



Green Teams are Springing Up

Are you the one in your office who is constantly reminding your co-workers to recycle? Do you go around turning off computers at the end of the day? Do you want your workplace to be as green as you are? You're not alone.

In a survey commissioned by *National Geographic* magazine in February 2008, more than 80 percent of U.S. workers polled said they believe it is important to work for a company or organization that makes the environment a top priority. As a response, businesses are not only greening their operations and products, they are forming green teams to start recycling programs, reduce energy, form carpools and much more.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has had a "green" team since 1995. The DEP Green Team, originally known as the Pollution Prevention (P2) Work Group, recently changed its name to reflect its current mission implementing the Commissioner's Conservation Plan. The goals of the Plan are to reduce energy, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions and make DEP a model for other state agencies.

The Green Team is made up of volunteers from a cross-section of departments and jobs. They work very closely with the building manager and cleaning crew to ensure that the recycling, composting, and special projects, like building-wide cleanouts, run smoothly. The group meets monthly. Subcommittees work on specific projects such as getting the word out, purchasing environmentally preferable products, and DEP's ReSupply Center (see story on page 6). *Continued on page 2*



Food waste is composted and screened at the DEP headquarters.

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Over the years the group has been responsible for ensuring all kinds of recycling in the building and other environmental initiatives, such as sneaker and “techno trash” collections, pollution prevention fairs and more. This year, the group is celebrating the 11th year of composting food waste at the 79 Elm Street Hartford headquarters. Over 43 tons of food waste have been diverted from the trash during this time, providing finished compost for gardens at Connecticut’s state parks. The Green Team encouraged the department to join the Northeast States Electronics Challenge, refreshing its old computers with over 700 “green” computers that meet the Silver EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) rating.

Another example of a green team is the Conservation Committee at Cartus Corporation, a worldwide company specializing in global employee relocation and workforce development solutions, based in Danbury, Connecticut. The Conservation Committee, along with an Executive Team, spearheaded employee involvement in NuRide, a carpooling program that helps locate other carpooling partners statewide and awards points redeemable for gift certificates at retail stores and restaurants like Home Depot and Applebee’s.

“Not only has this program become popular due to the ongoing gas price increases but many of our employees are also very environmentally conscientious and appreciate Cartus’ desire to help the environment,” said Debbie Smith, facility director for the Danbury firm.



Green Team member Susan Amarello and Deputy Commissioner Amey Marella cut the ribbon at the grand opening of DEP’s ReSupply Center.

Want More Information?

DEP’s Green Team:
mary.sherwin@ct.gov
or (860) 424-3246.

Carpooling:
www.nuride.com

Northeast States Electronics
Challenge:
www.nerc.org

Recycling and Composting:
www.ct.gov/dep/recycling

“In addition to commuting, Cartus’ Conservation Committee is continuing to look at environmentally-friendly products and services to utilize at our offices worldwide,” she added. “For example, the Committee has worked with the company’s food services provider to use green products, with the facilities group to utilize energy saving light fixtures, and with electrical and air conditioning vendors to reduce energy costs throughout the site.”

But green teams are not just for businesses. Cities and towns are convening Green Task Forces, hospitals are hosting farmers markets, and youth in middle and high schools are getting organized around river clean-ups, inkjet cartridge collections and sponsoring annual Tag (“Reuse”) Sales. Farmington’s Irving Robinson Middle School has even created an “enviromusical” and is also promoting awareness of depleted fisheries to area restaurants.

So, if you want to bring more environmental awareness to your workplace, consider forming a green team. Mary Sherwin, one of the co-chairs of DEP’s Green Team advises, “Start small. Don’t try to tackle everything at once. Get management support and celebrate your success.”



Wind Projects Blowing into Connecticut

Public interest in energy issues has skyrocketed and there is a lot of talk these days about renewable energy being the way of the future. Connecticut has been investing in dozens of solar projects, but now wind power is also on the horizon, with three wind projects slated for the Connecticut shoreline, and more are being planned.

Wind turbines are used to generate electricity, much like the windmills of the past were used to supply power for farms. A turbine is mounted on a tower and uses propeller-like blades to catch the wind's energy and supply it to the power grid. The amount of energy that's produced depends on wind conditions, installation, elevation, and turbine design.

