

Recycling Update

FALL 2014

FACTS

- Over 23,000 kinds of trees grow in our world.¹
- Every state has an official tree. Ours is called the Cabbage Palm (*Sabal Palmetto*) which is, strangely enough, a species of grass rather than a tree.²
- Trees produce oxygen from carbon dioxide. One large tree can generate enough oxygen to supply up to four people with air for a day.¹
- Trees are some of the oldest and largest living things on Earth. The giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron Giganteum*) lives well over 1,000 years, and others like the coast redwood (*Sequoia Sempervirens*) grow to over 360 feet high.^{3,4}
- Aspirin can be made from the bark of the white willow tree (*Salix Alba*).⁵

Ash Reuse

If you live in Pasco County, our Waste-To-Energy plant has been turning your garbage into energy for over 20 years. The process involves combusting trash in order to generate electricity. After the procedure is complete, the ash residue that remains is around 25% by volume

of what went into the plant. Typically, the ash is landfilled. But, disposal is no longer the only option available. In partnership with the University of Florida, Pasco County is looking into the reuse of ash as an ingredient in road base, asphalt, and concrete. A test road has been laid and its



performance and durability is being evaluated. Soon, you may be driving on the ghosts of orange peels, peach pits, and coffee grounds. County Administrator Michele Baker says "It really made sense for us to partner with the University of Florida."

The Cost of Using Blue Bags

When the Choose and Use Your Own Container program started in June 2013, no one predicted the positive reaction the changeover would cause. Our recycling tonnage has increased

23% between June 2013 and June 2014.

On average, a package of 30 blue bags costs \$9, while a plastic container has a one-time investment of around \$15. Blue bags don't just

cost over and over, but they can entangle recycling equipment, slow the process, and create 'contaminated' loads that are less valuable.

Thanks to Nate and Wendy for their help with the Coastal Cleanup. The efforts of over 1,050 volunteers, sponsors, and puppets cleaned **19.74 TONS** of trash from Pasco streets and waterways. Watch Nate and Wendy's Cleanup adventures at <https://www.facebook.com/pascoparksandrec>

1. <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/treesofstrength/treefact.htm>

2. <http://www.nps.gov/yose/naturescience/sequoia-research.htm>

3. http://www.nps.gov/redw/parknews/upload/VG07_featurestories.pdf

4. <http://www.flheritage.com/facts/symbols/symbol.cfm?id=13>

5. <http://www.udel.edu/chem/C465/senior/fall00/HerbalSupplements/Willowbark.html>

COMMIT :

Volunteering at a recycling or litter cleanup event once a year is not a substitute for incorporating

waste reduction and recycling into your daily life. These are changes in habit, not lifestyle changes. Once you start, you'll be amazed how it all becomes second nature. It'll be as natural as brushing your teeth, and about as easy.

We're Moving!

Pasco County's Recycling Department will soon be in a new home! We will be at the same Resource Recovery Facility on Hays Road, but we will be on the front side of

the complex. Our facility is 11,700 square feet used for recycling material transfer. We will start leading educational tours and our outreach programs will continue. Once we're

settled, we will put out the welcome mat for you.



Plastic Perspective

As the use of plastic in our everyday lives continues to

grow, it's important to know what plastics are recyclable in your county. It's easy enough to check the bottom of a drinking bottle for the familiar recycling symbol, but that symbol seems to be everywhere, and



not all plastic is created equal. Rigid plastics are defined as those that hold their shape and are not flexible. Examples include children's toys, CD and phone cases,

lawn furniture, pails, sheds, and car bumpers. Some rigid plastic products will have the recycling



symbol, but that does not mean that

the curbside service or drop offs will take them. Many more rigid

plastics are simply unmarked. Use common sense. If the rigid plastic doesn't bend, is put together with glue and screws, or is missing a recycling symbol, don't put it at the curb or in a drop off. When in doubt, call our office.



The Other Arrows

Everyone is familiar with the three chasing arrows of 'green' living. Reduce, reuse, recycle has become a part of our cultural landscape, but we often overlook reducing and reusing in favor of recycling.

At least a few times per year, go through your things and

decide whether you love something enough to keep it or whether it's time to let it go. Thrift stores and charitable donation centers abound and are happy to take many of your used belongings.

When you are shopping for something new, buy things that are made to last and don't fall

prey to the latest fads.

If possible, close the loop and try to buy things made from recycled materials to encourage manufacturers to be more environmentally aware.