

Waste Diversion Officer Report:

January 1st, 2021 – May 1, 2021



Waste Diversion Officer Update

October 1 – Jan. 1, 2021

HHW

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) has been steady for this reporting period. We are averaging 10-15 customers per Monday. There has been a big increase of regular users and with the increase in overall population a lot of new faces as well. The feedback from customers is reminiscent of what I have reported before, that accessibility continues to be a challenge, specifically for those who work during business hours on Monday. I am hoping to do the HHW “Summer Series” and open for 3 Saturdays throughout the summer, with proper promotional material to inform residents that we are doing our best to assure that the site is accessible.

We had Terrapure and Recollect shipments go out on January 19, 2021 we sent 21 barrels of chemicals, 5 fluorescent light boxes (300 lights) and 2 pallets full of 5-gallon pails. This writer has been keeping up with the lab-packing, except for the last 3 scheduled Household Hazardous Waste days as there have been administrative tasks that have been taking priority, so currently there is a backlog of items to be lab-packed. This last 4 HHW days have been exceptionally busy, with many new residents clearing out the properties they have purchased, it has been a great opportunity for education, but I will have to spend at minimum 2-3 full working days to catch up.



To add some perspective, this is the amount I had brought to the site within 1 hour of opening on May 3rd, 2021. I had not responded to any of the weekend calls, or emails until noon. We had 9 more customers in the afternoon, 4 with a full truck load.

The Household Hazardous Waste report for the Department of Environment was sent out on February 22, 2021. We report out on our total numbers that we had received for the 2020 year. We sent out 57.5 barrels of lab-packed chemical, 117, 20lbs. propane tanks, 17 tub-skids of used paint, 4.85 pallets of chemical in 5-gallon buckets, and 29 boxes of recycled batteries. This is an approximate increase of 25% more that we collected in the 2019 annual, versus the 2020 annual. This is great news! As more residents are inclined to frequent the site, less chemical ends up in the forest or the C&D site mixed within the piles.

This writer has sent out 10 more battery boxes within this reporting period, we continue to have a backlog on battery packing. With the hire of the RMRF assistant pending for mid to late May, this writer will be ramping up battery packing at the RMRF site. This writer will also be contacting “call 2 recycle”, to set up pickups at the C&D site to increase efficiencies and with the goal of clearing out our backlog by the end of this year.

RMRF

Regional Materials Recovery Facility has been consistent within this reporting period. We have had no down time with the scale for the last 4 months, our weights have been accurate, with minor fluctuations that are easily zeroed out. A draft of the “Request for Proposals”, was completed on April 19th, however with Covid-19 lurking back into our province and with competing priorities the completed version has yet to be approved. The proposal took a significant amount of time to complete as this writer had to become familiarized with the technical specifications to assure that what we are looking for serves the purpose of our facility. Once this is posted and we receive bids, this upcoming reporting period will be focused on the scale installation, as well as our technological upgrades to take the RMRF site into electronic record keeping. This will be a big undertaking for the site as we will have to train on the new tracking software (PAC LITE) as well as setting up the system to track exactly what we want to report out on for Datacall, as well as any future tracking that may be required by the Department of Environment in the future with the potential regulations of transfer stations pending.

Scavenging continues to be an entity unto its own. We are averaging 15 scavengers every Thursday. There are times that it is being reported to this writer that scavengers at times are not respectful of the paying or account customers at the site. For instance, not leaving the wood pile when a customer comes to offload, creating delays and frustrations with workers and customers alike. This is being addressed on an ongoing and individual basis. Despite staff efforts to keep the scavengers to abiding the policy, it does become a bit difficult to manage. For instance, we allow those to take wood, or metal, but we do not have a weight capacity, nor do we have any guidelines for what is acceptable versus not as it has never been limited to just 1 item that may be needed to fix an appliance. In speaking with our Bylaw Enforcement Officer,

scavenging has posed consequential repercussions with regards to the Dangerous and Unightly bylaw as well with some residents taking items and stockpiling them at their own residences.

From all conversations I have had with other site managers throughout the region, we are the only site that allows for scavenging in the province. There are liability concerns with regards to scavenging, and with metal being the product most typically scavenged it draws from our revenue stream. In the past, scavenging was certainly providing the adage of “one person’s trash, is another person’s treasure. This writer will continue to monitor the “Pro’s vs. Con’s” and will update accordingly.

On February 18th, we had a break in at the RMRF. The main office door was smashed in and our site safe was taken. The Police investigation is ongoing, and they did recover our cash boxes as well as paperwork, however the monies were gone. They drove a truck through the main entrance gate to gain entry. Constable Sanford with the RCMP attended the site and took samples/evidence for the forensics team and suggested we purchase cameras for the site.

