National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

EPN
Environmental Purchasing in NPS

Issue 9
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IN THIS ISSUE

EPN: Environmental Purchasing in NPS

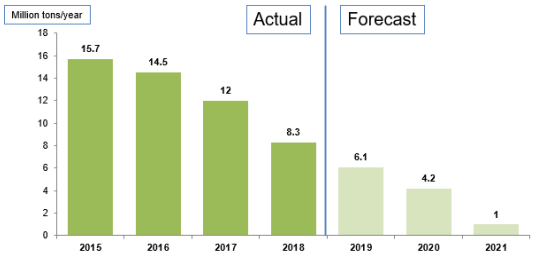
The Environmental Purchasing Newsletter (EPN) aims to keep NPS park staff up to date on the latest environmental purchasing strategies in the National Park Service as well as the latest in industry news and trends. Because environmental purchasing is inextricably linked with solid waste, this newsletter also explores solid waste management topics and strategies.

The EPN August 2020 Edition includes an update on the status of recycling markets, including international recycling import bans and how recycling can be a tool for local economic development; a focus on plastic pollution, exploring both the impact of microplastics and municipal legislation to address plastic pollution; how parks can advance environmental purchasing and solid waste management programs through youth engagement and partnerships; critical information for implementing green cleaning programs in the age of the coronavirus, how the coronavirus is impacting the clean economy, and how employees can reduce their environmental impact while teleworking; and more.

Update on the China Recycling Ban & Exports in Other Countries

Just over two years ago, China implemented a national policy ("National Sword") that significantly reduced contamination limits and banned the importation of most plastic, paper, and other mixed waste. At the time, China was accepting two thirds of global plastic waste; one year later, **plastic imports were down 99%** and **paper imports were cut in half**.

US Recovered Paper Exports to China



Slide from National Park Service Webinar. Slide credit: Dan Gee, Senior Associate, Moore & *Associates*

A total ban of all imported paper is expected by January 2021. This policy created cascading effects on global waste management, and countries are struggling to adapt. Following China's ban, additional countries including Malaysia, Taiwan, and India have implemented their own bans due to the impact of increased volume of imported recyclable materials on their infrastructure. To date, Malaysia, Taiwan, and India have implemented bans, Indonesia will no longer accept contaminated imports, and Thailand announced a ban that will begin by 2021.

As a result of these bans, countries who previously exported recyclables have turned to using alternative options such as landfilling and dumping recyclable material within their borders. When these materials, particularly plastic, are disposed rather than recycled, they often become pollution that contaminates ecosystems. Some countries have turned to incineration, but that can create toxic byproducts. Is there a better solution?

With crisis there also comes opportunity—the global waste market is projected to be **worth $530 billion by 2025**, meaning there is a financial motivation for countries willing to invest in the future of waste. Malaysia and Indonesia have plans to expand their infrastructure based on the recent significant growth in their recycling and manufacturing industry. In the U.S., domestic demand for paper is growing and a dozen new containerboard and fiber pulp mill projects are underway. Like an old-growth giant falling to the forest floor, China's ban has caused devastating short-term consequences, but has left a new opportunity for others to grow into.

Recycling & Resource Recovery as a Tool for Regional Economic Development

The U.S. recycling industry contributes $110 billion annually to the economy, but only 35% of the total recyclable material in municipal solid waste is captured. What would the economic and environmental effects be if 100% of recyclable material were captured? With China's recent ban on importing waste, many organizations in the U.S. are scrambling to find alternative solutions at home. The EPA Sustainable Materials Management Web Academy recently hosted a **webinar** describing how increased recycling and resource recovery can be leveraged as a tool for economic development.

Three speakers shared the strategies and experience of their respective organizations.

