

A Quarterly Newsletter Of

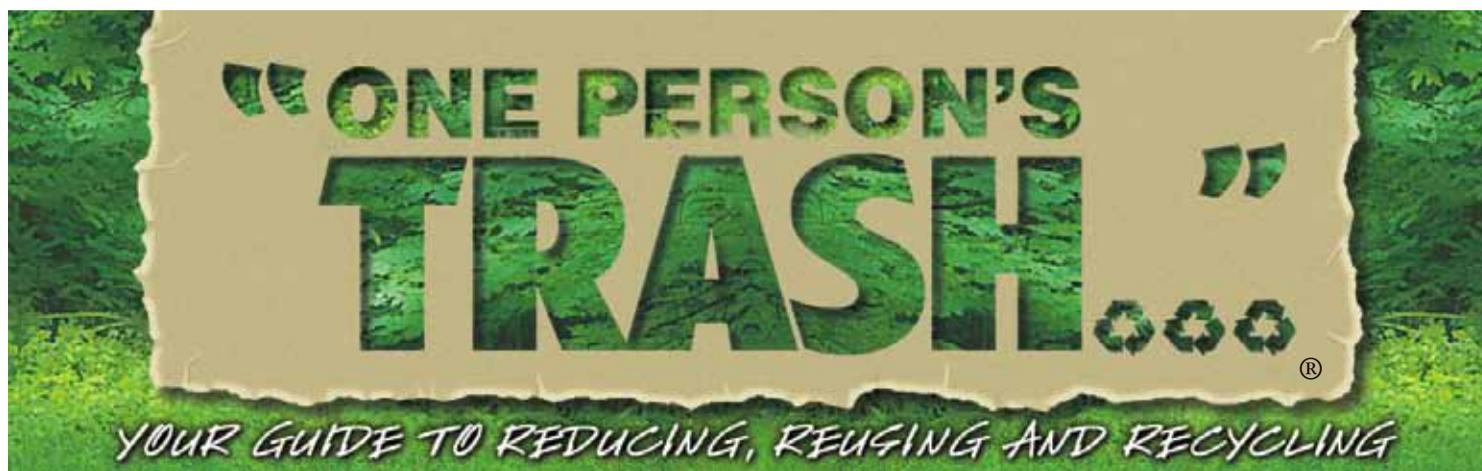


Buncombe County Solid Waste Department

828-250-5460

www.buncombecounty.org/green

Spring 2010



Pick It Up!

Litter doesn't fall from the sky. All litter began its life in someone's hand. Whether it is a sandwich wrapper, a disposable drink cup, a bag of trash, or an old couch, someone had to handle it before it ended up in the wrong place—along our roadways, near our streams and riverbanks, floating in our lakes and ponds, or blowing around our neighborhoods, parking lots, and playgrounds.

Sometimes people aren't careful enough with waste. For example, someone might drop a wrapper and not stop to pick it up. People might forget to cover their trash containers on a windy day, or trash may blow out of the car in a parking lot. But, at other times, people litter on purpose by throwing bags of trash into roadside ditches or dumping old furniture on vacant lots.

Whatever the source, the result is the same—litter along our roads and in our waterways. Recently, Keep America Beautiful completed the largest litter study ever conducted in the United States. They found that at least 51.2 billion pieces of litter are left on U.S. roadways annually, an average of 6,729 pieces of litter per mile! Those numbers don't even include litter along and in our waterways, in vacant lots, on private property, and in parks and playgrounds. The direct costs associated with litter, including damage to property, cleanups, and disposal, are at least \$11.5 billion each year!

However, just as litter begins in someone's hand, it can end there. Be sure to do your part and set a good example. If you drop something on the ground, stop and pick it up. Dispose of it in a trash can or recycling bin. Be sure that your trash containers are covered or packed and that your blue recycling bags are tied shut so that paper, plastic, and other items cannot easily fall out or blow away. And, please, don't ever dump trash, bulky items, or recyclables where they don't belong, especially on the ground!

