

League of Women Voters of Estes Park
PO Box 564
Estes Park, CO 80517



August 30, 2013

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
4300 Cherry Creek Dr. S.
Denver, CO 80246

SUBJECT: Final RREO Grant Report

Following is the final report for our grant project, "From Worst to First: Increasing Recycling and Waste Diversion in Estes Park."

Please call or email Project Coordinator Jim Cope or Grant Coordinator Anne Morris if you have questions or comments. We appreciate the support of the CDPHE and grant oversight committee for the opportunity and resources to further recycling in Estes Park!

Respectfully,


ANNE MORRIS

FINAL REPORT: League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee
"From Worst to First: Increasing Recycling in Estes Park"

I. ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

1. League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee
2. "From Worst to First: Increasing Recycling in Estes Park."
3. Project Coordinator: Jim Cope
4. Contact info: jimcope631@q.com, 970-586-4684
5. Person Completing Report: Anne Morris, Grant Coordinator
6. Contact info: grifton@aol.com, 970-488-0217

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II. WORK PLAN

Deliverable	Completion Date	Comments (if deliverable was not completed, explain why or what progress has been made)
Install signs at recycle center	6/1 2013	Details in narrative.
Publicize progress	7/15/2012	
Purchase bins	1/21/2013	
Bins arrive	February 2013	
Pour concrete pads	March-April 2013	Bin installation completed by town.
Finalize new service schedule with waste and recycling contractors	1/8/2013	
Publicize new bins	7/31/2013 (ongoing)	The LWV&CRC has publicized the bin project at every opportunity, and will continue to do so.
Finalize signage plans at the recycle center	11/9/2012	
Town Trustee approval of bin design	1/8/2013	
Publicity of progress attaining signs for the recycle center	N/A	To be candid, the signage enhancement project turned out to be a dud. With only one new sign, little to publicize.
Publicize recycle center enhancements	N/A	See above.
Complete education and marketing plan	8/31/2013	Still need to review year-long education and marketing effort to develop a reusable marketing plan.
Install recycling banner at gateway to Estes Park	1/22/2013	Banner displayed on a space-available basis on town poles at Hwy 34 and 36 intersection.
Procure signage for the recycle center	5/31/2013	Signage project has devolved to one new entry sign only.
Finalize plans with Waste Management to station LWV volunteers at recycle center during peak hours	N/A	Waste Management denied permission for volunteers to assist the public at the recycle center.

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III. PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Executive Summary

The CDPHE RREO grant of \$18,350 enabled the League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee (LWV&CRC) to successfully triple the opportunity for residents and visitors downtown to recycle by increasing the ratio of recycle bins to trash cans from approximately 1:11 to 1:4. The bulk of the grant funded a total of 27 new steel animal-resistant recycling bins. Grant funds also supported a student-led recycling initiative in the Estes Park Middle School, purchased additional “Estes Park Recycles” bumper stickers to increase community awareness, and led to modest signage enhancements at our community recycling center at the Larimer County Transfer Station.

Even more importantly for the future, this project increased the visibility of efforts to support recycling in our community. It enabled the LWV&CRC to partner with like-minded environmental and sustainability non-profit organizations and build strong, trusting and effective working relationships with Estes Park town leadership, including trustees and managers. Finally, this RREO grant—more than ten times the amount of the committee’s largest previous grant--gave LWV&CRC volunteers valuable experience in securing and executing a significant grant to include planning, managing and tracking finances, and completing administrative requirements.

2. Project Description & Overview of Work Completed

Over the past twelve months, the League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee has partnered with town staff and trustees, Estes Park schools, and local civic groups and businesses to execute the CDPHE RREO grant of \$18,350 to increase awareness and rates of recycling in Estes Park. As a result of this grant project, Estes Park has placed 24 new bear and animal-resistant recycling bins in the downtown business area as well as three new steel bins at the high-traffic Marina and town picnic pavilion. Funds from this grant were used to purchase recycling bins with a magnetized lid in support of a student-led recycling and sustainability project at the Estes Park Middle School. Finally, funds were used to purchase a large, heavy-duty outdoor banner and additional Estes Park Recycles Bumper Stickers to increase community awareness of recycling opportunities. In short, this grant went a long way to help Estes Park improve rates of recycling by residents, students, and visitors through securing new infrastructure and increasing awareness.

