

# **Christmas Tree Recycling**

The Gift That Lasts Long After the Holidays



## Community Recycling Manual

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## **National Christmas Tree Association**

The National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA), founded in 1955, strives to be one voice representing Christmas Tree professionals and promoting the use of Real Christmas Trees. More than 5,100 professionals support NCTA programs through membership; participation (through their state association) in the Tree Industry Partnership (TIP) Campaign; and/or individual investments in the RealTree Promotion & Marketing Campaign.

NCTA recognizes Real Christmas Trees as a renewable resource and is committed to protecting our natural environment through education, research and local and national programs.

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## **Real Christmas Trees ... The Environmental Choice**

During the 2005 holiday season, 32.8 million Real Christmas Trees were purchased for display in homes nationwide. These consumers made the choice of a Real Tree for a variety of reasons – the fresh scent, the beauty of the evergreen, the traditions of the holidays – but what they may not have known is that a Real Tree is also a wise environmental choice.

Here are some facts to consider:

- Around 98% of Real Christmas Trees are grown on farms throughout all 50 states and Canada. These trees are planted to be harvested, just as corn is cultivated for harvest.
- The Christmas Tree industry in the United States employs more than 100,000 Americans (part- and full-time). Meanwhile, 85% of fake trees are made by factory workers in China.
- Every acre of Christmas Trees grown produces the daily oxygen requirement for 18 people. With approximately 500,000 million acres of trees, 9 million people a day are supplied with oxygen thanks to these trees.
- Real Christmas Trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; they also stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide a refuge for wildlife.
- For each Real Christmas Tree harvested, up to three new seedlings are planted in its place. In 2006, more than 42 million new seedlings will be planted by Christmas Tree farmers all over the United States.

And after the holidays, a Real Christmas Tree is the only choice that is completely recyclable. Artificial trees typically end up in landfills, where they will remain for centuries after disposal.

- In a national survey, 69% of consumers who used a Real Tree said they recycled theirs in a community program.
- Real Christmas Trees are recycled for five main types of large-scale uses for post-harvest trees. These are:
  - 1) Chipping (chippings are used for various things from mulch to hiking trails)
  - 2) Beachfront erosion prevention
  - 3) Lake and river shoreline stabilization
  - 4) Fish habitat
  - 5) River delta sedimentation management

**Learn more about Christmas Tree recycling at [www.realchristmastrees.org](http://www.realchristmastrees.org)!**



# Steps for Success

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## Planning Guide for Your Recycling Program

### 1. Evaluate the need in your community, as well as the available resources.

#### *Things to Consider:*

- Are there other tree recycling programs in your area? Who coordinates these? It may be more effective to partner with existing programs rather than starting from scratch.
- Who is your target audience? What areas will be included in your recycling program and its marketing? Determine the program's potential using the formulas on page 6.
- Appoint a coordinator for the program. Do you have a pool of available staff and/or volunteers to help with the program? How will you divide up responsibilities?
- Do you have a budget for the program? Are there other organizations you can work with to share expenses? Are there other companies or associations who can donate or sponsor portions of the program, such as loaning equipment or providing marketing support?

### 2. Create an outline for your program.

#### *Things to Consider:*

- Collection: Decide the time frame and method for tree collection. See page 9 for an overview of the possible options.
- Outreach: How will you get the message out to your community? Create a marketing plan. The ideas on page 17 should help get you started.
- Recycling Method: Decide what the end use for your collected trees will be. See page 11 for an overview of the ways that trees can be reused and recycled.
- Your plan doesn't have to be set in stone, as you may have to be flexible depending on resources and budgets. But having a clear vision of the purpose of your program and a definition of its success is key.

### 3. Create a budget.

#### *Things to Consider:*

- You'll never know if you don't ask. Don't be afraid to approach businesses or groups to ask for their support by donating their time or resources. Since you've already thought out the details of your program and its marketing, you'll be able to explain the value easily to these possible sponsors.
- Think outside the box. Methods for funding a recycling program vary as much as the programs do. See page 14 for some possible funding ideas.
- Fill out the budget worksheet, starting on page 15, or create your own as an outline for your program.

## Steps for Success

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### 4. Spread the word.

***Things to Consider:***

- Start early with your marketing and public relations program. Be sure to emphasize the value to your community, as well as recognizing those individuals and businesses involved.
- Utilize the press release/PSA included in this manual on pages 20 and 21.

### 5. Implement your program.

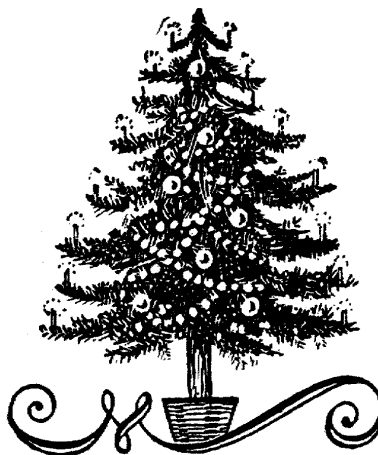
***Things to Consider:***

- Make sure each volunteer or staff member understands his/her role in the program.
- Use good safety practices when handling equipment and tools.
- Take pictures of the events for future publicity.

### 6. Evaluation & follow-up.

***Things to Consider:***

- Evaluate your program after completion while the details are still fresh in your mind.
- Make notes of statistics and results, such as number of trees recycled, pounds of mulch, number of volunteers, etc. These will be invaluable for future programs and publicity. Keep a file of promotional materials as well as photos from the actual event.
- Follow up with the media and your sponsors to let them know the results of your program.
- Discuss what can be improved for next year.
- Double-check your budget to make sure everything matched up. Make suggestions for future budgetary changes.
- Be sure to thank all volunteers and sponsors for their time and resources!



# Steps for Success

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## Step 1: Evaluate the Resources in Your Community

Community support is essential in establishing a successful Christmas Tree recycling program.

