

Composting, Recycling Vital to Island's Waste Management Efforts

By Leslie Rott

With a significant influx of new people to the Mackinac Island community every summer, the Mackinac Island Department of Public Works is eager to educate residents about the city's waste management system.

Much of the Island's garbage is shipped to a landfill in Dafter, south of Sault Ste. Marie, but to limit the expense of shipping, a three-bin sorting system is used, which promotes recycling.

Residents play an important role in the Island's waste management system when they sort their waste into the appropriate bags and receptacles. Blue bags are used for garbage that will go to the landfill, clear or beige bags are for organic waste that can be mixed with horse manure and composted, and blue recycling tubs are used for glass and cans to be recycled.

The sorted waste is taken by dray to the city's Solid Waste Handling Facility off British Landing Road, and distributed from there.

"Sorting is very important, especially from landfill to compost," said Bruce Zimmerman, the DPW director.

Items in the clear or beige compost bags receive a final screening from employees at the facility, then the contents are shredded, watered down, and mixed with horse manure, hay, and straw. The mixture is then put into composting bays for 45 to 60 days, then into curing bays for further composting for six to nine months. The finished compost is then tested and sold for use as topsoil.

Recycled items include corrugated cardboard, magazines and brochures, glass (clear, brown, and green), plastic (#1 PET, #2 HDPE, and #2 natural), tin, and aluminum, which is sold to distributors in Michigan and



Paul Wandrie with compost made and sold on Mackinac Island.

Wisconsin. Food grade foam containers are also recycled, but the city does not receive money for it.

Cleanliness is a big issue, said Paul Wandrie, who manages the Solid Waste Handling Facility, and it is important to clean recyclable items before they are sent

to the facility.

The cost to ship a 30-yard dumpster full of compacted landfill bags to Dafter is \$1,100, he said, so the more people remove the recyclable materials from their blue bags, the less landfill material has to be shipped to the mainland.



Roy Bessell, Jr. and Lorne Cowell, workers at the Solid Waste Handling Facility, stand with a bail of newspapers and a box of magazines which will be sold on the mainland.

From 1996 through 2005, close to 4,000 tons of trash have been recycled, and from 1994 through 2004, 7,172 cubic yards of compost were made and sold, enough to fill almost 30 dumpsters.

"We want to make sure that people are aware we have this [compost] program and that it is available to everyone," Mr. Wandrie said.

Finished compost can be purchased for \$10 per cubic yard. During the off-season, it can be delivered by a DPW motorized vehicle, and during the summer season and year-around, it is delivered by the Mackinac Island Service Company for a fee.

Of the sorting system, he said, "this is a great program if we could get everyone into doing it."

Anyone is welcome to come to the Solid Waste Handling Facility and see the process firsthand, he added.

Bags can be purchased at the

DPW office on the second floor of Community Hall from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays. Blue landfill bags can be purchased for \$3 each, clear or beige compost bags can be purchased for \$1.50 each, and blue recycling tubs are free for Island residents.

Recyclable materials

- Magazines and catalogs - All shiny papered magazines and catalogs are accepted; bundle them for easy handling. However, phone books, newspaper inserts, and junk mail are NOT accepted.

- Foam products - Food service materials such as meat trays, drink cups, plates, and egg cartons are accepted; rinse thoroughly. Insulation, peanuts, or packaging material are NOT accepted.

- Corrugated cardboard - Bundle cardboard and do NOT stick non-cardboard items in-between. Asian cardboard, is

*Please turn to page 23

Residential Collection Schedule

The following is the residential pick-up schedule for the Mackinac Island Service Company:

Monday - Landfill and compost bags from Stonecliffe Condos, Woods Restaurant, Woodbluff, Stonecliffe Manor 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Tuesday - Landfill and compost bags from East Bluff, Mission Area, and Downtown, including Leslie Court.

Wednesday - Curbside recycling from:

- 1) East Bluff, Mission Area, Downtown, and Harrisonville
- 2) West Bluff, Annex,

Stonecliffe Condos, Woodbluff, Stonecliffe Manors 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, Stonebrook, and British Landing Area.

Thursday - Landfill and compost bags from Annex, West Bluff, and Harrisonville.

Friday - Landfill and compost bags from Stonecliffe Condos, Woods Restaurant, British Landing Area, and Leslie Court (2nd pickup for the week).

Residential pickup starts at 9 a.m.

Downtown business pickup occurs at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Compost in Clear or Beige Bags

- Cereal boxes (no liners)
- Computer paper
- Meat (butcher) paper
- Food scraps
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Tea bags
- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Egg shells
- Cardboard egg cartons
- Cake mix boxes (no liners)
- Plain paper bags
- Scrap office paper (manila envelopes)
- Postage envelopes (no plastic windows)
- Other miscellaneous paper products
- Waxed paper
- Tissue and napkins
- Paper plates
- Paper (waxed) milk cartons
- Newsprint and telephone books
- Textbooks and paper back books
- Pet food bags (not lined)
- Horse feed bags (not lined)
- Paper/cardboard vacuum bags
- Wooden toothpicks and stir sticks
- Coloring books

Landfill Materials in Blue Bags

- Aerosol cans (paint, hairspray, etc.)
- Air, oil, and furnace filters
- Building materials
- Broken dishes
- Window and mirror glass
- Fireplace and wood stove ashes
- Clothing, rags, and shoes
- Small appliances (TVs, radios, toasters, etc.)
- Candy and gum wrappers
- Potato chip bags
- Bottle tops, neck rings
- Toothpaste containers
- Light bulbs
- Scrubbing pads
- Styrofoam peanuts and packing materials
- Prescription bottles
- Foil-lined juice boxes
- Disposable diapers, feminine hygiene items
- Shiny newspaper inserts
- Plastic utensils and plastic drink cups
- Broken glassware (box first to protect people)
- Cigarette packages, cigarette filters
- Cat litter
- Plastic stir sticks and plastic straws
- Plastic motor oil containers
- Metal utensils and plastic utensils

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