

“One Person’s Trash...”

your guide to reducing,
reusing and recycling



Spring 2015

Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department

828-250-5462

www.buncombecounty.org/green

Earth Day: Preserving, Protecting, and Defending Our Planet

As pollution affected more and more people in the mid-20th century, preservation became a growing concern in the United States. By April 22, 1970, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, had planned a national “teach-in” for the environment, marking the first Earth Day. “Literally millions of Americans of all ages and from all walks of life participated in Earth Day celebrations from coast to coast,” Nelson noted in a 1980 article about the 10th anniversary of Earth Day in the *EPA Journal*. That first Earth Day not only raised awareness but also led to actions that improved the quality of our air, water, and land, protecting people and property, as well as fish and wildlife.

April 22, 2015 marks the 45th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Even after 45 years of environmental education, preservation, and conservation, it is as important now as ever to think about the environment and how our actions impact it. This is also a great time to celebrate the natural world and show our thanks for the many ways it supports us, giving us the

ability to live and thrive. This Earth Day, get outside and enjoy your environment and the abundance of life it sustains. You could go for a hike, a walk, a run, or a bike ride. Look around and pay attention to the changes that spring brings to the natural world. Breathe the fresh air.

Nelson said, “So long as the human species inhabits the Earth, proper management of its resources will be the most fundamental issue we face. Our very survival will depend upon whether or not we are able to preserve, protect, and defend our environment.” What resources do you consume? What are you doing to take care of your little corner of our planet? How are you helping to ensure clean air, land, and water for future generations?

Earth Day is a reminder that we are only visitors here. We choose what kind of world we pass along to our children and grandchildren. Here are some helpful tips:

Recycle

In 2015, most of us are used to recycling paper, boxes, plastic bottles and jugs, glass

bottles and jars, and metal cans that we use in our daily lives. Did you know that many more things can be recycled? For example, you can recycle inkjet and laser printer cartridges, batteries, fluorescent tubes and bulbs, computers, tablets, televisions, appliances, phones, and more! Of course, not all of these go into your curbside bag, bin, or cart. You’ll need to drop off some of them. For details about drop-off locations, visit our website, www.buncombecounty.org/solidwaste.

Another great way to recycle is to add food waste, such as fruit and vegetable scraps, to a backyard compost bin or pile. Using compost in your garden helps build richer soil and leads to healthier plants!

Reuse

Many things in your home have more than one use. In fact, you already reuse many things—towels and sheets, dishes, pots and pans, and clothes. So reusing isn’t

about creating a new habit, but rather about expanding an existing one. What else might you start to reuse? Shopping bags are an obvious choice, as is a lunch bag with washable containers. Taking advantage of the books, CDs, DVDs, and other resources

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Photo Courtesy of Chimney Rock State Park

Celebrate Earth Day with your neighbors and friends!

You will have several opportunities to celebrate Earth Day this spring in Buncombe County:

- ❖ April 11-12, Mother Earth News Fair, Western North Carolina Agricultural Center, 1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher
- ❖ April 17-19, Trailfest, Appalachian Trail/Main Street, Hot Springs
- ❖ April 18, Asheville Earth Day, Lexington Avenue, Asheville
- ❖ April 18, Great Asheville-Buncombe Cleanup
- ❖ April 24, Arbor Day Celebration and Tree City USA Proclamation, French Broad River Park, 508 Riverview Drive, Asheville
- ❖ April 24-25, “Growing in the Mountains” Plant Show, Western North Carolina Farmers Market, 570 Brevard Road, Asheville
- ❖ April 25, Hard 2 Recycle Event, City Market Tailgate, 161 S. Charlotte Street, Asheville
- ❖ April 25, Earth Day at Chimney Rock State Park, Chimney Rock Village RiverWalk (behind the Old Rock Café)

Clear out old chemicals

This spring, take a look around your house and garage for all of the cleaners, lawn and garden chemicals, used paints, and automotive fluids that you no longer need. There’s no need to keep storing chemicals that are flammable, poisonous, or corrosive, especially when they’re not being used.