Some options for partnerships include:

- Christmas Tree growers, retailers & Choose & Cut farms
- Nurseries and garden centers
- Landscapers, tree service companies, arborists
- Private businesses in the community
- Parks and Recreation Departments, Departments of Public Works, Departments of Transportation
- Departments of Solid Waste Management
- Local environmental organizations — recycling groups, Sierra Club chapter
- Private waste management companies and haulers
- Civic groups — Lions Club, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Club
- Youth organizations — 4-H, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts, FFA, Junior Achievement
- Not-for-profits and volunteer organizations
- Universities and high schools
- Fish and game sports groups
- Utility companies

Involve your partners and sponsors early in the process so that you know what resources are available for your program. You may want to send out an informational letter to businesses and organizations requesting their participation or inviting them to a planning meeting. (See the Sample Partner Letter on page 8).

Many groups may want to participate in the program simply because it's a worthy cause. If you are still having difficulty generating support, it's important to remind them of the value of participation.

- For businesses, a program can offer opportunities for good public relations and the ability to get their name out in the community. Be sure to offer to include their company name/logo on all signage and promotional materials. Possibly create T-shirts/sweatshirts that volunteers/staff will wear w/ logos of all sponsors during the day of the event.
- For civic groups, a recycling program could be used as a fund-raiser. Groups could offer pick-up service for a small donation or collect donations at the drop-off site. Or, the recycling event can be held in conjunction with an already scheduled community event, such as a fair or festival.
- For university/school groups, the recycling program could offer the opportunity to complete community service or volunteer requirements.
- For local government departments, this can be a valuable public relations tool with a minimum amount of investment. Mulch created by the program could be used for public works projects, such as park landscaping.
- Private waste management companies may be willing to participate or donate services to avoid costly landfill tip fees.



## TREE TIPS!

Here are some tools and formulas for evaluating the benefits and capabilities of a recycling program in your community.

### 1) Determine the number of possible trees available for recycling in your community.

According to consumer surveys by the National Christmas Tree Association, 32.8 million trees were purchased during the 2005 holiday season. This means that approximately 28% of U.S. households nationwide purchase Real Christmas Trees for display.

*Source: Wirthlin Worldwide - Harris Interactive; U.S. Census Bureau*

#### Do the Math:

# of trees sold in community = # of households x 0.28

(Note: The number of households should be available through your local government offices or Chamber of Commerce.)

### 2) Estimate the possible number of trees that will be recycled.

Nationally, the recycling rate for existing state and community recycling programs is 69%. This can vary greatly based on the size and scope of the recycling program, so you may want to plan for a lower percentage, especially when just starting a new program.

*Source: Colorado Recycles*

#### Do the Math:

capacity of program = # of trees sold x .50 to .60

### 3) Determine the value of your possible recycling program. (This number can be used to help promote your program to consumers and the media).

By implementing Christmas Tree recycling programs, communities can save valuable landfill space as well as costly landfill tip fees. Tip fees can range from \$15/ton to \$70+/ton, depending on your geographic location, although most hover around \$20 to \$40 per ton.

*Source: Reason.org*

#### Do the Math:

landfill tip fees saved = tip fee x  $\frac{\text{capacity of program}}{115 \text{ trees/ton}}$

Hint: You may estimate the amount of chips or mulch produced by your program by dividing the capacity of the program by 115 trees/ton of chips.

landfill volume saved =  $\frac{\text{capacity of program}}{7.5 \text{ trees/cu. yd.}}$

Note: 100-200 pounds of Christmas Trees are in one cubic yard. Three to 12 trees will take up one cubic yard of space in the landfill.

*Source: Christmas Tree Recycling Investigation & Feasibility Study for City of Milwaukee, 1992.*



## SAMPLE PARTNER INVITATION LETTER

Recycling Coordinator  
Address  
City, State ZIP

Contact Name  
Company/Organization  
City, State ZIP

Dear Sir or Madam:

Each year, more than 25 million consumers nationwide purchase a Real Christmas Tree for display in their homes. But after the excitement of the holidays has faded, many households are left wondering what to do with their tree. Christmas Tree recycling programs have grown in popularity in the past few decades, diverting millions of trees from the landfill — and now we would like to bring Christmas Tree recycling to the community of (COMMUNITY NAME).

We feel that (COMPANY/ASSOC NAME) would be a valuable partner for our recycling program, and we would appreciate any input or resources you could contribute towards this effort. (Take a sentence or two to outline what types of resources they could offer — time, equipment, marketing support, etc.) We will be holding an informational meeting on (DATE) at (TIME) at (LOCATION) to begin planning for a successful Christmas Tree recycling program. We would love to see you there, and I will be following up by phone in the next week to answer any questions you might have.

A recycling program in (COMMUNITY NAME) could divert as much as (NUMBER OF TONS) of waste from our crowded landfills, as well as turning a cherished holiday tradition into an environmental benefit. But we need your support to make this program a success. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

(Recycling Coordinator)

## Steps for Success

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### Step 2: Create an Outline for Your Program

#### Collection Options

The collection process is often the area of the program that requires the most resources – particularly in volunteer/staff time. How you decide to handle Christmas Tree collection often involves weighing consumer convenience against what you can manage most efficiently with the resources available.

Here are some examples of how collection can be managed, with the advantages of each. Remember, however, that many successful recycling programs utilize more than one collection method.

#### **EXAMPLE 1: Short-Term Drop-Off Site**

**How It Works:** Collection is typically managed as a one-day or weekend event. Consumers turn in their trees at the designated location(s). Staff/volunteers are on hand to either chip up the trees on-site, or load them up for another method of reuse.

#### **Advantages:**

- A recycling “event” may create more excitement in the community. With face-to-face interaction, you can create promotions – such as giving away a free seedling, mulch or small gift to those dropping off trees. The event may also receive coverage by the media.
- With a minimum amount of time commitment, it may be easier to find volunteers. Working the collection point could be a fundraiser or volunteer project for groups.
- You will only need to find a location for a short period of time.

