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Screaming for action



Based on per capita disposal rates, Nebraskans have the same problem as everyone else in our consumer culture – we collect too much stuff. As a consequence, we’re generating a lot more waste than we used to. Nebraska landfill data shows that in 1993 the disposal rate was 1,630 lbs. per person. It steadily rose to 2,600 lbs. per person by 2017, except for a dip in 2008 during the Great Recession when we weren’t spending so much.

There has been a fair amount of discussion in the recycling industry about the changing composition of the waste stream and the difficulty it poses to collecting actionable data. The preponderance of plastics in consumer goods and the “light-weighting” of packaging (containers) poses a challenge to traditional tonnage-based metrics. Compounding the problem is the fact that accurate weight-based metrics are difficult to obtain. For example, when there are multiple haulers, varying definitions of materials, and/or no authority to compel data reporting, there can be little confidence in the completeness of the data, let alone a roadmap for next steps that community programs should take.

Traditional waste characterization studies, considered the “gold-standard” are extremely costly. At the Nebraska SWANA conference in October, a new measurement tool was proposed by Skumatz Economic

Research Associates (SERA). Called PRR, or Percent Recoverables Remaining, it is a process of sorting trash to identify the recoverable materials that remain in the trash. These are mini-sorts that can be ongoing or annual; sorted from trucks, facilities, or cans; and sorted by sector or location. A major advantage to this method is that it can be matched to three important system goals: 1) targets for recycling diversion, 2) value of materials being buried, and 3) environmental-based goals, such as greenhouse gas emissions or toxics in the waste stream. Most importantly, it can guide action steps by measuring the right thing.

Consumption and waste generation are overwhelming earth’s natural systems. The products we buy may not directly emit greenhouse gases, but their production and related activities do. The IPCC report on climate change issued in early October was deeply disturbing. It screams for action. But who should

act? You? Me? How? Communities can start by modernizing data-gathering in order to act in the most informed, strategic ways to help citizens change behaviors. NRC is here to help.

P.S. for actions individuals can take, keep reading!

Make a pledge to fight the plastics problem

America Recycles Day is November 15th, but we're celebrating throughout the whole month of November. To celebrate, we are asking individuals to take action.

#BERECYCLED



America Recycles Day

A KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL INITIATIVE

Plastics create many environmental problems, including but not limited to ocean pollution, groundwater pollution, and human health effects. The best solution to the plastics problem is to get to the root of the issue and avoid

unnecessary materials in the first place. As individuals, we must fight for what we stand for, for the good of the earth and its people, through our actions.

So we ask...

Will you make a plastics pledge? To become more personally responsible, to inform yourself, to demand that businesses make changes, to contribute to NRC so we may continue fighting?

We hope you will.

PS - Making a pledge has perks! You will be entered in a drawing for one of two sustainable to-go kits, and you will receive a special series of three emails with tips, resources, and tools to help you take action.

TAKE THE PLEDGE



PLASTICS
PLEDGE

Make a pledge this month
**TO FIGHT
PLASTIC WASTE**



NEBRASKA RECYCLING COUNCIL

FREE webinar: Waste reduction - the forgotten R

Thursday, November 15

Noon - 1:00 p.m.

[REGISTER](#)

This webinar will highlight recent waste reduction research and intervention results from New Dream. New Dream's mission, as a national non-profit organization, is to empower individuals, communities and organizations to transform their consumption habits to improve well-being for people and the planet. The framework New Dream is using to change behavior is social marketing. Social marketing is rooted in psychology, uses commercial marketing for societal goals and the key features are segmented audiences, research into citizen barriers and social science strategies to overcome the barriers.

The goal of this project was to motivate individuals to shift some purchases from material gifts to experiential gifts during the winter holidays, thus increasing time spent with friends and family and in the out-of-doors leading to a boost in long-term happiness and overall well-being, along with supporting the environment by decreasing consumption.

The presentation will:

- Discuss ways waste reduction can address current difficult global recycling markets and climate change.
- Use lessons learned from public health to change the narrative from waste reduction to waste prevention, creating a new way to motivate behavior change and engage with citizens.

- Give the audience new insight into the attitudes, awareness, motivation, barriers and benefits to waste reduction.
- Share various online tools and key take-aways to support waste prevention within the community.
- Review the components needed for a community-wide waste prevention movement to unfold.

PRESENTERS

Kelley Dennings, New Dream Advisory Committee Member

Kelley is a results-driven change agent with over 20 years of project management and leadership experience with 10 years focused on communications and marketing for behavior change.



Kelley Dennings



Casey Williams

Casey Williams, New Dream Director of Operations and Outreach

Casey joined New Dream in March 2013 after spending 15 years developing programs related to sustainable design and development, natural resource management and land revitalization.

REGISTER NOW!

Webinars & Events



[SLPS - The Power of Networks! Link and Leverage: How Higher Ed is Supporting Sustainable Community Growth](#)

Thursday, November 1 | 3:30 - 4:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

[Webinar - Paint Stewardship 101](#)

Wednesday, November 14 | 1:30 pm | [REGISTER](#)

Articles of Interest



[2018 APR Recycling Demand Champion Campaign generates almost 7 million pounds of new demand in it's first year](#)

APR campaign to expand market demand for recycled plastics releases year end report, new "Champion" companies announced

[ISRI survey indicates brands and government can help improve recycling behaviour](#)

Latest U.S. poll suggests recycling needs to be made easier for waste generators

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