Connecticut's coast seems the perfect place to capture some of the wind's energy. Two projects in New Haven and one in Groton are testing that theory. The projects are at a New Haven printing plant (Phoenix Press), on Long Wharf, and at Grasso Technical High School in Groton. All of the projects will collect data on the ability of wind to provide power. The Phoenix project will feature a 151-foot, 100-kilowatt wind turbine sited at the convergence of the Quinnipiac and Mill Rivers and the mouth of the New Haven Harbor in Fair Haven. The three-blade turbine is expected to provide about one third of the printing company's power needs — around 165,000 kilowatts of electricity each year. After installation this September, it is expected that the turbine will save the company about \$65,000 per year in energy costs.

The Long Wharf project will be a smaller, 6-kilowatt turbine expected to provide about 5,500 kilowatts of electricity annually for the adjacent Schooner building. It will be placed atop a 90-foot tower on Long Wharf Drive. This project will test the effectiveness of smaller wind turbines.

The third wind turbine project, located at the Grasso Technical High School in Groton, was donated to the school by Groton Utilities. It was turned on in January and helps to power the school's greenhouse. The wind turbine provides 1.9 kilowatts of energy per hour at peak performance. The wiring of the turbine was completed by Grasso students under the

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Installation of wind turbine at Grasso Technical High School in Groton

Despite being "Green Energy,"

wind turbines are not an energy source completely free of natural resource impacts. Location, size, operating schedule, and design need to be carefully considered to reduce or eliminate these impacts. Turbines at high elevations or placed along key migratory corridors or near important migration stopover sites can result in high mortality for migrating birds and bats. In the Northeast region, the impacts to songbirds and bats such as the hoary bat and the red bat, both species of special concern in Connecticut, are often most significant. It is always important to consider many factors when deciding which green energy source — wind or solar — is best for a given location.

Lending a Hand to the Environment



How green is our valley? If you frequent the libraries of Middlesex County, it's becoming a shade greener!

Public libraries have always been a model for reducing, reusing and recycling. Instead of buying that best seller, you can borrow it; instead of owning that movie you'll watch only once, you can check it out from the library and watch it at home for free while saving gas and munching on your own much cheaper popcorn. Many libraries also sell used books — donated by patrons or taken from the library stacks — for a nominal amount.

In recent years, public libraries have undergone makeovers and expanded their roles in our communities. Internet access and a shaky economy have transformed them from quiet places for study and research to lively gathering spots.

So when the librarians from Middlesex County put their heads together about how to use a grant from Middlesex County Foundation, they came up with the "Greening Our Valley" program. Eileen Branciforte, director of the Cromwell Belden Library and co-chair of Greening Our Valley, describes it best: "I couldn't wait to work on this 'green' grant. Libraries have been recyclers — or loaners — of books since Benjamin Franklin's time! We always collaborate to save money. It just seems natural that public libraries, who serve everyone, are the perfect place to turn to make 'green' changes. We have the books, technology, and patronage to collectively make great changes in our environment."

Through the grant, 18 libraries in the county are providing free programs and activities about the environment. Geared to children and adults, recent programs have included a talk about biodiesel fuels at the Clinton library; "Caring for Small Fruits and Fruit Trees," at the East Haddam Library; and "Keep It Green," a book talk for ages 6-9 at the Belden Library in Cromwell, sponsored by the CT Humanities Council. The grant is for one year, but Eileen hopes that the libraries can find other funding to continue the program.

For more information, contacts, and a calendar of events, visit www.greeningourvalley.org.

Wind Projects *Continued from page 3*

direction of Jamie Lamitie. The monitoring of the electricity production and wind data is under the supervision of the Bio-environmental department head, Alex Pesarik. "Green" collar jobs are the way of the future and this provides hands-on experience to Grasso students. Governor Rell has issued Executive Order 23, declaring the importance of green collar jobs in Connecticut and is making an investment in training at Connecticut's technical high schools.

The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) plans to create a rebate program for wind energy and has initiated the Small Wind Turbine Demonstration Project to provide preliminary information. Three or four small wind projects will be developed in the upcoming months. As these and other wind projects move ahead in Connecticut, we will have better information to base future decisions on renewable energy sources for the state, including what resource trade-offs might be acceptable depending on the benefit these projects actually provide.

Want to Learn More?

<http://ctcleanenergy.com>
(type in "Small Wind Turbine"
in search block)

[www.nrel.gov/learning/
re_wind.html](http://www.nrel.gov/learning/re_wind.html)

Recycling Rundup

Swap and Shop



Mansfield residents can browse through the great finds at the town's swap shop.

