

Recycle from A1

about the carbon footprint of each individual.

EcoGeneration began two and a half years ago as a simple Facebook page created to share information and ideas about sustainable ways of living.

Then plastics became an issue.

Until last year, countries worldwide had relied heavily on China for their plastics recycling. A Chinese ban in January 2018 on the import of plastics, however, has forced local governments and organizations to scramble for solutions as domestic plastics have piled up in landfills or getting incinerated.

As Gardiepy's Facebook page grew in popularity, he began getting actively involved in more conservation and recycling efforts such as local and countywide litter pick-ups.



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Master recycler Shauna Neigh (left) and EcoGeneration founder David Gardiepy separate plastics over the weekend using storage space loaned by the city.

"In this last litter pick-up, I picked up the bike path behind Safeway," Gardiepy said. "We got 24 pounds of garbage and only seven pounds went to the landfill."

This was due in large part to Gardiepy's pur-

chase of services with the recycling company Terra-Cycle.

"At that point I said, 'You know what? It makes sense to pay to recycle them,'" he said. "Most people don't realize that recycling is an expensive

endeavor."

Lane County has previously tried to address plastics by holding two plastic roundups, the last of which attracted 1,043 vehicles. As many were left idling their engines during the wait - essen-

tially working against the county's environmentally-conscious efforts - county officials decided this summer to replace the roundup model with community collectors.

Gardiepy saw a place for EcoGeneration.

Now operating with a staff of about 20 people, EcoGeneration has become an incorporated nonprofit in the State of Oregon and is pursuing a 501(c)(3) status.

In this, the group has launched its first Recycling Take-Back program as a community collector, though not without help.

Prior to the adoption of the community collector model, city staff worker

Shauna Neigh had become fed up with the lack of recycling options.

"I kind of started out as a citizen who was frustrated because my recycling was not being picked up," she said.

Neigh joined a master recycling course and began getting involved in educational and collection efforts at the South Valley Farmers Market early this summer.

When the county's community collectors model came along, Neigh signed up and ran into Gardiepy.

"I kind of hijacked her tent space," said Gardiepy.

See ECO 11A

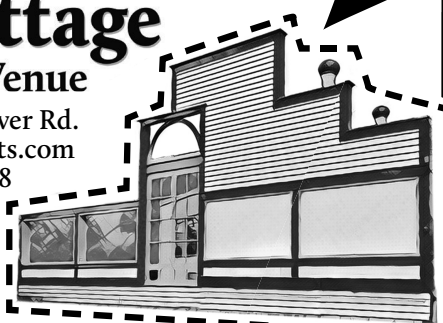
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