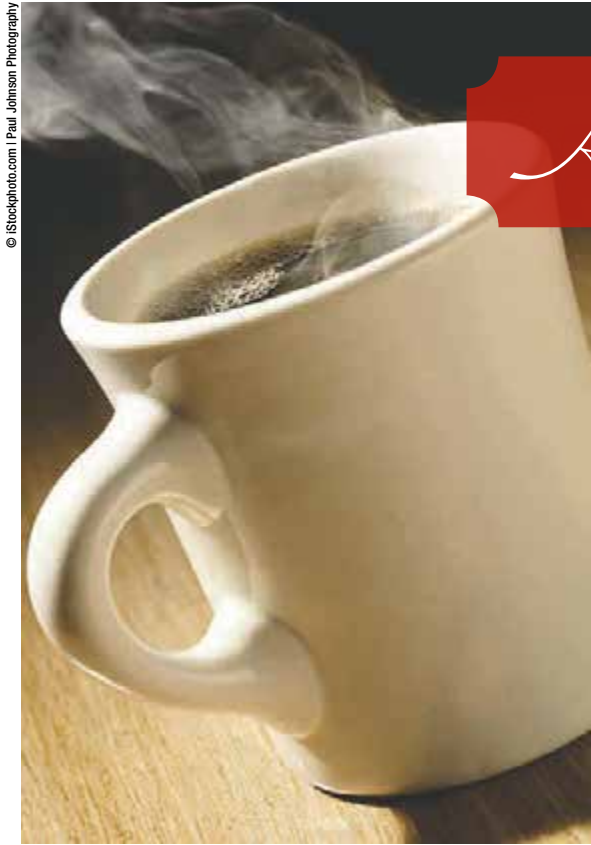
Will travel for trash

A young couple, Phil Corrigan and Margaret Morales, set off on a cross-continent trip to answer the question: "Where is 'away'?" They planned to spend a few months checking out the places where trash goes when it goes away. But spring turned into summer and summer into fall, and they are still on the road and on the trail of trash. Phil and Margaret have visited landfills, recycling facilities, and composting sites. They've seen what happens to electronics, batteries, and aluminum cans. And they've discovered artists and designers who find inspiration – and raw materials – in the trash heap.

Along the way, they've been "trashblogging" about all of the many places that are the "away" for our trash. You can read about Margaret and Phil's travels at <http://thetrashblog.com>. If you like what you see, sign up to receive email updates. You never know what the trashbloggers will find next!



Photo courtesy of The Trash Blog



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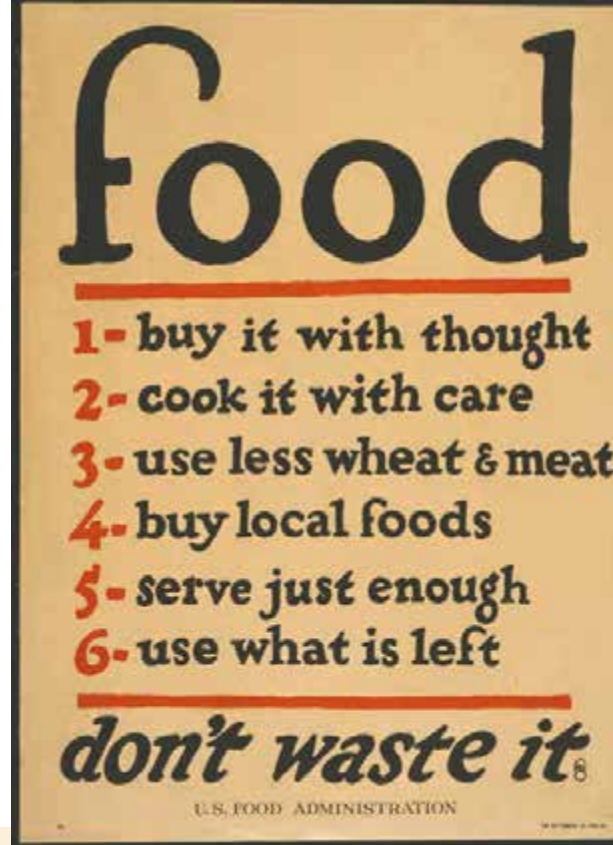
A single cup of joe

According to the National Coffee Association, 12% of Americans now own a single-cup coffee brewing system. Generally, the people using these systems purchase packaged and pre-measured coffee. Depending on the system, the ground coffee comes in a cup or pod that may contain multiple layers of material. As a result, most of the cups or pods end up in the trash.

