



Emmet County  
Department of Public Works

# The Whole Works 2017

Annual Report to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners from the Emmet County DPW Board and Staff

## HIGHLIGHTS:



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- "Reduce" and "Reuse" Get More Love page 14

## Featured photo:

*A trio of kids at the Petoskey Downtown Farmers' Market give some carrot tops a future as compost. More on "Give All Food A Future" on page 11*



## Give all food a future



# EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE



*Emmet County DPW Director Elisa Seltzer (right), led a tour of the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center for legislators in August. From left, State Representative Lee Chatfield, Bear Creek Township Supervisor and DPW Board Chair Dennis Keiser, State Senator Wayne Schmidt, and MDEQ Recycling and Waste Minimization Specialist Brian Burke. Several County Commissioners also were in attendance.*

2017 saw a confluence of local, state, national, and international trends, many of which have served to strengthen Emmet County's position to on our ambitious path.

At the international level, China's announcement that it will stop imports of contaminated recyclables in 2018 has rocked markets for recycled materials. Typically, 4,000 shipping containers a day of recyclables have left U.S. ports for China, making it THE market for many programs. Their new policy—called "National Sword"—includes very tight specifications, heightened inspections, and intentional reduction in import permits issued.

Now recyclers who have relied on exporting to China are looking to domestic markets to sell their materials, but—in part because there has not been the quality domestic supply to support use of recycled materials by U.S. industry—there simply are not the domestic markets to absorb all of the material that will not now pass Chinese muster.

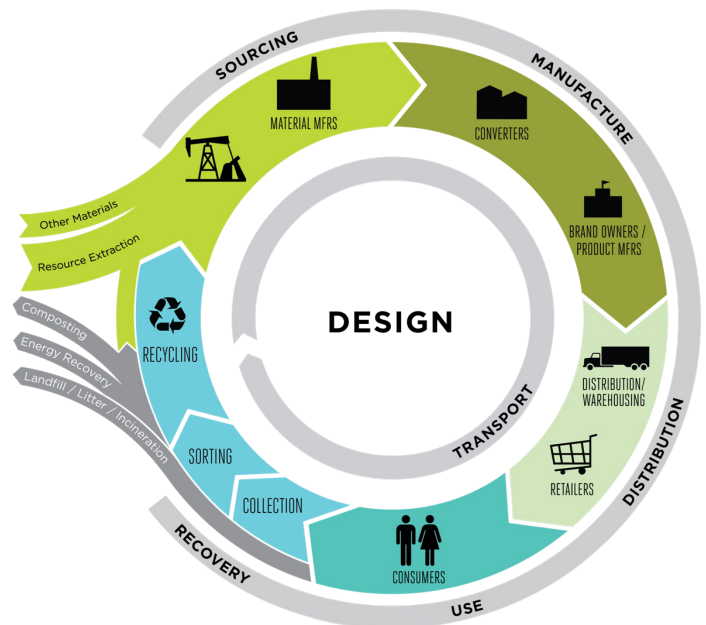
Fortunately for Emmet County and our partner recycling communities, we have both the quality materials and long-term relationships to stay our course. Clean dual-stream materials remain in steady demand by the brokers and factories to which we sell. Of course, our local markets are interconnected with international commodities markets, so the oversupply on the coasts has driven prices down for some materials and this will affect our bottom line.

Nationally, the emergence of the concept of the Circular Economy (CE) in the corporate world has helped illustrate

the benefits of our work. Waste reduction and recycling are at the heart of this paradigm. As shown in the diagram below, CE points to the benefits of jobs added, resources conserved, energy saved, and a cleaner world. Our systems and programs pave the way for Emmet County's residents, businesses, and partner communities to help build the Circular Economy every day.

