



FALL 2014

A Newsletter for Partners in Washtenaw County's Waste Knot Program

# Staying in the Loop

Providing community-wide recognition, organizational-based technical assistance and education to businesses, schools, governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that demonstrate leadership in waste reduction and recycling.

## WASTEKNOT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



### The Scrap Box

The Scrap Box is a non-profit organization based in Ann Arbor, and a part of Washtenaw County's Waste Knot Program since 2001. Its purpose is "Creative Recycling." The Scrap Box specializes in supporting early child education, but is a fun place for artists, older students, parents, and educators.

The Scrap Box has a warehouse in Ann Arbor and a van for business donation pickups. It is staffed by professionals assisted by many volunteers who procure and sort materials, hold workshops and keep the storeroom stocked.

The Scrap Box provides an outlet for recycling of many different materials including many colorful, interesting and useful materials such as craft foam, adhesive-backed paper and plastic pieces for use in craft projects, as well as many usable materials such as strapping, buttons, fabric, rip stop nylon, and office supplies. Among the many donors are book binders, carpeting warehouses, decorators, restaurants, craft and gift stores. Households may also drop off their craft donations during operating hours. (See below)

Donations from businesses may be one-time, as needed, or scheduled on a regular basis. For information regarding pickup of donations, contact Charlie. For

information on classes and/or volunteering, contact Libby. For general questions about the program, contact the Director, Karen.

During the last fiscal year, ending August 2014, the Scrap Box collected over 9000 square feet of materials, plus donations delivered directly by households and businesses. This is significant, but what is also important is the value that it provides to the community.

The warehouse in Ann Arbor is conveniently located on State Circle just off of I-94 at the State Street exit. Some items are priced individually; other items found in the bulk area are sold by the bag. With a Scrap Box membership, the members' room provides die cut machines, reference books, and a quiet place to plan or craft a project.

The Scrap Box offers classes to groups of children age 5 and over. Children listen to a short discussion about recycling and instructors might read a story for inspiration. Then children are given their own shopping bag to collect assorted materials. They can create pets, wild animals or imaginary critters, as well as boats, cars or planes. Older children can do games & mazes, masks, puppets and 3-D models.

The author of this document observed a teacher create a colorful

## Washtenaw County Striving Toward Zero Waste

Washtenaw County Government is working toward achieving zero-waste-to-landfill goals, as prioritized by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and the Washtenaw Food Policy Council. Zero waste is a goal that many organizations around the nation and globe are currently pursuing and is defined by the Zero Waste International Alliance to be "a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use."

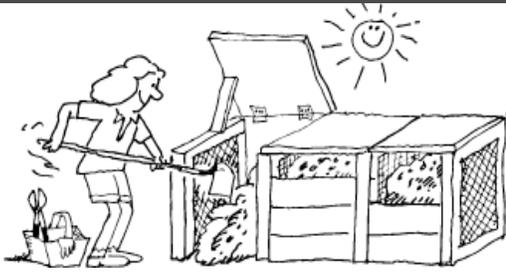
Pursuant to Zero Waste goals, Washtenaw County Government adopted an Environmentally Preferable

## TerraCycle

Tom Szaky founded Terra-Cycle in 2001. Its mission is to eliminate waste from the landfill by upcycling non-recyclable and hard to recycle items.

Headquartered in the United States this successful business has made its way to 26 countries around the world! Currently TerraCycle has more than 40 Brigade programs that range from food packaging to office supplies, all the way to personal products. To view the different Brigades and optimally dispose of your waste please visit the [TerraCycle Website](#). Points are earned for waste and can be redeemed for a variety of charitable gifts or in the payment of \$0.01 per point to a non-profit organization or school of choice.

# Composting in Washtenaw County



The 2014 Michigan Master Composter Class kicked off Tuesday, September 30th. With 20 students, another promising crop of master composters will be planting roots across Washtenaw County. For the completion of their certification they must produce a record of 10 volunteer hours. If you are an organization looking for volunteers please contact [Food Gatherers](#) or the [Waste Knot team](#) and ask about sharing your information with the students. Composting in the county has been gaining ground as a better option than landfilling and at the completion of Ann Arbor's first season of collecting residential food waste.

## 2014 Ceremony

For those of you who couldn't get enough of the amazing innovations, our guest speaker Howard Brown mentioned, check out the free dMass newsletter. [Insights](#) offers you a weekly dose of inspiration, including better with less innovations and a brainstorming exercise to help you and your team "think dMASS."