These chemicals, called household hazardous waste (HHW), require proper disposal. HHW is too toxic for the trash! Instead, you need to box up HHW and deliver it to the Buncombe County Landfill on Friday, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The HHW area will be open weekly beginning Friday, April 10, but will be closed the Friday before Memorial Day (May 22) and Friday, July 3.

You can drop off:

- ❖ Paint and paint-related items, such as water sealer, paint thinners, enamels, and polyurethane – \$2.00 per gallon with a 20-gallon limit
- ❖ All flammable liquids (gasoline, kerosene, etc.) – Recycling fee of \$2.00 per gallon, 20-gallon limit
- ❖ Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, motor oil, antifreeze, and lead-acid batteries – No charge
- ❖ Rechargeable household batteries – No charge for typical household quantities

Please keep all items in their original, labeled containers. Do not mix chemicals together. When loading these items into your car or van, place them into a cardboard box in the trunk or in the very back, as far away from passengers as possible.

This program is for residents ONLY. Items you deliver should have been used in and around your home. Businesses are not allowed to drop off hazardous waste through this program. To participate in this program, proof of county residency is required. At the landfill, you will be directed to the special drop-off area. If you need more information, please call the landfill at 828-250-5462.



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THE MAKING OF A ZERO WASTE PIONEER

Bea Johnson, author of *Zero Waste Home: The Ultimate Guide to Simplifying Your Life*, is a pioneer. She may not be the first person to attempt making her own cosmetics and cleaning supplies or to buy all of her foods fresh or in bulk. She may not be the first person to advocate making do with a smaller house, fewer possessions, or consuming less media. There have certainly been others who have written books on recycling and composting. What makes Johnson a pioneer is that she does all of these things with the remarkable goal that her household (herself, a husband, and two sons) will produce no more waste in one year than can fit in a large canning jar. The very boldness of the idea hints at the compelling nature of this story.

Pursuit of the “zero waste” goal did not happen overnight. The Johnsons were moving from a far inland suburb of San Francisco, Pleasant Hill, to a more urban community, Mill Valley. Mill Valley enjoys a walkable downtown, in close proximity to the coast and to the city, but the price of housing is about twice what it is in Pleasant Hill. After selling their old home, the Johnsons lived in rental housing to get acclimated to their new community and give themselves time to search for a new place. During this time, most of their belongings were placed in storage and they found the experience freeing. In the end, rather than replace their 3,000-square-foot suburban house with a similar-sized home, they opted for a two-bedroom bungalow adjacent to the downtown neighborhood they found so appealing. It had no yard to take care of and half the square footage. Shrinking their possessions down to what would fit in their new home and without as much yard work, they spent more time biking, hiking, and exploring as a family. And that was just the beginning.

As Bea and her husband, Scott, read about the environment and the impact of their typical, modern lifestyle, they formulated a plan that led the family toward their singular achievement. While Scott quit his job to start a sustainability consulting company, Bea transformed their household into an example of how little waste a family can produce and still enjoy a rich, fulfilling life. Like any pioneer, she tried many things along the way. Some of the things she tried she gave up, as those practices became “socially restrictive and time-consuming, and thus unsustainable.” For this reason, she decided to no longer make her own butter or cheese. Throughout, the author avoids scolding or preaching, except perhaps in the short chapter, “Getting Involved.” Mostly, she documents her experiences as she pursued her goal. The result is 292 pages of practical “how-to” instructions laced together with an interesting family story.

Johnson’s philosophy of zero waste is broader than just placing recyclables in the proper container and trashing whatever other waste her family produces. Her strategy has five Rs, as opposed to the three Rs you may know. Johnson prefaces “reduce, reuse, recycle” with a flat-out “refuse” phase. Items she refuses include single-use plastics, freebies, promotional items, individually-wrapped snacks, and other small gifts. She admits that “refusing is the most difficult to achieve socially, especially for households with children. Nobody wants to go against the grain or be rude when something is offered with no ill will.” However, she offers strategies to politely refuse these things and points out: “If we all refuse hotel freebies, then they will no longer be offered; if we all refuse receipts, then they will no longer need to be printed.”

