

WasteWatch Nov. 2015

I would like to acknowledge and applaud the Belmont residents who participated in the DPW Recycle Day. It was a busy event with 324 cars dropping off various items. The event was staffed by volunteers from the Green PTA/PTO Alliance, Sustainable Belmont, environmentally minded residents, DPW staff and students performing community service.

The following items were collected:

1,883 pounds of textile collection and
795 pounds of book collection both provided by RecycleThat

2,900 pounds of shredded paper plus \$883.00 donated to the Belmont Food Pantry collection provided by Watertown Savings Bank and Universal Shredding
A really big thank you to the generosity of Watertown Savings and Belmont residents!

20 cubic feet of expanded foam (Styrofoam) collection provided by ReFoamIt

1,780 pounds of rigid plastics collection provided by Russell Disposal

6,500 pounds of electronics collection provided by RMG

It was a successful recycling effort that diverted almost 7 tons from the waste-to-energy plant where Belmont's trash is incinerated. Not only does it save the Town money by decreasing our trash tonnage, but it also helps preserve our natural resources.

Last week on Nov. 15th the country will be celebrating America Recycles Day, sponsored by Keep America Beautiful - <http://americarecyclesday.org/>
This day is designated to celebrate and promote recycling in the United States. However, I feel the best way to celebrate recycling is:

Don't focus on recycling more, focus on trashing less.

A crazy statement coming from a recycling coordinator, but the goal is to have fewer items go in the trash. It would be better for a family of four to put out one trash barrel with one bin full of paper and one bin full of containers rather than

three trash barrels with four bins of containers (mostly single serve plastic water bottles) and one bag of paper. Why? A family of four that has only one barrel of trash is doing a great job of reducing and reusing. They reduce by buying less stuff, buying in bulk, and looking for products that have less packaging. They reuse by donating unwanted clothing, books, and toys, coming to the DPW Recycle Days, using reusable mugs, water bottles and bags, and renting or sharing items that are used less frequently. Learning how to reduce and reuse results in having less stuff to throw away. And before they throw it away they make sure it doesn't go into their curbside recycling.

Another issue with recycling today is wishful recycling, which means putting items in the bin that you want or think should be recycled. Please read the Belmont Collection Calendar and follow the regulations at - <http://www.belmont-ma.gov/dpw-highway-division/pages/recycling-trash-information>

Items that don't belong in the recycling bin do more harm than good for the recycling business, which in the long run leads to municipalities paying higher prices to recycle. Remember:

Hoses, plastic bags and film jam the machinery

Food laden containers contaminate other recyclables

Incorrect items in the bin increase the cost money (disposal costs)

For any questions or suggestions please call the Belmont Recycling Coordinator, Mary Beth Calnan at (617) 993-2689.