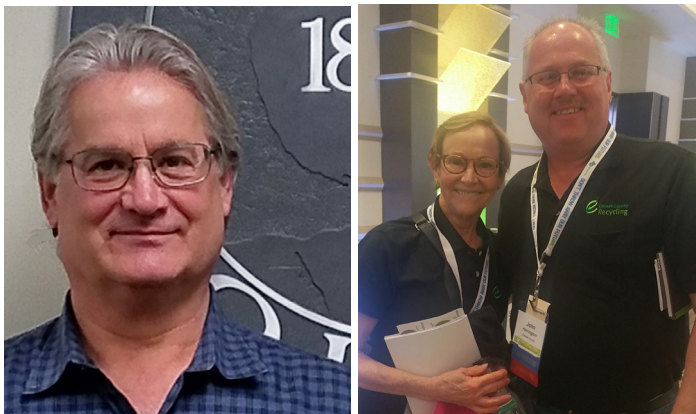
At the state level, we continue to be actively involved in policy development as Governor Snyder advocates for doubling the state recycling rate to 30%—the Great Lakes states' average. Emmet County has attained a 42% recycling rate and is fully engaged in demonstrating how best practices, sound policy, market development, outreach, and partnerships can both help the state reach its goals and further ours. We look forward to continued developments at the state level to help all Michigan communities grow their recycling programs along with us!

Finally, locally we have been pleased to partner with the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce's Conscious Capitalism initiative, "Thriving Petoskey." The Conscious Capitalism movement envisions businesses having a positive impact on six sets of stakeholders: employees, customers, suppliers, funders, communities and the environment. Waste reduction and recycling are recognized as an integral part of the businesses' relationship with the environment and we are at the table, ready to help the region's businesses minimize the impact of their waste.



*A diagram of the Circular Economy from GreenBlue.org shows how materials can be cycled through the economy instead of taking a one-way trip to the landfill. For more on the concept of a Circular Economy, visit [EllenMacArthurFoundation.org](http://EllenMacArthurFoundation.org).*

## DPW PEOPLE



*Emmet County Commissioners Jonathan Scheel (left) and Betsy White (right, at the Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference with ECR staffer John Harrington) joined the DPW Board in 2017.*

## Two New Commissioners Join DPW Board

January 2017 saw two new County Commissioners join our Public Works Board: Jonathan Scheel of Bear Creek Township and Betsy White of the City of Petoskey. In just this first year, they have already made their mark: Jonathan for his perspectives on policy and planning and Betsy for her focus on finances and for diving right in and going to the Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference with our team.

Our deepest thanks go out to the commissioners who had previously served on the DPW Board:

- Charlie MacInnis served from 2013 to 2016. Charlie has long been a stand-out supporter of the recycling program. He gained department “legend” status for bringing his wife to the 2010 Grand Opening of our new recycle processing facility as a date—and on their anniversary no less. (His wife is well known for her sense of humor.) We look forward to continuing to see Charlie around the County Building
- Shawn Wonnacott served on the DPW Board for six years, from 2011 to 2016. We appreciated the openness Shawn brought to the DPW Board and especially valued his expertise in all things operational, including serving on our Building Committee. He was always there for us and is missed!

## Public Works Board 2017

Denny Keiser  
Bear Creek Township Supervisor, Chairperson

William Dohm  
Little Traverse Township Supervisor, Vice Chair

Arden Bawkey  
Emmet County Drain Commissioner

Jack Jones  
Member at Large

Jonathan Scheel  
Emmet County Commissioner

Leroy Sumner  
Emmet County Road Commissioner

Betsy White  
Emmet County Commissioner

## Roger Changes Roles

Roger Duffiney, formerly a supervisor of our sort-line crew from Straits Area Services, became an Emmet County employee in 2017. Roger knows our systems intimately, having sorted alongside the Straits Area clients. Now he is operating the baler and fork lifts. We appreciate his versatility and outstanding team work. See him in action—above and beyond even his new role—on page 8.

## We ♥ Dogs at “the Dump”



*Many dogs love to visit the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center! Shown here, Journey, with her human friend, Emily Hughes.*





Our 2017 summer intern, Courtney Wilber, focused mainly on our Give All Food A Future campaign, setting up and staffing the farmers' market booth (see page 11). Courtney graduated from Grand Valley State University December 2017. Thank you, Courtney!