Reduce is the second R in her lexicon. She distills reducing into three steps: evaluate past consumption; reduce future consumption; and decrease your exposure to media and time spent leisure shopping, since these can lead to more consumption.

Reuse is the author’s third R. This includes selling or donating usable items you no longer need, as well as shopping secondhand first, before investing in newly manufactured goods. She also discusses “collaborative consumption,” which is basically sharing. This applies to things which you do not use all the time, such as tools, lawn equipment, recreational vehicles, cars, and even homes and office space.

Her fourth R is “recycle,” a category she maintains for “what we cannot refuse, reduce, or reuse.” She advises knowing and understanding what your community can and cannot recycle. She couples this with the recommendation to select products with high post-consumer recycled content and choose those that are accepted in your local recycling programs.

After refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle, the fifth R Johnson espouses is “rot,” or composting. She provides a concise, two-page chart which is an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to know the pros and cons of various types of composting.

The author claims there are many direct personal benefits to her lifestyle, in addition to minimizing her family’s impact on the earth’s environment. The first benefit is financial. Her husband estimates their household expenses went down 40% over the five years it took her to fully evolve her strategies. In addition, she cites the health benefits of reducing toxics and allergens in her home and eating healthier foods. Lastly, she notes the satisfying benefits of additional time. “Anyone can benefit from a life freed from the burden of stuff and wasteful practices, and instead focused on experiences,” she writes. “Time also opens opportunities to get involved and participate in collective consumption, through which sharing, interacting, and reinforcing community bonds are possible.”



**The Johnson family’s
waste for the year
2014.**

The bulk of the book consists of well-thought-out strategies, simplified systems, and recipes that address many areas of the home: kitchen and groceries, bathroom and toiletries, bedroom and wardrobe, housekeeping and maintenance, workspace and junk mail, etc. This is where others can really benefit from the trial-and-error experiences of the author and her family. For instance, she has pushed the limits of grocery shopping by using her own containers. In addition to bulk items where reusable containers are common, she uses her own containers for cheese, meat, and seafood purchased at the counter. “BYOC (bringing your own container) is uncommon and may raise eyebrows, but only if you show hesitation. I find it easier not to ask for permission to shop with reusables,” she advises. She suggests simply making a request and handing over the container without making eye contact. “I act as if jars were common practice (as if I had shopped this way my whole life),” she says. Meal planning, shopping once a week, and getting to know the staff of your local grocery and market are all good tips.

The bathroom and toiletries section has detailed recipes to replace the myriad products that crowd your bathroom vanity and medicine cabinet. Likewise, the recipes and strategies included in the housekeeping chapter are helpful. This is serious pioneer stuff that will get you curious enough to try some of it, even if you have no intention of adopting a complete do-it-yourself, zero waste lifestyle.

The kids and school, holidays and gifts, and out and about chapters address areas with huge opportunities and challenges to the zero waste lifestyle outlined in the book. Again, like every chapter, you may find that only a few of the strategies are for you. On the other hand, you may see something you never considered that piques your interest. Use what works and consider the rest as part of Johnson’s family story.

By her own admission, the author “grew up in the Provence region of France, in a cookie-cutter home on a cul-de-sac.” But, she says, “Through my young eyes, my home was a modern version of *Little House on the Prairie*, a TV series I watched religiously in reruns as a kid.” She grew up to be a true pioneer with respect to her pursuit of a zero waste lifestyle. Reading this book is like watching *Little House on the Prairie*, if the Ingalls family took the time to show you, in detail, how you too could survive on the 19th century prairie.



Photo courtesy of Bea Johnson, ZeroWasteHome.com

QUOTES REQUOTED



Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, 1867-1957
American writer, best known for the *Little House on the Prairie* books

RecycleMania



This year's RecycleMania marks the 15th annual recycling competition between colleges and universities. The challenge began in 2001 when recycling coordinators at rivals Ohio University and Miami University decided a little competition might be a way to motivate students to recycle. The little contest between two Ohio universities has grown into a competition among 450 schools in the United States and Canada.

Stacy Wheeler, RecycleMania's president, notes, "With the help of millions of students, RecycleMania competitors have recycled and composted over 277,800 tons of material since the competition first started in 2001."

