Garbage?
Is it a nuisance or treasure in disguise?

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Introduction

• Is garbage really garbage?

• This study was conducted to find the positive and negative effects of garbage, and possible means of reversing the harmful aspects.

Introduction to the problem

• A new report from the state Department of Environmental Quality shows that Oregonians generated 5.5 million tons of trash last year, a 6 percent jump from 2004.

• "It is a very troubling and compelling problem," David Allaway, waste prevention specialist with the DEQ.

• “During 2005, Oregonians recycled slightly more than 49 percent of the material they threw away, exceeding the 45 percent mandated by the 2001 Oregon Legislature. But the net increase in waste means that Oregon failed to meet another goal set by the 2001 Legislature - that there would be no increase in waste in 2005.” (2)

Oregon Consumption Chart
**Historical US Consumption**

Where does the garbage come from?
- "Why would you repair your $49 DVD player?"
- The growth of technology has caused a dramatic decrease of reusable goods.
- Businesses contribute more then 75% of Portland’s waste!!!

**Where does it go?**
- Majority goes into Oregon’s 36 Landfills
  - This includes all of Oregon’s Solid Waste approx. 70%
  - Solid Wastes Generated Out of State approx. 30%

**Oregon’s Six Largest Landfills**
- Columbia Ridge Landfill, Gillam County
  - Distributed 2.1 Million Tons
- Riverbend Landfill, Yamhill County
  - Distributed 548,835 Tons
- Coffin Butte Landfill, Benton County
  - Distributed 493,219 Tons
- Finley Buttes Landfill, Morrow County
  - Distributed 426,042 Tons
- Dry Creek Disposal Site, Jackson County
  - Distributed 375,364 Tons
- Short Mountain Landfill, Lane County
  - Distributed 336,620 Tons
Landfills Cont.

- The 6 largest landfills account for 4,313,429 tons of disposed materials alone.
- Most from Oregon waste, and out of state imported waste.
- Solid waste has increased over the years.

Where it used to go:

- St. Johns Landfill
  - “Today it is easy to miss the 238-acre St. Johns Landfill. It is hidden behind a hill and locked inside a gated fence on Columbia Boulevard. The landfill seems almost park-like, as grass covers what was once a major waste disposal site alive with activity. The surrounding industrial businesses camouflage the area, but this was not always the case”(1)

St. Johns Landfill Cont’d

How does it get there?

- Who’s my garbage hauler?
  - Trash removal in the Portland area is contracted by private companies. Central Garbage Referral has information on handlers within the tri-county (Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington) area.
What are the harmful effects?

• Who does the trash effect?
  EVERYONE!!!

• What has it done to the environment?
  The burning of municipal and solid waste have created emissions of hazardous pollutants into our land, air, and water.

Effects of Waste

• Pollutants from Burning:
  - Dust/Particulate matter into atmosphere
  - Sulphur Oxides
  - Carbon Monoxide
  - Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
  - Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)
  - Nitrogen Oxides (NO)

Effects of Waste Cont.

• Resources diminish.
• Increase in landfills and permanent wasted land.
• Damaged wildlife habitats.
• Pushes the problems away rather than forcing a solution.

Alternatives

Captain Planet!
• Reduce
• Recycle
• Reuse
• Don’t use
• Compost
Composting

- Composting is a way to recycle your yard and kitchen wastes, and a critical step in reducing the volume of garbage needlessly sent to landfills for disposal.
- Composting has been around for years. Ex) leaves pile up on the forest floor, and begin to naturally decay.

Composting cont.

- Composting is used now to turn organic wastes into a valuable resource due to landfills becoming scarce and expensive.
- In 10 years, composting will become as common as recycling aluminum cans.
- You can compost in your own home, in your back yard with a three bin system.

What we are doing as a city:

- According to Mike O’brian from the City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development, there is a food policy organization in action.
- The sustainable development department is starting a food compost (this takes food waste to be composted)
- In the near future, they hope to have household curbside waste management for food to be composted.

What Businesses can do

- Eliminating Garbage cans from offices, which increases recycling.
- Businesses should be more socially responsible for their actions in the environment in terms of waste management. (triple bottom line)
What We Can Do!

- City Of Portland “The City that Works”
- We could implement a comprehensive composting plan such as the Regence building.
- We could require the businesses, as well as homes, to compost. Currently, businesses can contract a composting hauler. These services should be provided by the city.
- The city could implement a Curitiba style sorting system that would be beneficial to both the consumers as well as community members.

City of Portland cont.

- Currently you have to pay to compost. This sends a negative message. Alternatively, we should provide tax benefits and write offs to those who support a sustainable way of life.
- According to the Portland Waste Management Department, 75% of Portland’s waste is from local businesses. This gives you a great opportunity to support those who support the environment.

What you can do!

- Household garbage composting.
- Support Businesses that are Environmentally friendly.
- You would be surprised what you can recycle!!!
- Educate yourself.
- Stay involved with community and their developments to better our city’s waste management activities.

Waste Prevention

- Examples of Waste Prevention
  - Reduce the amount of junk mail you receive;
  - Plan meals to avoid waste;
  - Bring your own shopping bag to the grocery store;
  - Buy at the local Farmers’ Market;
  - Buy, maintain and repair durable products;
  - Use rechargeable batteries;
  - Borrow, rent or share items such as books, videos, power tools or gardening equipment;
  - Use reusable table and silverware instead of paper or plastic;
  - Buy only what you need;
  - Give gifts that are resource efficient or that are an experience rather than a "thing".
Good Links for good doers

- Where to take your garbage and recycling: Metro's two transfer stations accept trash and recyclables from citizens, businesses and commercial waste haulers. Hazardous waste facilities are next to these stations. This page includes rates, fees, and how to prepare a load.
- Hazardous waste facilities: Metro-area residents can dispose of household hazardous waste such as pesticides, leftover paint, solvents and automotive fluids at one of the hazardous waste facilities located at Metro's solid waste and recycling transfer stations.
- Report illegal dump sites: Use the online form or call Metro Recycling Information at (503) 234-3000.
- Interactive maps and tools: Use these tools to see data layers on a map, locate recycling resources, find your garbage hauler, make food donations or find your councilor.
- Related documents: Garbage and hazardous waste. Links documents about this topic that are available to download.
- http://www.zerowaste.org/
- The Zero Waste Alliance is a non-profit partnership of universities, government, business and other organizations working to develop, promote and apply Zero Waste strategies.
- http://www.zerowaste.org/resources.htm
- This link provides sources to a plethora of different environmentally sound organizations and products.

The Power is Yours!

Our Planeteers

http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4125381235920289417&q=the+power+is+yourshl=en

Bibliography

- "Introduction to Composting." Composting Guide. 5 Dec. 2006 <http://vegweb.com/composting/>