Not only are cups and pods nearly impossible to recycle, but the coffee in them is also much more expensive. On a per-pound basis, the coffee in the pods or cups costs at least three times as much as a comparable coffee purchased in a large bag or can.

If you already own a single-cup brewing system, consider purchasing a refillable filter cup. You can use your own ground coffee and then empty and wash the filter for the next use. You'll reduce your waste and save money on your coffee purchases.

If you don't own a brewing system but like the idea of making one cup of coffee at a time, consider a single-cup French press or a pour-over coffee dripper. With these options, you'll save money on coffee, create less waste, and also avoid the purchase of an expensive appliance that takes up counter space.



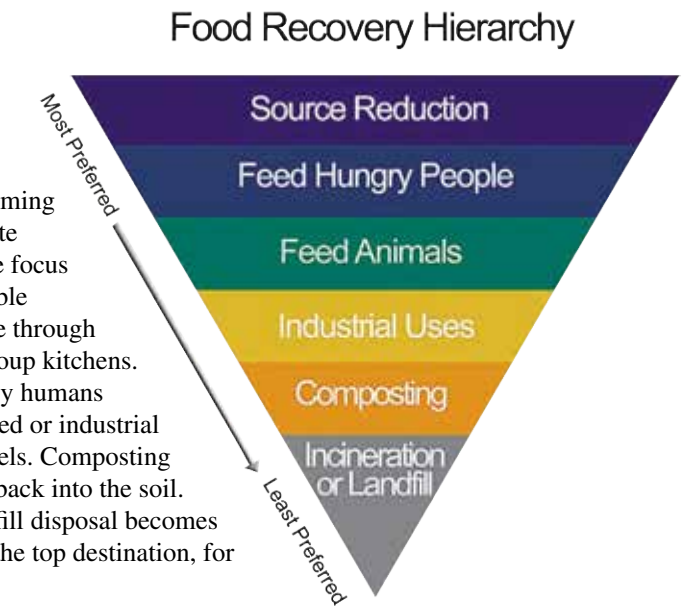
Food waste isn't a new issue. This poster was produced by the U.S. Food Administration during World War I. (Created by Frederic G. Cooper, The W. F. Powers Co. Litho., N.Y., 1917; Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.)

The food recovery hierarchy

In 2011, more than 36 million tons of food waste were generated in the U.S. Of this, a whopping 96% went to landfills or incinerators. The goal of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's food recovery hierarchy is to maximize food use and minimize food waste. The hierarchy has been integrated into the Food Recovery Challenge, part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program.

Preventing food waste is the top priority. Purchasing the correct amount of food, using it while it is fresh, and consuming leftovers reduces food waste and saves money. Next, the focus moves to ensuring that edible food goes to hungry people through shelters, food banks, and soup kitchens. Food that cannot be used by humans may be useful in animal feed or industrial applications, such as biofuels. Composting food scraps puts nutrients back into the soil. With these strategies, landfill disposal becomes the last resort, rather than the top destination, for food waste.

For more information about food waste and EPA's Food Recovery Challenge, visit www.epa.gov/smm/foodrecovery.



Outline: © iStockphoto.com | Cheryl Graham, FreeTransform

Dizzying date formats lead to losses

A dumpster of hummus that hadn't even reached its expiration date



© www.foodstrepreneur.com

A study by the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic investigates the impact of consumer confusion over the dates on food labels. Produced in cooperation with the Natural Resources Defense Council, "The Dating Game: How Confusing Food Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America" was released in September 2013.

Label dating began with the good intention of quantifying a product's freshness. However, lacking any coordinated oversight and with little regulation, dates on food labels frequently lead to confusion and unnecessary waste. A simple date stamp or a date preceded by "expires," "sell by," "use by," or "best before" are among the many commonly used phrases. But, regardless of which phrase is used, there is no uniform meaning.

Current federal oversight of food labels falls under the authority of 11 acts of Congress and is the responsibility of three different agencies: Food and Drug Administration, Federal Trade Commission, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, 41 states require date labels on at least some food products and 20 states regulate certain food sales past label dates. A handful of local governments even regulate the use of food labels. The more confusion, the more likely it is that the consumer will simply throw out any food at or near whatever date appears on the package.