The competition runs over an eight-week period which coincides with the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament, making school spirit a great motivator in RecycleMania's efforts. Each week, colleges report the recycling and trash collected on their campuses. From these reports, colleges are ranked in various categories. After the eight-week competition, the overall winner with the highest percentage of waste recycled receives national recognition and a trophy made out of recyclable materials. There are also 10 category winners, two of which are new for 2015.

Last year, 5.3 million student and staff participants at 461 colleges and universities recycled and composted 85.6 million pounds of materials. The Grand Champion was Antioch University, located in Seattle, Washington, with a whopping 93.13% of material recycled during the competition. Kalamazoo College, located in Kalamazoo, Michigan, won the Per Capita Classic award with 48.62 pounds of recyclables per participant, and Valencia College, located in Orlando, Florida, won the Waste Minimization award, creating only 2.87 pounds of waste per person. During the course of the competition, recycling by the participating colleges and universities prevented the release of 137,452 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is comparable to removing 29,937 cars from the roads for one year!

"RecycleMania provides a way for students to get involved and make a difference in their campus communities," said Keep America Beautiful Senior Vice President Brenda Pulley. "Keep America Beautiful is proud to support RecycleMania as part of our efforts to reduce waste and increase recycling."

RecycleMania is managed by Keep America Beautiful, sponsored by the Alcoa Foundation and the Coca-Cola Company, and supported by the U.S. EPA's WasteWise program and the College & University Recycling Coalition. Learn more about RecycleMania at www.recyclemaniacs.org.

Bags with a history

During college at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, Alice Saunders majored in History, focusing her studies on World War II and Vietnam. She spent her summers working on an organic farm and always thought she would become a farmer, as that is one of her biggest passions. Alice's winters were spent sifting through old textiles at flea markets, barn sales, and antique stores throughout New England and sewing them together to make something new.

In 2007, Saunders found a WWII-era duffel bag at a flea market and had an insight. In Jay Carroll's video for Levi's Makers Goods, Alice says, "My love for military history and those old fabrics, it was like, 'Oh, wow, I can put all of those in one and make a bag.'" That became her first Forestbound bag, which sold from her Etsy shop in February of 2008. Since then, Forestbound bags have been featured by name brands such as Levi's, Anthropologie, Urban Outfitters, and Patagonia.

Even as Forestbound has continued to grow, Alice makes every bag by hand with the

help of her friend Jill. Forestbound bags are mainly made with textiles from the 1920s through the 1960s, especially featuring military pieces like duffel bags, tents, and hammocks. In Jon Walley's video series *American Hand*, Alice states that the textiles she finds and repurposes "encapsulate the history of those events and that time period in such a personal way because it tells a story of that soldier." Finding the material and giving history a chance to tell its story and live again is

