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Zero Waste Vashon Newsletter - Winter 2021



Zero Waste Vashon (ZVV) is a non-profit organization and is 100% volunteer driven. Our goal is to inspire the Vashon and Maury Island communities to "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink."

### **Vashon Island's First ETAP and Beach Clean-Up Efforts**

It's been a busy year in spite of the challenges with the pandemic. Spring brought a flurry of activity, including several Earth Day related events. Steve Bergman reports on the results of the April beach cleanup.



The first ETAP (Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol) was completed on Vashon! The event took place during Earth Week 2021 at the north end of Quartermaster Harbor near Portage. As part of a collaboration between Zero Waste Vashon and Vashon Nature Center, Zero Waste Washington (ZWW) staff traveled to Vashon and trained island volunteers how to execute the ETAP, developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The CSI-style event was completed with walled canopies to prevent wind from blowing over 50 buckets of trash categories away. Marlyce and Bob Dixon kindly hosted the event in their backyard, and James Hyde documented the event with a great video. (<https://youtu.be/kwuWoiEEKho>).

Over a dozen volunteers canvassed the tidelands below the driftwood, collecting all observable litter in an area slightly larger than a football field. The litter was then identified, classified, and placed in labeled containers. Each category was laid out, counted, weighed, and photographed. In all, over 2700 pieces of litter weighing over 400 pounds were characterized and documented, including 18 pieces of COVID-related items (gloves and masks). All recyclables went to the Vashon Recycling and Transfer Station, Option 2 (alternative fuel) plastics went to Nadine Edelstein's First Sunday Styrofoam Recycling program, and the remainder went to the landfill. ZWW is now working on a

summary report to be submitted to the EPA. Plastic and other human-made solid waste are real problems for our waterways. In addition to cluttering our beaches, marine debris harms and kills fish and wildlife through ingestion, strangulation, entrapment, and injury. Human litter will continue to destroy the environment until the mess is cleaned up and prevented. Without greater efforts to stop trash getting into the water, nearly 250 million metric tons of plastic will be in the world's oceans by 2025-nearly one pound of plastic for every three pounds of fish (see 'Stemming the Tide', Ocean Conservancy, and McKinsey Center for Business and the Environment, 2016). We can contribute to solving this problem by eliminating single-use plastics and properly disposing of our own waste.

The Federal Clean Water Act sets a national goal that our waters should be "fishable and swimmable." To reduce marine debris pollution and comply with the law, Washington State has established water quality standards designed to protect the beneficial uses of lakes, streams, and marine waters. The Clean Water Act (section 303(d)) requires an official list of impaired waterbodies for each state be managed by the EPA. The purpose of the first Vashon ETAP in April was to collect quantitative baseline data to be used to set policy and compare with future annual surveys. Heather Trim, executive director of ZWW, led the Portage ETAP training and observed our site was definitely one of the most debris-laden sites she had surveyed in Washington. This effort builds on many previous beach clean-up events by Vashon citizens, and data collection orchestrated by the Vashon Nature Center. Puget Sound winds, currents and waves bring a variety of items to Vashon beaches from elsewhere. Let's try and make sure that it is exclusively driftwood which plays a valuable role in ecosystem habitat. We are very fortunate most of our beaches are nearly free of litter, thanks to the efforts of our citizens. Stay tuned for the next ETAP and if you have any questions or are interested in participating in future events, please contact [steven.bergman@zerowastevashon.org](mailto:steven.bergman@zerowastevashon.org).

## Upcoming Events

Save the Date - here's a list of the upcoming Island events for November and December 2021. Please note that all events are subject to change, please check our website or Facebook page for updates. We hope to see you there!

- **First Sunday Styrofoam & Plastics Recycling Event** - Sunday, November 7th, from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Sheffield Building, 18850 103rd Ave SW
- **Shop Talk** - presented by The Whole Vashon Project and sponsored by the Backbone Campaign and Zero Waste Vashon. Shop Talk is a series of community forums for building conversations focused on sustainability, consumerism, and climate change. Join us for the first of the Shop Talk series, "Unshopping the Holidays". We will discuss the "How To's" of reducing your personal consumerism during the Holiday season. This will be a free online event. Wednesday, December 1, 2021, from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Stay tuned for the online sign-up coming soon. A link will be posted on Facebook and on the Backbone Campaign and Zero Waste Vashon websites.
- **First Sunday Styrofoam & Plastics Recycling Event** - Sunday, December 5th, from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Sheffield Building, 18850 103rd Ave SW



## First Sunday Styrofoam Rocks!

The first Sunday Styrofoam and Plastics event continues to be a big hit on the island. Zero Waste Vashon has now officially taken on this project. Every month the cast of volunteers under the leadership of Nadine Edelstein continues to refine and streamline the intake process to help people drop off their goods quicker. To

further reduce crowding the hours have been extended 2 hrs. now from 10 am to 4 pm. The results have been great thanks to groups consolidating materials reducing the number of vehicles, and the effective traffic control in the Sawbones parking lot. Most people report less than a 15-minute wait even though the volume is increasing.

