

"GOOD NEWZ" is an online newsletter produced by San Juan County Washington's Solid Waste Division, in line with its "Trash to Treasures" project goals. The hope and purpose of "Good Newz" and the growing **"Sustainable San Juans"** effort is to spark enthusiasm in the concept of sustainability; its aim is to encourage community-building by providing a format for the collection and dissemination of new ideas, practices, and products that promote sustainability in the San Juan Islands. "Good Newz" will carry reports on global, national, and local efforts.

There are many definitions of SUSTAINABILITY. Here are a few:

- In a sustainable community, residents consume resources and produce waste at a rate that allows their children (and their neighbors' children) to enjoy the same lifestyle into the future.
 - Sustainability is when the functions and processes of an ecosystem can be maintained.
- Sustainability requires a paradigm shift from out-of-control consumerism to conservation ethics and economics
 - Learning to live more with less can lead to sustainability.

.We welcome your input... your comments and suggestions for improving the newsletter. Items you share on sustainable individual, group, and business efforts will be posted here. Please contact helenv@rockisland.com. If you want to "unsubscribe" from this mailing list, please respond to this email. We ask that you forward "Good Newz" to anyone who might be interested in the topic of sustainability, especially here in the San Juan Islands.

THE WORLD COMMUNITY:

Nueva Vida, Costa Rica: This village, south of the great Mayan pyramids that poke out of the forests of the Yucatan, is one of seventy-two new cooperative farms that ring the Calakmul Forest Reserve in a protective belt. The farms were established by land grants assigned to groups of refugee families when the Reserve plan recognized that human habitation in the forest was an ancient and integral part of this ecosystem. Residents have good reason to preserve the forest and the farm settlements act as a boundary to buffer the forest against outsiders who were deforesting in order to move farther in.

While the architecture of thatched houses helps to preserve the thousands of years old culture, beautifully-functioning composting toilets and rainwater cisterns have become new cultural accomplishments. The farm villages are not government charity, but the necessary education and technical advice are provided by much-respected agronomists and engineers from Pronatura, a Mexican conservation group, the U.S. Nature Conservancy, and other private organizations.

Turkeys and soap/onion/garlic decoctions do the job of pest control and are the "DDT of a new generation." Since the cost of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is beyond the means of these subsistence farmers, they are learning not to want them, seeing that the soil improves, rather than deteriorates, over time. There is a peaceful coexistence with the trees of the forest, which allows for the rediscovery of the ancient art of medicinal plant collection.

ALL-AMERICAN:

Washington, D.C., 1/6/03: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a new, environmentally-friendly "green" cafeteria today at the agency's headquarters. The state of the art facility incorporates the use of recyclable products and materials, furnishings and carpet manufactured from post-consumer recycled materials, non-toxic cleaning products, and energy-efficient lighting. The menu offers food from sustainable sources, such as shade grown coffee and organic fruits and vegetables.

EPA's Research Triangle Park in North Carolina includes a cafeteria facility with permanent china and stainless steel ware to reduce waste, and offers discounts to employees who bring their own reusable coffee

mugs. Disposable kitchen ware is starch-based, making it biodegradable and compostable; it also requires less energy to produce than paper or polystyrene containers. Paper napkins used are made from unbleached, recyclable paper and all aluminum and glass containers are recycled.

SUSTAINABLE SAN JUANS:

"Sustainable San Juans" (SSJ) was launched this year, inspired by "Sustainable Washington," "Sustainable Seattle," and numerous other national and international efforts, to explore the individual and community benefits of a creative approach to living well, and responsibly, in harmony with the natural world. SSJ is a growing, informally organized, effort here that aims to be all-islands-inclusive. This "Good Newz" newsletter will report on specific island project successes in the area of resource and energy conservation and pollution prevention, appropriate technology that works, and local events that spread the word and share ideas.

Mark Your Calendar:

EARTH DAY, 2003: The Orcas Exchange, located at the county's solid waste facility on Orcas Island, will celebrate its 20th year of providing education on waste reduction and reuse, while diverting tons of useful materials available for sale at low cost. Events will include a call to artists to create art out of reusable materials from the Exchange; display of same on Earth Day, April 22nd, at the Exchange; and a dance to celebrate community on April 26th. The theme of the celebration is "Come together, be the change." Contact George at geopost@fidalgo.net for details.

MAY 17, 2003: The recently-organized Low Impact Development (LID) group of builders, county and town planners, the SJ Conservation District, Friends of the San Juans, and others will be sponsoring a day-long LID Conference in Friday Harbor with guest speakers and audience participation in the areas of cost effective renewable energy; healthy, earth-friendly building/landscaping design and materials selection; resource-conscious waste management, etc. Watch for more on the conference in future newsletters.....

AUGUST 13-16, 2003: The theme of this year's County Fair is "Bringing in the Harvest," which includes the harvesting of our community's ideas that support the concept of resource and economic sustainability in the San Juan Islands. A large exhibit, sponsored by the County Solid Waste Division, the Fair Board, Spring Street School, and the 1420 Foundation for Sustainability Education, will focus on recognizing efforts already happening in the islands; on promotion of local businesses, individuals, and agencies that use sustainable practices or produce/retail sustainability products and services; and on offering on-site education and fairgoer participation. Included will be an auction of select items being gathered by the county's Trash to Treasures "deconstruction" and reusable building materials project. This promises to be an exciting opportunity for community-building.

SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2003: As a follow-up to the Fair exhibit, Spring Street School and the 1420 Foundation for Sustainability Education will sponsor the conference, "The Salish Sea --This Place, These People, This Time," on San Juan Island. Plans include guest speakers, workshops, exhibitors, and demonstration of state-of-the-art distance learning video conferencing technology. The latter will connect students from our island schools with students in Brazil, Appalachia, and Kenya...live, during the conference! The event will be videotaped for later use and the event planners hope to create a multi-media conference model that can be replicated for use by other communities interested in sustainability. A dance will follow on Saturday night.

"Practice random acts of efficiency and sensible acts of conservation!"

-- Ian Woofendon, The Home Power Journal (www.homepower.com)

2/14/03-Helen Venada