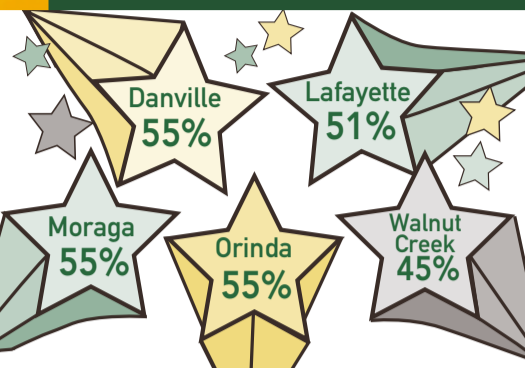




Diversions

Summer 2004

A Publication of the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority



2002 Diversion Numbers Are In

CCCSWA has submitted its 2002 diversion numbers to the State, and they look great! Here is what the above numbers mean in more tangible terms:

- Trees saved:** 122,524
- Tons of Iron Ore Saved:** 1,071
- Total Tons Reduced Air Emissions:** 18,587, including 17,403 tons of CO₂, a major contributor to global warming. This is the same as taking 3,040 cars off the road for an entire year!
- Total landfill tons diverted:** 146,924!

Thank you, Central Contra Costa!
 Calculated using the National Recycling Coalition's Environmental Benefits Calculator and statistics from the EPA.
 * The California Integrated Waste Management Board has preliminarily approved these numbers.

Local Events To Offer Recycling

Recycling Goes Public

The CCCSWA and the City of San Ramon received a grant from the California Department of Conservation to bring recycling collection to area events. "It's easy to recycle at home," says Lois Cole of the CCCSWA. "But it may not be convenient when you're attending a crowded festival. In fact, it may not even be possible, unless you are motivated enough to take your cans and bottles home."



Sandy Barlow demonstrates how to recycle using the new portable recycling containers. Look for the clear plastic bag and the blue lid at upcoming local events.

A number of logistical obstacles prevented the inclusion of recycling at past events, including: lack of containers, coordinating and often paying for collection, and training issues with food vendors and event coordinators.

The grant provided money to purchase new recycling containers. "The containers are different from trash cans to encourage proper recycling and prevent contamination," says Sandy Barlow of the City of San Ramon Public Works Department. "These bags are clear so it's easier to see that only recyclables go inside them." The City of San Ramon and CCCSWA staff are working closely with event planners to promote distribution before and collection of the containers after each event. The grant also funded signs and banners to promote recycling at events. Look for these recycling containers at local events this summer.



• The Waste-Cutting Edge •

Certified Green – What Does It Mean?

Eco-Labels Make Shopping Responsibly Easier

A trip to the grocery store isn't what it used to be. Gone are the days of simply choosing between red or green apples or even paper or plastic! Now there are such things to consider as, "Is this product organic...made with recycled materials...socially responsible...?" A number of certification programs now lend their stamp of approval to many consumer goods. Logos to look for include: Green Seal, USDA Organic, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Fair Trade Certified, and Hormone Free, to name only a few. Thank goodness, a website has come along to help us sort out all this information!

The Consumers Union (publishers of *Consumer Reports* magazine) has waded through the sea of environmental and social labeling and created a website entitled, *The Consumers Union Guide to Environmental Labels*. As they explain, the purpose of the site is "to help consumers make more informed choices in the marketplace, and participate more effectively as citizens in important decisions that affect the environment." They do this by establishing standards for eco-labels and by providing an online search engine that allows users to find legitimate labels to look for when shopping for particular products.

For example, a search on the category, "Baby Food," results in a list of seven eco-labels, including Antibiotic Free, California Certified Organic Farmers, and Quality Certification Services (QCS). From there you can click on a particular label to view its "report card." The QCS report card, for example, notes that the label has been verified and that the organization behind it is free from conflict of interest; however, it also contains a warning that "The meaning of the [QCS label] is different for food than for cosmetics or personal care products." The same page tells you how long the organization has been around and how to contact them if you want more information.

