



# ZERO WASTE

## Boulder County Mountain Community News



**The Zero Waste concept focuses on the big picture – jobs, infrastructure, smart purchasing, and markets for recycled products.**

### Spring Cleanup Events Divert more than 20 Tons of Reusable Materials, Recycling and Slash

Seven mountain communities held Cleanup events this year. Some turned their garbage rolloffs into metal recycling containers; others used a container or two for slash that went to composting, instead of to the landfill. Most events were primarily funded by Boulder County, and many local businesses provided services, including the Center for Resource Conservation, Creede Recycling, Eco-Cycle, Green Girl Recycling, MacDonald Farms, and Western Disposal. The Allenspark and Nederland transfer stations both opened for special collections of appliances in conjunction with each town's Spring Cleanup date.

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## 2012 Grants

Every autumn, the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division offers Zero Waste program grants to communities and organizations in the area. Guidelines are being fine-tuned for the applications that will be accepted this fall, but the grant program is likely to be "open" throughout October. For more details check: [www.bouldercountyrecycles.com](http://www.bouldercountyrecycles.com).

For 2011, the program made \$50,000 available to communities throughout Boulder County. Ten grants were awarded – three in the mountains! Generally, programs are funded in three categories: Infrastructure (equipment), municipal planning and education.

This year, the Town of Lyons received an infrastructure grant to purchase recycling bins for Main Street and the town parks. The Town of Nederland received a municipal grant to support a new compost service for businesses. The Eldora Ski Area received an education grant to improve its composting signs and other education for skiers.

Measurement is an important part of the grant program. Nederland, for instance, has already indicated that nearly five tons of food scraps and brewery waste have been collected for composting. The finished product will be sold to landscapers and gardeners in the Nederland area. Lyons recycling bins were heavily used during summer festivals, and the Eldora compost bins saw plenty of use during the 2010-11 ski season.

If your group or community has a "Zero Waste" idea for next year, be sure to check the Boulder County site for details about the grant program. Or send an email to [zerowaste@bouldercounty.org](mailto:zerowaste@bouldercounty.org).

# October Wildfire Awareness Month

October is “Wildfire Awareness Month” in Boulder County and a very important time to think about improving your home’s defensible space. The Boulder County Forest Health Initiative (see [bit.ly/BoCoWildfireMitigation](http://bit.ly/BoCoWildfireMitigation)) recommends a variety of actions you can take to improve the likelihood of your home surviving the next fire:

## **EASY STEPS:**

- *Cut your grass!* This relatively easy action can dramatically improve your home’s chances of surviving the next wildfire. Keep dead, dry, curing grass cut to less than 6”. The further out from your home you clean the better!
- *Clean up pine needles!* Clean highly flammable pine needles from your gutters & next to house & wood decks; this simple step might save your home! Pine needles & grasses removed from around your home can be thinly spread on other parts of your property or composted in the collapsible bin featured on page 4.



- *Move firewood piles & other flammable materials!* It’s a good idea to keep anything flammable at least 30 feet away from your home. Check under your deck too! Don’t keep scrap wood, debris or items stored under decks.

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO CONSIDER !**

- Work with a professional forester or your local Fire Protection District to evaluate your “3 Zones of Defensible Space” and to learn about the most important steps you should take to help improve your defensible space.
- Prioritize trees to cut from around your home; remove trees closest to the buildings and then work outwards.
- By cutting zones of defensible space, you help to slow the intensity and spread of wildfire as it moves across your property. Examples from the Fourmile Fire demonstrate how landowners’ wildfire mitigation efforts slowed the fire as it moved through the area. The proactive fuels reduction work that was completed before the fire is credited with saving homes and trees on the mitigated land.

The Colorado State Forest Service publication “Creating Wildfire-Defensible Space Zones” has more about how to create zones of defensible space. Find it at: [bit.ly/csfsDefensibleSpace](http://bit.ly/csfsDefensibleSpace)

Participate in Wildfire Awareness Month Events:

[www.BoulderCountyCWPP.org](http://www.BoulderCountyCWPP.org)

## TEXTILE DONATIONS

The Boulder County Resource Conservation Division recently installed textile donation boxes at both the Allenspark and Nederland transfer stations. Accepted items are:

- ◆ Clothing
- ◆ Blankets
- ◆ Shoes
- ◆ Sheets

Another box is planned for the Lyons Drop-Off Center later this year.

# RECYCLE YOUR ELECTRONICS BY MAIL

Mountain residents who aren't able to drive their computers and monitors to Boulder or Longmont for recycling can recycle some electronics by mail. Apple, Dell, Best Buy, Eco-Cycle, Goodwill, Office Depot, Samsung and other companies offer mail-back options for a variety of equipment. Some businesses accept a wide range of items, some take only their own brands, and some recycle only with a purchase.

Mailing details vary, too. Some of the businesses provide free labels and free shipping, some charge. Some provide boxes for shipping; some require self-packaging and self-pay. Boulder County is developing a handout that summarizes the different options and costs.

