

# Building Partnerships for Environmentally Sound Municipal Waste Management

The 2013 Municipal Waste Plan Update  
for Blair County, Pennsylvania

Prepared for the  
Blair County Board of Commissioners  
Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania

Outline Summary of the Public Review and Comment Draft



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**OUTLINE SUMMARY OF DRAFT BLAIR COUNTY MUNICIPAL WASTE  
MANAGEMENT PLAN – 2013 UPDATE**

**(Note – this is only a brief summary of the Draft Plan Update; for details and specifics,  
please refer the detailed Plan text and appendices)**

1. **Blair County Population** – Approximately 127,000; will remain steady for the next 10 years (-55)
2. **Blair County Total Municipal Waste Gross Generation, Including Recyclables** – expected to remain constant at approximately 139,000 tons per year (TPY), based on population
  - A. Conventional MSW (Residential/ Commercial/ Institutional waste), net of recycling – dropping from 104,000 to 80,000 TPY by year 2023 due to increased recycling
  - B. Recyclables Diverted (including organics) from Conventional MSW – increasing from approx. 35,000 TPY to 58,000 TPY by year 2023
  - C. C&D Waste – dropping from 7,700 to 4,300 TPY by year 2023 due to increased recycling (which is not included in the recycling totals in item 2.B above)
  - D. Infectious/ Chemotherapeutic Waste (ICW) – approx. 900 TPY
  - E. Sewage Sludge (dewatered fraction from WWTPs) –approx. 10,700 TPY
  - F. Ash Residue – approx. 470 TPY
  - G. Asbestos – approx. 330 TPY
  - H. Residual Waste (non-hazardous industrial waste, WTP solids, etc.) – approx. 25,000 TPY
3. **Recyclables and Organics Diversion from Disposal** (includes HHW)
  - A. 2009 high of 35%; 2010 dropped to 30%; 2011 dropped further to 23.5% (approx.32,300 TPY (but this drop could be partly due to failure to document all MSW recycling that is now occurring in the County)
  - B. Closure of Co. SW & Recycling Department – Closure of most dropoffs, some programs; but Intermunicipal Relations Committee (IRC) has helped facilitate new sponsorships in public and private sector
  - C. **Conventional MSW Recycling Projections in draft plan start at 25% in year 2013 and grow by 1% annually, to 35% recycling by year 2023**
4. **The Draft Plan Update - Ten (10) Year Plan Components**
  - A. **Waste Collection** (a local municipal responsibility)
    - 1) **Now**
      - i. Currently, 1 contract bid private collector (Tyrone B.), all others are by subscription private collectors (IRC provides collection vehicles for yard waste collection in the four (4) IRC member municipalities)
    - 2) **Plan Recommendations**
      - i. Every resident and business in Blair County should have access to and

should utilize some type of regular waste collections service.

- ii. Waste collection remains a local responsibility
- iii. Waste collection services should be cost-effective. The Plan provides bid document templates for municipalities that want to bid for collection services, as this has shown (local example Tyrone B.) to provide competitive pricing for “bundled” waste and recyclables collection services

## **B. Recyclables (from conventional residential, commercial, institutional waste) Collection**

### **1) Now**

- i. Recycling collected at curbside in all four (4) mandated IRC municipalities by PA Act 101 (Tyrone implements theirs through a contract bid; Altoona, Hollidaysburg and Logan T. implement theirs through ordinance requirements on subscription collection providers)
- ii. Three additional non-mandated (by Act 101) municipalities in the County (Antis, Snyder and Blair Twps.) have ordinances that require subscription haulers to provide curbside recycling to a customer upon customer’s request
- iii. County dropoff sites – 8 of County’s 9 dropoff sites closed 10-1-2012 with closure of Co. SW & Recycling Department. IRC continues the Buckhorn dropoff site, available to all residents, and operates a dropoff site at the Duncansville R&D site one day per week.
- iv. Some other dropoff sites have been opened or continued by other sponsors
  1. Martinsburg/ North Woodbury/ Huston Twps. – new dropoff site
  2. Williamsburg/ Woodbury – Paul Kane-sponsored dropoff site
  3. Frankstown Twp. – Ken Wertz-sponsored dropoff site
  4. Greenfield Twp. – Claysburg
  5. The Burgmeier Transfer Station and the Waste Management Transfer Station each offer recyclables dropoff containers at their sites in or near Altoona.