## Mulch Much?

Have you ever thought about mulching leaves? If you want a lush green lawn and garden then this could be a solution. Give it a try this year by starting slow and swapping between bagging and mulching. It takes time and energy to gather the leaves and send to a community compost site; while in comparison it could be shredded on site and composted directly into the ground from which they came, providing vital nutrients and decreasing fertilizers used come spring time. Mulching the leaves also decreases the volume and increases the decomposition time. It also saves your lawn from being smothered and causing turf diseases. If you don't want to leave them on your lawn you could mow over with the bag attached then use the mulch to start a small compost pile and have a rich compost to spread about on the lawn or garden around July!



## Become a Master Rain Gardener!

Washtenaw County offers a 5-week Master Rain Gardener certification program, offered through the Office of the Water Resources Commissioner. Classes begin Thursday mornings, 9:30a-12:30p, February 26 until March 26. Cost of class is \$90. Scholarships available.

The Master Rain Gardener Program has been around for 8 years, and in that time over 150 rain gardens have been built around Washtenaw County. [Rain Garden Map](#) A "rain garden" is a garden that utilizes rainfall and storm water runoff, along with particular native plant placement, for natural sustenance and water conservation. One purpose of a rain garden is to improve both the physical and biological integrity of local receiving bodies of water, such as rivers and streams. This happens as a result of the water first flowing through the vegetation and soils within the rain garden to remove contaminants carried by the storm water runoff. Infiltrating storm water into native, underlying soils helps mimic natural drainage process.

See the [Master Rain Gardener Hall of Fame](#).



## DEA Final Rule on Drug Disposal & Controlled Substances



Since 2008, Washtenaw County Office of the Water Resources Commissioner & Solid Waste Division has been running have coordinated a Pharmaceutical Take- Back Program that now includes a total of 10 Washtenaw County-based pharmacies that accept used or old medications for proper disposal. In 2010 the Drug Enforcement Agency [DEA] implemented a nationwide

Drug Disposal Act that allowed for pharmacies to take back all prescription medications besides controlled substances. Prescription drug abuse has been on the rise among our youth and Michigan ranks in the top five states nationwide for misuse. As a temporary measure the DEA has held a total of 9 National Take Back Days to provide education and help dispose of prescription drugs including controlled substances. The leading cause of poisoning in children under age 5 results from unused pharmaceuticals. In 2003, the United States Geological Survey revealed over 80% of the surface waters in the U.S. has some residual of personal care products including pharmaceutical compounds.

Tuesday, September 9th, 2014 the DEA Released the [Final Rule for the Disposal of Controlled Substances](#), which went into effect on October 9th, 2014. Here are some of the main facts from the publication:

Allows authorized manufacturers, distributors, reverse distributors, narcotic treatment programs, law enforcement agencies, hospitals/clinics with an on-site pharmacy & retail pharmacies to voluntarily administer mail-back programs, take-back events & maintain permanent collection receptacles at long-term care facilities. |

The return of controlled substances can come from ultimate users, described as:

- Any person the drug is prescribed to.
- Any member of the person's household who has a prescribed drug [including pets].
- Any person(s) lawfully entitled to dispose of a deceased person's property.
- You may find authorized collectors in their communities by calling the DEA Office of Diversion Control's Registration Call Center at 800-882-9539 .
- There will not be anymore National DEA Prescription Drug Take-Back Days.
- Any valid disposal methods, prior to these new regulations being implemented, continues to be valid.
- This is a voluntary, non-mandatory program; therefor not all pharmacy's will be able or willing to comply with rules for implementation.

## EPP + BOC

Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy [EPP] goes to Board of Commissioners [BOC]

November 5th, 2014 the Washtenaw County Food Policy Council's, Food Waste & Packaging Policy Action Team [PAT], took the EPP to the BOC. The PAT has spent the last two years working with city & county employees, local business owners, operators of biodigesters & composting facilities and concerned citizens, to identify food & waste packaging, becoming advocates for change within the county. This lead to the decision to amend the County's Purchasing Guidelines to include sustainable preferences when making purchases in all areas & departments. The final draft was presented to BOC, two weeks ago, and was victoriously approved!