Some dates aren't even meant for consumers. "Sell by" dates are simply a way of saying the producer wants that stock rotated off the shelf for maximum freshness. These "sell by" dates don't mean that a product is unsafe to eat.

By the same token, a "use by" date provides no indication of whether a product is safe to eat. As the report states, "Overreliance on label dates results in food being wasted because of safety concerns that are not founded on actual risk. At the same time, such overreliance can also cause consumers to ignore more relevant factors affecting food safety." The report cites processing failures, contamination after processing, and abuses in stor-

age and handling as the main causes of microbiological hazards in food—factors that are largely independent of the age of the product. In most cases, food will look or smell bad enough to keep you from eating it before it is actually unsafe to eat.

Meanwhile, these dates might create a false sense of security and cause consumers to ignore basic food safety. More relevant than a product date is the amount of time food spends at temperatures between 40 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This is the danger zone where most microbes grow.

Food losses total an estimated 160 billion pounds per year in the United States. Food loss results when food is grown, processed, or made available for human consumption but never eaten. Food losses cost the average American family \$2,275 per year. Per capita food loss has increased 50% in this country since 1974. Recent studies in the United Kingdom suggest that as much as 20% of avoidable food waste could be due to confusion about label dates. The most recent study for the U.S., which was conducted in 1987, suggested a comparable figure of 17%.

The report makes a series of recommendations for improvements to the existing food labeling system. These recommendations include:

- Make "sell by" dates invisible to the consumer.
- Establish a reliable, coherent, and uniform dating system for use by consumers. Such a system should include clear language regarding both quality and safety.
- Provide clear and pertinent safe handling instructions on labels and access to additional information through QR codes, apps, websites, or hotlines.

The report has specific strategies to help the food industry, government, and consumer organizations create a more meaningful dating system. To read the full report, visit www.nrdc.org/food/expiration-dates.asp.

QUOTES REQUOTED



Photo by Stan Weyman/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images

For, in the final analysis, our most common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.

John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963

The Greener generation

Since 1975, DDB's Life Style Study has taken an annual look at American attitudes and behaviors. Recently, DDB set out to answer the question, "Are Millennials greener than Boomers?" The answers may surprise you.

Millennials, who were born in the 1980s and 1990s, are more likely to carry and use a refillable water bottle outside their home and to own a hybrid or electric vehicle.

Boomers, who were born from 1946 to 1964, are more likely to recycle everything they possibly can and to make a strong effort to separate recyclables from the rest of the trash. They are also more likely to use reusable grocery bags as much as possible. They edged Millennials slightly in acknowledging the importance of recycling, composting, reducing packaging waste, energy efficiency, and protecting the world's ecosystems.

For both generations, there was a reluctance to pay more for the environmentally safe version of a product or to accept a lower standard of living to conserve energy. However, Millennials were somewhat more willing to do so than Boomers.

To learn more about the study, visit www.ddb.com/blog/community/are-millennials-really-greener-than-boomers.



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CORRUGATED RECYCLES

According to the Corrugated Packaging Alliance, 91% of corrugated cardboard was recycled in 2012, a total of more than 29.1 million tons. In 1993, the nationwide corrugated recycling rate was 54.5%. To encourage retailers and consumers to recycle more cardboard, industry officials introduced the "Corrugated Recycles" symbol and educational campaign the following year.

Today, more than half of recovered corrugated is used to make new containerboard and another 12% becomes paperboard, which is used to make items such as cereal and gift boxes. About one-third is exported. The remainder is transformed into packaging, tissue, and other products.

Learn more at www.corrugated.org.

What's UP?



© iStockphoto.com | Pasha Ignatov

When you upgrade your cell phone, remember to recycle the old one. Be sure to remove your personal data (contacts, photos, and notes). Most cell phone retailers accept old phones for reuse and recycling. Some schools accept cell phones for recycling as part of a fundraiser. You can also recycle cell phones with other electronics at the Friday-only collections at the Buncombe County Landfill. In addition, many businesses in our area accept old cell phones for recycling. To find a location near you, visit www.call2recycle.org.

Prevent produce from perishing



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Before you head to the grocery, look inside your refrigerator. Plan your meals for the period between shopping trips, taking into account what you already have on hand. If you know some, or all, of your household will be eating dinner out on a given day, that is one less meal to plan. Write a shopping list based on recipes for the meals in your plan. For produce that ripens quickly, like avocados and bananas, buy some that are soft and ripe for immediate use that day and some that are still green and firm for use later in the week.

