



# SWALCO Annual Report 2010

Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, IL

Agency Members: Antioch • Beach Park • Deer Park • Deerfield • Fox Lake • Grayslake • Great Lakes NTC • Green Oaks • Gurnee • Hainesville • Hawthorn Woods • Highland Park • Highwood • Island Lake • Kildeer • Lake Barrington • Lake Bluff • Lake County • Lake Forest • Lake Villa • Lake Zurich • Libertyville • Lincolnshire • Lindenhurst • Long Grove • Mundelein • North Barrington • North Chicago • Park City • Port Barrington • Riverwoods • Round Lake • Round Lake Beach • Round Lake Heights • Round Lake Park • Third Lake • Tower Lakes • Vernon Hills • Wadsworth • Wauconda • Waukegan • Winthrop Harbor

## *SWALCO's Services*

- Composting and Compost Bin/Rain Barrel Sales
  - Community Events and Programs
  - E-Lists, including E-List for Educators and those who work with Youth
  - Electronics Recycling Collections
    - “Going Green”
- Household Chemical Waste Facility and Collections
  - Environmental Legislation
  - Member and Community Support, Recycling Programs and Hauling Contracts
  - Online Recycle and Redirect Guide: What do I Do with My Stuff? and other information
  - Public Information and Outreach
  - The 4Rs: Reducing, Reusing, Recycling & Buying Recycled
- School Education Programs and Assistance
  - Shoe Recycling and Reuse Program
  - Sustainability and More

# Agency History

In 1989, Lake County became the first county in Illinois to adopt a solid waste management plan in compliance with the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act. The Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO) was formed in 1991 to implement the Lake County Solid Waste Management Plan, which is updated every five years. The Agency currently represents approximately 85%-90% of the county's population.

Since the Agency was formed, 41 municipalities, Great Lakes Naval Training Center and Lake County have joined to participate in forming and maintaining the county solid waste management system. Agency staff provide members with assistance and advice on solid waste management issues and educate the public on a number of environmental topics including recycling, waste reduction, sustainability and resource

recovery. Each member community designates a director and alternate(s) to serve on the SWALCO Board of Directors.

During the 2010 year Trustee Larry Mount of Round Lake Beach served as the Chairman of the SWALCO Board and Mayor Glenn Ryback of Wadsworth served as Vice-Chair. Kent Street, Village Manager of Deerfield, served as the Chairman of SWALCO's Executive Committee.

## Mission

- Implement the Lake County Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Facilitate an efficient, reliable and environmentally sound waste disposal system.
- Advise and assist members regarding solid waste management issues.
- Educate the public regarding implications of solid waste management options.
- Promote the 4 Rs. Identify, evaluate and disseminate information regarding techniques to reduce, reuse and recycle the amount of solid waste generated and information on buying recycled.



# 2010 Agency Highlights & Overview

## *A Word from the Director...*

In 2010 SWALCO continued to focus on growing recycling programs throughout Lake County, and along with the Lake County Board appointed a 27 member Recycling Task Force to develop more ideas and programs for achieving a 60% recycling rate by 2020. The Recycling Task Force began monthly meetings in June and is focusing on programs in three main waste/material generating sectors: 1) residential, 2) commercial, and 3) construction & demolition debris. It is expected that the Task Force will finalize its report in 2011.

As part of its efforts to continue to enhance recycling programs in Lake County, SWALCO members have continued to replace the small recycling bins with larger more convenient recycling carts that are three to four times as large as the small bins. In 2010 the following members went to the cart based collection: Fox Lake, Highland Park, Libertyville and Island Lake. SWALCO continues to help its members move to cart programs, with 31 towns now using the carts for recyclables, and many towns have the option of upgrading to a 95 gallon cart for recyclables.