#### **How to Make It Work for You:**

- Your drop-off site should be well-identified and free from traffic congestion. Check with area residents and businesses and be sure it will not interfere with their normal activities. If you will have a chipper on site, be sure that the noise will not cause problems.
- The ideal date(s) are the week after New Year’s, when many homeowners have taken their trees down.
- Possible drop-off sites include: parking lot (school, shopping mall, local business); Choose & Cut Christmas Tree farm; municipal park; community center; composting facility; recycling/environmental center; or nursery/garden center.
- Make sure you have adequate staffing for the event and plenty of space for the overflow of trees. Be sure everyone knows their role on that day.
- Plan for safety. If you will have a chipper on site, you will need qualified adult operators with liability insurance. If you will be transporting the trees elsewhere, take care to load the trees away from crowds and use qualified drivers.

### **EXAMPLE 2: Long-Term Drop-Off Site**

**How It Works:** Residents drop off their Christmas Trees after the holidays to an unstaffed location. The trees are then transferred to a central location or chipped on-site after the drop-off period is over. If desired, mulch or chips can be made available for pick-up by consumers afterwards.

#### **Advantages:**

- With an extended period, consumers have more opportunities to drop off their Christmas Trees.
- Less volunteer/staff time required.
- If using multiple drop-off sites, this method eliminates the need to have a chipper at each site. Also eliminates the danger of having consumers around while the trees are being chipped.

#### **How to Make It Work For You:**

- Be sure to select sites with plenty of space, or make collection bins available. You will still need to check the sites frequently to ensure there is not overflow.
- Advertise the start and end dates clearly and frequently to ensure trees are not left after the ending date. Also be clear in your preparation instructions so that trees are not dropped off with decorations still on them.
- For an extended drop site, ideal collection times should fall between December 26 and mid-January. This accommodates the Christmas Tree retailers, who can recycle their unsold trees when they close the day after Christmas, and families who keep their trees up through early January.

### **EXAMPLE 3: Curbside Pick-Up**

**How It Works:** Curbside pick-up could be incorporated into the route of an established yard waste collection program, or private haulers/waste collectors could be contracted to establish special routes. Another option is having volunteers/groups conduct pick-up for small areas/communities.

#### **Advantages:**

- The convenience to the consumer boosts the chance for more participation.
- Allows the recycling coordinators more flexibility in setting the schedule. For example, it doesn't have to occur on the weekends or evenings, as with a drop site.
- Consumers may be more willing to pay some of the cost of curbside pick-up, thereby helping to defray the costs of the program. For example, people may purchase a special tag to put on the tree to pay for the pick-up service.

#### **How To Make It Work For You:**

- Because of the cost and time involved, curbside pick-up will most likely need to involve the participation of waste management companies, the Department of Waste Management, or private haulers. Begin the planning process early with these entities.
- Make the pick-up schedule known well in advance. If being handled by the regular waste pick-up service, announcements could be included in billings. In all announcements, be sure to clarify what needs to be done to prepare the tree (remove ornaments and stand, etc.)



#### **TREE TIP!**

A creative way to collect the trees is to sponsor a "tree rental program." When the tree is returned to the purchase lot for reuse/recycling, the sponsoring party will return a portion of the purchase cost. For example, a rental program may rent the trees for \$10 less than they are sold but add on a \$15 deposit, which is refunded upon the return of the tree.

## Steps for Success

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### Step 2: Create an Outline for Your Program (continued)

#### Recycling Options

Long before you collect your first tree, it helps to have decided what the final use will be.

#### Method 1: Chipping

Most community recycling programs rely on chipping, as this method tends to be simple, cost-efficient and the chips can be used in a variety of ways.

For example, raw chips can be used as:

- Landscaping and path cover for parks, school campuses and private residences
- Ground cover in orchards and Christmas Tree farms
- Weed control around the bases of utility poles
- Animal bedding in stables
- Cover for playground areas
- Landfill daily cover
- Boiler fuel in a cogeneration plant (chips must be dried)
- Input for composting

In addition, tree chips may be partially composted into mulch to be used in a variety of ways. Mulch improves weed control and water retention in the soil around beds of annuals and other shallow-rooted plants. Keep in mind that without partially composting the tree chips, application around shallow-rooted or young plants will starve them of nitrogen. Chips may also be further processed into compost.

#### How to Make It Work For You:

Chipping requires special equipment (chippers or grinders) and qualified operators with liability insurance. You may be able to get the equipment and operators donated through local parks departments, university landscaping personnel, road maintenance crews from the Department of Transportation, local Christmas Tree businesses, private landscaping businesses, arborists or tree service companies. Chippers and grinders are also available for rent from equipment companies (look under Equipment Rental in your telephone book). If you're using volunteers to operate them, you will need to obtain liability coverage for them.

The end use of your chips determines the size and type of grinder/chipper you will need. Fine, high-quality chips for landscaping applications are produced by feeding trees one by one into a manual chipper. Coarse chips, better for low-grade mulch or composting, are produced by crushing trees in a tub grinder and can be fed mechanically.

Review the list of safety precautions on page 23 to ensure good practices while operating the machinery.

## **Method 2: Using the Whole Tree**

Whole Christmas Trees can also be a valuable contribution to environmental programs. Here are some examples of projects that communities have conducted with Real Christmas Trees:

### **1) Dune & Coastal Restoration**

Hurricanes, tropical storms and tide patterns can erode coastlines and beaches. For example, Hurricane Ivan in 2004 pulled sand away from the beaches of Alabama and destroyed dunes that are home to a number of animal populations. Gulf State Park naturalists, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, worked with volunteers to rebuild the dunes with Christmas Trees. The group put up more than 3,000 feet of sand fencing, in 10-foot sections, with a Christmas Tree at the base of each section.