### **2) Plan Recommendations**

- i. Curbside recycling collection services may be feasible for municipalities from Tyrone B. to Newry B. The Plan provides bid document template for municipalities that want to bid for curbside recycling with waste collection
- ii. The Plan recommends “optional curbside recycling” service to be provided in non-mandated (by PA Act 101) municipalities to residents and businesses that request it from their subscription haulers; this service could be at additional cost. The Plan provides a sample ordinance for non-mandated municipalities that want to adopt the optional curbside recycling feature for subscription providers when a customer in that municipality requests it.
- iii. IRC to continue the Buckhorn and R&D recyclables dropoff sites, with

- many hard-to-recycle items and electronics included, and open to all County residents
- iv. IRC to continue to work with municipalities and haulers to add additional dropoff sites sponsored by the IRC or by others, for use for County residents and businesses
  - v. IRC/ County to continue contract with JVS (or other entities as appropriate) for the recycling of electronics and Covered Devices Recycling Act (CDRA) materials, and to maintain other recyclables marketing efforts.
  - vi. IRC to continue to sponsor and coordinate annual HHW collection events, subject to available resources and support, including support from non-mandated (by PA Act 101) municipalities).

### **C. Organics Collection**

#### **1) Now**

- i. A local municipal responsibility
- ii. IRC provides yard waste collection equipment seasonally for use by its four (4) member municipalities
- iii. Several municipalities outside of the IRC conduct seasonal yard waste collections.
- iv. Yard waste can be dropped off at the IRC's (as of 10-1-2012) Buckhorn and Duncansville R&D Organics sites.
- v. Martinsburg offers a yard waste dropoff site.

#### **2) Plan Recommendations**

- i. Remains a local responsibility
- ii. IRC will continue to provide collection equipment for municipal collection services by its four ( ) member municipalities
- iii. Other municipalities may continue to provide collections with their public works crews, or through municipal contracts with a private collector (Tyrone B.)
- iv. Other municipalities could contract for this service if desired as part of a municipal bid for waste collection (bundled services, with waste and recyclables collection, similar to Tyrone B.)

### **D. Waste and Recyclables Transfer**

#### **1) Now**

- i. Waste transfer is a free market service provided by multiple transfer stations, including the Blair County Resource Recovery Facility (Burgmeier) and the Altoona Transfer Station (WM). Burgmeier also operates a recyclables MRF on-site, and WM transfers single-stream recyclables to an out-of-County MRF.
- ii. Burgmeier typically transfers MSW to IWS disposal sites, and WM to WM disposal sites.
- iii. Haulers are free to directly haul municipal waste to any disposal site contained in the current "menu plan" list of disposal sites under contract with Blair County

- iv. The private sector provides recyclables transfer service for materials that it either collects or that are dropped off to its system. The IRC and some municipalities also collect and transport recyclables collected at drop-offs.

## 2) Plan Recommendations

- i. Waste transfer remains a private sector service.
- ii. County waste haulers retain the free marketplace option to either haul MSW direct to disposal sites, or to utilize transfer stations.
- iii. Transfer stations allow for the economical transport of MSW to out-of-County disposal sites, including ones contracting with Blair County.
- iv. The Solicitation of Interest (SOI) resulted in three (3) transfer station responses, all three (3) which agreed to:
  - 1. Log all waste handled by its original county or origin (which helps with future data analysis and planning).
  - 2. Deliver MSW only to sites approved in the Plan Update (which helps with plan implementation).
- v. The County has undertaken steps to execute the Transfer Station Agreements with the three (3) sites that responded to the SOI (see attached Figure 6-1), effective for the ten (10) year planning period:
  - 1. Blair County Resource Recovery Facility (Burgmeier)
  - 2. Altoona Transfer Station (WM)
  - 3. Breezewood Transfer Station (Weavers Sanitation)
- vi. These transfer station agreements should be executed with the County soon, with an effective date of 7-1-2013.
- vii. Recyclables transport and transfer will continue by various haulers as under the current system. The IRC reserves the right to take an increased role in this activity over the next ten (10) years as determined to be beneficial.

## E. Waste Disposal

### 1) Now

- i. The 2002 Blair County Solid Waste Plan was a “menu plan.” MSW from Blair County currently can be taken to any of approximately a dozen disposal sites that are currently under contract with Blair County. These contracts expire on 6-30-2013.
- ii. Within the disposal sites identified in the menu plan, haulers operate under a free market system, where they can take waste to a transfer station or disposal site of their choosing.