The two privately owned and operated in-county landfills were also in the news in 2010. The Zion Landfill was granted an expansion by the City of Zion that will

provide for approximately 8,953,000 million tons of capacity and extend the life of the landfill for at least another ten years. SWALCO and Lake County also negotiated a new host agreement with Veolia, the landfill owner, which includes environmental safeguards, a guarantee of disposal capacity for the next six years, and an increased host fee payment to Lake County. The Countryside Landfill began a voluntary program to monitor hydrogen sulfide emissions in conjunction with the IEPA, USEPA, and the Lake County Department of Health. The monitoring data is being utilized as part of an overall effort to reduce odors and understand the impact that WMP's gas collection and control programs are having on hydrogen sulfide related odors. The study began in March and will continue into 2011.

SWALCO took some important steps regarding its governance structure and funding mechanism in 2010 as well. The SWALCO board voted unanimously to amend its intergovernmental agreement regarding the qualifications necessary to serve on the Board of Directors as a director or alternate. After this change was made a new Executive Committee was elected by the Board of Directors which included several new members on the Executive Committee. SWALCO also negotiated an agreement with Lake County and its

Health Department regarding the collection of the landfill surcharge used to help fund SWALCO and the Health Department's solid waste enforcement program which regulates solid waste management facilities in Lake County. Under the new agreement SWALCO now directly collects 75% of local surcharge allowed by state statute with the Health Department collecting the remaining 25%. The fund balance was also split between the two entities.

Finally, SWALCO continued to stay active with legislation in 2010 by working with the plastic bag manufacturers to develop legislation requiring increased recycling of plastic bags and film in Illinois, with hopes of filing legislation in the 2011 spring session. SWALCO is also involved with talks with the paint industry, with assistance from the Product Stewardship Institute, to file legislation in 2012 or 2013 that would require paint manufacturers to fund programs for the collection and recovery of both latex and oil based paints. Paints account for about 35% of the material we collect in our Household Chemical Waste program and this type of legislation would shift the cost for managing paint from the public sector to the private sector and consumers of paint.



# Recycling Guidelines for Lake County

SWALCO developed recycling guidelines for all of Lake County in order to increase recycling and help with educational efforts. Previously each municipality had a different set of guidelines. In the process of creating this document, several additional items were added to the standard list of recyclables including paper cartons (such as Tetra Pak soy and rice milk containers/chicken broth and other), juice cartons, paper cups, and in some communities household plastic containers #3, 4 and 5 were also added.

Additionally, the guidelines clarify that lids, labels and rings can now remain on metal cans, glass and plastic containers, to make it easier

and less prohibitive for our residents to recycle. The guide was designed to be a one page, go-to recycling guide for the Lake County resident that:

- provides a list of acceptable / recyclable items commonly found in the home or workplace with special notations and guidelines that address related issues and questions,
- addresses some of the more common and frequent questions related to recycling,
- provides a list of some of the more common items that are not acceptable/recyclable and ...

- encourages people to recycle more!

The guidelines serve as a definitive source of information for Lake County residents to assist in clarifying some of the misleading and/or outdated information and to try and address some of the more frequent questions and concerns that residents have with regards to curbside recycling. The guidelines will continue to be adapted and can be viewed or printed from the SWALCO website. SWALCO encourages all Lake county residents to follow these guidelines and share with neighbors and friends.



Photos left: (1) Staff from Habitat for Humanity/Re-Store talk to visitors about reuse possibilities. They were one of several exhibitors at the **3rd Annual Recycle-O-Rama and Environmental Fair**. 2) Compost Bin Sales make it possible for residents to try backyard composting at home. Visit SWALCO's website for how-to-links and resources at [swalco.org](http://swalco.org). 3) Mayor Susan Lahr from Lindenhurst and Merleanne Rampale from SWALCO talk with residents at the Village's Earth Day celebration event. 4) Mayor Nandia Black from Kildeer and Pete Adrian from SWALCO look over the day's collection of electronics at a Household Electronics Recycling Collection event held in spring. Televisions, computers, small appliances and other electronics were dropped off by residents to be recycled. SWALCO sponsors numerous events with its members throughout the year.