### **2) Rebuilding the Wetlands**

Before the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana's Jefferson Parish had been conducting a conservation project since 1991 to fight back against the encroaching ocean. Each year, the group made a "tree drop," with the help of a helicopter on loan from the Army National Guard. Large bundles of Christmas Trees were placed into the alligator-laden marshes, creating a "tree fence" to prevent the further erosion of the wetlands.

### **3) Wildlife Habitats**

Christmas Trees can provide cover and habitats for a variety of wildlife. In northwest Indiana, the Recycling & Waste Reduction District of Porter County and the Moraine Ridge Wildlife Rehabilitation Group gathered trees and unloaded them at a 25-acre wildlife rehabilitation center to provide cover for birds, chipmunks, racoons and other small wild animals.

In Baker's Lake Nature Reserve in Illinois, Christmas Trees were used by the Forest Preserve District and a local environmental group to create nesting structures for herons. Annually, the project uses 300-400 recycled Christmas Trees to attract hundreds of pairs of great blue herons, great egrets, cormorants and black-crowned night herons to the rookery.

### **4) Fishing Spots**

Freshwater or saltwater fish may also benefit from the additional habitat and feeding area provided by sinking trees in lakes, ponds or reefs (connected by wire and/or tied to concrete.) The trees typically must be replaced by new trees every five to seven years.

## **How To Make It Work For You:**

If you would like to use the whole tree for environmental projects, it is best to consult with local officials and environmental experts, such as agricultural extension personnel, forestry & wildlife officials, or the agriculture department for your state/county. Local ordinances may apply, and special permits may need to be obtained, depending on the project. Also, experts in the environmental sciences can advise you of the best way to use the trees, depending on your geographic area. This will help ensure the trees are used for the best purpose, without harming the environment.

## Steps for Success

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### Step 3: Create a Budget

Once you've gathered your partners and determined your resources, it's time to decide how to best allocate those resources.

Budgets for Christmas Tree recycling programs vary greatly, depending on the scope of the program, community support and the number of people involved. But whether your program is depending entirely on donations or is fully funded, there are some basics that need to be taken into consideration.

#### ■ Staff Time and Labor

Staff time includes all the preparations leading up to the program, the event itself and any follow-up. Even if this time is being donated by volunteers, it is helpful to keep track of approximate hours for future planning.

Consider the additional labor needed during the actual event or during pick-ups. Is this time being donated? If paid, will you need to account for overtime pay for extra hours?

#### ■ Publicity

You will need to budget for all printed materials for your program – from flyers to correspondence. Who will be handling the design and printing? Consider the costs of their time and the materials involved.

If you will be advertising, you will need to figure in these costs as well. Will local media donate ad time or serve as an event co-sponsor?

#### ■ Collection

Your collection costs will vary depending on whether you are using a drop-off or curbside collection program. A curbside program is typically more expensive, as it requires trucks and labor. If you opt for a drop-off program, you will need containers to store/haul the trees and volunteers/staff to direct traffic and unload vehicles.

#### ■ Chipping Equipment

You will need to budget for the rental/purchase of equipment if you do not have access to equipment. You will also need trained crew personnel to operate the equipment.

#### ■ Transportation

Will you need to transport collected trees to a chipping location? Will the chips/trees need to be transported elsewhere? Consider the staff time and the costs of the transportation itself.

## Steps for Success

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### Step 3: Create a Budget (continued)

#### Funding Sources

The costs of a Christmas Tree recycling program can add up quickly if you're not careful. If you're on a tight budget, the key is to think creatively. Recycling programs can be funded in a variety of ways, as shown below:

1. Solicit co-sponsors for the program to spread costs.
2. Exchange the service of chipping the trees for the resulting chips. (Example: landscaping company gets free mulch for providing the chipping equipment).
3. Sell wood chips or whole trees to fertilizer companies for soil amendment.
4. Haulers agree to collect trees free in exchange for avoided landfill tip fees.
5. Community pays for program through solid waste department or other funds.
6. Look into recycling, environmental or community service grants in your area.
7. Charge residents a small fee for tree collection.
8. Collect donations at staffed drop-off sites.
9. Offer the chips/mulch for local residents for a small fee.
10. Christmas Tree retailers/Choose & Cut farms pay for promotional flyers in exchange for credit line at the bottom of the flyer.
11. Ask a business or organization to donate the printing costs for promotional materials.
12. Have a graphic design/art/journalism student design the promotional materials/assist with marketing efforts.
13. Local utility companies agree to supply chipper and chipper operators for the program.



# Christmas Tree Recycling Budget Worksheet

You can adapt these worksheets as needed to budget for your recycling program.

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Materials Cost</b>	<b>Labor Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Promotions/ Marketing</b>			
<b>Sponsor Letters</b>			
<b>Advertising</b>			
<b>Design</b>			
<b>Placement</b>			
<b>Press Releases/PSAs</b>			
<b>Design</b>			
<b>Distribution</b>			
<b>Promotional Flyers/ Brochures/Posters</b>			
<b>Design</b>			
<b>Distribution</b>			
<b>Tree Tags</b>			
<b>Design</b>			
<b>Distribution</b>			
<b>Seedlings/Other Pro- motional Items</b>			
<b>Office Supplies/ Postage</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>Collection</b>			
<b>Curbside</b>			
<b>Truck Operations</b>			
<b>Staff/Labor</b>			
<b>Drop-Off</b>			
<b>Site Rental</b>			
<b>Staffing</b>			
<b>Banners/Signs</b>			
<b>Collection containers</b>			
<b>Chipper Rental/ Operating Costs</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>			



<b>Expense</b>	<b>Materials Cost</b>	<b>Labor Cost</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Volunteer Supplies</b>			
<b>Refreshments/ Snacks</b>			
<b>Work Gloves</b>			
<b>T-shirts</b>			
<b>Brooms/Clean-up Supplies</b>			
<b>Trash Bags</b>			
<b>First Aid Kit</b>			
<b>Traffic/Safety Cones</b>			
<b>Name Tags</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>Post-Event Follow-Up</b>			
<b>Film Processing/ Printing</b>			
<b>Thank-you Cards</b>			
<b>Follow-up Media Releases</b>			
<b>Recording of Event Statistics</b>			
<b>Evaluations</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

## Steps for Success

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### Step 4: Spread the Word

A recycling program can only be successful if people know about it. And just as important as knowing the time and location is understanding why Christmas Tree recycling is so important.