You can also lend a hand. Take part in our spring litter sweep, "Pick It Up," which runs from April 17 to May 1. Organize a litter cleanup

at a park, at your child's school, around your business, or in your neighborhood. Pick a day and invite others to volunteer. Buncombe County Solid Waste will supply trash bags, gloves, and safety vests, so gather your favorite group and "Pick It Up" this spring. If you collect three bags of trash, you'll receive a free Buncombe County Green T-shirt. For details, call Jane Cole at 250-5472 or Rick Ramsey at 250-5471.

The spring litter sweep is co-sponsored by Buncombe County Solid Waste and the Asheville GreenWorks' Great Asheville Buncombe Cleanup, which runs for the entire month of April. Visit www.ashevillegreenworks.org.

Recycling Reminder

If you receive curbside trash and recycling collection from Waste Pro, Buncombe County's new residential franchise hauler, **please make sure that blue bags of recyclables are placed beside garbage bags or cans and set out only on the day of pickup.** Also, make sure that blue bags are not placed inside the garbage cans.

Recycling carts and containers may be leased from Waste Pro for an additional cost. For an 18-gallon plastic recycling



bin, the cost is \$0.35 per month, and for a 64-gallon recycling cart the cost is \$3 per month. These fees

would be added to your monthly bill. Blue bags may be purchased at local grocery and department stores in Buncombe County.

No matter which type of container you use, you can recycle all plastic bottles and jugs, aluminum and steel beverage and food cans, glass bottles and jars, newspaper, corrugated cardboard, and mixed paper.

Say goodbye to an abandoned mobile home near you!

Buncombe County currently sponsors a program to remove abandoned, dilapidated, or unused mobile homes. The costs to remove the mobile home(s) are covered by the county. This program is free to Buncombe County property owners. Our goal is to help citizens of the county remove unwanted mobile homes in a responsible and non-polluting manner while helping to eliminate and improve blighted areas.

If you own or are aware of a mobile home in your area that appears to be abandoned, dilapidated, or unwanted, please contact Roger Presley at Buncombe County Solid Waste, 250-5470.



The grass is always greener

Spring is here. No doubt you've pulled out the lawnmower, or at least thought about it. As you begin another mowing season, it's time to think about "grass-cycling."

Grasscycling is the habit of letting your grass clippings drop back onto the lawn as you mow. Instead of picking up clippings with the mower's bagging attachment, you allow them to stay on the grass. These short clippings decompose quickly. As a result, the clippings, which are about 80% water, provide your lawn with needed moisture. Grass clippings also contain nitrogen, a fertilizer that your lawn needs. When you grasscycle, your lawn is able to produce and consume some of its own "homemade" fertilizer, reducing the amount of fertilizer that you will need to buy and apply.

In addition to helping water and fertilize your lawn, grasscycling also reduces your waste. When you leave clippings on the lawn, you have no clippings to bag, carry, or dispose. When you are done mowing, you are done with the work! And you'll be done more quickly, too. Grasscycling takes about one-third less time than mowing and bagging.

You don't need a mulching mower to grasscycle. Any mower can become a mulching, or grasscycling, mower. Simply remove the bagging attachment. If the bagger on your mower attaches to the back of the mower, be sure that the discharge chute is covered after you remove the bag. You may need to insert a "chute cover." If you have a side discharge mower, you won't need to do anything more than remove the bagger.

No matter what kind of mower you use, you should be "trimming" your grass. In other words, give it regular trims, not one big "haircut." Each time you mow, you should trim the top one-third or less off your lawn. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. The small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. If you chop off more than one-third in a single mowing, it is hard on the grass plants and you leave behind long clippings that take longer to break down.

If you grasscycle most of the time and bag occasionally, remember that you can use grass clippings as mulch around plants or add them to your compost pile or bin.



Earth Day: A History

You'll hear a lot about Earth Day over the next month because 2010 marks the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day. On April 22, 1970, about 20 million Americans gathered in their neighborhoods, hometowns, state capitols, and Washington, D.C. Events ranged from litter cleanups and tree plantings to demonstrations and "teach-ins" to increase environmental awareness and knowledge.

That first Earth Day was the culmination of efforts begun a century earlier and inspired by naturalists, such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. Early in the 20th century, the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service were founded, devoting themselves to protection of our public lands and natural heritage resources. In the 1920s, Marjory Stoneman Douglas began her work to save the Florida Everglades. The storms of the 1930s that caused the Dust Bowl in the Great Plains led to conservation efforts on farm and ranch lands. In 1948, the first piece of legislation that regulated water quality, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, was passed by Congress. In 1953, Keep America Beautiful was founded, largely to address the eyesore and hazards of roadside litter. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, sounded the alarm about the effects of pesticides on wildlife, as well as humans.