# Public Information and Education



Above: SWALCO Public Information & Education Director, Merleanne Rampale talks to Sierra Club members and other residents about recycling. Below: Environmentally-minded students from Warren Township HS assisted in a variety of capacities at SWALCO's annual Recycle-O-Rama.

One of SWALCO's primary directives is to do outreach and educate the public about the importance of the 4Rs, sustainable practices and resource management. SWALCO's Public Information Officer plans, directs and develops a variety of projects and programs for the Agency, including: school education, Reuse-A-Shoe, Recycle-O-Rama & America Recycles Day events, Earth Day celebrations, community outreach and education, member services, and more. A wide variety of information and resources are created and published, A new online Recycle & Redirect Guide was created and is now available on the web-

site at [www.swalco.org](http://www.swalco.org). During 2009-2010, education and assistance was provided to community organizations, schools, businesses, corporations and others in our member communities to help develop "environmental teams" and implement related programs and projects. Articles and publications on waste, recycling and other topics were created and provided for various community and member newsletters and journals. Presentation/talks were given to groups on a number of recycling and other environmental issues. Topics included: "Recycling at Home, Work & Play", "Everything You Always Wanted to Know

about SWALCO...", "The Importance of Buying Recycled" "Composting 101", and a number of presentations on sustainability, recycling, and the importance of the Rs. There were appearances made on local cable programs to talk about the Agency and its programs. A number of village/city special events were attended to assist members, providing interesting displays, educational information and resources for the local community. Residents had an opportunity to ask questions they wanted answered on a variety of environmental topics.

## School Education—2010 Highlights



Above: Students from Lake Bluff Elementary School unfurl their new Earth Flag. Below: Recyclers from Beach Elementary School doing their part!



- Thirteen schools earned Earth Flag Awards during the 2009-2010 school year. Schools recycled various items including paper, plastic, aluminum, inkjet cartridges, cell phones, and other items and participated in the shoe recycling and reuse program as well as a number of other environmental activities like waste-free lunches, locker clean-outs, native plant gardening, book swaps and clothing drives.
- Conducted solid waste and environmental workshops/ programs.
- Assisted other schools, educators and parents, outside the formal programs, providing resources and assistance throughout the year. Assistance and information is also provided to help implement recycling programs or other projects and activities in the schools.
- Assisted with other K-12 and college efforts.
- Received award from local High School Environmental Club
- Supplied further information and resources via SWALCO's E-list for educators and others who work with youth, including project ideas, curriculum resources, grant information and more.

## Reuse-A-Shoe Athletic Shoe Recycle & Reuse

Every year across the globe, millions of shoes end up in landfills or disposed of in some other way. Much of what we dispose of contains valuable materials that, with a little bit of imagination and ingenuity can be reused. With the pursuit of sustainability in mind, SWALCO teamed up with Nike for the 6th year to offer this program that collects worn-out athletic shoes of any brand and recycles them into a grind used to make sports surfaces like running tracks and playgrounds. Residents of all ages were involved and gym shoes of all sizes and colors filled the collection boxes. Nearly 90 groups from around the county participated, including schools, libraries, park districts,

municipalities, businesses and corporations, Scout Troops, churches and other community groups. United Partnership of Wauconda, Vernon Hills Public Works, Vernon Hills Park District, First Baptist Church of Waukegan and Zion-Benton Public Library graciously opened their doors and continued to act as year-round drop-off sites for individuals/families looking to drop off a small number of shoes. Over 32,000 shoes were collected to be recycled and approximately 3,000 pairs of gently worn shoes were donated to people in need. Groups interested in participating in this fun and unique program can visit SWALCO's website or contact Merleanne Rampale at 847-336-9340 x 4.



### SWALCO's 2010 Reuse-A-Shoe, Shoe Recycling and Reuse Program

Above: Highland Park's Lincoln School students making a difference. SWALCO's program has diverted several tons of shoes each year from landfills. Over 32,000 shoes were shipped to Nike to be recycled into "grind". Additionally, 3,000 pair were donated to "Share Your Soles".



