

7th Annual Potomac Watershed Trash Summit
November 7, 2012
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



**CLEAN LAND.
SAFE WATER.
HEALTHY LIVES.**

The 4 Rs:
Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Overview:

Focus: By getting back to basics and expanding beyond the common ideas associated with the 4 Rs, this session seeks to demonstrate the power of using these four fundamentals in waste reduction strategies. Speakers from a range of backgrounds will challenge us to think beyond what is typically done to rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle to solutions that take waste reduction to the next level, resulting in improved efforts at home, in the workplace and within our communities.

Moderator: Dan Jackson, Senior Consultant, Sustainability Solutions, Logistics Management Institute and Secretary, Board of Directors, Alice Ferguson Foundation

Presenters:

- **Rethink:** Kevin de Cuba, Caribbean Initiative Manager and Closed Looped Cycle Production in the Americas Program Manager, Organization of American States, Energy and Climate Change Mitigation Section – Using Cradle-to-Cradle design to inspire trash-smart solutions.
- **Reuse:** Ruthie Mundell, Marketing and Outreach Director at Community Forklift, Building Materials Reuse Center – The importance of the reuse industry to the environment and to the communities they serve.
- **Recycling:** Luisa Robles, Recycling Coordinator, Department of Public Works, Greenbelt, MD – Capitalizing on lessons from Greenbelt’s 60% recycling rate.
- **Education:** Russell Klein, LEED AP, Program Coordinator, Community Environmental Education Specialist, D.C. Department of Public Works, Office of Recycling – Educating people effectively about the 4 Rs and motivating them to change their behaviors.

Key Questions:

- What are effective methods of employing the 4 Rs in your waste reduction strategy?
- How is modern technology and access to information influencing the use of the 4 Rs?
- How do we continue to raise the bar once these methods are in place?
- How effective are these strategies at reducing and preventing waste?
- If you had to invest in one of them, which one would be the most cost-effective?

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Action Items

1. **Building Materials Guide: update hard copy.** MWCOG will take the lead.
2. **Use the Trash Free Potomac Network.**
 - Register now at www.trashnetwork.fergusonfoundation.org to post your events and find others near you.
3. **Education: multi-media methods**
 - Master Composter Course
 - Ensure websites are up to date and diverse (share materials between partners)
 - Engage with audience through social media
 - Look for funding sources to expand education
4. **Collaboration: Internal stakeholders and external partners**
 - Recruit Businesses and identify new partners
 - National Parks Service: Cleanups, enforcement, facilitation of education
 - Keep America Beautiful: cleanups and awareness
 - University of the District of Columbia: facilitation of awareness
 - Need to bring secular and non-secular partners into the fold.
 - Use the Trash Free Potomac Network
5. **Plan of Action for Sustainability**
 - Find your jurisdiction's plan of action and update it. If does not exist, create a Plan of Action for your jurisdiction.
6. **Enforcement: "the stick resonates"**
 - Create a plan for enforcing guidelines and increasing compliance.

Full Session Notes:

Intro by the Moderator: Overview and Expectations

Since Kindergarten many of us have practiced the 3 Rs, an effective waste reduction strategy that has since been expanded to 4 Rs: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. These four elements, are fundamental to how anyone, from students to businesses, to whole communities, can work comprehensively reduce waste. By getting back to basics and expanding beyond the common ideas associated with the 4 Rs, this session seeks to demonstrate the power of using the fundamentals in your waste reduction strategy. Esteemed speakers from a range of backgrounds, including business, education and government, will challenge us to think beyond what is typically done to rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle. They will move us to solutions that tackle waste reduction, challenging us to improve our efforts at home, in the workplace and within our communities. Please make note of ways you can bring these ideas into aspects of your own life and throughout the watershed to fuel the discussion following the speaker presentations.

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1st Speaker: Ruthie Mundell

Parent Non-profit of Community Forklift: *Sustainable Community Initiatives*

The first project and the first dollar earned, which opened the doors for Community Forklift and kept the first few trainers and trainees paid, was the sale of reclaimed flooring from an old housing complex. Ever since they have been reclaiming and repurposing materials, such as at Scott Degraf's recycled house in West Virginia. Their organization has created work for local tradespeople by keeping the cost of building materials low and allowing more money to be spent on quality craftsmanship. Granite countertops are one of their most popular items as they are very easily reshaped and reinstalled in new kitchens. Community Forklift serves as an anchor for green shopping in the area. It has become a destination and magnet for other green businesses nearby as many local businesses come there to shop for materials.

Question: What other green businesses have come in to the Port City area with a magnet like Community Forklift?