On April 21st we purchased 2 cameras for the RMRF site, we are still working out the bugs from installation as there was a conflict between the Internet service provider and the contractor installing the cameras. These issues have been resolved and the cloud-based cameras are operational and provide up to 2 weeks of feed. The cameras are motion activated, one points towards the main entry gate, the other covers the door to the scale house to assure video evidence to deter future break-ins. This writer will be purchasing signage to put on the fence as well to assure residents and burglars are aware of the camera’s existence.

Education, Solid Waste Removal & Enforcement

In this reporting period I have fielded 454 calls and responded to 63 Facebook queries. Most of the calls received, still tend to be questions pertaining to item sorting, however this reporting period had an extremely high volume of calls from residents who have just purchased homes and are new to the area. This has created a lot of follow up calls as well as attending residences to assist with how overwhelmed residents are with either clearing out an old barn, or woodshed of old chemicals (which has certainly increased the frequency and materials accepted at HHW). I have gladly used these opportunities to strengthen/create community relationships, as well as garnered support from new and old residents alike to do their part to contribute to our goals of following National/Provincial regulation and keeping our communities clean.

I attended 27 residences within this reporting period, some of which were related to materials placed for curbside pickup that was not permitted. I provide the collection guide, my business card, as well as an information sheet that identifies items as well as where the items are accepted with addresses and contact information. The additional calls were pertaining to neighbor disputes with shared driveways. The complaints were driven from 1 neighbor leaving

out materials curbside that were recently rejected, or green carts that are being left by the shoulder of the road for 2 weeks on end. All residents approached have complied to date.

Another opportunity for education is green cart deliveries and red bag deliveries. I completed 32 green cart deliveries. Approximately 70% of these green cart deliveries have been to new residents to the area, this has been great as I usually get to make contact (at a social distance) and answer any immediate questions they may have, as well as provide my business card to assure if they have follow-up questions, I can answer them. This is certainly a higher volume of deliveries than I did last year at the same reporting period. We are currently running out of the Large Green Carts, we have had a sharp decline of requests for these carts, they are almost double the cost of the smaller green carts, so this year we will purchase 2 more pallets of the normal 20-gallon size green carts, but with the remainder of the budget we will purchase repair parts for the 35 large carts that need lids and new wheels at the Public Works building. If we want to keep offering the large carts, we will have to build that into the budget for the 2022-23 year as an additional cost to the typical purchase of the normal size carts.

This writer and Angela Taylor with R-6 went to 6 businesses in the Town of Lockeport and the Town of Shelburne on February 25th to follow up with business owners regarding the Atlantic Used Oil Management Association (UOMA) services that came into effect on April 1st, 2020. This was the first “boots on the ground” visit to see how this version of Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) has worked for vendors outside of HHW to measure accessibility and get an idea as per the frequency that vendors are collecting and shipping out their containers to RPM (Receiving company). Overall, this writer has received calls from 3 vendors in the area as there was not pickups occurring on a regular frequency as initially promised. This writer's experience at HHW mirrors the feedback received. It took up to 3 phone calls, with one being to the National office in Alberta to receive any traction pertaining to the pickups and drop off the approved RMP bags for collection. With the volume we receive being minimal to a mechanics shop that does daily oil changes this writer was curious to hear the testimonials of local shop owners. The common narrative was that there have been huge delays, responsibility concerns, and a revolving door of contacts who have made promises that pickups would occur and that drop off for bags would be on the way, only to have to make the same phone call again in 1 month's time. This feedback was consistent in the R-6 region. The other major concern was the lack of education provided by UOMA at the start of the program. Because of the lack of clarity regarding “who had to become a vendor”, versus “you can choose to be a vendor”, has put locations on their website maps to the middle of the woods, or to a backyard shop that is not actually a commercial business. This feedback has been collected by Angela Taylor who met with UOMA representatives to assure that the needs of vendors and residents alike are being heard and taken seriously. On our visits one vendor admitted that because they had no more space to safely contain the bags of used oil containers/rags, that they did what they used to do and “took it to landfill”. This will be continued to be monitored by R-6 and this writer. One of the positive takeaways to date is that we have had a substantial increase in receiving

waste oil at our site, with many new users who are supportive of the initiative mentioning that they are happy that they are being recycled, versus being landfilled.

The Enforcement report that is forwarded to R-6 and Divert NS for our enforcement funding was completed and submitted on March 5th, 2021 that covers the reporting period of September - April 1st, 2021.

We had 108 curbside rejections from October-April 2021. This was an increase (+26) from 82 in the same reporting period from 2020. This increase is still reflective of closer Opaque bag inspections; however, it is also indicative of our population changes as of late. This writer considers this statistic to positively reflect on the efforts of the waste haulers to assure they are following the waste bylaws.

The calls I received in the 2020 report relating to rejected bags was 39, which increased to 42 in the 2021 reporting period of the same time (Oct-April). This is consistent with the contact averages in the last reporting period. This reporting period, as mentioned various times throughout the report, was consisting of a high average of new residents in the area who are adapting to our Solid Waste practices.