## Special Events and Projects

- Participated in Earth Day Celebrations with Recycle America as well as community organizations. Acted as resource for groups and organizations and assisted them in planning their own events.
- Presented at member events including village/city celebrations, open houses, Public Works events, environmental health and safety fairs, as well as special festivities, summer fests & other events.
- Sponsored 3rd Annual Recycle-O-Rama with Warren-Newport Public Library and Warren Township High School. Hundreds of visitors learned about recycling guidelines, composting, rain barrels, rain gardens, eco products, local resources; talked to experts on a variety of environmental topics, participated in activities for kids and adults, a swap corner with fabric, games, books, movies and more; had an opportunity to recycle a large number of items that could not be recycled in curbside recycling, including electronics, smoke detectors, propane tanks, car seats, latex paint, eyeglasses, hearing aids and more.
- Wrote and published an expanded 2010 Holiday Green Guide with information, resources and ideas for green gifts, decorating, & entertaining. Also included green cleaning recipes and more. Composed "Greening Your Halloween" Guide.
- Presented programs on recycling and other topics for a variety of groups including Sierra Club, Lake County Government employees, Lion's Club and others.
- Produced an online guide to help people recycle and redirect unwanted items in an environmentally responsible manner and answer other questions. What do I do with my Stuff?
- Produced variety of articles and publications for Agency website, municipal and corporate newsletters, websites and others.

# Recycling in Lake County



With the adoption of the 2009 Solid Waste Management Plan Update, the County recycling rate was adjusted due to revised guidelines used to calculate the rate.

The total volume of material recycled, and in turn

diverted from landfills in 2010, was determined to be 39%.

The 2010 Recycling Report for Lake County was compiled in accordance with state law, which defines the types of materials that may be counted in determining

the recycling rate: residentially generated waste, commercial and industrial wastes (excluding manufacturing waste volumes), landscape waste, and construction and demolition debris.

## Per Ton Payment



The Per Ton Payment Agreement between SWALCO and Waste Management Recycle America (WMRA) has made recycling profitable for participating Lake County communities that direct their waste services provider to deliver their recyclables to the WMRA facility in

Grayslake.

In 2010 thirty-two SWALCO members received a combined total of \$450,256 for the 42,679 tons of recyclables collected from their communities.

SWALCO receives funds from WMRA on a quarterly basis,

and then distributes the money to the member communities based on the tons of recyclables collected from the community. There is no financial risk for the members.

## Electronics

SWALCO's Electronics Recycling Program continues to grow each year. In 2010 a total of 33 host collection sites accepted residential electronics, which was a 20% increase over the 26 collection sites that operated in 2009. A total of 21,997 participants delivered electronics to our host locations resulting in a total of 935.8 tons (1,871,505 pounds) of material being recycled. These totals represent a 23% increase in drop off traffic

and a 17% increase in e-scrap tonnage over 2009 totals.

Since the inception of the program beginning in 2000, a total of 6.84 million pounds have been collected from 72,046 participants which continues to make the SWALCO Residential Electronics Collection Program the largest and longest operating program in the State of Illinois.

The Agency maintains a contract

agreement with Materials Processing Corporation of Mendota Heights, Minnesota. This agreement operates in accordance with the State law in that the processing costs for all electronics collected by the Agency are funded by an electronics manufacture. The no cost agreement assures the Agency that at a minimum, 2 million pound of electronics will be funded through calendar year 2012.



SWALCO encourages people to recycle where they live, work and play!

## Public Recycling

Data has indicated that the vast majority of single serve beverage containers that are consumed away from home are not being recycled. They are typically disposed of in trash receptacles located in parks, public walkways, retail business establishment entrances and gas stations. Over the past year SWALCO has maintained its support of projects to assist members in collecting recyclable

beverage containers at public recreation facilities, municipal special events and at gas station pumps.