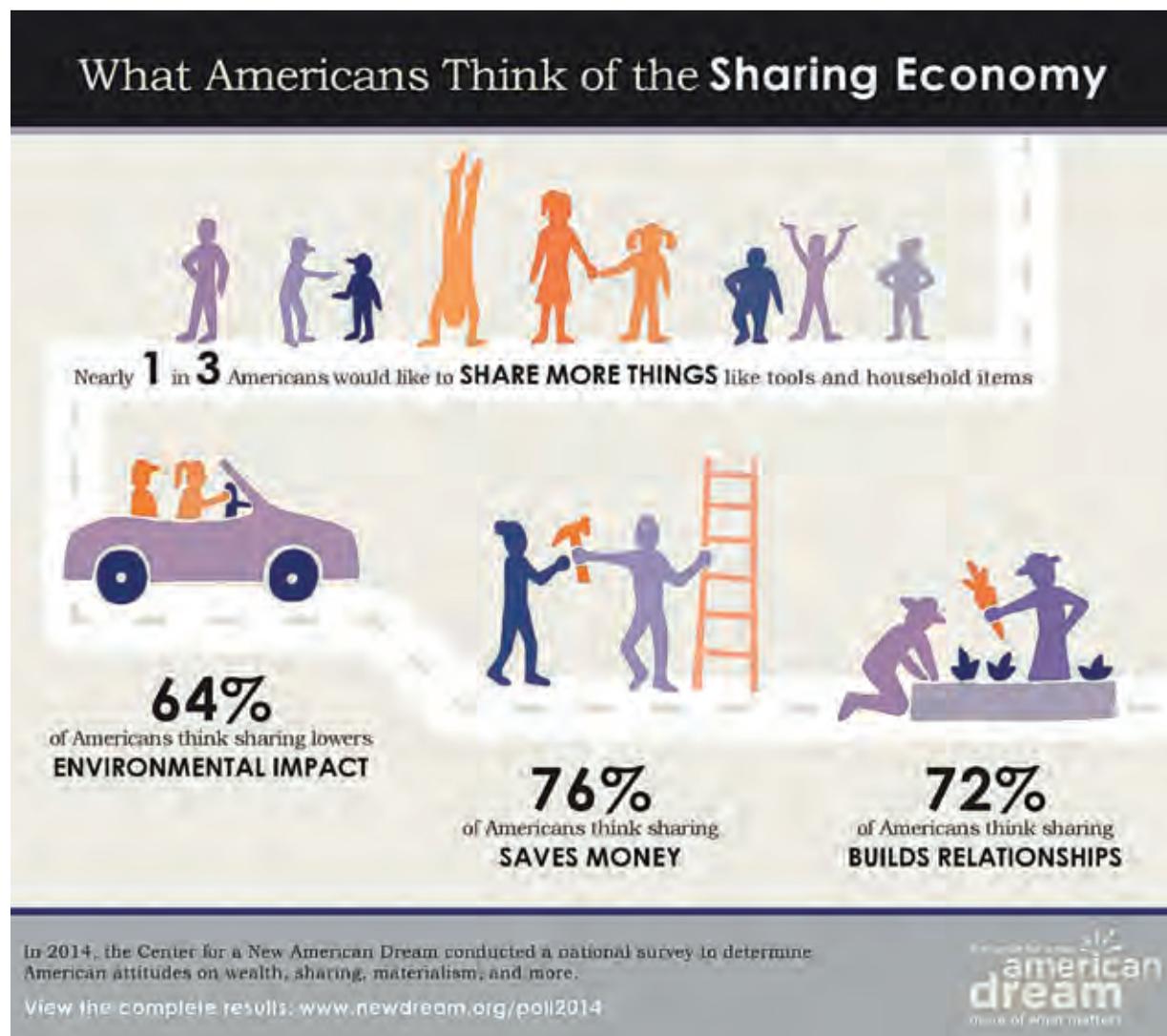
of great importance to this former History major.

Forestbound has grown into a company known for its durable, hand-made utilitarian bags, but Alice Saunders hasn't forgotten why she began making the bags in the first place. Every bag has its own story made from its own unique materials, just like every soldier has his or her own story. Alice Saunders has found a way to use her passion and talent to repurpose old materials and share a different story of history with every one of her customers.

Learn more about Forestbound at www.forestbound.com.



Photos courtesy of Forestbound.com



Don't store your old electronics!

We spend a lot of money on electronics. Maybe that is one of the reasons we tend to put them in storage rather than taking them directly to a recycler. However, electronics in storage aren't doing you or anyone else any good. Old electronics are readily recyclable. In some cases, working devices can be refurbished and sold to consumers. In others, materials are recovered from used electronics and recycled in the manufacture of new products. That sounds better than just leaving them stacked up in a corner or filling up a closet!

In Buncombe County, we accept TVs, computers, and other used electronics for recycling at the Buncombe County Landfill during our Friday-only collections for problem wastes and household hazardous waste. This program serves all residents and businesses in the county. You can be assured that electronics dropped off at the landfill are handled safely and recycled responsibly.