## Staff Stats

### Recycling Personnel

County Employees full-time equivalent (FTE).....	7.5
Contract Personnel FTE .....	15.5
Straits Area Services FTE .....	8.0
Total .....	31.0

### Solid Waste Disposal Personnel

County Employees FTE .....	7.5
Contract Personnel FTE .....	0.5
Total .....	8.0

DPW Total FTE.....39.0



A big shout out to both John Harrington and Gary "Goose" Hickman for 15 years of service at the Emmet County DPW.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### REVENUE

#### Waste Transfer Station

Charges for Services .....	\$2,358,966.85
Interest Income .....	\$1,977.15
Clean Sweep Grant Funds .....	\$2,302.87
Other Income* .....	\$5,748.55
County General Fund .....	\$0.00
<b>SUBTOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$2,368,995.42</b>

#### Recycling Program

For-Fee Recyclables** .....	\$100,958.40
Sale of Materials.....	\$917,796.49
From Waste Revenues.....	\$383,087.36
Out-of-County and Other Services .....	\$537,244.55
Curbside Recycling .....	\$366,353.19
Compost, Mulch & Bin Sales .....	\$32,989.75
Other Income.....	\$19,722.00
Grants .....	\$10,000.00
Local Revenue Share Contribution .....	\$10,000.00
<b>SUBTOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$2,378,151.74</b>
<b>Total DPW Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$4,747,147.16</b>

### EXPENSES

#### Waste Transfer Station

Personnel.....	\$480,112.96
Contractual Services.....	\$302,265.37
Landfill Fees.....	\$1,274,080.20
Operations .....	\$109,876.50
Depreciation.....	\$276,912.00
Principal & Interest Payment .....	\$34,563.49
<b>SUBTOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$2,477,810.52</b>

#### Recycling Program

Personnel.....	\$493,823.55
Contractual Services.....	\$659,591.52
Revenue Sharing.....	\$8,607.10
Operations*** .....	\$697,797.10
Depreciation.....	\$292,140.00
<b>SUBTOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$2,151,959.87</b>
<b>Total DPW Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$4,629,770.39</b>

\*Transfer Station "Other Income" includes monies from business and out-of-county users of the Household Chemical Drop-off (HCD) program and donations to the HCD program.

\*\*For-Fee Recyclables includes fees for recycling of mattresses, paint, refrigerants, electronics, rubble, tires, shingles and wood, 2) recycling of batteries and fluorescent bulbs from businesses, and 3) tipping of brush to be composted or chipped.

\*\*\*Operations includes Straits Area Services sort crew.

# Recycler of the Year

Whether you call them the booster, the cop, the nerd, or the czar, most every office has one. And they're not just in offices; they are common in stores, clinics, garages, restaurants, and factories, too. Many workplaces have more than one of them.

They're those avid recyclers who strive to make new recycling options available at work, educate others about recycling right, and maybe even pull recyclables out of the waste baskets. Emmet County Recycling (ECR) honored them with the 2017 Recycler of the Year Award. ECR calls them "Workplace Recycling Leaders." Meet a few of our honorees below!



*From Odawa Casino Resort, Aaron Figiel  
Recycling Claim to Fame: taking the lead on collecting food scraps from the Casino's food service operations for composting.*



*From Boyne Highlands Resort, Anne Bischer and Kathy Coyne  
Recycling Claim to Fame: taking it above and beyond the call of duty!  
They also really make a point of educating both customers and coworkers.*



*From Harbor/Brenn Insurance Agencies, Ashley Whitney (left)  
Recycling Claim to Fame: using new technologies to achieve huge reductions in paper use.*



*From Public Schools of Petoskey, Ron Griffin  
Recycling Claim to Fame: pairing every garbage can in the new Northmen Stadium with a recycling bin.*

## Also Specifically Honored

- Betsy VanOrman, Chemical Bank
- Cheryl Reese, Dentistry by the Bay
- Vicki Kelley and Krystal Kiogima, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa
- Christopher Benson and Greta Cherrette, Polly's Planting and Plucking
- Scott Schornak, Pond Hill Farm
- Paul Aggeler, Preston Feather Building Centers





## RECYCLING



*Kerrin O'Brien, Director of the Michigan Recycling Coalition (left) and our own Lindsey Walker and Elisa Seltzer celebrate both organizations' National Recycling Coalition (NRC) award wins with Bob Gedert, President of the Board of the NRC.*

## A "Triple Crown Win" at Recycling Conference

It started in the spring of 2017: our Director, Elisa Seltzer, was honored to be asked to speak as part of plenary session panel at the 2017 Resource Recycling Conference being held in Minneapolis. The topic? 'Hacking Recycling: Tools and Tricks for Your Program'.

Then it was announced that Seltzer was a recipient of the Steve Thompson Memorial Grant, provided by The Recycling Partnership. The Recycling Partnership (TRP) is the leading nonprofit working to increase recycling nationally and was a key partner in our "Carts at the Curb" project in 2016. The grant covered registration costs and lodging for the three-day conference. Grantees also participated in sessions on leadership and emerging issues offered by TRP during the conference.