In 2010 SWALCO continued to supplement the distribution of both portable and permanent recycling collection containers to both municipal members and the original gas station pilot participants. SWALCO provided portable special

event recycling collection containers for many spring and summer community events throughout the county.

Recycling also came for the first time to the Lake County Fair. Containers were placed at several locations throughout the fairgrounds with "Lake County Fair Recycles" signs.

Compost Bin Sales make it possible for residents to try backyard composting at home. Visit SWALCO's website for how-to links and resources at [swalco.org](http://swalco.org).

## Compost Bin Sales

SWALCO provided compost bins for sale at a reduced price at several locations in Lake County during 2010. In addition to creating mulch for yards and gardens, composting at home means residents dispose of less.

Composting has many benefits for the homeowner, including lower garbage bills. The program has been responsible for placing over 16,000 bins in households throughout Lake County and accounts for an estimated

5,000+ tons of organic materials being diverted from our landfills annually. The SWALCO website has information on composting, with how-to links and resources.



# Household Chemical Waste

SWALCO's Household Chemical Waste (HCW) Collection Program is in its twelve year of operation. Our HCW program is a *hybrid program* consisting of *mobile collection events* (held at various locations throughout Lake County) and *public drop-off events* (held at our Gurnee facility). This hybrid program improves accessibility to residents and provides the opportunity to conduct HCW collections on a year-round basis. SWALCO's hybrid program is the first of its kind in the State

of Illinois.

Seven (7) Mobile events were conducted during the 2010 year. The mobile collection events were conducted at locations throughout the County from April through November. Various municipal service centers, public works facilities, train stations, high schools etc. served as the site locations.

Additionally, Twenty four (24) public drop-off events were

conducted (by appointment only) at our Office/HCW facility (pictured below) in Gurnee. The Public Drop-off program continues to grow in popularity due to its convenience, speed of service and year-round operation.



SWALCO offers year-round HCW collections at the Gurnee Facility and mobile collection events at locations around Lake County, from spring to fall.

## Program Overview

The intent of SWALCO's HCW program is to reduce the volume and toxicity of our municipal waste stream. This is accomplished by diverting HCW from the municipal waste stream and sending that waste stream to IEPA approved recycling, reuse and disposal facilities. Our HCW program is not only important from an environmental perspective,

it is also a great public safety program. Residents no longer have to stockpile their HCW, or pour them down the drain because "there is no other option". Our HCW Program could not function without the support of our member communities and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). SWALCO maintains key Intergovernmental

Agreements with our members and the IEPA. Our Agreement with the Village of Gurnee allows us to operate the facility under certain operational parameters. Our IEPA agreement outlines general operational guidelines and provides funding for the management of the wastes while naming the IEPA as generator of the wastes.



Left: 1) Residents can drive through and drop off their household chemical waste products. 2) Items that can be brought to a HCW collection include: household cleaners, fluorescent lights & CFLs, garden/lawn chemicals, insecticides, prescription drugs (people & pet), over-the-counter medicines & supplements and more. Visit [swalco.org](http://swalco.org) for a more comprehensive list of items that are accepted.

## Supplemental Programs

SWALCO continued to provide technical assistance to various supplemental programs that directly benefit our HCW Program. Those programs were the Lake Zurich and Lake Barrington waste oil collection programs and the new HCW satellite collection facility located in Lincolnshire.

The establishment and operation of these types of programs is important to SWALCO as they provide the public other outlets for the disposal of HCW.

The Lake Zurich Oil Collection Program continues to be a valuable outlet for residents wanting to recycle their used motor oil. This program operates year round at the LZ Public Works Department. Residents can place their containers of used oil inside the yellow collection shed. Public Works employees then transfer the oil from the containers into a bulk

tank awaiting pickup by an oil recycling company. Five thousand and one hundred and seventy five (5,175) gallons of motor oil were collected during 2010. Since its inception in 1998, the program has collected approximately 74,000 gallons of motor oil.