In 1963, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson accompanied President John F. Kennedy on a speaking tour focused on environmental concerns. After President Kennedy's death, Nelson continued to work on the issue, but the next six years were consumed by other priorities.

Then, in 1969, three things occurred that got the nation's attention. In early January, Americans got their first glimpse of the earth as seen from space in photos



Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, exposed the risks associated with certain pesticides, some of which were banned less than a decade later.

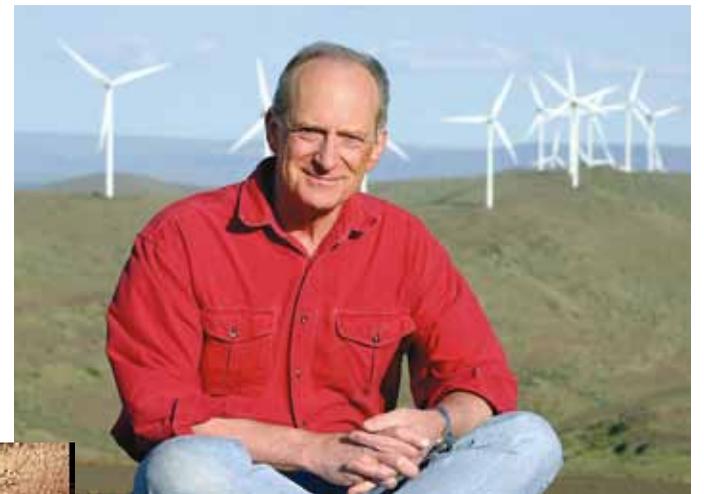
(Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

taken by the Apollo space crew. In late January, an oil spill fouled the California coast near Santa Barbara. In June, a chemical fire on Cleveland's Cuyahoga River received national media coverage. In 1969, the "enough is enough" moment occurred and Americans mobilized.

Senator Nelson realized that the time was right to put the environment at the top of the national agenda. He enlisted the help of graduate student Denis Hayes and planning got under way. When Earth Day rolled around, even the organizers did not anticipate how large the crowds would be or how passionate the voices. Within a year, President Richard Nixon had established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Congress had passed the Clean Air Act, and that was only the beginning.

The work begun by Earth Day continued in the years that followed. In 1990, on the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, more than 200 million people in over 140 countries took part. In recent years, those numbers have continued to grow, with more than a billion people now taking part in annual celebrations, activities, and initiatives.

The motto of Earth Day is "Make Every Day Earth Day." By continuing our efforts to improve the environment in big and small ways, we are making every day and every year one for the earth and all of its inhabitants.



Denis Hayes was a graduate student when he agreed to work with Senator Gaylord Nelson to organize the first Earth Day. (Photo Courtesy of Zeitgeist Films)



This hillside dump was photographed in 1972 as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Documerica" project, which was intended to capture images of environmental problems. (Photo by Gene Daniels, courtesy of U.S. EPA)

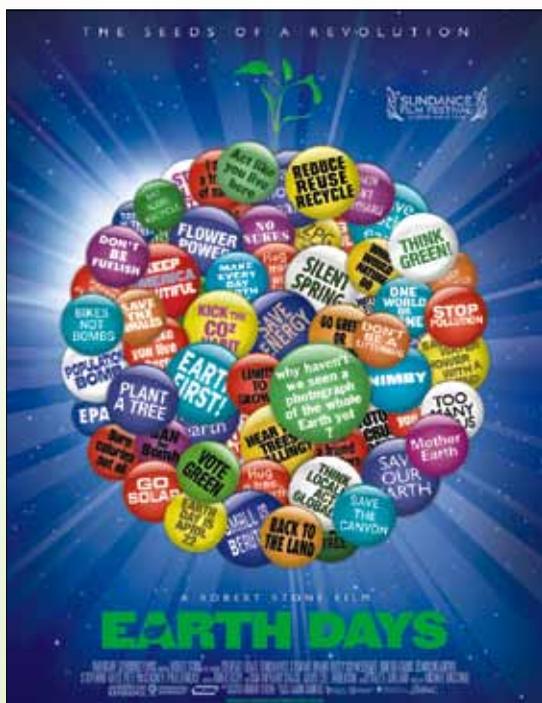
Read more about it!