On average this collection is now serving over 400 households a month. This program can only happen with great community participation and support. It takes a crew of about 25-35 volunteers (150-200 hrs.) each month to make this event successful. Their hard work and great spirits make this all possible. Donations also help keep this program running. It's costly to keep the popular option #2 working. We are filling two Option #2 dumpsters a month now at a substantial cost. Option #2 plastics go to DTG in Renton for sorting and processing into fuel bricks that are sent to LaFarge cement in Vancouver, BC. The program in 2021 has been a great success. We have moved over 600 cubic yards of Styrofoam and many tons of plastics.

This year ZWV is working with King County to move some if not all of these services to the transfer station for more convenient hours. We will continue to work towards reducing plastic waste in the King County landfill. ZWV wants to thank all the hard-working volunteers that make this program possible with a special thanks to Nadine Edelstein who has made this all possible.

A guide to help you sort your Styrofoam and plastics for our First Sunday collection event is on our website. Please continue to recycle your regular co-mingled recycling at the King County Transfer Station or in your Curbside Blue Bin.

<https://zerowastevashon.org/first-sunday-styrofoam-recycling/>

## ReUse Appeal From Vashon Library

Help the Vashon Library turn trash into treasure! Bring your pop-up plastic lids (from some brands of water bottles and dish soap-see graphic) to the children's librarian, Amelia Lincoln Ecevedo, at the Vashon Library to help make an up-cycled "take and make" kit to engage Vashon Island youth. Thanks for your support.





## Fix-It Cafe Goes On In The Time of Covid

By Liz Ilg

Islanders came away from the 12th Vashon Fix-It Cafe last weekend with smiles, stories, and new lives for old possessions. Twenty volunteers spent the day fixing over 100 items that were broken or malfunctioning or sometimes merely presented a how-to-use

dilemma for the 80 islanders who brought them in. Items were left and picked up later, unfortunately denying folks the fun and education of watching it being fixed, but a necessary part of the covid mitigation strategy. Most items were fixed, some were sent home with advice regarding a needed part, and a few people reluctantly took home a beloved item they now knew to be unfixable. A fix-it-yourself-at-home option was also available with a fixer on Zoom giving instructions to enterprising people at home who learned what they needed to repair their own items.

In the end, total fixes were reported on 55 items resulting in 502 pounds of material being diverted from the landfill. Helpful advice such as "needs a new battery" and "knows what part to buy" was reported on 26 items, resulting in another potential diversion of 434 pounds.

Organizers who coordinated the event and developed the drop-off and pick-up procedures were pleased with the overall turnout. They regretted the loss of face-to-face interactions and the barrier that the online registration may have posed for some potential participants. But they were proud of the collegiality and enthusiasm of the fixers, several of whom actually took items home when time ran out. They look forward to another event in the spring. In the meantime, fans of repair cafes can access many resources at the webpage: [vashonfixit.com](http://vashonfixit.com).

The event was sponsored by Vashon Makerspace, the nonprofit known best for the Tool Library, and hosted by the Vashon Eagles. Other supporting partners in bringing this unique community event to the island included Zero Waste Vashon, O Space, the Vashon Time Exchange, and the King County Eco-Consumer Program.

## Compost Facility - Feasibility Study Update

### The Continuing Quest For Community Compost

Most people know that compost is good for their garden, but did you know that compost helps





combat global warming? Organic material left to rot in landfills creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. No methane is created when these same materials are properly, aerobically composted. In addition, when compost is used to improve soils, it creates a carbon sink, pulling carbon out of the atmosphere.

Creating compost locally goes a step further by avoiding the emissions created by trucking organic materials long distances to be composted and then back to the island as a finished product.

For all of these good reasons, Zero Waste Vashon is continuing to work with King County Solid Waste Division (KCSWD) to create a community-scale Compost Facility on Vashon. Phase 2 of the Feasibility Study has finally been completed! It should be available on the County's webpage for the project within the next two weeks. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/facilities/vashon-compost.aspx>

The next step will be a survey of Island residents conducted by KCSWD. The County hopes to learn more about the Vashon community's level of interest in composting. The county is in the process of selecting a firm to conduct the survey, which will probably be mailed out before the end of the year. Please keep an eye out and be sure to turn yours in. Let's let the County know that Vashon is VERY interested in creating local compost for our island!



## Single-use Carryout Bag Ban

Plastic bags are a major contaminant in Washington's recycling facilities, waterways, roadways, and environment. Washington's Plastic Bag Ban will reduce pollution by prohibiting single-use plastic carryout bags and charging a fee for acceptable bags in businesses beginning in October 2021. <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Waste-reduction-programs/Plastics/Plastic-bag-ban>

You can still recycle these bags at the IGA Market. They also accept similar soft plastic bags that are used for potatoes and bread.

## Legislative Updates

Senate Bill 5022 was signed into law last May. This multi-part bill will be implemented in phases over several years. It will help reduce the use of some plastics and could drive the development of new markets for Washington's recyclable plastic. The key components of the bill address recycled content minimums, single-use serviceware only on request, and expanded polystyrene ban.

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-recycling-waste/Waste-reduction-programs/Plastics/2021-plastic-pollution-laws>

## 2021 ZWV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors and board members who contribute to the ongoing success of Zero Waste Vashon!



If you are interested in volunteering, getting involved, donating to ZWV, or simply have a question, let us know - we are here to help!

Web Page: [zerowastevashon.org](http://zerowastevashon.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/zerowastevashon](https://www.facebook.com/zerowastevashon)

Email: [info@zerowastevashon.org](mailto:info@zerowastevashon.org)

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE & RETHINK

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