Answer: Ecocity farms, consignment vendors at Community Forklift, Earnest Mayer (60-80 year old concrete biz now making permeable pavers), green contractors housed inside Community Forklift; Essentially, the area is now a hub for green manufacturing and many businesses are coming to the area and are expected to open 10 years from now. Ruthie sees the area as an example how green manufacturing can spread.

Rough Estimate: building materials could be up to 40% of National waste stream (not just residential waste stream, which is different and measured more exactly).

Community Forklift's competition is not from other organizations that are doing the same thing it is poorly constructed building materials that cannot be used again.

2nd Speaker: Kevin De Cuba

Kevin works for the Organization of American States Department of Sustainable Development in the Office of Energy and Climate Change Mitigation. Its goal is to increase the productivity, competitiveness, and sustainability of small to medium businesses. Their initiative has four components but Kevin focuses on the last component, business development, in Ecuador. This includes accessing Cradle to Cradle (C2C) applicability, a certification similar in structure to the green building L.E.E.D. standards. C2C is a way of rethinking the way that products are made so that are not only environmentally and socially friendly, but so that their components can be entirely reused. The largest challenge is that the culture of waste is already so entrenched, a mentality known as Cradle to Grave where materials end up in the landfill or incinerator instead of being reclaimed. The challenge is there are many groups working on the issue of waste that have progressive ideas, but they are not talking with each other. So they created a forum to bring minds together and foster collaboration.

His office is promoting the 5 R's: by adding Rethink atop their 4 R's which includes Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover (energy). They are using the C2C model as a leading principle because it calls for a comprehensive change with a special focus on the design and production phase. During this phase the biological and technical cycles need to be optimized to mediate the excessive waste from the production of items. This creates a highly sustainable product that is produced as efficiently as possible. The system

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is a mix of higher goals mixed with practicality and builds on the basics in order to work towards making all things relevant to waste reduction.

Wastewater is the primary source of pollution in the Potomac Watershed from industry, businesses and residents- which include agricultural and industrial chemicals (some of which are 'discovered' or 'identified' newly each year as testing equipment becomes more and more sensitive), litter, and sewage. Kevin suggests that the Potomac Watershed reassess the theoretical framework for the Watershed using a C2C design philosophy. This framework is not only specific to a product but can be applied to the entire infrastructures as well.

3rd Speaker: Luisa Robles

The City of Greenbelt makes it easy for residents to recycle, which is why their recycling rate is upwards of 60%. They did this by making recycling centers accessible 24/7 and by offering a visual guide to what is recyclable that is very understandable. They also put flyers in many important intersections, go business to business to meet them, and cultivate an online presence with their Facebook page and Yahoo Listserv, informal settings where Luisa and her team reply to the many good questions that are asked. The key to what makes the Greenbelt's recycling program so effective is communication. They have a clear, visual guide with photos, and also do show-n-tell shows, which are in-person presentations of the 2-D visual guide and include an additional segment on electronic waste.

They have found that pictures are much more effective than words in educating people about recycling, and that sharing 3-D items during their show-and-tell shows is by far the most effective technique.

Question: What size bins does Greenbelt use? And is there a noticeable difference with different sizes?

Answer: We have deployed 14-gallon bins but are phasing in 90-gallon totes for single family homes.

Question: Are there any private contractors that service residents? About how many residents are serviced by the City?

Answer: The City of Greenbelt services approximately 25% of the city's residents, but there is a massive caveat because the largest development in the East Coast is in Greenbelt, Imperial Village, where many thousands of people live. This development is not serviced by the City. Businesses are also not serviced. Several recycling centers are managed by the city.

4th Speaker: Russell Klein

In order to effectively educate people about waste reduction, you first need to choose your audience based on your goals, identify how much effort you want to put in and how connected you are, and recognize the current level of buy-in.

There are several types of recyclers: Always, Sometimes, and Never recyclers. The "Nevers" will never get on board, the Always hardly need inspiration but the "Sometimes" need your efforts. To get your effort to last, it is important you involve a stakeholder group rather than have one lone champion working on it. The group will last longer and become more established than if there is a single person trying to push things through, as the initiative ends when they leave or need to focus their energy

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elsewhere. For example, in the District of Columbia they are working on how the municipality can meet in the middle between Awareness (the state of being aware) and Enforcement (by employees of the municipality as on-site regulators of a municipality's recycling laws). One way to work on awareness is through education.

“Neither awareness nor guilt is enough. Between awareness and enforcement there must be facilitation.”

Question: Can Russell be brought as guest speakers to other jurisdictions?

Answer: Yes, but on his own dime and by invitation only. It is not part of the commission of his post and he would defer to the recycling advocates and coordinators in respective counties before accepting an invitation.

Question: How to recycle at events?

Answer: See Russell's slide show that highlights the Washington Convention Center's Know-the-Code System.