



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by WMM Date 10/9/09
General Manager

DATE: October 9, 2009
TO: General Manager
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager
SUBJECT: Report on Public Education, Recycling and Litter Activities

Coastal Cleanup Day, September 19th, 2009

The 25th observance of California Coastal Clean-up Day saw 1,422 volunteers turn-out in Monterey County to collect 6,519 lbs of material from 71 miles of shoreline and waterways. Volunteer participation numbers decreased 16% over 2008. Organizers attributed this in part to the heavy fog that shrouded the coast that morning. The District sponsored the Fort Ord Dunes State Beach clean-up site which had 95 volunteers turn out. The District donated 250 reusable tote bags which were given out to the first 25 volunteers at 10 clean-up locations. Media coverage of the event did not seem as thorough this year.



Marina Councilman Ken Gray hands Clean-up Day volunteer and County Supervisor Jane Parker a bag for litter removal at Fort Ord Dunes State Park.

District staff submitted the attached Opinion column to the *Monterey County Herald* which the newspaper promptly ran on September 29th.

No Butts on the Beach

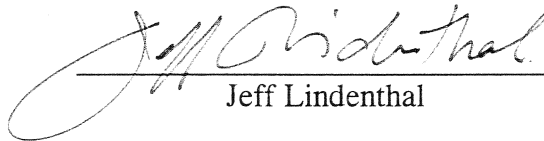
Cigarette butts and associated litter represent 40% of the material collected during Beach Cleanups around Monterey Bay. The District has been contacted by staff at the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) regarding a demonstration "No Butts on the Beach" campaign they hope to fund. A number of cities including Capitola, Santa Cruz, Sand City, Monterey, Carmel, and Pacific Grove have banned smoking on City beaches. The City of Monterey is considering extending their smoking ban to include city parks and the recreation trail. Data tracked by the non-profit group Save Our Shores indicates that to date beach bans have not reduced the quantity of cigarette litter collected during beach cleanups. The thrust of the OPC program would be to raise public awareness about beach bans and to add appropriate receptacles to existing trash cans for the disposal of cigarette butts. Data from future cleanups would then be compared with that prior to the demonstration project in an effort to measure success. OPC staff would like to present their concept of this demonstration project to the District Board at the November 20th meeting.

CIWMB AB 939 2008 Annual Reports Approved

District staff prepares and submits AB 939 Annual Reports for each member city. The intent of the Annual Report is to review a jurisdiction's progress in the implementation of their Source Reduction and Recycling Element and Household Hazardous Waste Element. A large part of what we report pertains to the education and outreach activity the District carries out for member jurisdictions along with the work performed by local haulers. It also includes initiatives at the city level to reduce, reuse and recycle. The CIWMB has notified District staff that the 2008 Annual Report for each of our member cities has been approved.

Strategic Planning Impact

4b Program focus on public awareness, increased diversion of organics and commercial wastes, proper management of hazardous & prohibited materials, litter abatement, & sustainability.



Jeff Lindenthal

Attachment

William Merry: Chance to reuse, reduce, recycle

By WILLIAM MERRY

Guest commentary

09/30/2009

As the 25th annual California Coastal Cleanup Day was observed in the state Sept. 19, more than 67,000 volunteers turned out to help clean beaches and waterways. Locally, the state parks staff coordinated sponsors and volunteers for a record 19 cleanup locations in Monterey County, ranging from Upper Carr Lake in Salinas to Arroyo Seco River in Los Padres National Forest, from Big Sur to Moss Landing.

This year, 1,422 volunteers collected more than 6,000 pounds of trash and recyclable items in Monterey County. Each volunteer completed a data card itemizing the debris, everything from cigarette butts to shopping bags. Plastic and packaging, along with cigarette butts, represented a large majority of the debris collected locally and statewide.

All those bits of plastic in the sand represent a problem, and an opportunity. The problem with plastic take-out food packaging is that while it may have a useful life of 30 minutes to carry the contents home, it essentially lasts forever whether it is in a landfill or littered into the environment.

In an effort to crack down on polystyrene cups, plates and clamshells, Carmel, Pacific Grove and Monterey have implemented policies that require the use of environmentally friendly biodegradable or recyclable alternatives. It is encouraging to hear that additional Peninsula cities along with Monterey County will consider similar ordinances in the coming months.

From the standpoint of sustainability, the best environmental solution to dealing with packaging waste and litter may not be recycling or composting, but reducing the staggering volume of packaging and products being generated and consumed. While emissions resulting from personal transportation often get first look at how we can reduce our individual carbon footprints, new studies suggest that the "provision of goods," including products and packaging, represent as much as 44 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Connecticut has recently identified waste prevention and recycling as one of its top 10 strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Product designs that improve durability, the ability to reuse or repair a product rather than throwing it away, and supporting recyclability can have a big impact in reducing emissions. We've all heard of the "reduce, reuse and recycle" approach to managing our discards. When it comes to personal consumption habits, perhaps it is time to reconsider the importance of reducing and reusing.

The 25th anniversary of Coastal Cleanup Day is an appropriate occasion to reflect about how the generation of waste, and the composition of litter on our beaches, has changed over the years. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than 52 million tons of containers and packaging were generated in the United States in 1984. Today, this category of the accounts for more than 79 million tons annually.

The observance is a good opportunity to recognize the efforts of the many volunteers, businesses and public agencies that come together to help solve a problem. It is also a reminder that we can all play a part every day to reduce, reuse, recycle.

William Merry is general manager of the Monterey Regional Waste Management District