Earth Day
www.earthday.net

Apollo 8's "Earthrise" Photo
www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_102.html

Cuyahoga River Fire
www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2009/06/cuyahoga_river_fire_40_years_a.html

Santa Barbara Oil Spill
www.dailynexus.com/article.php?a=16459



Earth Days

Last year, a documentary, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution," opened at the Sundance Film Festival. The film traces the beginnings of the modern environmental movement through the first Earth Day and the actions that followed. The documentary will air on "American Experience" on PBS on April 19 and will be available on DVD after that.

To learn more, visit www.earthdaysmovie.com or www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/earthdays/.

FAST FACTS

Cook, clean, deodorize

What gives lift to your homemade cookies, creates a soothing paste for a sunburn, deodorizes your fridge, and cleans your bathroom? Baking soda, of course! Baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate, is a leavening agent used in baking, but it is also so much more.

Baking soda mixed with dish soap makes a versatile cleaning scrub. Mixed with white vinegar, baking soda can be used as an all-purpose cleaner. Baking soda can help deodorize trash cans, garbage disposals, laundry, gym bags, tennis shoes, cat litter boxes, hampers, and other smelly items. A paste made from baking soda and a small amount of water can soothe skin irritations caused by sunburn or insect bites.

For more baking soda solutions, go online and search for "baking soda solutions" or check out *Baking Soda Bonanza* by Peter A. Ciullo or *Green Up Your Cleanup* by Jill Potvin Schoff.



Green @ Home

Looking for ways to "green" your home? Whether you want to reduce your energy use, conserve water, choose environmentally friendly materials and products, reduce your waste, or protect your health, you'll find suggestions at www.epa.gov/greenhomes. Find specific ideas for each area of your home with the room by room feature.

Spring reading, naturally

As the temperatures warm, you may be looking forward to more time outdoors. Your plan may be to garden, bike or walk, or simply sit and enjoy the spring breezes and sunshine. Consider a trip to the library (or used bookstore), too. Nothing is finer than reading a good book outdoors on a warm spring day.

If you love nature, consider some classics. *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* by Annie Dillard will have you ready to do some exploration of your own. Are you itching to travel? Pick up *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* by Bill Bryson. As two middle-aged men set out to hike the Appalachian Trail, you'll find humor and awe. Maybe it is the desert landscape that fires your imagination. Look for *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey or *The Land of Little Rain* by Mary Austin. More

of a beach person? Track down a copy of *The Outermost House: A Year of Life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod* by Henry Beston. You might also look for works by John Muir, John McPhee, Gary Snyder, and Maxine Kumin, among others.

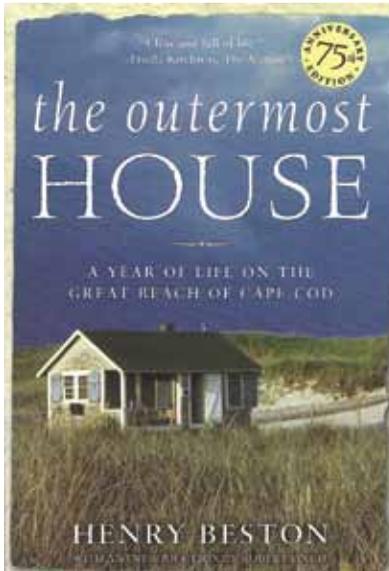
If you prefer your nature closer to the local coffee shop, look for *City Wilds: Essays and Stories About Urban Nature*, edited by Terrell F. Dixon. *City Wilds* celebrates the natural world that

is closest to home for many Americans.

Perhaps you are interested in how we form communities. A National Science Foundation study in 2007 found that as many as one quarter of Americans have no one to confide in or celebrate with. In *Population: 485 – Meeting Your Neighbors*

One Siren at a Time, Michael Perry writes of returning to his hometown and joining the volunteer fire department. One emergency call at a time, he connects with his neighbors and explores the place where he grew up with new eyes. In *Less Is More: Embracing Simplicity for a Healthy Planet, a Caring Economy, and Lasting Happiness*, edited by Cecile Andrews and Wanda Urbanska, the authors ostensibly address how to embrace a simpler lifestyle. However, their real concerns seem to be how we find and maintain more enriching relationships. The reader is challenged to ask the question, "What do I have to offer?"