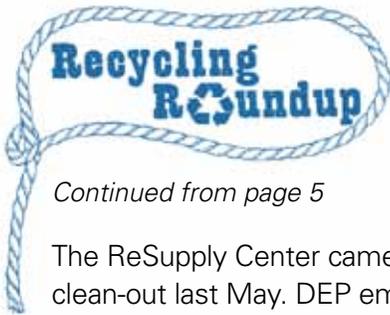
Especially with the current economy, more people are discovering that gently used items — from clothing to furniture to construction materials — are as good as new. When you choose “used,” you help to conserve natural resources and reduce the air, water and land pollution caused by manufacturing and shipping of new goods.

While yard sales, thrift stores and classified ads have been around a long time, the internet has opened new avenues for the consumer, businesses and institutions to get what they need or want at reduced cost — or even for free. Sites like **Freecycle.org**, **Reuseit.org**, **Craigslist.com**, **Ebay.com** and **sell.com** are loaded with items looking for a new home.

But there are other options for those of you who don't want to go on-line: local “reuse” stores that specialize in art supplies, sporting equipment, construction materials, and medical equipment. Your local transfer station may also have a swap shop where residents can drop off items that would have been thrown in the trash. If your town doesn't have one, consider asking them to start one. (See resources below for guidelines.) There are so many opportunities for buying used that you may find that you are making fewer trips to the mall. And then there's the excitement and satisfaction of the “hunt” — finding the bargain, a one of a kind thing or just what you were looking for while living a little more lightly on the earth.

Resources to Help You Get Started

- List of ReUse Centers and Material Exchanges: www.ct.gov/dep/recycle
- Tips for using Craigslist: planetgreen.discovery.com/work-connect/craigslist-work-green-life.html
- Reuseit Network: www.reuseitnetwork.org/us.htm
- Freecycle: www.freecycle.org/
- Setting up Swap Shops: cetonline.org/Publications/SwapDepotStarterKit.pdf
- How To Go Green Guide: planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/



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DEP's ReSupply Center

Need twenty folders for a workshop, or other office supplies? If you are a DEP employee, all you have to do is make a trip to the ReSupply Center in the basement level of the agency's headquarters and pick them up.

The ReSupply Center came about as a result of a major building-wide clean-out last May. DEP employees recycled literally tons of paper, but also collected hundreds of binders, thousands of paper clips and other office supplies, all in good condition. Members of the DEP's Green Team sorted and organized the supplies and created the Center.

The Center can save the State hundreds of dollars in new office supplies and eliminate the pollution caused by creating and transporting new supplies. Sherill Baldwin, one of the organizers of the Center, says, "Even your office can have its own version of the ReSupply Center. A centralized location makes it easy for staff to locate what they need because it is organized and all in one place."

Consider starting a ReSupply Center at your workplace. For more information, contact [Sherill Baldwin](#) at (860) 424-3440.



DEP employee "shops" for a binder at the ReSupply Center

What's **NEW** in P2?

CT Hospitals "Go Green" Forum

DEP's Office of Pollution Prevention presented at the Connecticut Hospital Association's (CHA) "Go Green Forum" held March 17 at the CHA offices in Wallingford. CHA chose the topic after hearing from their members that hospital employees want more environmental initiatives at their workplace. Employees who are recycling and using fewer toxic products at home also want their work environment to be more sustainable.

The forum gave hospitals that are just getting started with "going green" an opportunity to learn from other hospitals that are already well down that road: Bridgeport, New Milford, Hartford, St. Francis, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, and John Dempsey Hospitals shared their inspiring success stories about implementing green teams, increasing recycling, switching to environmentally preferable cleaning products, recycling construction debris, serving local food, and implementing energy efficient heating and cooling systems.

For more information about DEP's hospital initiatives and the CT Hospital Environmental Roundtable, visit www.ct.gov/dep/p2 or contact Connie Mendolia or Nan Peckham at (860) 424-3297.

A New Home for Used Sneakers



Do you have sneakers you no longer wear? If they are in good condition, consider donating them. If they are ready for the trash, just recycle them! The Nike ReUse a Shoe Program and the CT Recyclers Coalition (CRC) have partnered to collect the shoes for recycling into playground and all weather athletic surfaces. For a list of programs and collection sites, visit the CRC website at www.ctrecyclers.org/SneakerRecycling.html.

