



March 2020 - Issue 4

FROM THE CHAIR

Let’s Talk Trash

It is clear, and common sense tells us, that our present way of dealing with solid waste is unsustainable. We Americans produce anywhere from 2 to 5 pounds of waste per person per day. Let’s assume we are doing a decent job of recycling (and that the Chinese start to take our plastics again), and we are aware of what can go into the recycling stream. Despite our efforts, the percent of our trash that goes into the garbage truck headed for the landfill is huge. Generally, we recycle only about 30% of our trash. A significant percent -- around 55% -- of the material that is trucked away is organic (paper, yard debris, food scraps). All of this organic material could be composted.



OK. But why should we compost? Well, there are at least three good reasons:

- 1. It will save our town money if this material is removed from the solid waste stream. Landfill space is limited; at present, there are two operating landfills in the state, and one is slated to close. Costs to our town for solid waste disposal are going to go up with time.
- 2. Organic material in a landfill breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen). This produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, and contributor to climate change; it is 30 to 40 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a [Read more](#)

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IN THE NEWS

New bus service in Presque Isle, Maine, is attempting to prove the viability of transit in a smaller community.

Six months ago, residents of Presque Isle, Maine, had few good options for getting around their small but sprawling city other than by car.

Now, a fledgling bus service is expanding there as it begins its fifth month of service in the city of about 9,000, just across the border from Canada.

Supporters say services like the **Presque Isle Loop** could be a boon to Maine’s economy, especially with added revenue from a proposed multi-state, regional compact to cut transportation emissions in the Northeast.



While some critics worry the Transportation and Climate Initiative will hurt more rural, car-dependent communities, Presque Isle is showing the potential value of transit outside the region’s urban corridors. [Read more](#)

About David Thill

David is a New York-based journalist who has written on health, science and the environment for various outlets, including World Wildlife Fund and the Chicago newspaper Windy City Times. He has reported on topics including the city’s opioid epidemic, bird research at the Field Museum, and LGBT youth in foster care. He covers northern New England for the Energy News Network.

MAINE PARTNER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



Molly Agrimson is York’s AmeriCorps Energy Efficiency Coordinator. Over the course of her year as an AmeriCorps volunteer, Molly has focused on many projects to help town residents, especially those with low income, initiate behavioral and technical changes that result in greater energy efficiencies at home. In mid-January, in partnership with the nonprofit organization Window Dressers, she coordinated a window-build event. With the help of about 120 volunteers over the course of five days, 180 insulating window inserts were built for the homes of 21 residents of York County.

Continuing her work, Molly has a number of upcoming events to keep on your radar. On Wednesday, March 25, she will collaborate with York Adult Education to offer a program on how to save money

through energy efficiency in the home. If interested, please sign up for this free event by clicking on <https://york.coursestorm.com/course/save-energy-save-money-tips-to-make-your-home-more-energy-efficient?page=3>.

This coming June, Molly will work with York County Career Services to offer a green career fair. It is still in the planning stages, but the tabling employers will be focused primarily on filling full-time blue collar jobs in the green career field, such as solar panel installation, agriculture or forestry.

In summer, Molly will plan and coordinate more energy efficiency education events, as well as a green career resume workshop. Also, Molly and her supervisors, Jackie Brisebios and Diane Kleist, will seek an additional full-time AmeriCorps member to assist Molly during the summer months with home weatherization and various other projects. If you or someone you know is interested or would like more information, please contact Molly at molly.agrimson@maine.edu or (503)729-3357 or Sally Slovenski, executive director of the program, at Sally@mainecompact.org.

WASTE REDUCTION AND DIVERSION (WRAD)

Plastic and Produce:

WRAD Members Meet With Hannaford’s Sustainability Director and Store Manager

As part of the ongoing effort to address plastic pollution in York, the Waste Reduction and Diversion Committee (WRAD) of York Ready for 100% met recently with Hannaford sustainability director George Parmenter and store manager David Couture. WRAD representatives expressed concern about excessive and unnecessary plastic use in food packaging, particularly the “to-go” bags in the produce section; this packaging may be incompatible with York’s single-use plastic carry-out bag ban of 2015. In response, Parmenter and Couture gave assurances that Hannaford is aware of and concerned about the problem of plastic pollution and plans to reduce plastic use storewide.



Since this conversation, Hannaford has begun offering reusable cotton mesh produce bags; they are prominently displayed in the produce department. The hope is that shoppers will choose to purchase and use these bags instead of the plastic produce bags still available around the aisles. There are no plans to discontinue the use of the plastic bags entirely at this time.