### 2) Plan Recommendations

- i. The County will contract with disposal sites to secure Blair County’s required disposal capacity commitment (under PA Act 101) for the ten (10) year planning period.
- ii. Under the new Plan, haulers of Blair County MSW will be allowed to use the County-contracted disposal sites, or any disposal site with a valid state-issued operating permit from the state in which it is located.
- iii. There are benefits to Blair County in contracting with multiple

disposal sites, including proximity to the County, geographic distribution of the sites to various regions of the County, current use by haulers and transfer stations, tipping fees, and other reasons. For these reasons, as further documented in the Plan, the County has taken steps to enter 5-year contracts (with a 5-year renewal option) with the following tentatively designated disposal sites (see attached Figure 6-1):

1. Mostoller Landfill (an IWS facility offering free space for illegal dump cleanups by public and non-profit groups in the County; this site currently accepts a majority of the waste from Blair County, including waste from the Burgmeier Transfer Station, but does not accept infectious/chemotherapeutic waste (ICW)) – IWS’s Sandy Run Landfill is the contractual backup site for this facility.
  2. Sandy Run Landfill (another IWS facility offering free space for open dump cleanups; but also does not accept ICW) – Mostoller Landfill is the backup site for this facility.
  3. Laurel Highlands Landfill (a WM facility accepting ICW waste, but that will not accept asbestos waste; this is the WM facility that currently accepts the largest quantity of MSW from Blair County of the three (3) WM sites that responded to the SOI) - WM’s Southern Alleghenies Landfill is the contractual backup site for this facility. This site offers a limited amount of free disposal of illegal dump cleanup waste from public and non-profit groups in the County.
  4. Veolia ES Greentree Landfill (offers relatively low ceiling tipping fees; is the most distant site from Blair County of the recommended sites, and the only disposal site to the north of Blair County) – Veolia ES Chestnut Valley Landfill is the contractual backup site for this facility. This site did NOT offer any free disposal capacity for illegal dump cleanups in Blair County.
- iv. These disposal site contracts should be executed with the County soon, with an effective date of 7-1-2013.
  - v. The Plan Update includes the opportunity for Blair County, at its sole option, to consider contracting with additional disposal sites during the ten (10) year planning period. This should give the County flexibility to adapt to unforeseen circumstances that may occur prior to the expiration of the 2013 Plan Update in 2023.

## **F. Processing/ Composting**

### **1) Now**

- i. With closure of the County SW & Recycling Department 9-30-2012, the IRC has taken ownership and operation of the Buckhorn Blair County Yard Waste Composting Facility site, effective 10-1-2012. Through the spring of 2013, this IRC has continued to accept yard

waste from residents and municipalities in Blair County for composting. The IRC now maintains a staff of two (2) at the Buckhorn site for composting activities as well as oversight of finished compost distribution and sales, and recyclables dropoff monitoring.

- ii. The Duncansville R&D site, operated previously by the County under a site lease agreement, now continues to operate with staffing shared between IRC staff and the Blair County Conservation District, and is open to the public one day per week. Recyclables are also accepted at this site during hours when organics are received.

## **2) Plan Recommendations**

- i. The Plan recommends the Buckhorn Composting and Duncansville R&D composting operations continue with IRC management and staffing, with Conservation District support at Duncansville.
- ii. The Plan Update has determined the merit, on an initial conceptual feasibility basis, of adding food waste to the Buckhorn site, and possibly providing a food waste transfer point at the R&D site or some other location. Adding food waste could add a revenue source to the IRC composting activities without significantly impacting the space and equipment requirements for composting.
- iii. A more detailed feasibility study of transferring food waste and composting food waste with yard waste at Buckhorn is recommended, and could be eligible for further PADEP grant (901 and 902) funding.
- iv. Outside of the four (4) charter IRC members, municipalities (and their residents) that want access to the Buckhorn and Duncansville sites for yard waste and organics deliveries should be supported by some form of financial or in-kind recycling/ composting program support; the IRC is currently working to firm up these details with municipalities. The Plan supports these efforts as a way to help sustain the IRC operations while continuing to make services available to municipalities outside of the four (4) member IRC communities.