3. Summary of Findings & Results

Recycling metrics in Estes Park and measuring the impact of the new recycling bins are among the greatest challenges of this grant, in short because the recycling stream is not a closed system.

People and businesses in Estes Park may recycle in a number of ways. Curbside recycling is provided by three different companies, with collections handled in different ways. People may take recyclables to Larimer County sites, either Estes Park’s recycling center or to the Larimer County Landfill. Alternatively, people can take recycling to drop-off sites in neighboring communities including Loveland, Allenspark, Lyons or Boulder. In any case, there is no standard data.

Likewise, to our knowledge, the town of Estes Park does not formally track the volume of recyclables collected from the town’s new and existing recycling bins except anecdotally. As noted during the June site visit, the town’s waste and recycling contractor noted an approximate six

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percent increase in the amount of recyclable materials collected during the early summer season. We will continue to work with town public works staff to try and track trends for recycling downtown as well as work with Larimer County’s director of Solid Waste to make supportable estimates of recycling rates.

4. Summary of Unanticipated Outcomes or Roadblocks

a. The first major unanticipated roadblock was the administrative process of acquiring formal town board approval to accept new recycling bins and the cost of adding the bins to the town’s waste removal and recycling contract. While it slowed the process, this roadblock had a major silver lining: it raised the profile of the grant project and led to effective partnerships with town trustees, town staff, and the Bears Are Us and Association for Responsible Development civic groups. The vote by the town board to accept the bins was thus a community victory, and not just a milestone for the LWV&CRC grant project. The CDPHE’s approval to allow RREO funds to be combined with town funding to purchase dual trash/recycling bins was also an unanticipated beneficial outcome for the community. Not only are the new containers attractive (an important consideration for a mountain resort), but the bins are resistant to wildlife and will help prevent bears from being attracted and habituated to town waste receptacles as a food source.

b. A second unanticipated outcome or roadblock concerned the LWV&CRC’s efforts to enhance the signage at the county-provided recycling center. The LWV&CRC grant proposal requested approximately \$2,500 to replace or add signs to assist recyclers (e.g., by standardizing signage, repainting or replacing faded or worn out signs, adding signs with pictures or graphics to assist non-native English speakers) and promote safety (e.g., prevent recyclers from crossing the industrial area of the transfer station on foot).



Photos from early 2012 showing the condition of some of the signage at the recycling center that we hoped may have been redone or enhanced.

The project started out on a positive note with a visit to Steve Gillette, Larimer County director of Solid Waste, and an initial conference call with regional Waste Management staff to explain the goals and seek the way to move forward on the project. In the initial teleconference, Waste Management offered the services of their designers to assist with the project.

The project still appeared to be moving forward in a cooperative way following a November teleconference where local Waste Management team members volunteered to take on sign

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enhancement efforts in conjunction the county’s effort to make with similar upgrades at other Larimer County facilities. (This is what drove our midterm report request to reprogram grant funds from this initiative). To date, only one sign has been enhanced--for which we are appreciative--but we’ve been unable to get specific info on plans or timelines for any other changes that might be made. These projects may still be in the pipeline; we just don’t know.



One of the previous entrance signs (left) and the new sign provided by Waste Management. New sign includes the recycling center located within and also includes a “Thank You for Recycling” message.

Of greater concern to us in the long run than better signage is the lack of an effective working relationship with the local Waste Management staff at the Estes Park Transfer Station for this project and related recycling education initiatives. We’ve been asked by Waste Management to send our questions and requests to a regional representative and not go to the local staff directly. Despite good intentions, this has not been effective. We believe our community recycling efforts could be stronger if our local transfer station personnel would be empowered and willing to work with our community recycling committee directly.

5. Communication of Project Findings

Thanks to the support of Estes Park town leaders and staff, as well as support from the two local newspapers, we have been able to generate and maintain a consistent stream of news coverage over the course of this project. In addition to the public meetings required as part of the town approval of the recycling bins, we also garnered coverage for a Recycling Day town proclamation, Earth Day, Duck Race fundraiser, monthly LWV&CRC recycling awards to businesses and organizations, acquisition of ZeroHero recycling tents, implementation of Terracycling in the community and schools, and coverage of the CDPHE grant administrators’ visit in June.