When promoting your recycling program, be sure to emphasize the importance of Christmas Tree recycling in your community. (Use the stats and figures from previous recycling programs or estimate using the formulas on page 7.) You can also make use of the general environmental facts provided at the beginning of this manual.

Make the most of free advertising for your program. List your recycling program on every calendar you can find. Check with your local government or other organizations to see if they will list the program on their Web site as a community service. Do a quick Internet search for additional recycling calendars or sites on which to promote your program. The first place to start is [www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org), which lists recycling programs nationwide.

Many local newspapers or magazines print a “holiday guide” for use by readers – check to see if you can get your recycling program included. Christmas Tree retailers and Choose & Cut farms can be a great resource if you contact them before the selling season starts (typically Thanksgiving weekend.) See if they will post signs on your behalf or distribute flyers to their customers. You can find a list of growers/retailers in your area by visiting the NCTA Web site at [www.realchristmastrees.org](http://www.realchristmastrees.org). Try asking utility and private sanitation services to put a sentence at the bottom of mailings and billing statements promoting the program.

Make the media your ally. A community-based recycling program is often a great story with a local angle for media outlets. The key is getting your press release or PSA in the right hand.

**Newspapers:** Try to make contact with the Environment and/or Science Editor. At smaller papers, you can try the News Editor, Lifestyles Editor and/or Features Editor.

**Radio/TV:** News releases should go to the Assignment Editor or Producer of a specific program. Public Service Announcements go to the Community Affairs/Relations Director or Program Director.

Often, you can find the contact you are looking for by checking the Web site for the publication or station. Otherwise, call the main number and ask who the correct person is. A news release that is not addressed to a specific staff member often gets overlooked.

You may also consider working with a specific media outlet as a co-sponsorship for the program, with recognition of this sponsor in all promotional materials.

Many tree recycling programs encourage participation by giving residents a coupon to be redeemed for a seedling at a nursery in the spring. Often the cost of the seedlings is minimal, and the nurseries will accept Christmas Tree chips or the increased customer traffic brought by the seedling distribution in exchange for the seedlings. Some programs also use donations collected at the drop-off site to purchase seedlings for local park landscaping.

## Steps for Success

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### Step 4: Spread the Word (continued)

**Keep these tips in mind when creating your marketing and promotions plan:**

1) Be clear and concise in your directions to consumers. Tell them exactly what needs to be done to the tree before drop-off or pick-up, such as removing all ornaments, wire hooks, lights, tinsel, garland, nails, screws and stands. (But also be prepared to still receive trees with these items remaining. You will need to have volunteers on hand to prepare the tree for chipping if that is the case.)

2) Reinforce the start and end dates, as well as the locations. Make sure these areas are well-marked with signs and/or banners. People may still drop-off trees past the end date, so you must decide how to handle this unexpected overflow.

3) Keep a file of all your marketing efforts, including where your ads/PSAs ran and any media coverage. This will allow you to follow-up with additional information and thank-you letters following the program.

4) Make it easy for the media and promotional partners. If you already have materials prepared in the format required, it makes things go a lot smoother. Same goes for photos. Many newspapers may want to send their own photographers, but for smaller outlets or those who don't make it, having images available (preferably as high-resolution digital files) makes it easier for them to cover your story.

5) Select a spokesperson who will speak on behalf of the program — most likely the recycling coordinator. Prepare a list of talking points or answers to commonly asked questions so that the spokesperson is prepared to speak on a moments notice about Christmas Tree recycling and the environment. If you need additional information for your recycling program, contact NCTA at 636/449-5070.





## ***TREE TIPS!***



### **Promotional Ideas for Your Recycling program**

- ✓ Partner with other local groups and businesses to expand the resources and support, as well as raising awareness.
- ✓ Create a radio public service announcement. (See sample script on page 21.)
- ✓ Distribute news releases to local print, broadcast and local media. (See sample press release on page 20.)
- ✓ Write and submit newspaper articles, columns and editorials to be published before and after the event.
- ✓ Add the event to local community calendars.
- ✓ Work with local Christmas Tree growers and retailers. Provide flyers or tree tags for them to distribute at the point of sale.
- ✓ Give talks to local community and civic groups.
- ✓ Distribute flyers and posters to schools, public libraries, businesses and grocery stores.
- ✓ Sponsor a contest for school children to design the recycling program promotional poster.
- ✓ Include a reminder about the event in utility bills.
- ✓ Insert flyers or ads in the newspaper.
- ✓ Suggest TV and newspaper stories relating to the event.
- ✓ Take photos at the event for use by local newspapers and future promotions.
- ✓ Speak to local classrooms on recycling and the environment. (Remember: children may not be the ones dropping off the trees, but they can be a powerful influencer.) For presentation ideas, visit [www.realtrees4kids.org](http://www.realtrees4kids.org).
- ✓ Work with a Girl Scout/Boy Scout troop, FFA or 4-H chapter, or other youth group. They can volunteer to handle one aspect of the program (promotions, manning the collection site, etc.) as a community service project.
- ✓ Many schools have internal radio/TV stations and news shows. Give the principal a copy of the PSA and have the students produce a news story about the event.
- ✓ Offer a small gift or token for those dropping off a tree. Some ideas: a sapling for planting (may be available through your state's department of agriculture), mulch for their garden, ornament, food treat or even a discount coupon toward next year's tree (if working in cooperation with tree growers/retailers.)
- ✓ Ask churches to put reminders in their weekly or monthly bulletins and newsletters.
- ✓ Create tray liners for local restaurants.
- ✓ Be sure to release the results of your program via a news release following your event (ex. number of trees recycled, groups involved, landfill space saved, etc.)
- ✓ Visit [www.realchristmastrees.org](http://www.realchristmastrees.org) for statistics and environmental information on Real Trees.
- ✓ Hold the recycling drop-off day in conjunction with another community event, fair or festival.

