

Closing the Loop: A conversation with EcoGeneration

By **BRITTE KIRSCH,**
LANE COUNTY
MASTER RECYCLER

and their commitment to protecting our planet. That is the key to our success. We couldn't do it without the dedicated communities and their financial support and volunteer efforts.

David Gardiepy started EcoGeneration in 2017 via Facebook while becoming a Lane County Master Recycler. In 2019, he established a Recycling Center in Cottage Grove followed by organizing Recycling Take Back Events in five different communities in Lane County — including Florence.

There will be three Eco-Generation Recycling Take Back Events in the area on Sundays, May 2, Aug. 1 and Oct. 3, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This is Part I of a two-part interview series Master Recyclers had with Gardiepy about his passion to protect our environment and the importance of these community events.

What do you see as the greatest impact you have made for Lane County and what is the key to your success?

Gardiepy: Over the past two years, EcoGeneration has taken in over 30,000 pounds of plastic waste in Lane County. Our biggest impact is the fact that we have cleaned up our communities and kept a variety of plastics out of our oceans and waterways while building awareness about reducing plastic waste.

At each of our three-hour events, we typically have more than 150 recyclers who take the time to sort and clean their plastics and wait in line to process their recyclables. That speaks volumes for the community members

What should the residents of Florence know about the upcoming events and how to prepare their recyclables?

Gardiepy: The main objective of these 2021 events is to make sure we collect reusable plastic that will be accepted by the various vendors who remanufacture this plastic. People should remember three words when recycling — clean, dry and sort.

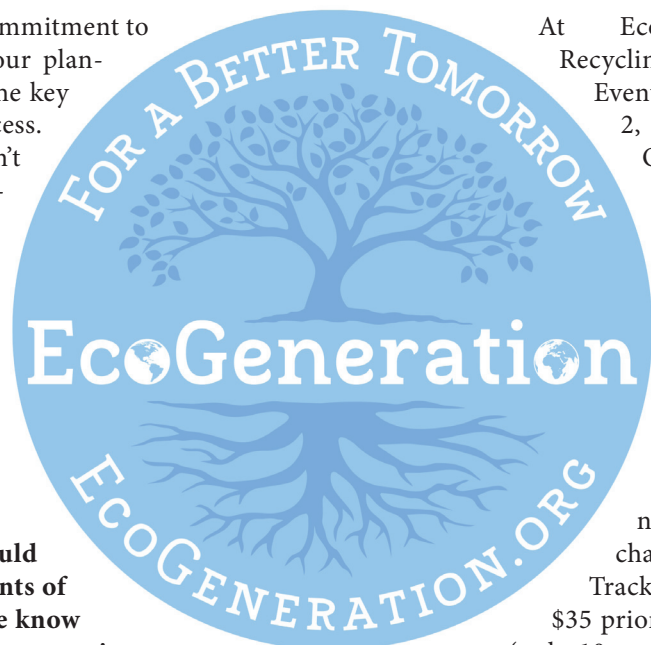
Cleanliness is the most important. If it isn't clean, we cannot accept it.

Everything must be dry so there is no mold or slimy residues, because vendors need pure plastic without contamination.

Sorting the plastic into the different types is also very important.

People should be prepared to wait in line. It takes time to process the various recyclables and we are a volunteer organization. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Details on what we collect and how to sort the different plastics is available at www.ecogeneration.org.



With that said, what are the different plastic waste streams you collect?

- Number 1 drink bottles and jugs anything with a screw top lid. No caps please. Labels okay.
- Number 2, 4 and 5 – bottles, jugs, tubs and lids – prescription bottles go here. No labels– please check the website for more details on how to sort these. www.ecogeneration.org.
- Personal Care Items – shampoo, makeup, soap, lotions, pumps, caps. Labels okay.
- Health and Nutrition Items – vitamins, supplements, lids, blister packs. Labels okay.
- 1 gallon-size bag of caps, 6 inches or smaller, all types.
- 1 grocery bag of plastic film and bags – same items collected at the grocery stores.
- No Styrofoam packing materials will be accepted at these events.

At EcoGeneration's Recycling Take Back Events on May 2, Aug. 1 and Oct. 3, the first hour will be for residents who are 65 years of age and older.

There will also be an opportunity to purchase a "Fast Track" pass for \$35 prior to the event (only 10 passes available, first come, first served) which will allow residents to process their clean, dry and sorted plastics without waiting in a long line. When you purchase this pass, you will also have the opportunity to recycle one quart size bag of used clean face masks and plastic gloves – in an effort to keep our landfills free from this pandemic wastestream.

Sponsorships and donations are always welcome. People can visit www.ecogeneration.org for more details.

Stay tuned next month for Part II of this interview series with EcoGeneration's founder. Gardiepy will discuss where these different waste streams of recycled materials end up and how they are being reused.

Got ideas for future articles? Need more information about closing the loop? Have questions about your recycling efforts? People can contact britte.kirsch@gmail.com or visit Waste Wise Lane County at www.lanecountyor.gov/wastewise.



The Breakdown on Plastics

Small Changes
x Billions of People

BIG IMPACT

Be a part of the solution:

- Use a refillable water bottle.
- Bring your own to-go cup to coffee shops.
- Keep reusable utensils and straws in your car, office and purse.
- Shop with reusable bags instead of plastic bags.
- Bag and store fruit and vegetables in reusable produce bags.
- Trade your shower pouf for a washcloth, scrubbing towel or bamboo scrub brush.
- Look for tablet or powder-based cleaning products to dissolve in refillable containers, or make your own cleaning products.
- Switch to bamboo toothbrushes.

Reduce, Recycle, Reuse

"Thank you for doing your part!" - Dave



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The 24th Annual "Fore! Kids" Golf Classic & 10th Annual Helicopter Golf Ball Drop

Entry into the 4-person scramble is \$90 per player, including opportunities to participate in the Hole-In-One Challenges and Million Dollar Shoot Out, prizes, lunch and more!

All proceeds benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Western Lane County.

Space is Limited so don't delay!

For additional information and Registration to Play please call or email Pat Bennett; 209.986.4793, pat@pebennettco.com

Ask Pat about Leveraging your play by becoming an event Sponsor!

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