

Locally recycled plastics total 960 cubic feet in first nine months

Vernonia Recycles, the volunteer plastic recycling program in Vernonia, has collected approximately 960 cubic feet of plastics in its first nine months of operation, coordinator Debbie Taylor reported.

To illustrate what that means in space saved at the

Vernonia landfill, imagine the following: If that amount of plastic were spread out to a depth of one inch, it would cover 11,520 square feet. In comparison, the customer floor space at Vernonia Sentry Market is approximately 8,600 square feet.

Denton Plastics, Portland,

where the material is delivered, pays 8 cents per pound for milk jugs, and the approximately 250 pounds of these the program has recycled has built up a \$20 credit. There is no pay for other types of plastics, Taylor said, though recycling them means a longer life for our landfill.

The program works this way: The material is collected at Anderson Park on the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a trained volunteer is on hand to help recyclers sort their plastics.

The plastics are put in bags that hold 80 cubic feet each, and stored at the Columbia County Road Department building in Vernonia until volunteer Wally Dettmers delivers them to Denton Plastics, near the Portland

airport. Dettmers delivers from one to three bags each month.

Denton processes the plastic into small chips which is shipped to processing plants throughout the country and made into useable products such as park benches, guard rails for use along roadways, even raingear, Taylor explained.

She also stressed that Vernonia Recycles is a non-profit, volunteer organization, and the small amount of money earned will be put back into the program.

For those who are unfamiliar with the program, there are four classes of plastics that can be recycled: (1) Polystyrene - brittle, breakable plastic used in sour cream or cottage containers; (2) Polystyrene Foam - soft,

light-weight plastic used for egg cartons, coffee cups, fast food containers, meat and bakery trays; (3) Natural High-Density Polyethylene - soft, cloudy plastic used for milk, juice, water or vinegar jugs; (4) Colored High-density Polyethylene, Poly Propylene and Low-density Polyethylene - soft, pliable plastics used for soap jugs, shampoo bottles, dairy containers, bleach jugs, etc.

Plastics that cannot be recycled are film, such as plastic bags, hazardous chemical containers, or clear containers like those used for peanut butter, cooking oil or salad dressings.

All recycled plastics must be thoroughly rinsed, and have all paper removed either by soaking in hot water or cutting out. For processing purposes, there should be no items smaller than the palm of the hand.

Taylor expressed her thanks to all of the people who have participated in the program, either by recycling their plastics or by volunteering their time, and says her greatest reward is meeting the people who care, but that more volunteers could be used to help collect or take in the plastics.

"We need to express special thanks to Dettmers and Peter Sessions," she said, "without them, Vernonia Recycles would be a lot less manageable."

For information on volunteering, or questions about the recycling process, call Taylor at 429-5611.

Local recycling center accepts various items

In addition to the volunteer Vernonia Recycles project for plastics, many other items can be recycled locally.

Nehalem Valley Sanitary Service has boxes and bins for glass, aluminum, tin, newspaper and grocery bags. They will also accept motor oil that is in tightly capped containers.

The recycling center is located at 917 Madison Avenue, behind the old Vernonia Hotel.

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Glass

Just rinse. Don't worry about labels. Clear, brown or green glass is recyclable. (No window glass, please.)

Corrugated Cardboard & Kraft Paper

Flatten boxes and bags. (Put waxy containers or slick cardboard in regular garbage.)

and easy!

Motor Oil

Use a non-glass container with a screw top. (An old bleach bottle is perfect.)

Aluminum

Just rinse and flatten cans, TV dinner trays and foil.

Tin/Steel Cans

Just rinse, remove labels and flatten. (Removing the bottom makes flattening simple.)

Newspapers

Just bundle and tie or put in big paper sack. Sorry, old magazines and other slick papers can't be recycled.

Take your recycled items to
Nehalem Valley Sanitary Service
917 Madison Avenue, Vernonia
(Behind the Vernonia Hotel)

For more information call 429-8711

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