**Most importantly, start early! Get creative!**

## **SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) SCRIPT**

**(30 Seconds)**

*ANNOUNCER:* When the holidays are over, give a gift back to the environment. Recycle your Real Christmas Tree!

Real Trees are 100 percent biodegradable and can be recycled for a wide variety of uses.

You can drop off your Christmas Tree at (LOCATION), (ADDRESS), on (DATE) from (START TIME) to (END TIME).

Make the Christmas spirit last by recycling your Real Tree.

A public service message from (YOUR ORGANIZATION) and (STATION CALL LETTERS).

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## Steps for Success

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### Step 5: Implement Your Program

Here are some tips to help your recycling program run as smoothly as possible:

- 1) Plan for extra or back-up volunteers in case someone gets sick or doesn't show up. Extra volunteers also allow for more frequent breaks, particularly in inclement weather.
- 2) Check trees carefully to make sure they meet the standards for chipping (no ornaments, hooks, etc.) Metal objects can ruin a chipper, as well as being a safety hazard.
- 3) Give each staff person/volunteer a clear assignment – directing traffic, checking trees, bagging debris, collecting donations, dealing with media, etc.
- 4) Take photos and get comments from participants that could be helpful in preparing follow-up press releases and stories.
- 5) Keep track of trees being collected for evaluation purposes.
- 6) If chipping on-site, arrange the drop-off so that consumers are nowhere near the equipment.
- 7) Drop-off bins fill quickly so be sure to monitor and replace them as needed. In many cases, open piles may work better.
- 8) Follow the safety tips on the following page when operating chipping/grinding equipment.
- 9) If customers can pick up the mulch at a later date, it's helpful to have small flyers or cards indicating the date/location for pick-up. Be sure to indicate if they need to bring their own containers or if these will be supplied.
- 10) For curbside pick-up, indicate clearly and exactly where the tree should be left. The further the collectors must go from the curb, the more expense and time involved with pick-up.
- 11) If collection sites have changed in recent years, it may be wise to do a check of the old sites, in case trees have been left there.
- 12) If using the trees for a purpose other than chipping/mulching, a brochure or flyer explaining how the trees will be used could help promote the program. (As well as saving volunteers from having to give detailed explanations over and over again.)
- 13) If using a staffed site, treat the consumers dropping off trees as your customers. If you make the experience as simple and painless as possible, they will be more likely to recycle in the future.
- 14) Have fun! By making it an enjoyable experience for all partners involved, it makes recruiting for next year all that much easier.



## **SAFETY FIRST!**

When using chipping and grinding equipment in your recycling program, it's best to have a trained operator with liability insurance. If using rental equipment with volunteers, be sure they are familiar with the equipment and that they are properly covered by insurance. Consult your equipment's operating manual for specific instructions and safety recommendations.

Here are some safety guidelines to keep in mind:

- Clothing should be close-fitting and tucked in.
- Operators should wear a hard hat and ear protection, as well as OSHA-approved eye protection, such as glasses, goggles or a flip-down visor.
- Wear non-slip work boots and leather work gloves to protect your feet and hands.
- Be sure the chipper is set on level ground.
- Before use, inspect all equipment for problems such as loose nuts and bolts, loose hose fits, infeed obstructions and improper fluid levels.
- Brush for the chipper should be stacked in a way that makes it easy and convenient for the operator to feed the chipper. The butt-ends of the brush should always face the chipper infeed.
- The operator should never, under any circumstances, place their feet or hands in the infeed chute while the machine is running.
- Always examine the trees for foreign objects before chipping.
- Remove the ignition key when the machine is left unattended.
- Have a first-aid kit on-site, along with a fire extinguisher.
- Never attempt to unclog a chipper or perform any type of maintenance while the chipper is running.
- Keep the area around the wood chipper free of tripping hazards.
- Before processing material and unless the manufacturer recommends otherwise, the machine should be run at the lowest possible speed while workers listen for noise that might indicate broken or loose machine parts. If unusual noise is detected, the machine should be shut down immediately and evaluated by a competent person.
- At least two workers should be present and within sight of each other when material is being fed into a wood chipper.
- Keep all children and observers away from the machine during operation.



## Steps for Success

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### Step 6: Evaluate Your Program

Keep a file from year to year with key statistics and facts about your recycling program. Not only is this helpful for promotion purposes it also makes the transition between recycling coordinators easier.

Be sure to include:

- Methods of collection
- Method of recycling
- Dates and location of program
- Copy of the proposed and final budget
- List of partners/sponsors with contact information, along with what they contributed
- Number of trees recycled
- Pounds/tons of mulch created
- Where the recycling byproduct (whole trees, chips, mulch) went and how used
- Outline of marketing plan and expenses
- Media coverage and clips
- Copies of press releases, PSAs, talking points distributed
- Landfill tip fees for your area (these represent the dollars saved by recycling)
- Donations/fees collected
- Future suggestions

It may be also be a good idea to circulate an evaluation form among your partners and volunteers. Their comments can help you pinpoint problems in the program as well as better prepare for the following year. See the following page for a sample evaluation sheet.

### Recognition

Volunteers and partners become involved with recycling programs for a number of reasons – out of a love for the environment, to help a worthwhile cause, to promote their company or organization and more. While recognition may not be the reason a person or business gets involved, it can be a key factor in their decision to participate in the future. Even a simple thank-you card can be an important part of recognizing contributions to the program.