Old electronics will be accepted weekly beginning April 10, excluding Fridays around a holiday (no collections on May 22 or July 3). Electronics are only accepted on Fridays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at a special drop-off area at the landfill. At these Friday-only drop-offs, you can recycle televisions, computers, and other electronics. We will accept up to three televisions from RESIDENTS for free (unless stripped or broken); additional TVs

will be accepted at \$8 per plastic TV, \$10 per wooden console TV, and \$20 for stripped or broken TVs. We will also accept up to three computers for free from RESIDENTS; after that, there is a charge of 30 cents per pound. Proof of county residency is required. If you have questions, please call the landfill at 828-250-5462.

Businesses are permitted to recycle electronics and televisions at the landfill, but businesses will be charged fees at the rates outlined above. Businesses that wish to drop off electronics must call the Solid Waste Department at 828-250-5462 prior to arrival to make arrangements. To participate in this program, proof that your business is located in the county is required.



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Earth Day ... (Continued from Page 1)

at your local library is another great way to reuse.

You can also get creative, making something new from something old. An old T-shirt can be turned into a new shopping bag. Empty cereal boxes can be covered to become magazine holders, and salt boxes can be turned into matching pen and pencil cups. Search online for "recycled crafts" and you'll find all sorts of clever ideas.

If you have working, usable items that you no longer need, sell them at a garage sale, through classified ads (in the newspaper or online), or to a secondhand store. Don't want to bother with selling items? Give them away through an online program like Freecycle or donate them to Goodwill, the Salvation Army, or the Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

Reduce Waste

Reducing waste takes a little bit of planning. For example, cooking more food from fresh ingredients can reduce packaging waste, as can growing your own food in a garden. Eating out less can limit the number of carry-out containers you bring home. These habits can also save you money and create a healthier lifestyle.

When you shop, do you remember to carry a reusable bag into every store? Maybe you are remembering them at the grocery store, but what about the drugstore or a clothing store? Rather than trying to decide what to do with all of those store bags, carry your own.

Paper has two sides. Are you using them both? In your printer, select two-sided printing or use the back side of paper for printed drafts and handwritten notes. Do you think before you print and remember to choose only the pages you need? When you use less paper, you also use less ink—and that can lead to big savings.

Get creative and think of more ways you can reduce waste in your everyday life!

Save Energy

In 2015, everything seems to use power. However, there are easy ways to conserve power. Did you know that power adapters use electricity when nothing is plugged into them? Pull the plug and save. Electronics in sleep mode also draw electricity, so either unplug them when they are not in use or plug them into a power strip which you can turn off. Energy-efficient light bulbs (compact fluorescents or LEDs) also save energy, and no matter what kind of bulbs you use, remember to turn off lights as you leave the room.

You can also try to do more activities that don't require much, if any, energy: read a used or borrowed book, go for a bike ride, or take a walk in the park. Spending more time enjoying the Earth is good for the environment and you!

To learn more about Earth Day and what you can do, check out www.epa.gov/earthday, www.earthday.org, or www.ashevillegreenworks.org.

DROP-OFF RECYCLING OPTIONS

Buncombe County Landfill Convenience Center



Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

From I-240 East or West, take Exit 4A to 19/23 North. Travel 1 mile and then take UNC-A exit. At the end of the exit, turn left. Go to traffic light and turn right onto 251 North. Continue on 251 North for 9 miles to Panther Branch Road. Turn right onto Panther Branch Road and travel 1/10 of a mile to the Buncombe County Landfill, which is located on the right. The new landfill is 6 miles north of the old landfill.



85 Panther Branch Road, Alexander
828-250-5462

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.;
Saturday, 8 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

Buncombe County Transfer Station Convenience Center



Directions to the Transfer Station:

From I-240, take exit 1B (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. Turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left. From I-40, take exit 47 (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. After crossing I-240, turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.



191 Hominy Creek Road, Asheville
828-250-6205

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.;
Saturday, 8 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Mobile Home Removal/Environmental Control – Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Junk Yards/Junk Cars – Geoff Noblitt	828-250-4847
Bioreactor Manager – Kristy Smith	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station	828-250-6205
Waste Pro – Residential Trash Pick-up	828-684-7790

Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents

Asheville City Sanitation – Trash Pick-up	828-259-5857
Curbside Management – Recycling	828-252-2532



We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department
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www.buncombecounty.org

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