- The **Upcyclers Network** is a newly formed non-governmental organization whose mission is to support the growth of the "waste as a resource" industry and unlock the value of recirculating recycled and recovered material back into our economy.
- The **Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC)** unites industry, government, and NGOs to promote sustainable recycling in the southeast U.S. and highlights the fact that the U.S. has a significant and growing recycling industry.
- The **California Association of Recycling Market Development Zones (RMDZ)** is implementing strategies to create jobs and reduce waste through sustainable domestic manufacturing.

There is a significant recycling industry in the U.S. that employs hundreds of thousands of workers, and Chinese companies recently have begun investing in and building new recycling facilities in the U.S. SERDC and RMDZ share some examples of effective policies and programs that promote improved resource recovery, such as

- recycling incentive fees,
- consumer education,
- extending producer responsibility,
- disposal bans, and
- engaging in economic development and efficiency initiatives.

Together, these speakers emphasize that reframing waste as a valuable resource and making resource recovery an economic development strategy can minimize waste and maximize economic value. Moreover, regional and public-private partnerships can pool resources and advance recycling efforts in concert and at scale.

Maximize Recycling Program Success through Contracts Management

With the China ban in full effect, global markets have changed the way parks have been able to recycle. Parks can adapt to the changing recycling markets by recognizing how the global market affects the park, determine what role the park plays in the recycling process, and find ways to change their current practices.

What Can Parks Do?

- **Emphasize quality through contract management.** Parks can improve recycling practices by continually communicating with recycling contractors to keep abreast of changes in the marketplace for recycling and collection programs and learn how the park can take action, such as reducing contamination rates. Parks can also improve procurement processes by considering purchasing environmentally sustainable products and buying less in the first place.

For more on changing recycling markets, check out the NPS webinar: **Changing Recycling Markets Webinar**.

How Coronavirus is Impacting U.S. Waste & Recycling Programs

From service disruptions to volume shifting, there is no doubt the coronavirus is impacting waste and recycling.

Check out WasteDive.com for new developments around the U.S. from temporary suspensions of recycling programs to changes to plastic bag bans.

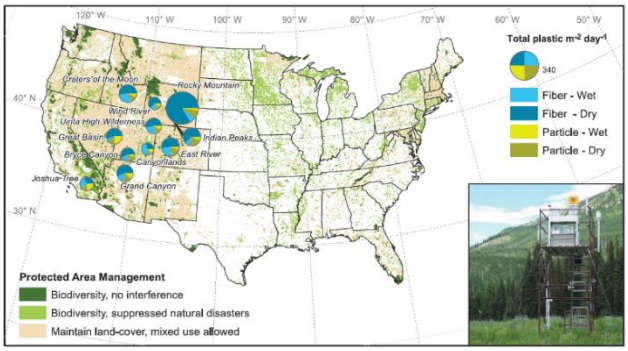
Microplastics: Not Just a Coastal Park Problem

The escalating ubiquity of microplastics and the negative impacts they have on the health of ecosystems and organisms have increasingly attracted national attention. These tiny plastic pieces (<5 mm long) can be consumed by organisms and cause digestive and reproductive issues, and even death. Common primary sources include microbeads found in cosmetics and cleaning solutions, and secondary sources include degraded straws, cigarette butts, textiles, and containers.

While the prevalence of microplastics in marine environments, such as in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, is well-established, less is known about their occurrence inland and in freshwater systems.

The Snake River winds nearly 1,100 miles through the Northwest U.S. before feeding into the Columbia River, which travels another 325 miles before emptying into the Pacific Ocean. A recent study published by the University of Wyoming investigated the prevalence of microplastics in the rivers—researchers found microplastics in 75% of grab samples and 93% of net samples. Sites with low flow, like reservoirs and dams, and areas further down river had the highest concentrations. The two areas with the highest concentration of microplastics were located in sparsely populated but agriculturally active areas; agriculture, as well as recreation and wastewater treatment plants, are common sources of microplastics (Kapp et al. 2018). The conclusions of the study were that more research is needed to determine how microplastics affect ecosystems, and that establishing baseline levels and monitoring them will be crucial to better understanding those effects.