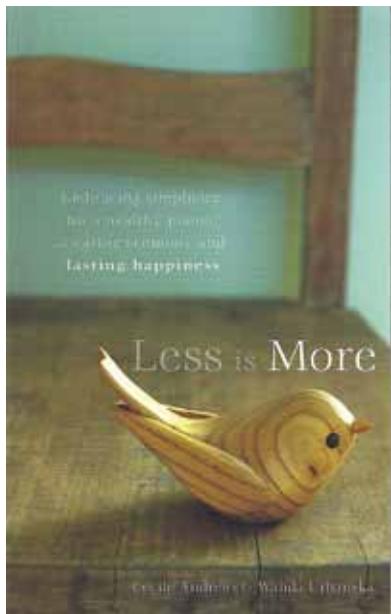
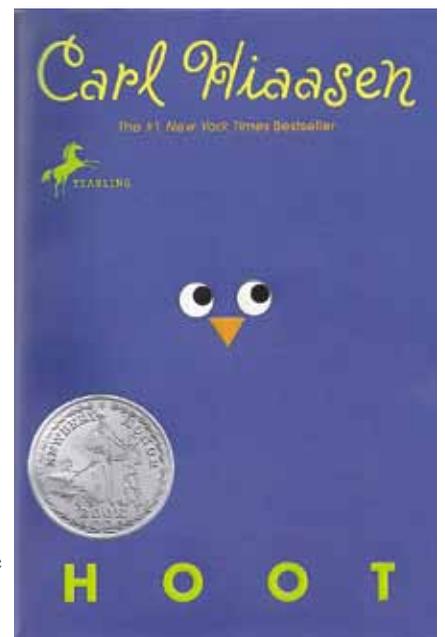
If you have children in your life, check out *Get Out! 150 Easy Ways for Kids & Grown-Ups to Get into Nature and Build a Greener Future* by Judy Molland. This book is full of ideas to get families and groups outside where they will learn about nature as they enjoy it.



Sharing books with young people builds relationships and improves their reading skills. For wonderful books about the natural world, look for Lynne Cherry's books, such as *The Armadillo from Amarillo* or *The Sea, the Storm, and the Mangrove Tangle*; *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* by Chief Seattle, illustrated by Susan Jeffers; and *Just Us Two: Poems About Animal Dads* by Joyce Sidman. Encourage young gardeners with *The Empty Lot* by Dale H. Fife, *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart, *A Handful of Dirt* by Raymond Bial, and Lorraine Roulston's series on Pee Wee, the worm. For the slightly older crowd, suggest a simple chapter book, such as *Judy Moody Saves the World* by Megan McDonald.

Pre-teens can be a harder group to please. Get them excited about the environment with Carl Hiaasen's eco-thrillers: *Hoot*, *Flush*, and *Scat*. In these books, youth find—and find ways to solve—environmental problems created by adults.

Obviously, there are many more great books for children, teens, and adults. Take advantage of that reuser's paradise—the local library—and enjoy good reading with the good weather!



What a week!

In the week before Earth Day each year, students and teachers are invited to explore the natural world during National Environmental Education Week. Environmental education isn't just for the science classroom, but can include activities in social studies, language arts, math, art, music, and more. Environmental education gets students excited because they get involved in real-world problem solving.

There are many ways for students and teachers to take part in Environmental Education Week, beginning with incorporating environmental themes and topics into daily lessons. But the activities don't end there. Students can be encouraged to write conservation plans for home and school, audit energy and water use or trash disposal, set up a nature walk or scavenger hunt, take part in a litter cleanup, visit a local utility facility (power plant, water treatment plant, wastewater plant, recycling facility, etc.), start or expand a school recycling program, and much more. Get parent organizations and clubs into the act, as well!

Environmental Education Week 2010 is April 11-17. This year's focus will be on conserving water and energy to preserve our planet and save money. For more information, visit www.eeweek.org.



Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter.

Rachel Carson, 1907–1964
from *The Sense of Wonder*
American biologist

One Change

If you were going to make one change this month, what would it be? We have a suggestion! Purchase recycled-content trash bags and trash can liners. When you are at the store to buy trash bags and can liners, read the labels and look for phrases like "made with recycled content" and "made with post-consumer recycled content."

Don't forget reuse. Plastic shopping bags can be used as liners for small wastebaskets.



Transfer Station

The Transfer Station now accepts only residential household waste, which must be bagged. There is a fee for household trash disposal. The Transfer Station also accepts these recyclables at no charge:

- Newspaper and brown paper bags
- Mixed paper, including office paper and mail
- Magazines and catalogs
- Corrugated cardboard
- "Blue Bag" or co-mingled recyclable containers, including #1 PETE and #2 HDPE plastic bottles and jugs; aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass; and steel cans
- Lead-acid batteries
- Appliances

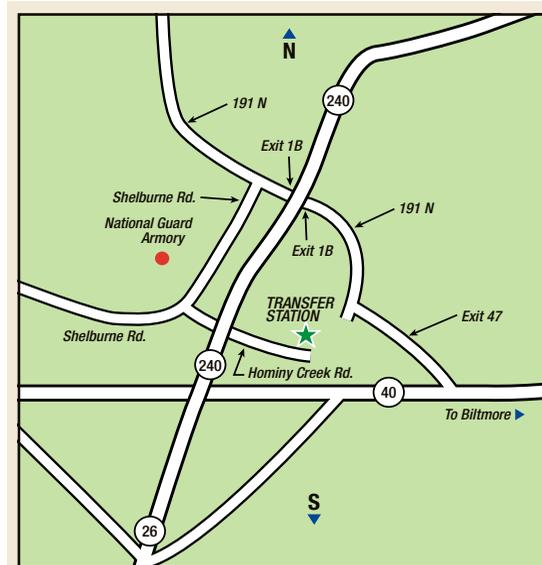
In addition, you can drop off reusable corrugated moving boxes and shipping cartons for reuse. (Please break down and flatten the boxes.) We also accept medical equipment, such as wheelchairs

and crutches, for reuse. Plus, Buncombe County residential households can drop off "sharps," such as needles and lancets; however, **NO BUSINESSES OR MEDICAL FACILITIES** are permitted to use the sharps disposal area at the Transfer Station. Please place sharps in an approved sharps container (available at pharmacies) or in a sturdy, thick-walled plastic jug with a secured lid or taped closed and labeled SHARPS.

The Buncombe County Transfer Station's hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

All other garbage items, bulky waste, construction and demolition debris, mattresses, wood, and other oversized items will need to be disposed of at the Buncombe County Landfill.

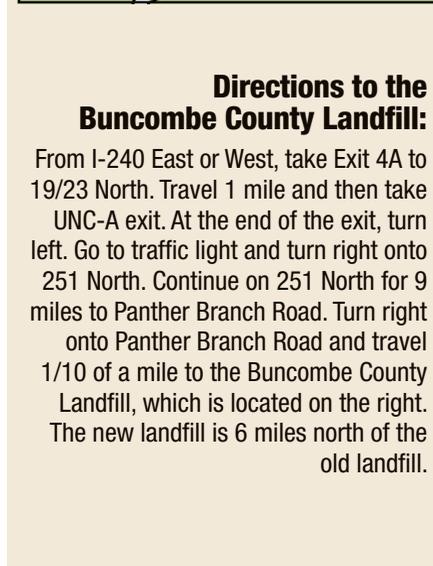
If you have questions, call the Transfer Station at 250-6205.