The honors did not end there, though: Emmet County was also recognized in the Outstanding Government Program category when the National Recycling Coalition presented their awards at the conference. And our friends at the Michigan Recycling Coalition took home an Outstanding Recycling Organization award. What an event!

## State Recycling Initiative Moves Forward

The release of final reports from both the Governor's Recycling Council (GRC) and the Solid Waste Committee and Sustainability Advisory Panel (SWSAP) paved the way for legislation to be drafted. The Council and the Panel were then combined into one group, dubbed the Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Group (SWRA). Our director, Elisa Seltzer, continued to serve on the GRC into 2017 and is now a member of SWRA. As the name suggests, SWRA will provide input as the legislation evolves.

A state funding approach is also in the works. Funding will be pivotal for counties to replace obsolete, out-of-date Solid Waste Plans with fresh new Sustainable Materials Management Plans, the new name emphasizing the change in direction the state is encouraging. New funding will also provide grants to give a leg up to local and regional efforts to expand recycling and composting.

While Emmet County is fortunate to be well ahead of most communities in the provision of resource recovery programs, we are looking forward to planning for the next twenty years. State grants will facilitate new opportunities to increase recycling and composting in Emmet County and our partner communities. A legislative and funding package is expected to be introduced in 2018.

**Recycle for Michigan**

We roll your recyclables out to supply factories all over Michigan, creating jobs and conserving energy and resources.

**To recycle more, visit [EmmetRecycling.org](http://EmmetRecycling.org)**

**Emmet County Recycling**  
231-348-0640

*To "give back" to the communities that participate in our programs, Emmet County Recycling places ads on venue signs and in publications supporting local organizations. For our ads in 2017, we joined Governor Snyder in lifting up recycling's employment, industrial, and environmental benefits to Michigan.*

## Commodity of the Year: Plastic Bags and Film

One of the things that sets Emmet County Recycling (ECR) apart is that we accept plastic bags and film. Plastic bags and film are the bane of single-stream recycle processing facilities: the bags get tangled in their star screens (equipment which does the initial separation of cardboard and paper from rigid containers) and the facilities must spend hours every day removing them. (Our dual-stream and system does not require a star screen.) We accept plastic bags and film curbside and at all of our 13 drop sites. In addition, we have a bunker at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center for larger plastic film including pallet wrap and marine shrink wrap.

ECR has been recycling film since 2008. Trex, a manufacturer of plastic-sawdust composite decking, currently buys our bags and film. They note that the average 500 square foot Trex deck contains 140,000 plastic bags! Because Trex's process uses only polyethylene film and bags, we accept only "stretchy" bags, a description that excludes chip bags, stand-up pouches, and cellophane. Our full quality control mantra here is "stretchy, clean and dry only," because Trex needs the material clean and dry, too.

Plastic bags are included in our "dry" "Paper, Boxes and Bags" category—with paper and cardboard. This is our biggest customer education challenge in recycling film plastic: plastic bottles and jars are collected in our "Mixed Containers" stream and apparently customers assume all

of the plastics go in the same place. We see huge amounts of our bags come in with the Containers.

Our other message to customers about recycling plastic bags and film is to "bag your bags." This

serves two purposes in our system: first, decreasing the chances that the wind will lift bags out of recycling bins or whisk them down the block when a cart is tipped into a curbside truck; and second, to keep them from contaminating the paper and allow for more efficient sorting.

We envision a day when reusable sacks and totes replace single-use grocery bags, but for the time being, plastic bag recycling is a much appreciated service that recovered 153 tons of polyethylene in 2017 and a total of 783 tons to date.