To give the site a try yourself, go to www.eco-labels.org. Another good source of information about making choices in the marketplace is the *Consumer's Guide To Effective Environmental Choices*, available at your local bookstore or online.



Fair Trade Certified and USDA Organic are just two of the many new labels that help identify green products. Visit www.eco-labels.org for tips on how to interpret all the options.

Home Composting for Busy People: Workshops

The CCCSWA offers FREE workshops on composting and worm composting. Each workshop covers the basics in a concise, easy-to-understand format. And once you're composting, you can apply for certification and receive a \$1.50 per month discount on your garbage bill.

- June 8** 7:00-8:30 pm Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek
- June 19** 1:00-3:00 pm Lindsey Wildlife Museum, Walnut Creek
- July 13*** 7:00-8:30 pm Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek
- July 24** 9:00-11:00 am Crow Canyon Gardens, San Ramon
- Aug 10** 7:00-8:30 pm Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek
- Aug 21** 9:00-10:30 am Moraga Lumber & Hardware, Moraga
- Sep 7*** 7:00-8:30 pm Gardens at Heather Farm, Walnut Creek

*Compost/Soil Health Workshop

Advanced Composting Class Offered this Fall

The CCCSWA offers an advanced class for experienced composters or those who want to become an expert quickly.

- Six-week course (one evening per week), starting Sep. 22 at the Gardens at Heather Farms.
- Training is free but participants are asked to provide six volunteer hours to the CCCSWA.



Call 906-1806 or see www.wastediversion.org for more info.

More Schools Reduce Waste

This school year, seven more schools became certified Wastebusters: Bancroft, Buena Vista, Happy Valley and Lafayette Elementary Schools, Foothill Middle School, and Orinda and Walnut Creek Intermediate. Each school recycles and reduces waste and saves the district money on disposal costs. They also teach students about environmental stewardship and help our community meet state-mandated waste reduction goals. Camino Pablo Elementary, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate and Rheem Elementary recently received their first recertification awards.

◀ Students at Foothill Middle School accept \$2,000 that is part of the Wastebusters award.

Say Goodbye to Tasteless Tomatoes

You're strolling down North Broadway in Walnut Creek on a Sunday morning, venturing into the farmer's market for the first time. Right away you see a vendor selling the most gorgeous strawberries you've ever seen. Across the way, another farmer offers organic nut butters. Where do you begin?!

That's just the kind of dilemma you should expect when visiting any of the local Contra Costa farmers' markets. Besides being able to buy fresher and more unusual items, here are a few other benefits:

Consumers:

- You have direct contact with the person who grew your food so you can provide direct feedback to the farmers about product types, quality and variety.

Producers:

- Farmers' markets cut out the middleman. The farmers make more money when they sell directly to you, the consumer. This helps support small farms and "greenspace" in the area.



At the Walnut Creek farmer's market, Barbie and Stan Ratto (center, right) of Ratto Farms sell their produce grown in French Camp. Neighboring vendor Stan Devoto (left) sells gorgeous flowers.

Environment:

- Farmers' markets reduce the distance the products travel, thus reducing fossil fuel use and related air pollution.
- They reduce packaging and, thus, solid waste.

Community:

- Farmers' markets support downtown businesses by increasing foot traffic, especially during typically slow times, like weekend mornings.

CENTRAL COUNTY FARMERS' MARKETS

Danville

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Railroad and Prospect
(800) 949-FARM

Orinda

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Orinda Way, near the
Country Club Shopping Ctr.
(925) 431-8361

Walnut Creek

Sundays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
North Broadway at
Lincoln Ave.
(925) 431-8361

Spotlight on a Farmer's Market Favorite

An Eggsuberant Madame Ovary Tells All

Next time you're at the farmer's market, look for the CCCSWA-funded favorite Madame Ovary. A *Diversions* roving reporter caught up with the reuse education eggspert at the Wildlife Festival at Wagner Ranch School in Orinda on April 25. Here are eggserpts from their conversation:

Diversions: "You were recently awarded a CCCSWA mini-grant to perform at the farmers' markets and other Central Contra Costa events. Tell us eggactly what people can eggpect when they visit your booth."