Some other suggestions:

- A special luncheon or dinner for all of the volunteers/sponsors
- Small plaque, certificate or memento
- Gift certificates (could be donated by an additional sponsor)
- Ad in local paper or magazine thanking contributors to the program
- Volunteer/sponsor listing on Web site
- T-shirt, sweatshirt or other apparel item recognizing the event (could be worn at the event as well)
- Seedling or small plant



SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM

**(NAME OF RECYCLING PROGRAM) Evaluation Form**

**Circle One:** Volunteer      Staff                      Sponsor/Partner

Rate the success/implementation of each part of the recycling program. (1=poor, 5=excellent)

<b>Planning Meetings</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Marketing Plan</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Collection</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Timing/Location</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Recycling Process</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Consumer Response</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Coordination w/ partners</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Coordinator w/ volunteers</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA
<b>Overall Program</b>	1	2	3	4	5	NA

**How do you feel the community responded to the program?**

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**Do you feel the program was properly promoted? What suggestions do you have for future programs?**

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**What do you feel could be improved about the collection process?**

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**Any suggestions for how trees could be used in future recycling programs?**

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**Is there anyone (individual or business) that you would like to refer for participation in next year's program?**

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**Other Comments**

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**THANK YOU!**

## STATE RECYCLING ASSOCIATIONS

### **Alabama**

Alabama State Recycling Office  
PO Box 5690  
Montgomery, AL 36103-5690  
Phone: 334/242-5100  
Fax: 334/242-5099  
[www.adeca.state.al.us](http://www.adeca.state.al.us)

### **Alaska**

Alaskans for Litter Prevention  
and Recycling  
PO Box 200393  
Anchorage, AK 99520  
Phone: 907/274-3266  
Fax: 907/274-8023  
[www.alparalaska.com](http://www.alparalaska.com)

### **Arizona**

Arizona Recycling Coalition  
Mail Stop 417, PO Box 4008  
Chandler, AZ 85244-4008  
Phone: 480/782-3430  
Fax: 480/782-3520  
[www.azrc.org](http://www.azrc.org)

### **Arkansas**

Arkansas Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 745  
Fordyce, AR 71742  
Phone: 866/290-1429  
Fax: 870/352-7492  
[www.recycleark.org](http://www.recycleark.org)

### **California**

California Resource Recovery  
Association  
785 Orchard Drive, Suite 225  
Folsom, CA 95630  
Phone: 916/441-2772  
Fax: 916/932-2209  
[www.crra.com](http://www.crra.com)

### **Colorado**

Colorado Association for  
Recycling  
PO Box 11130  
Denver, CO 80211-0130  
Phone: 970/535-4053  
[www.cafr.org](http://www.cafr.org)

### **Connecticut**

Connecticut Recyclers Coalition  
PO Box 340601  
Hartford, CT 06134  
Phone: 203/627-2973  
[www.ctrecyclers.org](http://www.ctrecyclers.org)

### **Delaware**

Recycle Delaware  
1128 S. Bradford Street  
PO Box 455  
Dover, DE 19903-0455  
Phone: 302/739-5361  
[www.dswa.com](http://www.dswa.com)

### **Florida**

Recycle Florida Today, Inc.  
PO Box 15889  
Tallahassee, FL 32317  
Phone: 877/867-4738  
<http://recyclefloridatoday.org>

### **Georgia**

Georgia Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 550667  
Atlanta, GA 30355  
Phone: 404/634-3095  
Fax: 404/350-8780  
[www.georgiarecycles.org](http://www.georgiarecycles.org)

### **Hawaii**

Recycle Hawaii  
PO Box 4847  
Hilo, HI 96720  
Phone: 808/329-2886  
[www.recyclehawaii.org](http://www.recyclehawaii.org)

### **Idaho**

Association of Idaho Recyclers  
PO Box 2532  
Twin Falls, ID 83303  
Phone: 208/432-5536  
[www.idahorecyclers.org](http://www.idahorecyclers.org)

### **Illinois**

Illinois Recycling Association  
PO Box 3717  
Oak Park, IL 60303-3717  
Phone: 708/358-0050  
Fax: 708/358-0051  
[www.illinoisrecycles.org](http://www.illinoisrecycles.org)

### **Indiana**

Indiana Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 7108  
Bloomington, IN 47407-7108  
Phone: 812/331-3006  
Fax: 812/988-9947  
[www.indianarecycling.org](http://www.indianarecycling.org)

### **Iowa**

Iowa Recycling Association  
2742 SE Market Street  
Des Moines, IA 50317  
Phone: 515/265-1596  
Fax: 515/265-6690  
[www.iowarecycles.org](http://www.iowarecycles.org)

### **Kansas**

Kansas Business and Industry  
Recycling Program  
2933 SW Woodside Dr., Suite C  
Topeka, KS 66614-4181  
Phone: 785/273-6808  
Fax: 785/273-2405  
[www.kansasbirp.com](http://www.kansasbirp.com)

### **Kentucky**

Kentucky Division of Waste  
Management  
14 Reilly Road  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
Phone: 502/564-6716  
Fax: 502/564-4049  
[www.waste.ky.gov](http://www.waste.ky.gov)

### **Louisiana**

Louisiana Department of  
Environmental Quality  
602 N. Fifth Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone: 225/219/3181  
[www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)

### **Maine**

Maine Resource Recovery  
Association  
142 Farm Road, PO Box 1838  
Bangor, ME 04402-1838  
Phone: 207/942-6772  
Fax: 207/942-4017  
[www.mrra.net](http://www.mrra.net)

## STATE RECYCLING ASSOCIATIONS (continued)

### **Maryland**

Maryland Recyclers Coalition  
2105 Laurel Bush Rd., Suite 200  
Bel Air, MD 21015  
Phone: 443/640-1050  
Fax: 443/640-1031  
[www.marylandrecyclers.org](http://www.marylandrecyclers.org)

### **Massachusetts**

MassRecycle, Inc.  
198 Tremont Street, Box 143  
Boston, MA 02116  
Phone: 617/338-0244  
[www.massrecycle.org](http://www.massrecycle.org)