*Our film plastic recycling efforts actually started with marine shrink wrap, at the suggestion of Michael Esposito of Irish Boat Shop in Harbor Springs. We receive many of the ubiquitous blue boat wraps each spring. Pallet wrap is another common form of bulky plastic film.*



*On the Paper, Boxes and Bags sort line at the Emmet County Materials Recovery Facility, plastic bags and film overflow from the chute feeding their bunker, below the platform.*





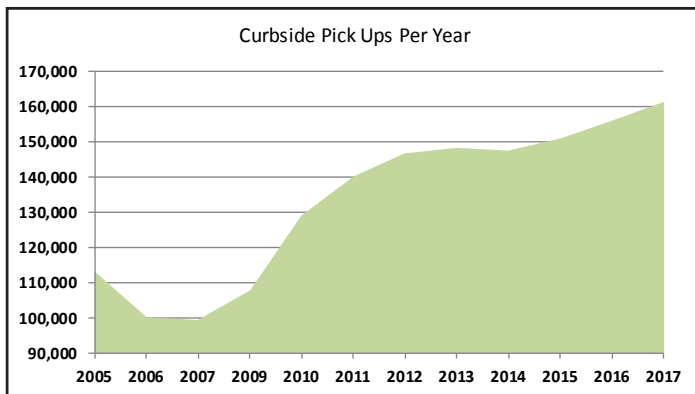
*Residents of Alanson gave a warm welcome to Emmet County Recycling staff—here, Roger Duffiney (left) and Michael William—who spent their evenings delivering recycling carts and totes to all households within the village of Alanson the first week of June, 2017.*

## Alanson Welcomes Curbside Recycling Service

Alanson is the first new community to offer curbside recycling to residents since the service was initially offered in 2004.

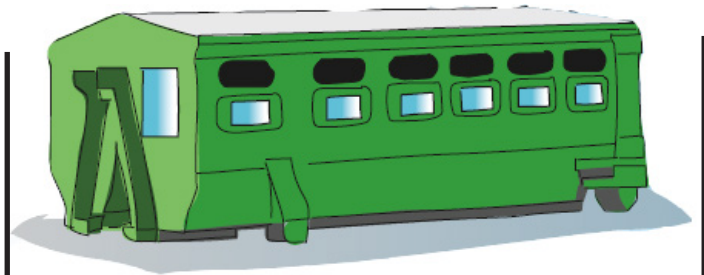
“Everyone was so excited—jumping for joy even—to see the service coming to Alanson,” said Andi Shepherd, an Emmet County Recycling staffer who was part of the delivery crew.

Alanson resident Brooke Milbrandt was potting tomato plants as the delivery crew came up her street. Asked how she felt it, she said, “Oh, yes please! I have two children and this will be great: I’ve been recycling for years and I am always dropping off, dropping off, dropping off. The convenience of just taking it out to the road will be incredible for us.”



## Businesses, Parks Outside Curbside District Serviced with Drop-site Bin Leases

Convenience is key to making recycling viable for businesses in our region. Those businesses outside the area serviced by our curbside-recycling trucks and those with particularly high volumes face particular challenges. To meet the need, Emmet County Recycling has begun a limited program leasing drop-site recycling bins to such businesses and institutions, with servicing provided on a per-pull basis. The program is growing, year by year:



### 2014

Stafford’s Crooked River Lodge  
Pond Hill Farm  
Petoskey State Park (seasonally)

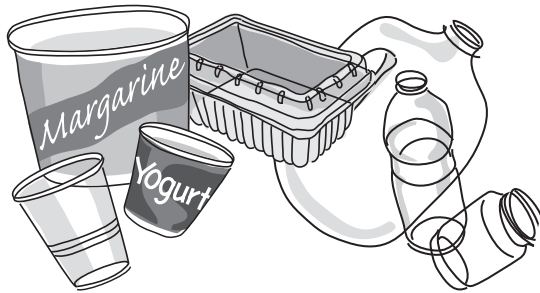
### 2016

Wilderness State Park (seasonally, as part of the State of Michigan initiative to expand recycling to all of the state parks)

### 2017

American Spoon Foods production facility  
Boyne Highlands  
Camp Daggett  
EJ (Iron Works)  
Emmet County’s Camp Pet-O-Se-Ga  
Emmet County’s Headlands Dark Sky Park





## Mixed-Plastics Recycler ReOpens as ReVital

While there are many factories purchasing one or two grades of plastic (for instance water bottles and milk jugs), very few factories on our continent are committed to receiving mixed plastic containers from community programs and turning them into new products. This is, at least in part, due to the many years of easy flow of mixed materials offshore to China.

We were fortunate to develop a relationship with one of these mixed plastic recycling facilities (PERFs in industry lingo) in 2009, allowing us to expand the plastic containers we accept upon the 2010 opening of our new processing facility. We were dismayed when they closed in 2015, then thrilled to learn of their reincorporation in Sarnia, Ontario as ReVital this year.