Resist impulse purchases based on sales. With perishables, you don't save money by stocking up when they're cheap. You'll just

end up throwing more unused produce into the garbage or compost heap.

Keep track of your leftovers. After eating your carefully planned meals, be sure and jot down how much of each item is left over. If the usual members of your

household are at the table, you will develop a better understanding of how much you really need to buy next time.

Shopping more frequently will really preserve produce. Instead of loading up the cart every week or so, make a commitment to shop for groceries at least two times each week. That way, your forecasts regarding what meals will be eaten at home will be more accurate. In addition, you'll be able to choose the freshest produce and use it all before it goes bad.

Despite the best intentions and planning, you will still find yourself with something in the crisper that will spoil before you need it. If a perishable food is still good and you know there is no way you will use it in time, freeze it. You can even freeze veggies that have become limp but are not yet rotten. Later, they can be used in soups and casseroles. Be sure to develop some favorite recipes based on using up these frozen treasures.

When you prevent produce waste, you'll also save money!

From fryer to fuel

If you have a turkey fryer, you've probably used it in the last month or so. Besides good memories, you're now left with used cooking oil. But used cooking oil is no problem because you can recycle it through the Cooking Oil Recycling Program in Buncombe County.

To recycle your used cooking oil, follow these simple instructions:

1. Let the oil or grease cool to a safe handling temperature.
2. Pour the oil into a jar or bottle with a lid.
3. Take the oil to a cooking oil recycling bin. To find the bin nearest you, go to www.cookingoilrecycling.org.
4. Carefully pour the oil into the recycling bin.
5. Take your oil container home so that you can use it the next time you fry.

Blue Ridge Biofuels picks up the used cooking oil and turns it into biodiesel, which can be used in any diesel engine. Biodiesel is better for the environment and produces fewer emissions than traditional

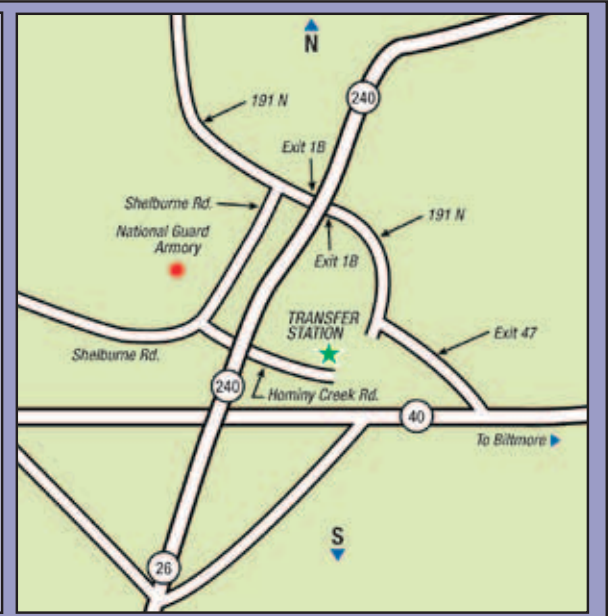
diesel fuel. In addition, biodiesel created locally supports our local economy and creates jobs here in Western North Carolina.



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Directions to the Transfer Station:

From I-240, take exit 1B (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. Turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left. From I-40, take exit 47 (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. After crossing I-240, turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.



Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

From I-240 East or West, take Exit 4A to 19/23 North. Travel 1 mile and then take UNC-A exit. At the end of the exit, turn left. Go to traffic light and turn right onto 251 North. Continue on 251 North for 9 miles to Panther Branch Road. Turn right onto Panther Branch Road and travel 1/10 of a mile to the Buncombe County Landfill, which is located on the right. The new landfill is 6 miles north of the old landfill.



Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Mobile Home Removal/Environmental Control – Roger Presley.....	828-250-5470
Junk Yards/Junk Cars – Mason Scott.....	828-250-4847
Bioreactor Manager – Kristy Smith.....	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill.....	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station.....	828-250-6205
Waste Pro – Residential Trash Pick-up.....	828-684-7790

Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents

Asheville City Sanitation – Trash Pick-up.....	828-259-5857
Curbside Management – Recycling.....	828-252-2532

CLIP & SAVE

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

**Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department
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