MO: "I do a show for all ages called, 'Madame Ovary Eggsplains it All: Lessons in Yolkllore and Egg-cology.' Everything I use in the show is made from reused, rescued or recycled materials. For eggssample, I have over eighty 'Egg Folk' puppets made from various odds and ends—much of which I found at the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse in Oakland."



Madame Ovary demonstrates the magic of reuse by constructing a sword from rolled paper and plastic remnants.

I also sell, 'Toys & Tools for Troubled Times,' made from recycled materials and I have a 'Trash to Treasures' traveling art show for people to enjoy. I distribute CCCSWA Reuse Directories, promote upcoming Reuse and Cleanup days and give away art activities books for kids."

D: "What do you like about reusing materials for your shows and eggssbits?"

MO: "There is a bursting feeling of pride you get when you make something out of nothing. Besides, it's more egg-conomical!"

Visit Madame Ovary's booth at the Walnut Creek and Danville Farmers' Markets. See article above for hours.

For reuse craft supplies, visit the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse at 6713 San Pablo Avenue, near Ashby in Oakland. Call (510) 547-6470 for hours. Contact the CCCSWA for a free Reuse Directory.

Mini-Grant Winner, Books for the Barrios:

Reading, 'Riting & Reuse

Books for the Barrios is an all-volunteer, local non-profit that collects books and other educational materials for reuse in developing countries, particularly the Philippines. Books for the Barrios recently received a CCCSWA grant to continue their great work, which also diverts material from local landfills. From January through March of this year alone, they diverted 90 tons, and in 2003, the total was a whopping 550 tons!

At the end of the school year, schools can donate many of their unwanted materials rather than disposing of them. If you would like to donate (especially textbooks) or volunteer, email them at joinus@booksforthebarrios.com or call (925) 687-7701.



Take a Rest on a Recycled Plastic Bench

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority used its 2003 mini-grant funds to purchase and install recycled-content benches at 30 bus stops throughout Central Contra Costa. "Recycled plastic benches were easy to find and cheaper than we originally thought," remarked Director of Administration Celinda Dahlgren. "Thanks to frugal shopping by our purchasing department, we bought twice as many benches as originally proposed in our grant application."

The 8- and 6-foot benches, made from recycled plastic, come in two styles: a park bench design for downtown areas, and a sturdier model for outlying areas. Some prominent bench locations include St. Mary's Rd. near the Moraga Library, Ygnacio Valley Rd. at N. Civic Dr. in Walnut Creek, and in front of the Orinda Community Center.

Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

I'm in the market for a new computer. My friend told me I'd better buy it quick because there's going to be some sort of fee charged starting July 1. Is this true? If so, how much is it going to be, and what is the reason for it?

Diligent in Danville

Dear Diligent,

Your friend is right. The Electronic Waste Recycling Act of 2003 (SB 20, Sher) was signed into law on September 24, 2003. This law helps pay for the collection, recycling and proper disposal of computer monitors and TVs containing cathode ray tubes, and other electronics such as LCD screens and laptop computers. These all have lead in them and cannot be disposed in a landfill. Here's the fee breakdown, which begins July 1, 2004:



Electronics Collection Event – No Charge!
June 12, Walnut Creek.
Call 800-207-8222 to make an appointment.

Screen Size*	Fee
Under 4 inches	none
4- 15 inches	\$6.00
15-35 inches	\$8.00
35 inches and up	\$10.00

*Measured diagonally.

Information provided by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Contact Information

CCCSWA **906-1801**
fax: 906-1805 web: www.wastediversion.org
email: authority@wastediversion.org

PLEASANT HILL BAYSHORE DISPOSAL **603-1144**
fax: 685-8153
web: www.pleasanthillbayshoredisposal.com

For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, new service or your blue garbage cart.

VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT **935-8900**
fax: 935-1617 web: www.valleywaste.com
For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil disposal containers, for recycling cleanups or information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.

CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE .. **1-800-750-4096**
HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING **906-1806**
HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE .. **1-800-646-1431**