## Governor Snyder's Recycling Initiative

Governor Snyder's Recycling Initiative Calling all businesses that currently achieve a 30% or higher recycling rate! Governor Snyder announced on April 14, 2014 a detailed plan to increase the State of Michigan's recycling rate to 30% by 2017. As part of this progressive initiative, the Governor's Recycling Summit will be held on May 5, 2015 where Michigan-based businesses achieving 30% or higher recycling rates will be recognized. This event will be held in conjunction with the 2015 [Michigan Recycling Coalition \(MRC\)](#) Conference on May 6-7, 2015. Both events will be held at the Kalamazoo Radisson. Please contact Waste Knot if you'd like your organization submitted for recognition in achieving 30% or higher recycling rate or need assistance in determining if your organization may qualify.

## Zero Waste [cont.]

Purchasing (EPP) Policy which strongly demotes the use of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS), or Styrofoam®, which is a primary source of unnecessary waste and a potential public health threat. The new EPP Policy instead promotes the procurement of "reusable, compostable, and recyclable" food service ware and office supplies, clean technology, renewable energy and sustainable janitorial service products & providers. Zero Waste goals are most effectively achieved if waste is prevented from being generated in the first place, so this policy seeks to preventively tackle waste before it starts!

As a FREE SERVICE to our Waste Knot Partners interested in learning more about adopting EPP Policy in furtherance of organizational Zero Waste Goals, please contact Noelle Bowman ([bowman@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:bowman@ewashtenaw.org)) for more information or consultation.

## Scrap Box [cont.]

scrap bouquet for a retiring teacher. She watched her effortlessly twist together wire and paper scraps within a few minutes in the members' room and head off to the retirement party. She also watched a proud grandfather wait for his toddler to put together a foam backing with eyes and legs to create an imaginary animal in the store. On another day, there were five (5) University of Michigan students designing a project for their undergraduate course on entrepreneurship. All of these people were having fun the day they were at the Scrap Box.

-Julie Craig, Environmental Engineer & Volunteer



[Household Donation](#)  
[Maker Faire Report](#)  
[Project Foam](#)



## DEA [cont.]

At this time the DEA has no plans of sponsoring additional National Take Back days. This is an important public health issue because many people choose to flush their drugs down the toilet or leave them in the medicine cabinet thus leading to drugs misuse, abuse, accidental swallowing and deaths of young children, as well, a water supply with traces from various prescription medications that cannot be filtered out by wastewater treatment facilities. In an effort to help keep our water clean The Great Lakes Clean Water Organization of Michigan began a program called Yellow Jug Old Drugs.

At this time the DEA has no plans of sponsoring additional National Take-Back Days. This is an important public health issue because many people choose to flush their drugs down the toilet or leave them in the medicine cabinet thus leading to drugs misuse, abuse, accidental swallowing and ultimately the death of young children; as well, a water supply with traces from various prescription medications that cannot be filtered out by wastewater treatment facilities. In an effort to help keep our water clean & communities safe, The Great Lakes Clean Water Organization of Michigan began a program called Yellow Jug Old Drugs. In Washtenaw County, law enforcement can collect the controlled substances through the Big Red Barrel Program. These & other programs, disposal options and the difference between controlled and non-controlled substances can be found at [DontFlushDrugs.com](http://DontFlushDrugs.com).



## Calling All Greenhouses & Marinas, Shrink Wrap Recycling is Here!

As the push for more sustainable options increases so does that for locally sourced food, which could be seen as a reason for the increase in hoop houses. Using them to prolong the farming season can be great, especially in Michigan, where our season can be short lived. Depending on the scale of the operation and size of the greenhouses they can provide optimal conditions for growing root and leafy greens all winter long, even in extremely rough years, as in 2013.

Have you ever thought about the plastic film from the greenhouses and nurseries when it has to be replaced? How about marinas and storage yards? Or what about the wrap that accumulates in grocery stores from pallets or cases of water?

Every season when boats and/or RV's are winterized they shrink wrap them for protection from the harsh Michigan elements. As for stores, they generally use the wrap as an inexpensive option for shipping items, to keep them safely secured. After these items are unwrapped for use it adds up to be a tremendous amount of plastic that would normally go to landfill, where it looses all value and is not compostable.

If you want your local marina, greenhouse, nursery, storage yard or other business that produces shrink wrap waste to do one better alert them to the [Shrink Wrap Recycling Program](#). Washtenaw County's Solid Waste Program and the Michigan Sea Grant are working with local businesses and residents to recycle high and low density polyethylene [#2 and #4]. In 2014, Washtenaw County recycled approximately 4,000 pounds! Let's not let this reusable & recyclable material go to waste.



# Washtenaw Counties

## Local Resources:

An informational guide for reuse, recycling, proper disposal & all things green.



Washtenaw County Solid Waste Division, 705 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48107

<http://Recycle.ewashtenaw.org>