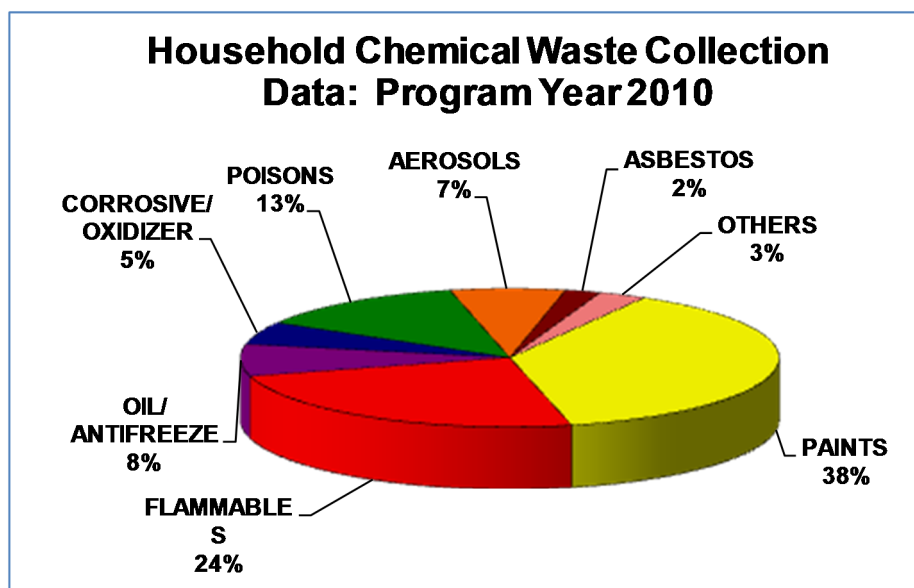
The Village of Port Barrington also operates a residential motor oil collection program. The Program is located at its Public Works Department and is similar to the Lake Zurich program. However, appointments to drop off your oil are required. Since becoming operational in mid-2007 approximately 875 gallons of oil have been collected.

The Lincolnshire Riverwoods Fire Protection District now collects HCW (on an appointment basis) at its Fire Station # 51. This HCW collection facility is located at 115 Schelter Road, Lincolnshire



(pictured above). SWALCO secured operational permits from the IEPA and provided HCW specific training to the Fire District's fire fighters. The District's fire fighters can now safely collect HCW from the residents served by the Fire District. HCW collected through this program is incorporated into our overall HCW Program. This program served approximately 150 residents in 2010.

In 2010, 1658 barrels (approximately 650,000 pounds) of HCW were collected from households. The pie chart shows the breakdown of the types of HCW materials collected.



Pictured Above: Residents can drop off their used motor oil at the yellow shed at the Lake Zurich Public Works Department, year-round. In 2010, 5,175 gallons of oil were collected and recycled from this program.

## SWALCO Staff

Walter Willis, Executive Director

Peter Adrian, Recycling Coordinator

Lorin Buchta, Office Manager

Steve Nelson, Household Chemical Waste Engineer

Merleanne Rampale, Public Information Officer / Education Director



SWALCO Office and HCW Facility  
in Gurnee, Illinois

## Contact the Agency



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847.336.9340  
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[swalco.org](http://swalco.org)

For more information about SWALCO's programs and services, or for our **Event Hotline**, please call the SWALCO office at **847-336-9340**.

Visit us on the web at [www.swalco.org](http://www.swalco.org) for:

- More information on programs and services
- Upcoming collections and events
- Online "What Should I Do with My Stuff" Recycle and Redirect Guide
- Lake County, IL Recycling Guidelines & other information on Recycling, Waste Reduction & Resource Recovery
- Information & articles on how to live a more sustainable life.
- E-List Sign-up: You can sign up for our general E-list service announcements to receive occasional announcements and information on upcoming events, programs and related information.
- Educators, youth leaders and others can sign up for a separate E-list service for occasional information and announcements specifically for them.