The most enduring message, however, will come in the form of the 24 additional new recycling bins in our downtown business area. These bins promote recycling on-the-spot, but also convey the

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message that we are a community that cares about resources and wants to do a better job diverting resources from the local waste stream. We have already had inquiries from town trustees and residents on how we might be able to obtain more bins in the future!

6. Future Impact of the Project

As described in a previous section, the public approval process for the downtown recycling bins ended up generating enthusiastic public support for this project in particular, and for recycling in general. The new recycling bins, particularly models well-suited to a mountain community surrounded by wildlife, send a message that recycling is important to Estes Park.

As part of the learning process, LWV&CRC volunteers have worked over the summer of 2013 to incorporate recycling and other sustainable practices into the town governing process and strategic planning process. At the Aug. 13th town board meeting, town administrator Frank Lancaster reported that the town was in the process of purchasing additional bear-proof trash & recycling bins—and will most likely continue to do so as funding allows.

As a result of the increased exposure of the LWV&CRC through this project, the coordinator of Rocky Mountain National Park’s zero waste efforts contacted our group. We look forward to partnering with the Park over the next year to create a cadre of volunteers who will help Park employees meet our shared goal of diverting recyclable materials from the waste stream.

7. Financial Summary

Grant Budget Table

Description	Grant Funds Spent	Matching/In Kind Amount (if any)	Total Amount
Personnel Salaries	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tuition/Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Materials/Supplies/Equipment(under \$5000)	\$18,350.00	\$12,676.00	\$0.00
Equipment Purchases (over \$5000)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractors/Subcontractors	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Training/Education	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Marketing/Advertising	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Direct Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Project Cost:	\$18,350.00	\$12,676.00	\$0.00

Total award amount: \$18,350.00

Matching/In Kind amount includes \$12,576.00 from the town of Estes Park so the town could install dual animal-resistant trash/recycling bins and \$100 in donated transportation to collect the three locally-manufactured recycling bins from Greeley, CO.

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8. Conclusion

Most of the residents and visitors in Estes Park care deeply about the environment and are probably inclined to recycle if recycling were readily available. For a variety of reasons, recycling historically has been difficult in this mountain town. We do not have tax funding to underwrite commercial recycling collection and industrial-zoned real estate is not readily available for the kind of recycling center many in our community might want. Until recently, recycling was largely out-of-sight, out-of-mind.

Recent studies served as a wake up call. Larimer County officials estimated that Estes Park’s recycling rate was only about 8 percent—well below recycling rates just about anywhere else in the state or country. A study commissioned by the town found that Estes Park scored as “significantly worse” than other benchmark communities in recycling and sustainable practices. In the face of these statistics, the LWV&CRC launched a number of education and awareness initiatives to turn things around. These projects included establishing the REcycle Estes.org brand and web site, along with updated recycling guides and information brochures; radio, print, and movie theater public service announcements; and an informational video along with continuing to support recycling events in the town and schools. The RREO grant was an important next step in building momentum and public support for increasing recycling in Estes Park.

The CDPHE RREO grant of \$18,350 enabled the League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee (LWV&CRC) to successfully triple the opportunity for residents and visitors downtown to recycle by increasing the ratio of recycle bins to trash cans from approximately 1:11 to 1:4. The bulk of the grant funded a total of 27 new steel animal-resistant recycling bins. Grant funds also supported a student-led recycling initiative in the Estes Park Middle School, purchased additional “Estes Park Recycles” bumper stickers to increase community awareness, and led to modest signage enhancements at our community recycling center at the Larimer County Transfer Station.

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9. Appendices

- A. Grant Metrics Table (See Excel file “RREO.Final.Report.Grant.Metrics.LWVCRC.xls”)
- B. Map of Estes Park with Locations of CDPHE-funded Recycling Bins
- C. Community Leader Contact Information
- D. Manuals, Brochures, Print Advertisements, Pictures, Educational Materials, etc.
- E. Community Recycling Communication Plan

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Appendix A: Grant Metrics Table

See associated Excel file "RREO.Final.Report.Grant.Metrics.LWVCRC.xls"

No metrics to report since they are still figuring out how best to collect data. Will report data on Six Month Follow-Up Report.

