## What Does "Throw It Away" Really Mean?
August 2022

We've been throwing stuff "away" since childhood — ever since someone said, "No! Dirty! Throw it away!" As grownups, we throw away TVs, plastic bags, refrigerators, clothes — absolute piles of stuff that we don't want.

Ever wonder just exactly where "away" is? Except for occasional space junk, the things we throw "away" stay right here.

That means everything from pill bottles and yogurt tubs to bubble wrap, cardboard, coffee makers and holey socks. They may be out of your sight. But thrown-away stuff can linger for centuries in landfills and the ocean.

There are better ways to get rid of stuff!

*"Freecycling"* is one way to pass along things you no longer want to people who can use them. Get together with a few neighbors and host a free yard sale. Or check out Trash-to-Treasure on Monroe County's Waste Authority website https://thewasteauthority.com. Or try Freecycle NEPA on Facebook. Both offer everything from kid's toys and sports equipment to furniture, tools, and appliances — free to post and free to take!

Bundle up clothes and shoes and take them to local organizations like the Salvation Army and Goodwill. Call local houses of worship: many of them accept clothes to give for free to people in need. Check out resale shops like the Nearly New Shop in Mountainhome or Echo in Stroudsburg. They accept donations of clean, good-condition clothing — and while you're there, you may find a bargain for yourself. Veterinarians can use old blankets and towels.

For hard-to-recycle items like dairy tubs, visit terracycle.com. They offer free and paid recycling solutions for everything under the sun — even for cigarette waste!

For pill bottles, go to Matthew 25 Ministries http://m25m.org/pillbottles/.

And for help deciding whether something can be recycled or must be trashed, check out "What Do I Do With…" at Monroe County Waste Authority's website https://thewasteauthority.com/what-do-i-do-with/

It takes 713 gallons of water to grow cotton for *one* tee shirt. And keeping stuff out of the waste stream helps keep drinking water clean. Conserve and protect our water — don't waste good stuff!

Get lots more ideas at https://www.epa.gov/recycle
Don't let your favorite old jeans end up in a landfill! Finding ways to reuse and recycle helps protect drinking water.

*For humans, fish, and every living thing, Brodhead Watershed Association protects water quality and quantity throughout our area. Get involved! Become a member today.* https://www.brodheadwatershed.org.