

Maya Lin's Confluence Project



universities across the country. He adds that the AAA faculty "recognize the incredible benefit that the students offer to this program through their hard work."

Workshops and keynote speeches make up part of a more traditional academic conference component, with titles like "Formless but Flat, Fearsome but Figurative." But Pete emphasizes that the conference isn't only for theory-heads. "What's so unique is that it's a solution-based approach; we're getting over the hump of the problem because we're exploring and refining solutions."

And the parties: On Saturday night, after a daylong opportunity to build reclaimed-material costumes, both kids and adults get their creativity on during the Trashy Fashion Show. Artists of various stripes share their groove. Last year, a group of

dancers created a "dance installation" with used bicycle tubes and performed through and among their creations during the party. This year, music and art installations will again combine with eco-relaxation. "That's how it is," Henne says, "just awesome!"

HOPES combines practical applications of ecological design thinking with down-to-Earth ways of solving problems, gorgeous art installations and professional networking for the good of the planet. Design a lifesaving factory, build a bioswale, open your mind with some theory and party for the planet — whatever your interest, Pete says, just get to the UO this weekend. "Anybody who comes can find an avenue and can find a passion."

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To register for the HOPES conference, which is free to UO students, staff and faculty, \$15 for non-UO educators and \$25 for community members, visit hopes.uoregon.edu

Trashy Fashion '06



REDUCE, REUSE, RE-SHRINKWRAP

A Q&A with Weyerhaeuser's recycling guru BY NICOLE FANCHER

Here in Lane County, where most curbside recycling is commingled in a single bin, it's almost easier to recycle than to trash. But plastics complicate recycling efforts. Since there are limitless different grades of plastic, one recycling method won't work for them all. Sanipac's curbside service only takes grades #1-7 (soda bottles, detergent jugs), excluding #6 (things like meat trays). Other plastics — such as the shrinkwrap that packages Eugene Weekly newspapers — must go elsewhere. EW takes shrinkwrap to Weyerhaeuser's drop-off site in Glenwood, a plastic recycling service that the company started five years ago. On an average day, we see plastic chairs, toys, greenhouse film, plastic flowerpots, poly seed bags and lumber wrap hanging out in the recycling bins.

Weyerhaeuser's Recycling Account Manager Lorena Young pioneered the plastic recycling program by finding markets for plastics that ended up in the waste stream. EW was curious about what happened to our plastic and interviewed Young by email. The following Q&A highlights Weyerhaeuser's fast-growing program and helps explain the complicated world of plastic recycling. — Nicole Fancher

Why did Weyerhaeuser make the move to plastics recycling?

For years, recycling everyday plastics, such as milk jugs, orange juice containers and detergent bottles, has been a goal of recyclers throughout the country, including Weyerhaeuser. Because we were already in the recycling business and already working with many haulers and recyclers, adding plastics to our paper recycling efforts made sense in terms of logistics. It was a natural transition, and it was the right thing to do.

Effective recycling requires all three legs of the stool to be stable: viable markets, cost effective collection and suitable transportation. A primary driver behind the recycling of plastics is access to viable markets. These markets have grown both domestically and in China with its demands for raw materials. ... Many counties are hard pressed to find new opportunities for waste diversion to meet their DEQ diversion goals. Recyclable plastic that is still in the waste stream is a logical target. There are many grades of plastics that are recyclable when collected separately that are not suitable for recycling in the commingle process.

What prompted you to approach local businesses five years ago to participate in a pilot recycling program?

Markets for plastic film came knocking. Domestic users of shrinkwrap were looking for a supply of film to make various building products such as the ChoiceDeck, which are deck boards made of plastic and wood fiber. Some of Weyerhaeuser's existing account base included warehouses, grocery stores and others that generated used shrink wrap. So adding this addi-

tional grade of plastic for recycling where we were already providing recycling services made sense. It also made economic sense for these businesses because it reduced waste.

Are there any local markets for the plastic Weyerhaeuser recycles?

We do work with one Willamette Valley plastic recycler that processes a variety of rigid plastics, including the high-density polyethylene lumber wrap cores.

What makes Weyerhaeuser's plastic recycling program unique?

For Lane County and the Eugene/Springfield area specifically, Weyerhaeuser provides the widest range of recycling options for plastic and paper as well. Curbside commingle programs are based on a specific recipe of recyclables that are sorted out at material recovery facilities in Portland, but they do not accommodate many specific types or forms of plastic. What's unique about our plastic recycling program is there is an opportunity to match source-separated plastic and paper commodities with appropriate markets.

What are the most common grades of plastics recycled? How many different grades do you take?

That's a complicated question. Though there may be a shorter list of plastics as defined by the 1 to 7 codes you see stamped on the bottom of plastic containers, there are potentially hundreds of distinct markets based on form, quality, quantity and cost. For example, plastic film markets may be specific to a type of film such as clean clear shrinkwrap or specific to an industry such as the grass seed industry that recycles

polypropylene seed bags and bulk bags. Sometimes if there is enough of a specific plastic, we go looking for a specific market. Other flows of plastics may end up in a mixed plastic grade, which would include plastic lawn furniture, large plastic toys and other plastic items.

What kinds of products can recycled plastic be made into?

Recycled plastic can be chipped and used in making all sorts of plastic products from extruded plastic parts to building products. There are thousands of products produced with some or all recycled plastic content, which makes sense with the rising cost of virgin plastic that is tied to petroleum pricing. For example, chopped plastic lumber strapping can go back to U.S. and Canadian companies to be remade into new lumber strapping. Many manufacturers of containers for liquid products, such as laundry detergent, use recycled plastic.

Weyerhaeuser sends to export markets in India and China; what kinds of businesses desire recycled plastics?

There are hundreds of thousands of plastic recyclers in China feeding a gigantic manufacturing enterprise that generates products for building the Chinese infrastructure and providing products for Chinese consumption. China also makes products produced for export to the rest of the world.

How do you ensure that the businesses you work with are processing plastics with environmentally sound practices?

We do not and cannot control the business practices of our customers. That responsibility lies with government and regulatory agencies.

What is your goal with the recycling program? How do you plan on expanding it?

Our goal is to expand recycling for both paper and plastic still in the waste stream. Much of this is accomplished by getting the message out that there still are recyclables in the waste stream. If businesses think the only thing they can recycle is what goes into a commingle container, they're often stepping over many opportunities to pull recyclables from their waste stream. And, in some cases, they can make revenue on the recyclables they were paying to dispose.