However, what the study further demonstrates is that microplastics are not just a coastal park problem; inland parks, too, are experiencing microplastic pollution. In fact, **another study** found that extremely small microplastics sourced from garments like fleece can be carried by wind and rain for thousands of miles and have been found in numerous national parks, including Rocky Mountain National Park where microplastics were found at sites higher than 10,000 feet above sea level. It is worth noting that some microfibers are commonly used in outdoor gear and the use of such gear by park visitors may contribute to the prevalence of such material in parks. A recent **study in *Science*** looked at variations in plastic deposition rates across 11 protected areas and reported that over 1,000 metric tons of plastic are deposited on protected lands in the western U.S annually.



Average deposition rates of plastic fibers and particles to selected national parks and wilderness areas in the U.S. (*Science* 2020)

In the case of microplastics, prevention is easier than cleanup because a single item such as a plastic bag can degrade into thousands of pieces, compounding one piece of litter into an exponentially growing and dispersed challenge. By preventing pollution upstream and at the source, all parks can play a part in lessening the cumulative downstream effect and making the challenge manageable. Healthy rivers lead to healthy oceans.

Municipal Plastic Legislation

Some problems such as plastic pollution benefit from legislative measures to effectively address the root cause. A growing number of municipalities have taken the lead in the absence of state or federal guidance by passing legislation to ban plastic bags, incentivizing plastic alternatives, encouraging recycling, and other related efforts. For example, **Jackson, Wyoming**

banned single-use plastic bags in 2019 and Teton County and Grand Teton National Park (and its concessioners) quickly adopted the ordinance as well. Teton County even handed out thousands of free reusable bags as alternatives.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the enforcement of these legislative efforts difficult and has halted the legislative momentum—**at least four states and many municipalities have paused or waived their bans** during the pandemic, contributing to increased plastic bag contamination and reduced operational efficiencies at recycling facilities. Other issues have hindered municipal efforts, such as **Colorado's state preemption law**, which bans municipalities from banning plastic materials, limiting the abilities of municipalities to effectively address local plastic pollution.

Despite these obstacles, advocates remain optimistic and many municipalities are continuing to enforce plastic bag bans and supplemental efforts. Some jurisdictions are already beginning to re-prioritize plastic pollution efforts, such as Massachusetts which **lifted its ban on reusable shopping bags** effective July 10.

Recycling Hard-to-Recycle Items

Many materials are *technically* recyclable. In reality, however, recyclability depends on the right collection, sorting, and processing infrastructure and on whether there is an end market for the new product. Here, we use the example of uniform recycling to showcase how something that is not typically recycled—textiles—can be diverted from the landfill through creative thinking and collaboration.

Uniform Recycling

EPA estimated that in 2017, 16.9 million tons of textiles ended up in landfills. In an effort to reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, Wyoming's Teton County Integrated Solid Waste and Recycling (ISWR), which handles 90% of Grand Teton National Park's waste and recycling, has a textile recycling program for the park and community. Working in partnerships with local organizations, ISWR encourages residents to first consider donating gently used items to local thrift stores and resale/reuse organizations. When local donation sites are at capacity, ISWR collects the overflow materials and sends them through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Salt Lake City for distribution to the thrift stores throughout the region.

Many years ago, Grand Teton National Park staff created a uniform cache for employees to drop off or pick up NPS uniform components, instead of buying them new. Once a uniform has outlived its respectable life due to change in shields, styles, or it is too worn, the park must dispose of it. Since the textile recycling program started, the park has diverted from landfill 50 or more pounds of uniforms a year to ISWR. This program has been extremely successful in furthering the park and ISWR's mission to reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, while saving thousands of dollars in trash disposal costs. Look to see if your park has the resources to donate textiles nearby and don't forget to remove all NPS logos/shields!

Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is a great way to advance your park's environmental purchasing and solid waste management program. Here are some examples of youth engagement to inspire and provide ideas for how your park can engage with communities while reducing its environmental impact.

Junior Ranger Day Reusable Bag Project

In January of 2019, the town of Jackson, Wyoming passed an ordinance banning the free distribution of single-use plastic bags. Fifteen miles away in Grand Teton National Park, park concessioners and partners followed suit. To educate visiting and local school children during the park's Junior Ranger Day in June 2019, Grand Teton National Park had a station for kids to custom stamp their

own reusable bags. Using 100% recycled cotton bags, fabric paint, and stencils, they quickly went through 250 bags.

The "Make Your Own" reusable bags station for Junior Ranger Day. Photo credit: Margaret Wilson

Jackson Hole High School Students for Sustainability Club Creates Waste Reduction Initiative

During the 2019-2020 school year, the Students for Sustainability club (SFS) at Jackson Hole High School took on the initiative to reduce waste and bring awareness of the waste generated from cafeteria meals. Through the club's research, they discovered that every cafeteria in the Teton County School District utilizes single-use plastic utensils and paper plates. After surveying the student body in February, 25% of students consistently chose the single-use plastic option. In response, the SFS raised funds to purchase reusable forks needed to fully supply the cafeteria. With single-use plastic utensils being the norm for most students, the program organizers are hoping to expand their efforts to avoid hundreds of thousands of disposable utensils from entering landfills.

Teton County ISWR seeks to partner with the Teton County School District to continue the student-led sustainability initiatives established by the Jackson Hole High School for Sustainability. The plan will include the opportunity to engage more students in the Students for Sustainability club, encourage mentorship among participants, and foster long-term sustainability awareness goals through the school district with students of all ages.

Student leaders held a community-wide fundraiser to secure funds to purchase reusable utensils. Photo credit: Sienna Taylor, Sophie Parker, and Elsa Knoke, JHHS

Funding Recycling Projects through Partnerships

Private companies are increasingly directing resources to solving global waste management problems. In July 2020, **major brands renewed over $50 million in investments** towards recycling solutions and technological innovation. National parks are increasingly leveraging these private funding sources.

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park

Located in Atlanta's Sweet Auburn Historic District, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park is home to many significant sites associated with the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. The park **received a $10,000 donation** from ecoATM, a reCommerce company with a goal to provide a safe, convenient and environmentally friendly way to recycle electronic devices. This donation will contribute to the ongoing initiative to educate young people about the importance of recycling and help with property maintenance.

Judy Forte, Superintendent of Martin Luther King Jr. National Park and Tony Rome, marketing strategist for ecoATM, stand with donation check. Photo credit: Parker Owens for NewsOne

Green Cleaning in the Age of COVID-19

The NPS Sustainable Operations Branch hosted a **Coronavirus and Green Cleaning webinar** this spring to explore how parks are adapting green cleaning and environmental purchasing programs in the age of the coronavirus. The three speakers featured were:

- Dr. Jason Marshall, the cleaning lab director from the Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at the University of Massachusetts Lowell
- Eric Hatch from Signal Mountain Lodge, an NPS concessioner at Grand Teton National Parks
- Lorena Nelson, Custodial Supervisor at Indiana Dunes National Park

In case you missed it, check out the **Coronavirus and Green Cleaning webinar recording.** Below are several key takeaways and questions that came up during the webinar.