Parmenter reminded members of WRAD that consumer choice is an important factor in solving plastic pollution.

To reduce your personal plastic use in the produce aisle, consider these changes:

- ★ Purchase reusable produce bags and use them consistently. If you don’t see them on display, ask to speak to the manager.
- ★ Choose to purchase loose vegetables over those wrapped in plastic.
- ★ If you don’t find the loose vegetables you want in Hannaford, check out Golden Harvest in Kittery or the Farmers Market (seasonal).
- ★ Speak to employees at the grocery store where you shop about reducing the use of plastic — let them know this is an important issue for you.



Recycling Solutions

Casella Waste Municipal Representative Erica Bayley made a presentation to the York Select Board on February 10 during a discussion about appropriate recycling practices. Recycling costs are rising because Casella is having trouble selling the processed recycling loads to manufacturers.

Residents can help lower costs and improve the recyclability of their materials by making sure that items they recycle are free of contaminants, and that they are recycling eligible items only. Guidelines are provided by the City of York Public Works Department at [York's Recycling Coach](#) The newly reconstituted York Recycling Committee is tasked with clarifying and improving residential recycling.

Meanwhile, the Maine State Legislature is tackling the problem of recycling on a bigger scale. Rep. Ralph Tucker, D-Brunswick, has sponsored [LD 2104](#), “An Act To Support and Increase the Recycling of Packaging.” The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee [has held a public hearing](#) about the bill, which would make packaging producers pay fees to municipalities based on the type of packaging they produce. The idea is to reimburse those municipalities for the costs of disposing of recyclable materials and to incentivize producers to come up with less wasteful packaging.

Victoria Simon, WRAD Chair
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MAY 16: A CRITICAL VOTING DAY

York Needs Your Green Light!

On Saturday, May 16, York voters will be asked to approve three critical climate/energy initiatives:

- A request for funding to develop a Climate Action Plan for York
- A request to fund the position of Sustainability Director for York
- A request to lease the Witchtrot Road landfill to a developer for a solar array that will power York’s municipal buildings.

Your YES vote on these initiatives will move us toward a **Climate Action Plan**, which will have significant benefits for York, including:

1. Cost reductions from new energy efficiency projects;
2. Lower energy costs for households and businesses;
3. Reduced vulnerability to the effects of climate change;
4. Improved waste management;
5. Shared responsibility and benefits that will lead to a more equitable community;
6. Progress toward preservation of local ecosystems and species; and
7. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions consistent with town goals.

The position of **Sustainability Director** will more than pay for itself. Funds from state, private and federal grants and incentive programs are available only to towns that can actually develop climate action programs – work that requires a full-time energy and climate specialist who not only knows the field, but who appreciates the urgency of the issue and the need to work with community groups and individuals to identify the best actions for the families, businesses, environment and future of our town. Your **YES** vote on funding for this position is essential to developing the Climate Action Plan.

The **Witchtrot Road landfill** is no longer in use. A solar array on that site could provide the power for York’s schools and other municipal buildings, thus reducing operational costs for taxpayers and reducing greenhouse gas emissions community wide. Your **YES** vote to lease the landfill to a solar developer will allow this project to go forward.

These three ballot questions will allow significant progress toward clean, renewable energy and a more secure future for York. Please give them a green light!

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, ALL library events and programs are cancelled until further notice.

Join us on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 4:30 PM for our monthly Educational Team Meeting at the York Public Library.

- Ongoing - **Cancelled**
 - **Climate Change Conversation - The third Friday of every month, 3:30 - 5:00 PM, Community Room, York Public Library.** Everyone is welcome to join round-table talks with Debby Ronnquist and community members on the third Friday of every month, 3:30-5:00, in the Community Room at York Public Library. Topics range from composting to heating your home to gardening, soil health, and everyday steps we can take to reduce the effects of climate change on people, vegetation and wildlife. Bring your own topic suggestions, questions, ideas and friends. Debby is affiliated with York Ready for 100% Clean Renewable Energy.
- March **Cancelled**
 - **Friday, March 20, 3:30 AM - “Climate Change Community Dialogue”, Wheeler Room, York Public Library.** The March Conversation will explore issues related to food: energy-wise farming, soil health, distribution, and other topics.
 - **Cancelled Friday, March 27, 7:00 PM - “Maine State Bicentennial Celebration: Two Centuries of Environmental Change,” Community Room, York Public Library.** James Kences will be presenting two narratives--the first for Maine, which will embrace two centuries of change--the second for York since the first Earth Day in 1970. The March 20 program will acknowledge the two anniversaries together.
- April
 - **Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, 8:30 AM -12:00 PM “Earth Day Beach Cleanup” Long Sands Beach, York, (meeting at the Bath House) - Hosted by Mayo Designs.** Want to take a break from your crazy schedule and daily tasks to help make a positive impact on the community? Can't stand the fact that 14 billion pounds of trash are dumped into the world's oceans every year? Join us for our community beach clean up and help us celebrate Earth Day... the right way!
 - **Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, “Dedication of the Newly Installed Electric Vehicle Charger”, York Public Library.**
 - **Saturday, April 25, 1-4 PM - “Electric Vehicle Show”, Sponsored by the Town of Wells’ Energy Committee.** In case you didn’t get a chance to participate in last summer’s electric vehicle event, this would be an opportunity to test drive an electric car and talk to EV owners.



SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, ALL library events and programs are cancelled until further notice . Please watch your email for scheduling updates.

- ❖ YRF100 Educational Team Meeting: Third Wednesday of the month at 4:30 PM. (3/18) - YPL
- ❖ Town of York, Energy Steering Committee: Third Thursday of the month at 7 PM. (3/19) - YPL
- ❖ YRF100 Core Group Meeting: Fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. (3/25) - YPL
- ❖ Town of York, Recycling Committee: Every other Friday at 10 AM at 10 AM. (3/27) - YPL

YPL - York Public Library



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- ★ **Newsletter Designer** - Help us with improvement of our newsletter design and social media outreach process. Contact briseboisb@gmail.com
- ★ **Writing and Editing** - We need individuals to edit articles that are submitted to us for publication in the York Weekly, Newsletter and multimedia, also to occasionally write articles and “letters to the editor”. Contact sglick@maine.rr.com
- ★ **Youth Initiative Outreach** - We need individuals who would like to help us engage the youth of our community as environmental citizens. If you are a parent, teacher or individual interested in working with our youth, YRF100 would like to talk with you. Contact macmcabee5@gmail.com
- ★ **Grandparents Group** - a group of grandparents will be convening to discuss the possibilities for climate canvassing in the fall. The goal is to make a connection with voters through our grandchildren, and urge them to vote for candidates who acknowledge the dire nature of climate change, and will provide leadership to secure a habitable planet for those who follow us. We will not be discussing candidates or political parties. Contact joaliceboth@yahoo.com or 676 9460.



GREEN TIPS



Ditching unnecessary chemicals, unhealthy foods, unfriendly Earth practices, and bad habits/routines can all add together to make an altogether healthier you, while boosting the environment and ecosystem.

We will be introducing four simple green tips each month, one for each week of the month as a reminder of steps that can be taken to help you create a safer and healthier future.



1. When your light bulbs burn out, replace them with *ENERGY STAR* qualified products. Replacing your five most frequently used bulbs helps the environment and can **save you up to \$70 PER YEAR on energy bills**. *ENERGY STAR* lighting provides bright, warm light; generates 75% less heat; uses about 75% less energy than standard lighting and lasts 10-50 times longer. (Source: [ENERGY STAR](#))

Efficiency Maine works with lighting manufacturers, **retailers** and **distributors** to reduce the prices of energy-efficient lighting products statewide. Prices are marked down in participating locations. **Check out the MaxLite display at Eldredge Lumber and Hardware for significant savings.**

2. When shopping, make all of your purchases intentional. Keep a running list going at home; it'll help you plan your shopping so you'll need fewer trips to the store, and you'll be able to resist impulse purchases while you're there. Purchasing only what's really needed produces benefits on several fronts - you'll consume less, create less waste, reduce auto emissions AND save money! (Source: Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry)
3. Reduce food waste – leave the skins on potatoes, carrots and cucumbers, all of which are fine to eat with a good scrub. One-third of the food raised and prepared on the planet does not get consumed. By helping reduce food waste, you also help reduce landfill waste and the greenhouse gases it produces. (Source: Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry)



4. Use a reusable water bottle. It's great to stay hydrated, and reusable water bottles can help your health, the environment AND your bottom line. Even at a cost of \$1 per disposable bottle, saving that dollar every time you refill your reusable version can easily add up to hundreds of dollars saved each year. Not to mention the hundreds (or thousands!) of disposable plastic bottles it will keep out of the landfills. (Source: NC State Sustainability Blog: [//bit.ly/2FNqZrM](#); Penn State Sustainability Institute: [//bit.ly/2sdfMz3](#))

Thank you to the York First Parish Creation Care Committee for providing these tips.