Directions to the Transfer Station:

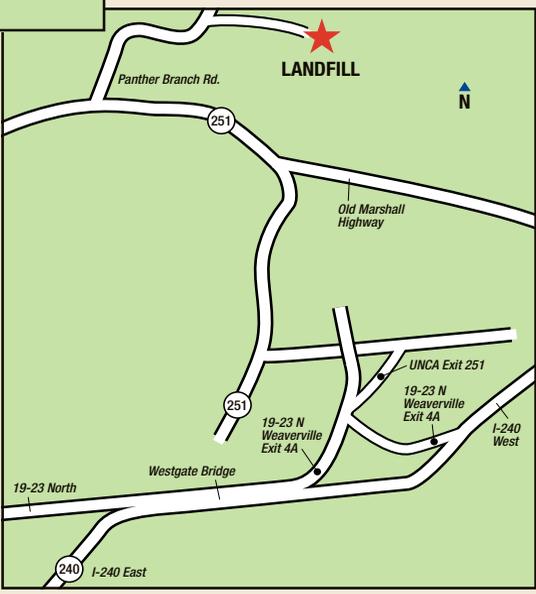
From I-240, take exit 1B (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. Turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.

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.



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.



Landfill

You can drop off all of these items for recycling at the Buncombe County Landfill at no charge:

- Newspaper and brown paper bags
- Corrugated cardboard
- "Blue Bag" or co-mingled recyclable containers: aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass bottles and jars; steel cans; and plastic bottles only (milk jugs, soft drink bottles, laundry detergent jugs, and shampoo bottles)
- Lead-acid batteries
- Motor oil
- Oil filters
- White goods, including stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, and all metals
- Empty, triple-rinsed pesticide containers

- Empty propane tanks (20-pound, gas grill type ONLY)

You may also recycle tires. Each year, residents may recycle 10 tires without rims at no charge. There is a limit of four tires per visit. After that, tires may be recycled at \$2 per tire. All tires on rims (even the first 10) are \$2 per tire.

You can drop off household trash, as well as bulky waste, construction and demolition waste, and yard waste, at the Landfill. There is a fee to dispose of trash, bulky waste, and yard waste.

The Landfill is open to accept trash and recyclables Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

If you have questions, call the Landfill at 250-5462.

clip&save

Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Junk Motor Vehicle Officer – Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Mobile Home Removal – Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Environmental Control Officer – Rick Ramsey	828-250-5471
Environmental Control Officer – Jane Cole.....	828-250-5472
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

Friday-only collections at the Landfill

Buncombe County accepts household hazardous waste (HHW) and electronics every Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at a special drop-off area at the Landfill, excluding weeks with a holiday.

Each week, we accept electronics from residents at no charge, subject to a limit of 3 televisions or computers per month. Businesses are able to drop off electronics for a recycling fee, but special arrangements need to be made prior to acceptance. Contact the Solid Waste Department prior to arrival. Proof of County residency is required.

The following items must be separated out of loads and brought to the electronics recycling area. Remember, electronics are only accepted on Fridays!

- VCRs and DVD Players
- Copiers
- Fax Machines
- Telephones
- Stereos
- Calculators
- Cell Phones
- Video Cameras
- Televisions (limit 3 per month)
- Computers, such as monitors (limit 3 per month), CPUs, and keyboards
- Household Hazardous Waste

Household Hazardous Waste is also accepted on Fridays only. HHW includes:

- 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
- Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, motor oil, antifreeze, and lead-acid batteries – No Charge
- Rechargeable batteries, such as Nickel Cadmium, Nickel Metal Hydride, Lithium Ion, Nickel Zinc, and Small Sealed Lead batteries found in cordless power tools, cellular and cordless phones, laptop computers, digital cameras, two-way radios, camcorders, and remote control toys – No Charge for typical household quantities

No hazardous wastes from businesses will be accepted. Bio-hazardous materials, radioactives, and explosives are NOT accepted at any time.



Earth Day 2010

The Asheville Earth Day festival will take place on Saturday, April 17, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. in downtown Asheville at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The event will once again feature non-profits, green vendors, craft vending, and food from local and regional vendors, as well as some national and regional musicians. For more information, visit www.avleearthday.org/.



Medical Equipment Rescue Program

You can donate unneeded walkers, wheelchairs, canes, or crutches at the Buncombe County Landfill or the Transfer Station. Tell the scalehouse attendant that you want to participate in the Medical Equipment Rescue Program. The items will be placed in a storage building until enough equipment is collected for Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry Medical Clinic.



Attention, City of Asheville Residents!

If you live inside the city limits of Asheville and have questions about garbage or recycling pickup, please call Asheville City Sanitation at 259-5857.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

**Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department
81 Panther Branch Road
Alexander, NC 28701
828-250-5460
www.buncombecounty.org**

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