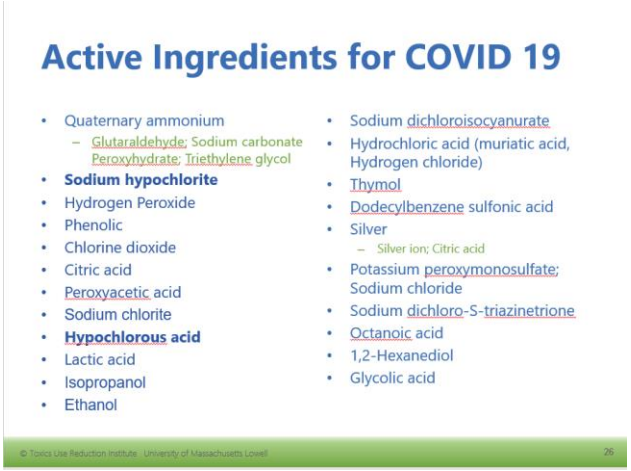
Key Takeaways

Green cleaners today are on par or exceed traditional products. The first green cleaners were hit or miss, which created a negative image for green products. Today, green cleaning products are much improved in quality and consistency.

There is a difference between cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and sterilizing. These terms exist on a spectrum, from cleaning, which removes dirt from a surface, all the way to sterilizing, which kills and deactivates all forms of life. A product may be marketed as a "sanitizer" but read the label closely to ensure the product substantiates that it does indeed sanitize.

You cannot disinfect a dirty surface. Soil renders disinfectants less effective because it hides the microbes, absorbs the active disinfectant ingredients, and changes the chemical nature of the disinfectant. All dirt, debris, and other organic matter should be removed from a surface so that the disinfectant can come into contact with and destroy the microbes.

It is crucial to train and communicate green cleaning practices. Parks should develop a strategy in conjunction with building owners, managers, and occupants and notify management of the chemicals being used so they can inform occupants with special needs or sensitivities. In addition, parks should provide employee training that is current and site-specific, in addition to annual trainings.



List of active ingredients for COVID 19. Slide credit: Dr. Jason Marshall, the cleaning lab director from TURI.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Are all chemicals listed on EPA's N list able to kill viruses?** All products on the N list should be effective for COVID-19. Testing with the COVID-19 strain has not been completed at this time, but these products have been proven effective for other CoV viruses.
2. **What about using an ozone solution against COVID-19?** Ozone solution has proven to be effective for SARS, a CoV strain, so this should be effective for COVID-19 but is not on the N-list at this time. Coronaviruses are classified as enveloped viruses, which are typically more susceptible to physio-chemical challenges and don't like being exposed to ozone.
3. **Is there a recommended laundry detergent for mop heads?** There is not a recommended product at this time, but the COVID-19 structure is easily broken down. Using an adequate detergent that breaks down lipids and fats should suffice.
4. **Please discuss the cooling off period before cleaning public restrooms. How long should you wait before entering the bathroom after someone has used it?** The virus can remain in the air and on surfaces for a long period of time, so that is a challenge. PPE is essential when stepping into these spaces. To prevent viruses from staying in these areas, it is recommended to have adequate ventilation, which helps increase air flow and lowers the likelihood of the virus lingering in spaces.
5. **Some parks are using a product called shockwave in backpacks or hand-held paint sprayer applicators. Any thoughts on this?** There are challenges with these cleaning systems. Surfaces must be cleaned prior to these systems being used. Although it seems like these processes are easy and safe, facility operators must perform a level of cleaning and sanitation before this system can be used.
6. **Is Clorox 360 used for just airborne cleaning and could this be effective for facilities?** This product is typically used for exam rooms and health facilities. There is a difference between public use clean and hospital clean. The use of a Clorox 360 machine can be used for COVID-19, but it is not meant to be the only product you use to disinfect. While this product does clean the air, it is important to disinfect tricky areas like handrails and knobs. This system would not do that and is relatively costly.
7. **I have concerns over residual odor and discoloring of porous materials like curtains and chairs. What is the best way to disinfect these materials?** For materials like curtains, simple laundering in the hottest water the material can handle is recommended. Fabric-covered chairs and other like materials should use upholstery cleaner by following manufacturers' instructions or they can be cleaned using a carpet cleaning machine with an upholstery attachment. Refer to the **CDC's Disinfecting Your Facility** webpage for additional information on specific household disinfectants for soft surfaces and instructions.

