

Dumpster Dive results, Nov 15, 2012

**This year we only sorted trash from OUTDOOR areas at Southern/Dobson. This is because we recently changed our methods for handling almost all outdoor waste. We removed dozens and dozens of individual metal trash cans and replaced them with fewer nice looking trash/recycle sets in almost all areas. This reduced our trash receptacles and increased recycling opportunities.

Number of volunteers: 65

Number of bags of outdoor trash: 153

Number of items:

Cups in trash: 1156

Plastic drink bottles in trash: 420

Cans in trash: 181

Glass in trash: 10

Other plastic containers in trash: 234

Paper in trash: 30 pounds

Cardboard: 10 pounds

After removing all the common recyclables (cups, cans, bottles, plastic containers, paper, cardboard), the original 153 bags of trash fit into only 29 bags.

Bag waste: 124 bags per day wasted

Bags: \$35 for 100 (includes tax/shipping costs)

Wasted: 31,000 bags per year, 310 boxes of bags, \$10,850 loss in trash bags used unnecessarily

(while we do still use bags for recycling, we change them much less frequently since they don't contain messy food waste or biologically contaminated items like dirty tissues, etc. Also, we purchase recycling bags made of 70% recycled content)

Pounds of items:

Cups: 200 pounds per day

Plastic containers: 80 pounds per day

Cans: 40 pounds per day

Paper/cardboard: 40 pounds per day

PER YEAR: (250 weekdays in 50 weeks)

Cups: 50,000 pounds, 25 tons

Plastic containers: 20,000 pounds, 10 tons

Cans: 10,000 pounds, 5 tons

Paper/cardboard: 10,000 pounds, 5 tons

Total tons of recyclables being landfilled from outdoor trash: 45 tons

We pay approximately \$70/ton to landfill.

We recycle for FREE.

We EARN approximately \$60 for paper/cardboard.

Loss on landfilling recyclable items: \$3150

Loss of earnings on paper/cardboard: \$300

Loss on use of unnecessary trash bags: \$10,850

Total approximate annual dollar loss from recyclable cups, cans, plastic containers, paper, and cardboard going into the OUTDOOR trash receptacles at MCC Southern/Dobson: \$14,300**

**this does not include INDOOR trash cans that have recyclables in them. There are possibly MORE recyclable items in the indoor trash cans. Look in them when you walk by...see for yourself.

**this does not include anything from the other 4 MCC locations around Mesa.

Common waste at MCC that is NOT recyclable in the city blue barrels: (i.e. almost everything else is recyclable)

Chip bags, candy wrappers

Plastic bags/wraps*

Food, greasy fast food packaging

Paper towels, napkins, tissues, paper plates

Rubber, ceramic, fabric

Chunks of packaging Styrofoam* or dirty takeout-food foam containers

Yard waste*

Batteries, light bulbs*

*employees have opportunities to recycle these things on campus, just not in the blue bins.

Other factors to consider besides money lost:

- Trash bags: manufacturing process emissions and shipping fuel emissions are being wasted; labor in our receiving department to track, unload, and store them; landfilling 31,000 bags annually unnecessarily that are made of non-renewable petroleum.
- Recyclable items:
Most of the cups/cans/plastic containers are made of non-renewable petroleum products. By sending these to landfill instead of recycling them into new products, even more natural resources are being used to make new products (instead of being able to use recycled content). While plastic and paper eventually wears out the more it is recycled, aluminum and glass never wear out during the recycling process. That means soda cans and glass bottles can always be made of 100% recycled content, and no virgin natural resources ever need to be used to make them. Every soda can or glass bottle that goes to landfill means that someone has to harvest new natural resources from our land to make more.

While the cost to landfill includes fuel surcharges and dumping rates, it does not factor in the emissions from fuels that are put into the environment by the more frequent waste pickups.

Landfills do not allow items to biodegrade. Landfills are specifically built to keep out air, water, and light so that items don't break down and get chemicals/contaminants into our groundwater. Anything sent to a landfill will likely be there for an eternity, EVEN PAPER.

This newspaper was removed from a landfill in 2012. It is from 1960. (<http://gwri.calpoly.edu/>)



Manufacturing businesses need recyclable items in order to make new products of recycled content.

Dumpster Dive Comments, Nov 15, 2012

I thought it was alright, but just some nasty smells from all the garbage.

Not a lot of people recycle even though the bins are right next to each other.

It was easier than I expected and I felt pretty good about helping out.

It is crazy how many recyclable items are thrown in the trash. More than half of each bag could have been recycled. I liked the Dumpster Dive.

Very smelly but amazing how much people don't recycle. It's ridiculous!

It was fun sorting trash!

Amazing to see what people threw away.

It thought this was a very nice experience. Life changing.

It was very liberating. I got to look at how wasteful everyone is, as well as myself. I definitely will think about what I throw away and what I recycle.

I thought that this activity was really eye opening to the amount of recyclable items that are being thrown away with trash.

It is a great solution, to have a recycling campus and also helps with being more aware of what needs to be recycled.

It was quite repulsive, but interesting to see how many people don't recycle.

Seems like this is a fun way to check waste and to minimize it.

I think there should be a way to recycle the paper towels.

I thought it was great, all these people came out to recycle.

Was beneficial for my students to experience this again. Would like to go back to getting drink info, where things are coming from.

There was a lot of trash but overall it was interesting.

Very smelly, dirty, and not fun.

I thought it was a wake up call to how many people still don't recycle even though we have the proper bins on campus. I definitely will recycle always after this. ☺

It wasn't too bad at all. I thought there was going to be a lot more bottles and cans. We went through it fast.

It was wetter than I thought it would be.

Fun experience. ☺ It was kind of gross getting dirty, though. Interesting to see how much is thrown away.

I think it was great and is good for our entertainment. Lots of fun.

It was a good experience and good information on the school's trash.

It was great. Life changing.

It was interesting how many beverage containers there were. That is what most of the trash was. I would sort 3 bags and (after taking out the recyclable items) it would all fit into one.

I think it really helps the environment and it also helps the city trash company to organize recycling from regular trash.

Way too much recycling needs to be done. People need to pay attention to what they throw away. So much can be saved.

Someone Cares.

It was very informative on what people use on a daily basis.

Good chance to learn about the ways people purchase and waste products.

It was informative. I never knew how much stuff people didn't recycle when the recycle bins are nearby.

A lot of people don't use what they buy completely. I need to be mindful to recycle. It was very fun. 😊

Good cause, perhaps a way to deal with all the liquid that comes with the trash.

I was able to volunteer. I walked by, I didn't have a class to do it for. I would love to do things like this again. It was a wonderful overall experience. It taught me a lot about recycling. We need to recycle more.

It is so surprising how much perfectly good stuff is getting thrown away.

It was pretty crazy seeing what we throw away. I actually had a lot of fun!

Cool!! Good and easy way for students to volunteer.

I thought this was interesting. I think this should be every month.

I was very astounded by what people put in the trash. Yuck! But it feels good to do something good.

Good experience. Did lots of sorting, some gross, some not. Keep it up.

This year's Dumpster Dive has shown the campus something that continually shows up: liquid waste.

I thought the Dumpster Dive was fun! I never really thought about how many items were actually recycled. Most students don't recycle. But I think the Dumpster Dive was interesting. 😊