Our director, Elisa Seltzer, attended ReVital’s Grand Opening which included a tour of the renovated facility. Emmet County benefits from a long-term relationship with this facility, where they appreciate the high quality and low contamination rate of our mixed plastics bales. We appreciate ReVital’s investment in incorporating more plastics into the circular economy.



The ribbon cut at ReVital Polymers’ Grand Opening illustrated the range of plastics the company processes.

## 2017 Recycling Highlights

Total Recycled.....11,430 tons  
 Curbside Pick Ups..... 163,300

### What a Good Year Looks Like!

	2016	2017	% Up
Pickups Curbside	153,400	163,300	6.5%
Drop Site Activity (cubic yards)	62,550	67,030	7.2%
Revenue from Sales of Materials	\$676,155	\$917,796	36%

## Deep Fried Recycling

Got used fryer oil? The Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center now has a vat—just like a restaurant—for receiving cooking oil from the public. It was easy to set up and there is no cost to us or the customer.





## PLEASANTVIEW ROAD DROP-OFF CENTER

### Center a Work in Progress

While big changes in site layout may be coming in the future, the interim Drop-off Center study recommended a series of operational changes that have all been put into effect but for one.

One of the more visible improvements was the addition of a series of bright orange arrows leading from the Gatehouse to the Waste Transfer Station, providing a visual path for new customers to follow to reduce confusion and simplify the message attendants need to convey. We are also using these arrows to guide customers with televisions to recycle from the Hazardous Recyclables area to the Drive Through.

The one task still underway is transitioning to allow credit cards for payment, a highly anticipated move that continues to experience delays and hurdles. We expect that once implemented the transaction time at the Gatehouse will be reduced, an important goal of the Study, particularly during our summer high season activity.



*During a DPW “stock photo” shoot, Emmet County Maintenance Department employee Derek Grisby and his son Nikholas helped us get this great image of drop-site recycling. Thanks, Derek and Nikholas! Real heroes recycle! Photo by Dave Harrell.*



### Document Shredding Service Popular

In 2017 we shredded 1,300 boxes of documents by appointment. We charge \$5 per box for the service to cover our costs. We also shred for other County departments (152 of the boxes in 2017) as an in-kind service.

In 2008 we offered our first “Big Shred” event, making 2017 the tenth year we have offered shredding on site.

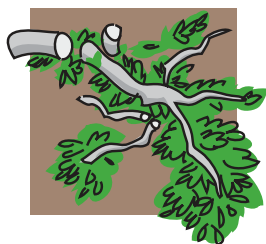


## WASTE DISPOSAL

### Transfer Station Rates Hold Steady

For the second year in a row, the Public Works Board has recommended holding disposal rates steady. Emmet County’s Transfer Station continues to offer among the lowest disposal rates in northern Michigan, along with a funding structure that supports recycling of many items that otherwise would not have a recovery home.

Solid Waste volumes increased 3%, which is about par for a year with positive economic growth. While solid waste volumes going up in and of itself is not a good thing, it is to be noted that in the same year recycling volumes rose 14%.



## ORGANICS

### New Initiative Applies 3Rs to Household Food Waste



## Give all food a future

After two years of collecting food scraps from local businesses for composting, in 2017 we expanded our efforts to address food waste to households. Household food waste is of particular concern because, of food wasted in the United States, 40% is wasted by consumers—more than grocery stores and restaurants combined! Looked at from the householder's perspective, we typically waste one bag of food for every four we bring home. For a family of four, that amounts to over \$1,500 a year wasted on food that is never eaten. Ouch!

With the help of a \$10,000 grant from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation we took a comprehensive approach to household food waste: reducing it, reusing it, and recycling it; recycling in this case being through composting. We quickly came up with a name for the initiative: Give All Food A Future.

We began with an Earth Day truckload sale of home compost bins and backyard food waste digesters (an alternative to composting which some folks prefer because it may require less maintenance, is good for handling greasy foods, and does not create compost). We organized and conducted the sale in cooperation with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council which sold rain barrels. The Watershed Council took the lead on advertising the sale, took pre-orders by credit card, and provided staff to work the day of the sale. Our thanks go out to the organization for partnering generously with us on this project. 50 backyard composting bins were sold that day.