Green Cleaning Resources

There is a myriad of resources on green cleaning and the coronavirus. Here we highlight several useful resources from the CDC and EPA.

- **Follow the CDC three-step plan** for **cleaning and disinfecting public spaces** to help limit the exposure to COVID-19:
    1. **Develop a Plan** – Evaluate your workspace, home, or facility to determine what surfaces and materials need increased cleaning and disinfection versus normal routine cleaning. Frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as light switches, doorknobs, and countertops, will need to be cleaned and then disinfected to reduce the risk of spreading germs.
    2. **Implement the Plan** – Once a plan is established, read all manufacturer instructions for cleaning and disinfection products that will be used. Put on gloves and other required personal protective equipment (PPE) to begin the process.

3. **Maintain and Revise the Plan** – Review "**Prevent Getting Sick**" tips to reduce exposure and risk of acquiring COVID-19. Continue to update the plan based on updated guidance and current circumstances.

- **Review the following guidance and factsheets** for more information on cleaning and disinfecting spaces: **CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Factsheet**, **UW's Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Science's Factsheet**, and **Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) – COVID-19: Safely Clean & Disinfect Guidance**.
- **Consider purchasing green products.** When buying green products, purchasers should evaluate a product by considering the environmental life cycle of the product in addition to price and performance. Purchasers should be especially careful in interpreting vague or generic claims as "environmentally friendly" and "eco safe." Visit the **EPA Sustainable Marketplace** for additional information on green product purchasing.
- **Check out Green Seal Green Measuring Cleaning Product Performance** for information on choosing green products that are used against COVID-19.
- **Follow CDC's Guidelines for Park Administrators** and **Guidance for Businesses and Employers**.

Coronavirus and the Clean Economy

As COVID-19 continues to disrupt society and the economy, experts have begun to analyze how the virus has created challenges and opportunities in the clean economy. This April, GreenBiz hosted a **webinar** to discuss the effects of the virus on the circular economy, transportation systems, clean energy, and food systems, and how those markets will respond in the coming months. Notable trends related to environmental purchasing and solid waste management and what parks can do to address those trends include:

Use of Disposables is Increasing

- Disposable plastic product use is increasing. As home delivery, takeout, and sanitary practices increase, reusable materials are being swapped in favor of single-use materials.

What Can Parks Do?

- **Safely use reusable materials by employing basic hygiene practices.** The best available science and guidance from public health professionals suggests that thoroughly washing materials renders them safe to reuse. In late June 2020, over **100 scientists from 18 countries published a signed statement** to reassure the public that reusables are safe to use during the pandemic.
- **Purchase paper towel dispensers** that **minimize paper towel waste**. Purchasing motion-activated, touchless dispensers can control the paper towel length and set a predetermined delay between towels to limit consumption.
- **Purchase plastic-alternatives for takeout containers**, such as paper-based and compostable alternatives.
- If your park has a composting program, **work with your compost manufacturers** to identify if they will take your paper towels and compostable takeout containers. Some manufacturers accept them, while some do not.
- **Work with your waste contractor.** Takeout containers are bulky and take up a lot of room in waste collection containers. Adjust your waste contract to accommodate the increase in volume.

Demand for Recycled Materials has Dropped

- As use of single-use plastics increase and as people use the time at home to clean their recyclables, recycling rates have increased. Yet

as the price of oil has plummeted, the demand for recycled materials has dropped because virgin materials are now half the cost.

- **What Can Parks Do?** Parks should buy products made with recycled content whenever feasible. Recycled-content products are made completely or partially from recycled material, such as aluminum soda cans or newspaper. Products made from recycled material significantly reduce air and water pollution, conserve natural resources, and promote a more sustainable lifestyle or business ethic. In fact, under Executive Order 13834 and its underlying statutes, agencies must give purchasing preference to products that meet minimum requirements for recycled content as identified by **EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) Program**.