On February 4th, this writer presented a comparative of bylaws from the Town of Shelburne, Town of Lockport and the Municipality of the District of Shelburne to the Shared Services Administration Team. The purpose of the presentation was to highlight some differences within wording that creates different operational practices from one unit to the next. It was pertaining to the use of opaque bags at individual residences but also covered shared living accommodations with one solid waste pickup location. The proposed bylaw will not allow for any opaque bags to be placed at shared pickup locations (already the normal practice within the Municipality). A draft of an addition to the Solid Waste Bylaw has been made and will be presented at the next Shared Services Administration meeting to receive any constructive feedback regarding the wording to ensure the intended goal is being met. Further information and feedback will be included in the next reporting period.

On April 1st, 2021 we had our first Great NS Pick-Me-UP group register for the \$150.00 litter incentive pickup. We have had 4 groups complete the pickup totaling 8kms of pickup. There were a lot of challenges with regards to permitting. This writer has been working with the Department of Transportation and has called for a meeting in the summer with Meaghan Mason the program coordinator of the pickup. Groups were initially being told that they could be waiting up to weeks for a permit, however with a full day of panic and phone calls we were able to get the permits issued within 1 business day of request if they came directly from the Municipality. This allowed for groups to be able to participate in pickups during the Earth Day week. Writer has suggested that moving forward, groups should be able to register as of March 1st. If DOT are unable to accommodate this, then writer will host a pre-registration, so on the day of April 1st permits can start to be issued. The groups that have participated so far have picked up 203 bags of garbage from roadside ditches. This has been a huge success for the

limited time that it was available. Due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases within our province, the Department of Transportation is no longer issuing permits for the litter incentive. If the Provincial regulations push back the permits into June, the ditches will have grown in and it does not allow for good conditions for litter pickup. If this is the case, and if there are permits in September being issued, this writers hope is that we can re-promote it, reach out to the 4 additional groups that expressed interest and resume for a month to try and finish off the 21 kms that are still available. This is a big undertaking for the department as we are delivering supplies, then picking up the waste at a centralized location the day of the pickups, as well as the administrative work that goes into the tracking/mapping and then as a go-between for the permits, whilst attending to regular duties such as phone calls, community complaints, green cart deliveries, HHW and the RMRF. This writer can create efficiencies to make for a smoother transition next year but will also look to potentially using a student for assistance with deliveries and pickups. So far it has been extremely rewarding and exciting to see community members digging in and cleaning up our community and seeing pictures on social media with the Captain Planet sticker.

On April 20th, Angela Taylor and this writer attended the Shelburne Regional High School and completed a litter cleanup of the school grounds and one side of the road from Spa Road to the High School. The litter pickup was from 1pm-2:30 pm. We collected 14 bags total of waste and some of the students were heard saying “its harder to pick it up then to throw it down”, which was the best soundbite taken from the Earth Day week. When I came back to collect the bags as the buses were filling 2 of the students from the pickup ran to the truck and assisted with loading the truck of the waste that was collected which was much appreciated and a success story all unto its own. The Municipality offered 2 reusable Yeti water bottles as prizes that were given out by their teacher by random draw after the cleanup was completed. The same cleanup/initiative was set to happen at Lockeport High School, along with a partial beach cleanup however Covid-19 will not allow for this to happen. If there is time and the School permits, we will try to do the pickup within this school year, however it may have to wait until the 2021-22 school year.

On April 22nd, 2021 we hosted the Compost giveaway at the C&D site, with the first 400lbs. of waste drop off to residents free of charge. We had 18 residents take advantage of the waived tipping fees and 24 who came to collect soil. Most collected soil for themselves and their neighbor. All the soil was given away before the end of the April 24th. We got the compost soil from Plant-it-Earth in the Valley and customers were commenting on the quality of the soil and how they loved the initiative. This writer may have been spurting off factoids about Earth Day and other Recycling initiatives that are within the province as we were shoveling the soil. The plan was for R-6 to attend the site and do a Facebook live to assist with live promotion, however Angela was unable to attend due to personal reasons.

This writer and Angela were in the preparation stage to do composting with the elementary schools in the area. This writer has been collecting Keurig coffee pods daily at our office and

washing them out as we are going to use them for started seed pods. The plan was we were going to use Angela's composting with kids' video for the teachers to complete in class. Angela and writer were then going to meet on school grounds with the kids (at a social distance) with the intention of using the Keurig pods (reusing landfill product) to start the seeds, so they would grow by the end of the school year to take home to their parents/caregivers. Unfortunately, this will have to be postponed as well. This was to be hand and hand with Compost awareness week which runs from May 2nd, though to May 8th.

Changes in Services

None in this reporting period.

UPCOMING:

1. Interview and hiring for the RMRF Assistant
2. Solid Waste bylaw review (continued)
3. Datacall
4. Continued education and conflict resolution provided throughout the Shared Services area.
5. Continuation of the Litter pickup incentive
6. Municipal Bin replacement
7. Green cart repairs
8. HHW and Battery Back-log