## **G. Environmental Issues and Enhancing Recycling Efforts**

### **1) Management of the Recycling and Environmental Programs by IRC**

- i. With the County's decision to close its Solid Waste and Recycling Department on 9-30-2012 and to effectively terminate or transfer all solid waste and recycling duties that it can, operations that continue now with reduced IRC staff dictate more limited operations.
- ii. The IRC will look for ways to continue to provide educational and recycling benefits to residents both within and outside of the four (4) charter member municipalities of Altoona, Hollidaysburg, Tyrone Borough and Logan Township.
- iii. The IRC will promote feasible expansion of the current recycling system in Blair County, and to facilitate new sponsors of expanded and enhanced recycling measures from the public and private sectors.
- iv. The IRC will continue to pursue finding new sources of revenue, and/

or in-kind service support, that may help the new IRC-managed programs grow, as further discussed below.

## **2) Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Program Sustainability**

- i. Ability to Negotiate Support Agreements
  1. The PADEP guidance document on County Planning specifically confirms that recycling program and sustainability support fees can be negotiated. PADEP recommends and prefers this be done outside of the disposal capacity contracting (SOI) process.
- ii. Negotiations with Transfer and Disposal Sites
  1. Each of the four (4) tentatively designated (for contracts) disposal sites (actually, all seven (7) disposal site Respondents to the SOI) responded affirmatively when asked to state their willingness to further discuss possible forms of support for the sustainability of integrated waste and recycling programs in Blair County.
  2. The Plan recommends that these discussions be pursued by the County/ IRC outside of the SOI contracting process, at least with the landfills and transfer stations that Blair County chooses to enter contracts.
- iii. New Revenue Sources and Support
  1. The IRC is looking into ways that municipalities can help support the County's recycling and composting programs, either through in-kind service donations (such as hosting a recyclables dropoff) or by paying a fee to deposit yard waste at one of the two IRC composting sites.
  2. The success of future recycling and composting programs in Blair County will need to rely heavily on municipal, private, and group sponsorships of educational efforts, facilities and sites, manpower and cash donations, and other forms of program support. The Plan supports the expansion of these forms of support, and of the IRC as a facilitator of these efforts.
  3. The Plan recommends that PADEP Section 901 (planning) and 902 (implementation) funding be pursued to help support the implementation of enhanced and expanded recycling opportunities in Blair County.

## **3) Illegal Dump Cleanups**

- i. PA CleanWays of Blair County has identified 116 confirmed illegal dumpsites in the County. It continually works to facilitate the cleanup of such sites, and to try to help deter or eliminate new dumping activities. The Plan Update supports these efforts.
- ii. The availability, ease and cost of proper waste disposal, especially for difficult items such as tires and appliances, helps minimize the temptation to dump. Such efforts to minimize dumping are supported in the Plan Update.
- iii. Three (3) contracted disposal sites in the new Plan have offered free



disposal capacity on an annual basis for illegal dumpsite cleanup by public and non-profit groups.

#### **4) Open Burning – Recyclables and Waste**

- i. The burning of waste and recyclables pollutes the air and is a waste of important recyclable resources.
- ii. In order to become eligible for some PADEP grants, a ban on the burning of recyclables must be in place for the service area serviced by the grant-funded project.
- iii. The elimination of backyard burning of waste is environmentally beneficial, although the decision to ban all open burning is felt to be a local municipal issue.
- iv. The Plan Update mandates that municipalities implement a prohibition on the burning of recyclables, to conserve and better manage recyclable resources and to eliminate conflicts with PADEP requirements related to eligibility to apply for recycling grant programs.
- v. The Plan Update recommends that municipalities consider the implementation of a complete backyard burn ban on wastes and recyclables.
- vi. Draft ordinance templates for the banning of the burning of recyclables, and for an overall ban on the backyard burning of waste, are contained in the Plan appendices.

#### **5) Promoting Increased Recycling**

- i. Municipality and Hauler Dropoff Sponsorship - The IRC is working with municipalities and haulers to find new sponsors to develop and operate additional recyclables dropoff sites throughout the County, to help ensure that convenient opportunities for recycling exist for rural areas of the County that do not have curbside recycling pickup. The Plan supports this expansion of sponsorship.
- ii. The Plan recommends the IRC work to facilitate the establishment of additional recycling opportunities (such as drop-offs, curbside recycling, additional materials collected, etc.) in a cost-effective, environmentally sound and sustainable manner. Both public and private support is crucial for the expansion of these programs.
- iii. The maximization of recycling of corrugated cardboard is recommended, and the Plan recommends that municipalities consider placing a ban on disposing of this material with their waste, as least in more urban and suburban areas.
- iv. The continued recycling and growth of recycling of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste materials by the private sector is encouraged in the Plan, and additional recycling of this material is included in the Plan's waste projections.
- v. The Plan recognizes the importance of education in proper waste management and the growth of recycling, and recommends the support of both the public and private sectors in a sustainable educational effort.