EPA Comment Period on Designations & Recommendations for Recycled-Content Products

Between April and early July 2020, EPA sought **comments** on its list of items that are or can be made from recovered materials and its recommendations to federal agencies on purchasing these items. Currently, EPA has designated 61 items made from recovered materials in eight product categories as part of its **Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines**.

The federal government's "buy recycled" program uses federal purchasing power to stimulate the demand for products made with recovered materials and shows leadership by example, furthering EPA's "**America Recycles**" efforts. Buying recycled-content products incentivizes markets to reuse waste and increase recycling rates, thereby strengthening the American recycling industry.

Support for Green Purchasing

Within NPS, everyone who has a purchase card must take a credit card refresher training every three years. The GSA SmartPay Credit Card Training includes green purchasing guidance. GSA can assist with identifying green products by consolidating federal green purchasing information into one place.

For more information, please contact Brennan Conaway at brennan.conaway@gsa.gov.

Food Supply Chain Disruptions Have Increased Food Waste

- Food distribution is being reassessed. Supply chains have been severely disrupted, creating food waste and reducing supply in stores. The limited number of meat processors have created a notable bottleneck in meat supply, and there are countless stories of food rotting in fields because restaurants, hotels, schools, and other customers are no longer operating.

What Can Parks Do?

- Consider reviewing the EPA's **Recycling and Sustainable Management of Food During the Coronavirus (COVID-19)** webpage for information on waste prevention, increasing your reuse and recycling efforts.
- Review ReFED's past webinars and discussion series on **Food System Best Practices For Navigating Covid-19**. Past webinars include organizational financial health, getting governmental support, safe operations and food handling, and connecting labor and surpluses and shortages. **Register** to join future ReFED webinars.
- Take stock of your waste and don't overbuy.
- Partner with a non-profit to donate whole

unused food. For instance, **Hole Food Rescue** is a non-profit that diverts excess edible food to serve at-risk and socio-economically disadvantaged community members. **Food Rescue US** is an app-based food rescue program that transfers fresh, usable food that would otherwise be thrown away from restaurants, grocers and other food industries and are given to community members in need.

While COVID-19 has been extremely disruptive, its effects are not all negative; the crisis has caused businesses and individuals to reassess consumption habits, to place greater emphasis on resilience and creativity, and to value a more circular economy. Rejuvenating local markets, making supply chains more robust and flexible, and minimizing unnecessary travel are new trends that are likely to remain after the pandemic passes, though it is too soon to say to what degree and for how long.

Check out the full webinar here: **GreenBiz Coronavirus and the Clean Economy Webinar Summary**.

Teleworking – Green Actions You Can Take at Home

Many Americans, including NPS staff, have been forced to work from home due to the pandemic. But are they considering how their new "office" environment is contributing to or counteracting responsible solid waste management and environmental purchasing efforts?

There is growing evidence that teleworking may become the norm for some sectors of the economy even after the pandemic passes. Given these recent events, consider adopting these tips to make your home office more environmentally friendly.

- Check that your office appliances are ENERGY STAR® certified, a label that identifies energy efficient, cost-effective, and high-performing products.
- Use smart power strips to save energy and protect your devices from power surges.
- Unplug unused electric devices to reduce vampire loads that use energy even when not turned on.
- Purchase preowned or eco-friendly products.
- Purchase products made from recycled content, such as recycled paper for printing and notetaking.
- Use duplex printers and make sure to always print on both sides of paper whenever possible, or even better, go paperless!
- Upgrade your light bulbs to energy efficient styles like LEDs, or better yet, utilize natural lighting during the day and turn off excess lighting.
- Buy a programmable thermostat to maximize efficient cooling and heating and add or remove clothing layers before adjusting the thermostat.
- Sign up for curbside recycling and composting services to reduce material and food waste.

For additional tips and resources, check out this **article** and share your favorite ideas with coworkers.