### **Michigan**

Michigan Recycling Coalition  
3225 W. St. Joseph  
Lansing, MI 48917  
Phone: 517/327-9207  
[www.michiganrecycles.org](http://www.michiganrecycles.org)

### **Minnesota**

Recycling Association of  
Minnesota  
PO Box 14497  
St. Paul, MN 55114-0497  
Phone: 651/641-4560  
Fax: 651/641-4791  
[www.recycleminnesota.org](http://www.recycleminnesota.org)

### **Mississippi**

Mississippi Department of  
Environmental Quality  
PO Box 10385  
Jackson, MS 39289-0385  
Phone: 601/961-5005  
Fax: 601/961-5703  
[www.deq.state.ms.us](http://www.deq.state.ms.us)

### **Missouri**

Missouri Recycling Association  
PO Box 2144  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
Phone: 866-667-2777  
[www.mora.org](http://www.mora.org)

### **Montana**

Recycle Montana!  
2021 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601-4882  
Phone: 406/443-6242  
<http://recyclemontana.org>

### **Nebraska**

Nebraska State Recycling  
Association  
PO Box 4098  
Omaha, NE 68104  
Phone: 402/933-3059  
Fax: 402/933-3259  
<http://recyclenebraska.org>

### **New Jersey**

Association of New Jersey  
Recyclers  
120 Finderne Avenue  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807  
Phone: 908/722-7575  
Fax: 908/722-0280  
[www.anjr.com](http://www.anjr.com)

### **New Mexico**

New Mexico Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 24364  
Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Phone: 505/983-4470  
Fax: 505/466-6266  
[www.recyclenewmexico.com](http://www.recyclenewmexico.com)

### **New York**

New York Association for  
Reduction, Reuse & Recycling  
PO Box 3913  
Albany, NY 12203  
Phone: 888/925-7329  
Fax: 888/925-7329  
[www.nysar3.org](http://www.nysar3.org)

### **Nevada**

Nevada Bureau of Waste  
Management  
901 South Stewart Street  
Suite 4001  
Carson City, NV 89701  
Phone: 775/687-4670  
Fax: 775/687-6396  
[www.ndep.nv.gov](http://www.ndep.nv.gov)

### **North Carolina**

Carolina Recycling Association  
PO Box 1578  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
Phone: 919/545-9050  
Fax: 919/545-9060  
[www.cra-recycle.org](http://www.cra-recycle.org)

### **North Dakota**

North Dakota Solid Waste and  
Recycling Association  
PO Box 3241  
Fargo, ND 58108-3241  
Phone: 701/293-8428  
[www.ndswra.org](http://www.ndswra.org)

### **Ohio**

Association of Ohio Recyclers  
PO Box 70  
Mount Vernon, OH 43050-0070  
Phone: 740/397-7652  
Fax: 740/397-7649  
[www.aor-omex.org](http://www.aor-omex.org)

### **Oklahoma**

Oklahoma Recycling Association  
546 S. Darlington  
Tulsa, OK 74112  
[www.recycleok.com](http://www.recycleok.com)

### **Oregon**

Association of Oregon Recyclers  
PO Box 13328  
Portland, OR 97213-0328  
Phone: 503/233-3056  
Fax: 503/232-0272  
[www.aorr.org](http://www.aorr.org)

### **Pennsylvania**

Professional Recyclers of  
Pennsylvania  
PO Box 25  
Bellwood, PA 16617  
Phone: 814/742-7777  
Fax: 814/742-8838  
[www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org)

## STATE & NATIONAL RECYCLING ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

### **Rhode Island**

Rhode Island Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 14127  
East Providence, RI 02914  
Phone: 401/435-7710

### **South Carolina**

Carolina Recycling Association  
PO Box 1578  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
Phone: 919/545-9050  
Fax: 919/545-9060  
www.cra-recycle.org

### **South Dakota**

South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources  
523 East Capitol Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501  
605/773-3153  
www.state.sd.us

### **Tennessee**

Tennesee Recycling Coalition  
PO Box 23796  
Nashville, TN 37075  
Phone: 615/668-9174  
www.trc-online.org

### **Texas**

Recycling Alliance of Texas  
PO Box 2359  
Austin, TX 78768  
Phone: 512/473-3217  
Fax: 800/419-8633  
www.recycletx.com

### **Utah**

Recycling Coalition of Utah  
PO Box 112045  
Salt Lake City, UT 84147  
Phone: 801/491-0201  
www.utahrecycles.org

### **Vermont**

Association of Vermont Recyclers  
PO Box 428  
Plainfield, VT 05667  
Phone: 802/454-8400  
Fax: 802/454-8401  
http://vtrecyclers.org

### **Virginia**

Virginia Recycling Association  
PO Box 18155  
Richmond, VA 23226  
Phone: 888/867-1923  
www.vrarecycles.org

### **Washington**

Washington State Recycling Association  
6100 Southcenter Blvd.,  
Suite 180  
Tukwila, WA 98188  
Phone: 206/244-0311  
Fax: 206/244-4413  
www.wsra.net

### **Wisconsin**

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin  
2561 S. Broadway  
Green Bay, WI 54304  
Phone: 715/343-6311  
www.arow-online.org

### **Wyoming**

Wyoming Recycling Association  
PO Box 539  
Laramie, WY 82073

### **Keep America Beautiful**

1010 Washington Blvd.  
Stamford, CT 06901  
Phone: 203/323-8987  
Fax: 203/325-9199  
www.kab.org

### **Solid Waste Association of North America**

PO Box 7219  
Silver Spring, MD 20907-7219  
Phone: 800/467-9262  
Fax: 301/589-7068  
www.swana.org

*If you have additions or corrections to this list of organizations, please contact the National Christmas Tree Association at 636/449-5070 or [rasmussen@drakeco.com](mailto:rasmussen@drakeco.com)*



### **National Associations**

#### **National Recycling Coalition**

1325 G St. NW  
Suite 1025  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202/347-0450  
Fax: 202/374-0449  
www.nrc-recycle.org