Ask for a copy by sending an email to [zerowaste@bouldercounty.org](mailto:zerowaste@bouldercounty.org). You'll get an electronic version – or a hard-copy by mail, if you ask – when the document is finalized.

## *Take the Zero Waste Pledge: Win Zero Waste Prizes*

When residents of Boulder County recycle at the transfer stations and Spring Cleanup events – or compost with the new programs in Nederland and Ward – the materials are weighed and counted as “diversion.” But when you buy less, reuse more, and compost at home, your actions can't be measured – not unless you're one of the mountain residents who turns in a pledge to reduce waste!

When you take the “Zero Waste Pledge,” you get to choose the easiest actions for your household. Reduce, reuse and compost more, or take on a new challenge such as recycling hard-to-recycle items and setting a “buy nothing” day each week. Random, lucky winners this spring won cloth napkins, reusable to-go containers and durable mugs just for taking the pledge.

More winners will be chosen on America Recycles Day, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Everyone who has already entered will be eligible, except for previous winners. If you haven't already turned in your pledge, complete the form online by going to [bit.ly/zwpledge](http://bit.ly/zwpledge) or look for hard copies at community events this fall. Be sure to include your contact information, so we can send your prize to you. Your email will help Boulder County alert you to Zero Waste programs in the future.

## USDA SUMMARY 2011

This year's Zero Waste project for mountain communities is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development program. Technical assistance and outreach staff from Boulder County provide information and support to mountain residents and businesses.

The Zero Waste program focuses on improving recycling, compost and reuse opportunities. Currently, Boulder County residents throw out about 1,500 pounds of garbage every year on average – that's per person. That's hardly zero waste. In the mountains, more material gets thrown out, because recycling and composting are less convenient than in the larger cities. On the flip side, however, we're finding through this program that a lot more reuse & sharing of resources happens in the mountains. Our job is to make it easy for mountain residents and businesses to reduce waste.

Last year, Boulder County completed a study that showed 10% of the material going into garbage at the transfer stations could have been recycled: This project's goal is to raise those recycling numbers. More composting helps, too.

Some mountain communities, such as Ward and Nederland and the Eldora Ski Area, are experimenting with food composting programs, despite challenges such as bears, transportation and cold weather. Those communities without food composting options can compost yard materials, instead. Pine needles, grass, small twigs, etc., make up about 5% of what mountain residents throw away. Instead, mountain residents can compost such materials at home when creating defensible space around structures. Pine needles and dry grass you clear from around the foundation and out of the gutters isn't food waste, so it won't attract pests.

Staff members on this project are also offering special assistance to mountain businesses that want to reduce waste through recycling or composting more or through buying recycled and compostable products. If you would like more information, send an email to [zerowaste@bouldercounty.org](mailto:zerowaste@bouldercounty.org).

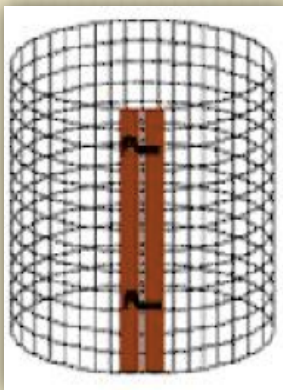
## Build this simple compost bin to keep pine needles and dead grass away from your home

Roll out and cut approximately 10' of 1" x 1" welded wire or hardware cloth. Trim ends flush with a cross wire to eliminate loose edges that may poke or scratch hands. File each wire smooth along the edge to insure safer handling when opening and closing bins.

Using a staple gun, staple a 3-foot length of 1 x 4 decking or scrap wood to each end. Bend wire into a circle and attach with eye hooks, to ensure your compost is contained.

### Materials:

- ◆ 1" welded wire or 1.2" hardware cloth, 3' high, 9-12' long
- ◆ 2 3' lengths of 1 x 4 decking or similar scrap wood
- ◆ 2 large hook and eye gate latches
- ◆ Heavy-duty wire or tin snips, pliers, hammer or metal file, staple gun and work gloves
- ◆ Staples for staple gun



*Plan from WSU Extension, Washington State*

## SPRING CLEANUP

(CONT FROM PAGE 1)

All told, the communities of Allenspark, Bar-K, Gold Hill, Jamestown, Lyons, Nederland and Ward sent 1.75 tons of traditional materials (bottles, boxes, etc.) to recycling, along with 3 tons of electronics and more than 8 tons of metal. Add to that nearly 5 tons of wood slash, a ton of tires and more than 2 tons of other materials that included block Styrofoam™, rigid plastics, clothing and two truckloads of tools for the ReSource tool library.

Many communities set up swaps, and the town of Jamestown completed the “loop” by distributing 5 yards of finished compost, donated by Western Disposal.

Next year’s Spring Cleanup events will take place in June and July in the same communities. Send an email to [zerowaste@bouldercounty.org](mailto:zerowaste@bouldercounty.org) with your ideas and requests for next year.