

Opinion

Ours

Recycling must be a priority

People have been talking about recycling for decades, but they may have hazy ideas of what they are saving.

It actually means preserving money and resources, especially considering that oil reserves are on the downhill slant and the cost of energy will likely not drop anytime in the future.

Here are some facts from Moscow Recycling in Latah County:

- Each one of us throws away an average of five pounds of garbage daily. Half of that could be put into compost for use in a garden.

- It takes 17 average-sized trees to make one ton of paper.
- It takes 3-1/2 barrels of oil and 7,000 gallons of water to process one ton of wood into paper.

- Making one ton of recycled paper uses only 60 percent of the energy needed to make one ton of virgin paper.

- Recycled aluminum requires only 5 percent of the energy required to manufacture a can from bauxite ore.

- The energy saved from recycling one aluminum can is enough to run a TV set for three hours and a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.

- Every time a ton of steel is recycled, it means 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,000 pounds of coal, and 40 pounds of limestone will not have to be mined from the earth.

- Recycling glass lowers the melting temperature and saves 32 percent of the energy needed for production of new glass.

- Recycling glass instead of making it from quartz sand reduces mining waste by 80 percent, water use by half, and air pollution by 20 percent.

- Americans use 2 1/2 million plastic bottles every hour.

The nation's manufacturers make it easy to just use a product once or consume the contents and then toss it into the trash. A great deal of that stuff is in the form of containers.

Not recycling some of that solid waste means it heads up to the transfer station near Donnelly, then is hauled down busy Highway 55 to between Boise and Mountain Home for its final resting place.

That is a lot of diesel spent to move the trash so we don't have to deal with it. But we actually do have to pay for it. Lakeshore Disposal recently hit up Valley County and the town of Cascade for extra money largely because of the cost of fuel.

Just go to a town like Seattle, where residents haul their trash to an urban transfer site and then out of town. The cost of that service will take your breath away and we are headed in that direction.

Dumping all your trash, rather than recycling some, fills up the landfills faster, so Idaho counties and cities must come up with new dumpsites—all at our expense.

Tamarack Resort early on took the step to recycle and a group of locals are working to improve the system here. It is interesting that our area, which is increasingly becoming tourist- and recreation-based, lacks a real cohesive recycling system like similar mountain communities.

But one appears to be on the way and it makes real fiscal sense to support it.

The Ledge

By M. Flinn



GUEST

A UN warning Americans should not ignore

By Mary Christina Wood

This time, the waiting really is over. A United Nations (UN) summary report issued Friday, with input from more than 2,500 scientific experts from 130 countries, confirms that human greenhouse gas emissions are causing accelerated global warming. Further debate will recklessly waste time and energy we need to avert global disaster.

Many Americans have responded to global warming by reducing their own carbon footprints. Such efforts, while important, conceal our national chaos. We cannot curb greenhouse gas emissions without government leadership. Citizens across Idaho should demand action from local, state, and federal officials today. The President, Congress, state legislatures, and governors across the country should confront global warming as a supreme national priority.

The UN's top climate official has called upon governments to cut greenhouse gas emissions 60-80 percent by 2050. To reach this goal, we must completely overhaul our carbon infrastructure, moving towards energy efficiency, clean industry, public transportation and waste reduction. Our governmental agencies hold the resources and authority to accomplish this. Every agency should immediately create a strategic plan calibrated to a reduction goal. Because the carbon problem transcends all societal sectors—including transport, energy, housing, and industry—no agency should be exempt from this massive undertaking.

The good news is that, if agencies act now, they can retool our sectors in a way that meets our individual, family, and business needs. The bad news is that agencies still act as if global warming didn't exist. They still permit the same pollution that brought us this crisis. Why? Because there is no strong leadership from elected officials.

Inaction has unspeakable consequences for humanity. The UN report follows an "Urgent Call to Action"

issued by America's leading scientists telling President Bush that Earth is "seriously imperiled" by global warming. Evangelical Christian leaders are making the same call—save Creation.

Government's passivity has already locked us into rising temperatures. Existing carbon dioxide levels are higher than any over the last 650,000 years, and what we emit today will be around for generations. Food shortages, rising seas, heat waves, flooding, drought, and intense storms like Hurricane Katrina mark the future for ourselves and our children. But if we act now, the UN report makes clear, we can still avoid the most catastrophic climate shock.

With few exceptions, our political leaders sit idle. Some, like Idaho's Senator Larry Craig and Oklahoma's Senator James Inhofe, still dismiss climate predictions as exaggerated. But equally dangerous are those politicians who acknowledge the problem but propose inadequate solutions like biofuel subsidies alone. Such measures mislead the public into believing the problem is under control. Quite simply, if we pour resources into the wrong strategy, we won't have time to go back and chart another course. This is no time for a too-little, too-late response from our government.

Political will grows overnight when ordinary citizens demand action. If your bank statement showed that negligent bankers were permitting your personal account to drain away, you would interrupt your daily routine to demand an immediate accounting, and a change in the bank's practices.

We can afford to do no less when it comes to natural assets essential to our survival.

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Advertising

Classifieds - Monday at 3 p.m.

Legals - Friday at 5 p.m.

Inserts - Friday at 5 p.m.

DISPLAY ADS - Fridays at 5 p.m.

Editorial Matters

All News Releases, Letters to Editor,

Thank You's,

Announcements

Due by Monday at Noon

The Long Valley Advocate will accept letters reflecting any point of view, concerning any subject of community interest. We reserve the right to edit or reject letters on the basis of length, libel, propriety or redundancy. A reasonable attempt will be made to contact writers of letters which are edited.

Address letters to Editor, The Long Valley Advocate; P.O. Box 1079; Cascade, Idaho 83611. Letters should be restricted to 300 words, or approximately one typed, double-spaced page.

Letter must be signed with an address and telephone number.

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