Ask Eartha

Dear Eartha:

I started using your recipes to make my own cleaning products and I really like the fact that they are made from simple ingredients and are safer for my family. (Editor's note: for Eartha's recipe card, go to the featured link at www.ct.gov/dep/p2) Then I started wondering about my laundry detergent. Are there ingredients to avoid, like phosphates?

Kathy C., Haddam, CT

Phosphates can cause blooms of algae in water bodies, which deplete sunlight and oxygen—killing fish and other aquatic life. Because of this problem, states and localities began limiting or restricting laundry-detergent phosphates and by the mid 1990s, detergent companies had voluntarily phased them out. (Note: Some automatic dishwashing detergents contain phosphates, so look for a brand without them.)

Today, laundry detergents do not contain phosphates, but most have surfactants to improve their cleaning power. Surfactants reduce the surface tension of water, allowing it to mix with oil and grease. Unfortunately this same property can make surfactants toxic to fish and aquatic life,

impairing their ability to get oxygen from the water.

There are safer surfactants that break down quickly to non-polluting compounds and help protect aquatic life in both fresh and salt water. However, nonylphenol ethoxylates, commonly referred to as NPEs, are an example of a surfactant class that does not meet the definition of a safer surfactant. When NPEs break down, they also act as endocrine disruptors that may affect male fish.

What Should I Look for?

Consider buying laundry detergents that do not contain NPEs. NPE is not usually listed in the ingredients but you can avoid it by not buying detergents that list nonionic surfactants on the label.

For a review of six green laundry detergents go to www.grist.org/article/its-a-wash/.

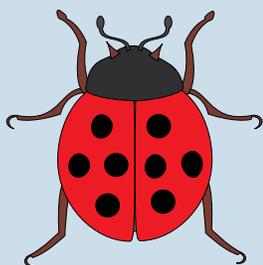
Eartha answers selected environmental questions. Email your question to judith.prill@ct.gov and watch future issues for your answer.



Be wary of vague claims, such as "natural," "green" or "biodegradable." The terms should be more specific (e.g., biodegrades in 30 days). Many products claim they are biodegradable but in fact they contain petroleum-derived agents that would take an extremely long time to biodegrade.

Avoid synthetic fragrances, dyes and optical brighteners. Many of the chemicals making up these compounds have been shown to have negative environmental and health effects. For example, synthetic fragrances contain phthalates which have been shown to act as endocrine disruptors and VOCs that contribute to air pollution.

Buy concentrated or in bulk. This saves resources by reducing packaging and energy used for shipping.



Few foods are as healthy and delicious as those fruits and vegetables picked fresh from your own garden. As any gardener knows, growing your own food can be challenging at times. Which varieties grow best in Connecticut? How can insects and diseases be identified and controlled? When is the best time to harvest? The University of Connecticut's Home and Garden Education Center can help with your food growing questions. Call toll-free at 1-877-486-6271 or visit www.ladybug.uconn.edu.



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P 2 C A L E N D A R

A SELECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

May 16, 2009

Solar Home Tour

Norfolk, Falls Village and Canaan, CT

Visit homes with passive solar, solar hot water and solar electric technologies, geothermal energy, radiant floor heating and a variety of unique energy-efficient conservation systems. Sponsored by People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE) and the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCFE). Tour information: (860) 693-4813, or www.pace-cleanenergy.org.

May 30, 2009

**Backyard Bins and Wiggly Worms
 Common Ground Environmental
 Education Center, New Haven**

Learn how to set up a backyard compost bin, what to put in it, and how to manage it. Participants can also observe and learn about our on-site worm bins (vermicomposting) and take home information and resources for starting their own worm family. For more information:

www.commongroundct.org/for_the_community.php
 or call (203) 389-4333 ext. 209.

June 13, 2009

CT NOFA Garden Tour

Various locations in Connecticut

Visit a number of gardens, from completely established organic gardens and landscapes, to transitioning gardens and gardens in progress. They will include flowers, shrubs, herbs and vegetables in the landscape. For more information: www.ctnofa.org or call (203) 888-5146.

Spring - Fall 2009

**Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collections
 Various locations throughout Connecticut**

Dispose of your unwanted HHW in an environmentally safe manner. HHW items include oil-based paints, thinners, pool chemicals, pesticides, mercury fever thermometers, and gasoline. For a collection schedule, visit www.ct.gov/dep/recycle (click on "Household Hazardous Waste") or contact your town's public works department.

Get Outdoors for the Great Park Pursuit — www.nochildleftinside.org