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Appendix B: Map of Estes Park with Locations of CDPHE-funded Recycling Bins



Note: Map shows 25 bins, 24 funded by the CDPHE and one prototype purchased by Estes Park. Three additional bins are located off of this map at the Estes Park Marina and picnic pavilion.

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Appendix C: Community Leader Contact Information

Mr. John Ericson, Estes Park Town Trustee, 970-586-5042, jericson@estes.org,

Mr. Frank Lancaster, Estes Park Town Administrator, 970-577-3701, flancaster@estes.org

Dr. Tom Gootz, Bears Are Us, 970-586-9257, tdgootz@yahoo.com

Ms. Ruby Bode, M.Ed., Principal, Estes Park Middle School, 970-586-4439 x3205,
ruby_bode@psdr3.k12.co.us

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Appendix D: Photos of new recycling bins and representative examples of news coverage and marketing



One of several bins placed around downtown Confluence Park on the River Walk.



Bin located on Moraine Ave. in front of the iconic and historic Park Theater.



Bin located at Bond Park, site of weekly festivals and cultural events.

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New bins are located at each of the main entrances to Estes Park's Visitors Center.



One of two bins at the entrances to the outdoor Performance Park.



Two bins are placed in the central parking area adjacent to the library, Town Hall, and Bond Park.

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Recycling bin along the River Walk.



New bin (manufactured by Greeley's 5 Star Industries) located at the Estes Park Marina.



New bins at the Marina and picnic pavilion are also located on the multi-use Lake Estes Trail.

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Examples of news coverage and marketing efforts

Jean Weaver Supports Recycling In Estes Park



Jean Weaver, 35 year recycling advocate for Estes Park, recollected about how significant recycling was during World War II: "It was unpatriotic to not recycle." She is optimistic that more citizens will regain this attitude about recycling.



The image is a green graphic with a white border. At the top, the title "Jean Weaver Supports Recycling In Estes Park" is written in a white, sans-serif font. Below the title is a photograph of Jean Weaver, an elderly woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a bright pink jacket over a dark top. She is smiling and holding a small white sign with a green recycling symbol and the text "ESTES PARK RECYCLES". To the right of the photo is a block of text in white, sans-serif font. Below the text is a large, stylized green recycling symbol (three chasing arrows forming a triangle) with a white outline and a drop shadow effect.

LWV&CRC submitted photos and captions of local recyclers to the town's two newspapers.



Recycling Up 6% In Estes Park

Published in Estes Park News. Posted date: **June 19, 2013**

By: Kris Hazelton

Two years ago, Town Trustee John Ericson gave the League of Women Voters and the Recycling Committee a notice from the Colorado Municipal League that the Colorado Department of Health and Environment was offering grants to cities to help their recycling efforts.

Many are aware that in the Estes Valley, the recycling effort is in need of improvement. The group was eager to secure this grant and they submitted the request by way of Recycling Committee member Anne Morris who wrote out the detailed plan of action.

Much to their delight, the efforts of the Recycling Committee did not go unnoticed as earlier this year, they learned the Colorado Dept. of Health and Environment would award them \$18,350 to help purchase new trash cans and recycle bins for our community. The effort was to be a co-op with the Town who purchased 24 trash cans and the League of Women Voters and the Recycling Committee who purchased 24 bear resistant trash and recycle receptacles. The units were ordered and delivered and the Town installed them earlier this spring.

This week members of the State committee came to Estes Park to inspect the new receptacles. The group met with Town employees and members of the League of Women Voters and Recycling Committee so they could see for themselves where the trash cans and recycling bins were placed and to make sure installations were up to grant specifications.

Town Operations Manager Kevin McEachern led the shuttle tour and he told inspectors that with this project, the goal was to do three things. Add trash and recycle containers in as many places as possible and make them

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bear proof.

Last summer, many will remember bears getting into trash cans was a huge problem, partly because of the drought we experienced in the Estes Valley and partly because we didn't have bear proof trash cans anywhere in town. It was a free meal for a hungry bear! In order to keep bears wild and keep them from becoming human habituated and relying on trash as their main source of food, it is our responsibility to make sure trash isn't available to be an item on any bear's menu.

