



PROTECTING CLEAN WATER TOGETHER

By Carol Hillestad for the Brodhead Watershed Association

Disposing of the Hard Stuff

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You've probably figured out how to recycle, reuse, or dispose of a lot of what used to be called "waste." Things like cardboard and paper, glass jars and bottles, metal cans, and milk jugs and other #1 and #2 plastics. Maybe you even compost your kitchen waste, grass clippings and leaves.

What about the hard stuff? All those yogurt containers, compact fluorescent bulbs, batteries, used motor oil?

In Monroe County, Chestnuthill Township offers the most options for its residents. An amazing 38 different kinds of things can be recycled! Most is free, and items like mattresses and furniture are accepted for disposal for a small fee. Residents can drop off their yard waste, which is shredded and composted and available for free to residents. Township Manager Dave Albright says that their "pay-as-you-throw" system provides a direct benefit to residents because "people can lower their disposal costs by recycling as much as they can, then pay by the bag for less trash."



Polk Township offers similar services to their residents, on a smaller scale. In fact, they cooperate with Chestnuthill to market recycled cardboard and plastics.

Stroud Township also accepts their residents' yard waste at its compost and mulch facility on Gaunt Road: leaves, grass clippings, tree branches, limbs and brush. Residents can self-load compost to use in the garden.

Any resident of Monroe County can get a recycling tag to recycle the basics at the Waste Authority's two recycling sites. The Waste Authority can also help with everything from road-killed deer to disposing of electronics.

The professionals agree: "single stream" recycling mostly ends up in the landfill because of contamination. The Waste Authority's executive director, Jim Lambert, offers a ray of hope for plastics, however. "Advanced chemical recycling is coming to Pennsylvania," he says. "This process in effect re-makes plastics of all kinds — not just #1 and #2 — into the equivalent of new, virgin plastic, ready to be reused. That's *true* plastic recycling." The process should be available within about a year.

And what does all that mean for our drinking water?

Single-use plastic is a major polluter of creeks, streams, and groundwater — and not just the plastic bags that suffocate or entangle aquatic life. Plastic that doesn't get recycled breaks down into microscopic bits. These particles pollute the air, water, fish — and ourselves. Even newborns have been found to have these nano-plastics in their bodies.

So if you haven't already, ditch the single-use plastics. No water bottles, throw-away knives and forks, or grocery bags. Skip the single-stream recycling, and take your #1 and #2 plastics, cardboard, glass and metal cans to the Waste Authority's recycling centers.

And stay tuned for advanced chemical recycling. Coming soon!

Get more information at 570-643-6100 <https://thewasteauthority.com> — get your tag for their recycling sites, and check out "What do I do with..." for recycling ideas. Recycling Site locations:

DCNR Recycling Site
2174 PA-611
Swiftwater, PA 18370

Military Road Recycling Site
1114 Military Road
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

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>.