*(Left to right) Stephanie Schubel, Martha Lancaster, and Doug Fuller went above and beyond the call of duty, volunteering dozens of hours each staffing our booth at the farmer's markets especially after intern Courtney Wilber went back to school. Thank you!*

The heart of Give All Food A Future was providing education and a recycling opportunity at farmers' markets. We began with the Harbor Springs and Petoskey Downtown markets, and the Old Town (Petoskey) Farmers' Market asked to be included, too. Customers were attracted to our booth by the offer of a free kitchen caddy. The caddies—for collecting food scraps for composting—came with eight "recipe cards" we developed, offering tips on reducing food waste. The tips ranged from taking a look in the back of your fridge before shopping to freezing extra milk if you do not foresee using it before it goes bad. In exchange for the caddy, the customer signed a pledge to reduce their food waste, reclaim food before it spoils, or compost it. The caddies were very popular and we gave away over 700 before the year's end.

Food waste drop-off carts were also part of the booth at the farmers' markets. Customers dropped off 6,177 pounds of food scraps at the markets, many becoming "regulars." We also established a food waste drop-off cart at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center. A follow up survey showed that caddy-users split about evenly between composting at home and using our drop offs.

The follow up survey also showed that the average distance traveled to use the drop-off locations was 4.5 miles, meaning people are not willing to travel too far with their food scraps in their car. A number of customers also said that, "our family would be happy to pay for curbside food scrap collection."

Generally, we learned that our customers found the concept of better food management compelling and



intuitive. One member of our community even used this program to work towards her goal of a zero waste household. She told us that she is very conscious of what she buys and how to get rid of most wastes, but that she did not have a plan for food waste yet. This program filled in a missing piece.

The visibility of Give All Food A Future led to more opportunities to work on personal food waste.

- Teachers from Petoskey’s Sheridan Elementary School requested caddies for each classroom and reinvigorated a schoolyard composting program.
- Our staff were invited to collect food scraps from GroundWorks’ program encouraging kids in school to try produce from local farms, “Try It Tuesdays.”
- We were asked to provide a cart for food scraps drop off at the winter’s Crooked Tree Arts Center Artist’s and Farmer’s Market.
- Presentations and events gave us platforms to share our Give All Food a Future message with everyone from the Chamber of Commerce to the Conservation District.

Give All Food A Future will continue into 2018 with more emphasis on working with kids and schools, thanks to another generous grant from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation.

## Organics Snapshot

Total Food Scraps Collected ..... 428,769 pounds  
 Total Compostables In (nonwoody) ..... 2,812 cubic yards  
 Compost Sold (2015 and 2016 batches) ..... 958 cubic yards



Loading compost at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center. Our customers can load their own compost for a 33% discount or buy it bagged.



Shay Elementary students use the new foods scraps bin in their lunchroom and illustrate the need for food waste reduction and composting.

## Harbor Schools Pilot Food Scraps Collection

“Recycling,” “Food Scraps for Composting,” and “Landfill” read the signs on the disposal bins in the lunch room shared by Shay Elementary and the Middle School in Harbor Springs. The pair are the first schools participating in Emmet County Recycling’s (ECR) Commercial Food Scrap Collection Program. The recyclables are picked up by ECR’s curbside recycling system. The food scraps are collected with those from participating Harbor Springs area restaurants and businesses and composted at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center.

A Friday, January 20 kick-off program gave the students a quick presentation about food scrap collection for composting and a refresher course on recycling. By lunch time, the students were experts: There was very little confusion about which bin the food went into (composting) versus where their milk carton went (recycling) versus where their foam tray went (landfill).

We are delighted to work with the Harbor Springs Public Schools on this project. For us, the goal is to determine best practices and a three-bin lunchroom system that we can expand to other schools.



## 25th Anniversary

2017 represented the 25th anniversary of Emmet County’s Household Chemical Drop-off (HCD) Program. In 1991, our HCD program got a leg up from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the form of a \$100,000 Solid Waste Alternatives grant which provided 75% of the funding for the purchase of our secure storage unit and related equipment, site preparation, educational materials, training of our staff, and disposal of chemicals collected for the first three years of operation.

Looking back, it is remarkable both how much has changed and how much has stayed the same. Still the same: our simple drive-through events, offered by appointment on Saturdays; the variety of chemicals we collect; and our customers appreciation of the program.