- vi. The SWAC has developed a large number of goals and initiatives related to expanding and enhancing integrated waste management and recycling in Blair County, that are attached in Table 1 to this outline summary. It is recommended that these items be further pursued over the next ten (10) years within the limits of available resources, and based on the identification of program sponsors (both public and private), and as found to have further merit. To the extent that the further investigation of these goals and initiatives results in programs and projects that are eligible for grant funding, it is recommended that this funding be further pursued.

**6) Biosolids and Septage**

- i. The Plan acknowledges that the current methods of biosolids (i.e. wastewater treatment plant solids/ sludge) are adequate to meet the County's needs for the next ten (10) years, and that these practices be continued in an environmentally safe manner. Proper pre-treatment programs should ensure that any land-applied biosolids are safe and protect the agricultural land and water resources of the County.
- ii. The Plan acknowledges that the current method of delivering septage (septic tank pumpings) to wastewater treatment plants for proper treatment prior to disposal are adequate to meet the County's needs for the next ten (10) years, and that these practices be continued in an environmentally safe manner. Specifically, the Plan does not support the application of untreated septage on agricultural land. Any land application should be safe and protect the agricultural land and water resources of the County.

**TABLE 1****LIST OF RECYCLING GOALS AND INITIATIVES**

As part of the preparation of this Plan Update, the SWAC reviewed a large number of initiatives and programs that could potentially enhance recycling in Blair County over the ten (10) year planning period.

The SWAC, and this Plan Update, support the promotion of the following goals over the ten (10) year Plan Update period, given the proper resources and selected priority (to be determined during plan implementation) to implement these goals:

- **Municipal Recycling Recommendations:**
  - o Require businesses to report recycling totals
  - o Ban the burning of recyclables
  - o Intermunicipal cooperation and programs
  - o Recycling at all special events from municipality to municipality
  - o Recycling curbside in municipalities over 5,000 pop. OR 300 people/ square mile density
  - o Require waste collection service for all households
  - o Require OCC recycling in all businesses with 10 or more employees
  - o Promote contract bidding for collection or municipal collection
  - o Implement volume-based pricing for trash (to encourage recycling)
  - o Provide recycling receptacles where empty beverage containers are generated
  - o Promote full recycling programs (like in mandated communities)
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- **Composting Recommendations:**
  - o Promote Christmas tree composting/ recycling
  - o Maintain satellite composting facilities
  - o Encourage/ reward backyard composting
  - o Further research food scrap composting with yard waste in the County
  - o Promote food waste composting to accelerate the composting process
  - o Offer food waste composting services to large food waste generators
  - o Promote grasscycling, “let-it-lay” mowing practices
  - o Offer yard waste composting in “suburban” areas, not just mandated communities
  - o Look at transfer locations for yard and food waste to reduce transport costs
- **Special Recyclables Recommendations:**
  - o For electronics
  - o For tires
  - o For non-curbside rigid plastics
  - o Provide drop-offs closer to population centers
  - o Provide programs for Freon-containing appliances
- **Educational Priorities**
  - o Publicize the benefits of recycling
  - o Publicize bin availability and use as an educational opportunity
  - o Continue educational campaigns that use print and electronic media
  - o Pursue PSAs and other free publicity
  - o Support enforcement for non-complying haulers
  - o Raise awareness of special recyclables (beyond the curbside bin)

- Support enforcement in commercial and institutional buildings
  - Support youth education and competitions
  - Support enforcement of residential curbside requirements
  - Promote reuse and waste minimization
  - Reward good recyclers
- **Other General Recycling Goals**
- Make recycling convenient
  - Capture recycling data from recyclables processors and other recyclers
  - Provide oversight of recyclables processors
  - Explore/ encourage more efficient collection
  - Encourage/ require pay-as-you-throw programs to increase recycling incentives
  - Add additional recyclable materials to drop-off and curbside recycling programs
  - Reward haulers for recycling, to encourage more recycling
  - Have the IRC take a more active role in transporting and processing materials