Park Successes in 2019

Every year, parks report solid waste management data to the Solid Waste Management Database, a website and database administered by the Department of the Interior (DOI). Data from the Solid Waste Management Database are used by the Office of Management and Budget to evaluate agency progress for the Environmental Stewardship Scorecard, and the National Park Service Green Parks Plan and Green Parks Performance Brief.

What did parks report in 2019? Many parks took steps to improve waste diversion as well as to reduce overall waste generation through environmental purchasing.

Here is a breakdown of park successes, by the numbers.

21 parks reported new or improved recycling programs

- 16 parks increased tracking accuracy
- 9 parks right-sized the number of their collection containers by adding recycling containers and/or removing trash containers
- 4 parks conducted employee education/training
- 5 parks increased park practices to be safer/more efficient
- 5 parks implemented or improved electronics/battery recycling

22 parks took steps to reduce waste & purchase green

- 15 parks improved environmental purchasing programs including bulk purchasing and purchasing only what is needed
- 3 parks installed a water bottle filler installation
- 1 park installed a restroom hand dryer
- 2 park implemented new trash free/pack in/pack out policy

3 parks reported new or improved composting programs

- 3 parks implemented new waste composting programs

Refresher on EP & SWM Performance Metrics

Executive Order (E.O.) 13834 set forth energy and environmental performance goals for agencies based on statutory requirements and relating to management of facilities, vehicles, and operations. In order for agencies to track, measure and report progress toward these goals, the E.O. instructions set out a Performance Measure and Progress Milestone for each goal. Below are summaries of the performance metrics defined by the E.O. instructions and the underlying statutory and/or NPS requirements relating to environmental purchasing and solid waste.

Environmental Purchasing Requirements

E.O. 13834 Section 2(g) requires that agencies acquire, use, and dispose of products and services, including electronics, in accordance with statutory mandates for purchasing preference, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requirements, and other applicable Federal procurement policies.

Acquisition Progress Metrics	
Metrics:	Percentage of contract actions containing statutory environmental requirements; and Percentage of obligations (in dollars) containing statutory environmental requirements.
Performance Measures:	Increase in the percentage of contract actions and increase in percentage of obligations (in dollars) containing statutory environmental requirements, as compared to the previous fiscal year.
Progress Milestones:	Agencies will identify targets for the next fiscal year in annual Sustainability Plans.

Agencies must give purchasing preference to products that:

- Meet minimum requirements for recycled content as identified by **EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) Program**
- Are designated as biobased or **BioPreferred** by USDA. (Agencies must also set yearly targets for number of biobased-only contracts awarded.)
- Are certified by **ENERGY STAR**
- Are **FEMP** energy efficient products

Agency procurement practices must also maximize the substitution of alternatives to ozone-depleting substances, identified under EPA's **Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP)** program.

Solid Waste Management Requirements

E.O. 13834 Section 2(f) calls for agencies to implement waste prevention and recycling measures and comply with all Federal requirements regarding solid, hazardous, and toxic waste management and disposal.

Waste Management Progress Metrics	
Metrics:	Tons of non-hazardous solid waste generated (excluding Construction & Demolition waste and debris), and percentage of non-hazardous solid waste sent to treatment and disposal facilities.
Progress Milestones:	Agencies will identify target for percentage reduction in non-hazardous solid waste and percentage reduction sent to treatment and disposal facilities in annual Sustainability Plans.

The E.O. instructions provide additional resources for three "special categories" of solid waste: Construction and Demolition (C&D), food waste, and electronics.

We Want Your Feedback!

Do you have a success story? Are you curious about a new topic?

Please let us know how we can make this newsletter as helpful and meaningful as possible in your efforts to implement and institutionalize green purchasing activities.

Email **Monta_Baskerville@nps.gov** to let us know how we did with this issue and any suggestions of topics or success stories you would like to see covered in the coming issues.