### Clean Sweep

Beyond these constants though, our hazardous waste offerings have seen a constant evolution. For example, in 2001, we became one of just 14 Permanent Clean Sweep Sites in the state with funding from the Michigan Department of Agriculture to collect pesticides from any end-user in the state.

### An Incubator

Even before the Household Chemical Drop-off (HCD) events were instituted, Emmet County Recycling was collecting motor oil and batteries for recycling daily at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center. HCD events have served as an incubator for collecting hazardous materials that went on to be accepted daily, too.

- In 2001 electronics were first accepted for recycling as part of HCD events; in 2006 we set up our Electronics Recycling Shed and began accepting them daily.
- In 2008, under an EPA grant obtained by the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, we piloted collection of unwanted medicines. The Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Drop-off program which grew out of this event began installing year-round drug drop-off boxes, dubbed “PODs,” in local law enforcement offices in 2011. The program now has dozens of boxes across 8 counties, largely thanks to the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

- In 2011 we piloted accepting latex paint for recycling in conjunction with our HCD days; in 2012 we piloted daily collection of latex paint from April 1 to November. In 2014 we made the day-to-day seasonal collection of latex paint for recycling official.
- 2017 was our second year piloting recycling of oil-based paints on HCDs. We hope it will become a day-to-day offering at the Drop-off Center in the future.

### Community

The Household Chemical Drop-off Program has enjoyed great support from the community all these years. Dozens of volunteers have donated countless hours to help us direct traffic, unload vehicles, and collect data. The Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council also have been outstanding supporters and collaborators in our efforts to increase human safety and protect the environment by properly dispose of chemicals from Emmet County households and businesses.

In all, Emmet County’s hazardous waste management programs have held 100 Chemical Drop-off Events and collected over 7,000,000 pounds of chemicals from area households and businesses.



*A good old fashioned, new fangled Household Chemical Drop-off.  
Photo by Charlie MacInnis, 2014.*

## Hazardous Waste Volume

Oil Paint Recycled (pounds).....	20,480
Latex Paint Recycled (pounds) .....	53,800
Hazardous Materials Collected on Drop-off Days (pounds) .....	20,640
Haz Mat Collected Year-Round (pounds) (Hazardous Recyclables Collection Area) .....	698,100
Total (pounds).....	793,020

This is up 9% over 2016!





## EDUCATION

# “Reduce” and “Reuse” Get More Love

While our time at the ECDPW is dominated by recycling operations, policy and education, we always have the classic EPA “waste management” hierarchy—which shows that reducing and reusing are preferable to even recycling—on our minds. Recently, reduction and reuse have become more visible in our work.

We have always encouraged customers with reusable items to sell or donate them. Every year we find that the 4th graders who tour our facility can recite the 3Rs, but they do not know what “reduce” and “reuse” mean. To clarify, we discuss reuse—passing clothes down and garage sale shopping, for example—and compare paper-thin water bottles to Gatorade bottles to illustrate waste reduction by manufacturers.

In 2016, the publishers of The Petoskey News-Review offered a number of retired newspaper boxes for reuse as



Little Free Libraries (LFL). We jumped at the double reuse opportunity, placing the refurbished box next to the Papers, Boxes and Bags recycling bin at the Pleasantview Road Drop-off Center. Now customers bringing books to recycle in the bin can conveniently offer them for reuse.

The tag line, “Take A Book/Leave A Book=Reuse a Book,” on our Little Free Library emphasizes the reuse implicit in the LFL concept. We adopted the reuse symbol from ReuseNeedsASymbol.org (the arrowed “8”) for our first ever Emmet County Reuse logo, shown below.



And in 2017, waste reduction was a major theme of our Give All Food A Future (GAFAF) project. Our “recipe card” pack includes waste reduction tips for:

- Before You Shop (shown below)
- When You Shop
- Storing Fruits, Storing Vegetables, and Storing Proteins
- Understanding Use By/Best By Dates, and
- Planning Meals.

Follow up surveys showed these were among the most popular Give All Food a Future tip topics.



### Food Waste Reduction Tips: Before You Shop

- Scan your fridge and your main food-storage shelves so you are more aware of what you already have at home.
- Plan a couple of meals to use up perishable foods you have on hand.
- Make a shopping list. (Also saves time and money and supports healthier choices!)

For more savvy shopping tips, visit:  
[SaveTheFood.com/tips/shopping-guidelines](http://SaveTheFood.com/tips/shopping-guidelines)

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