Town leaders figured out that bears got into trash cans overnight, when bears are most active so it was decided to collect trash from these town trash/recycle containers between 7-11 p.m., to help cut down any possible bear raids. This move has proven very effective to help curb the black bears access to any food scraps they might forage for in the bins.

Kevin also explained to inspectors that Town employees first put the new trash/recycle containers where ever there were problems with bears last season and in the higher people traffic areas such as at the Visitor's Center and at the west end of town, near Performance Park.

The good news that has already come from this is that recycling is up 6% from last year. Where there was an 11-1 ratio of trash to recycle last year, this year it is down to 4-1.

State inspectors were impressed with the placement and fast usage of these new containers and were happy to help be part of the solution in our battle to encourage more recycling and lessen our problem with bears getting into the trash.

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It's time we all realize the importance of recycling and that good environmental stewardship is vital to our future and the future of generations to come. We must strive to use less land for landfills because now, we can recycle so much that we used to just think of as trash.

The Recycling Committee keeps a list of items that can be recycled. Go to recycleestes.org for more information.



Neal Schuessler, Waste Management Grant Monitor, Anne Morris, Susie Gordon, Environmental Planner with Waste Management, Eric Heyboer, Program Administrator for the Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment, Trustee John Ericson, Maria Hernandez, State Health Dept. and Irene Little, League of Women Voters and Recycling Committee. Photo EP NEWS/ Kris Hazelton

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Estes Park Middle School receives LWV & Community Recycling award

By Anne Morris

Special to the Trail-Gazette

Posted: 07/27/2013 09:28:55 AM MDT

Students, staff, and faculty at Estes Park Middle School were recently presented with the May 2013 Recycler of the Month Award by the League of Women Voters & Community Recycling Committee. The LWV&CRC recognizes a local business or organization each month for leadership, commitment, or innovation in practicing the 3Rs of "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle."

For the students and employees of Estes Park Middle School, commitment to recycling and the environment is a tradition. Led and inspired by students and supported by faculty advisors and staff, the school participates in a variety of sustainability programs.

Members of the environmental club, known as the "Plastic Pulverizers," led a campaign to reduce the use of plastics and save the school district money by replacing plastic cutlery with metal cutlery in the cafeteria. Using EcoChallenge award money they'd won the year previously, students purchased metal cutlery and a magnetic bin lid for the school cafeteria.

The Student Council has worked with school janitors and Waste Management to collect and recycle paper from classrooms for about five years. This past year, the students also began collecting traditionally hard-to-recycle items in the lunchroom and shipping the materials to Terracycle, where they could be recycled or "upcycled" into new products. By collecting foil juice packets, plastic snack packaging and milk cartons, the group reduced the amount of trash going to the landfill from three bags a day to one.

"I'm proud of our students and their initiative to reduce waste in our school," said Ruby Bode, middle school principal. "They're environmentally aware and really make a difference in an area they're passionate about."

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She added that the school's recycling programs support the school district's end goals of promoting civic duty and environmental stewardship.

The Pulverizers included Skylar Shumate, Christy Kearsley, Kaezan Tag, Kelley Dennison, Daniel Menger, Hunter Sallee, Mariah Pena, Alina Frontczak and Kelston Glassman, and were mentored by faculty advisor Jennifer Taylor.

Student Council members included Ted Dumont, Ben Switzer, Skylar Shumate, Savannah Erskine, Mary Ringgenberg, Aspen Turner, Mariah Pena, Bailey Ash and Molly Morgan, and were supported by faculty advisors Carol Carner and Allison Skapin. Erin Curran, a parent, volunteered numerous hours helping coordinate between the students and Terracycle.

Bode said a major component to the school's recycling success is the enthusiastic support of the janitors. "We couldn't recycle as we do without Andrew Sweet and Keller Patterson," she said. "They're awesome!"

She said the lunchroom staff's assistance was also critical to the Student Council being able to initiate their Terracycle program.

The LWV&CRC welcomes suggestions for other Estes Park businesses and organizations that deserve to be recognized for reducing, reusing and recycling. Pass ideas to Judi Smith at 586-4530.

Pictures will be available in follow-up report.