

Are We Trashing the Apple?

Explore NYC's Garbage Crisis with Recycle-A-Bicycle



North Brooklyn Recycle-A-Bicycle
 Recycling and biking by kids for New York City's environment
 Summer Programs for Students — www.bway.net/~rab
 Funded by the Citizens Committee for New York City

► Summer 1999 North Brooklyn Recycle-A-Bicycle map-makers on the last day 60-mile bike ride.



Now that you know about the garbage crisis in NYC, RAB hopes you will gear up and get involved in ways to **Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.** ▼

REDUCE

- Buy less
- Buy things that last longer
- Buy large economy sizes
- Buy only what you need
- Avoid buying low-quality items
- Bring your own shopping bag
- Stop junk mail: contact Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Ass'n, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735
- Purchase items with warranties

REUSE

- ▲ Buy refillable, reusable products
- ▲ Take care of what you buy

- ▲ Donate unwanted things
- ▲ Borrow/rent items
- ▲ Save containers for other uses
- ▲ Return hangers to dry cleaners
- ▲ Buy second-hand or used items
- ▲ Compost food waste

RECYCLE

- ◆ Buy recycled materials
- ◆ Participate in neighborhood and workplace recycling programs
- ◆ Motivate others to recycle
- ◆ Don't contaminate recycling bins
- ◆ Buy a recycled bicycle — call RAB at 718-852/5668

The Garbage Crisis

The average New York City resident produces 6.9 pounds of garbage daily.

Since 1948, barges have been hauling up to 25,000 tons of garbage per day to Fresh Kills in Staten Island — the only landfill for residential waste in New York City. In 2001, this landfill will close!

New York City residents are NAGging and GAGging under the burden of overwhelming garbage! Community groups such as Neighbors Against Garbage (NAG) of Greenpoint/Williamsburg and Groups Against Garbage Sites (GAGS) of Red Hook are fighting to save their neighborhoods from garbage.

More waste transfer stations, where our garbage is exported to and from, are planned as Fresh Kills closes. Unfortunately many transfer stations are proposed for waterfront neighborhoods — industrial areas, primarily Greenpoint/Williamsburg, Red Hook, and the South Bronx. Imagine a 48-acre transfer station in your backyard. The people of Red Hook face this smelly, noisy, and unhealthy possibility.

In Greenpoint/Williamsburg 22 transfer stations are already in operation! More garbage and trucks will make existing health problems, such as asthma, worse.

Instead of increasing the amount of garbage going to our neighborhoods, New York City needs a plan to share the burden of garbage, to utilize water and rail transport, and to reduce the amount we create.

Our Garbage Trail

Summer 1999 students of North Brooklyn Recycle-A-Bicycle map-making program cycled to investigate issues of garbage and waste transfer stations in New York City.

Community people guided us through each neighborhood's problems. We visited landfills, transfer stations, recycling plants, and waterfront neighborhoods and explored solutions. On this green map, you will find ways

to reduce, reuse, and recycle garbage,

as well as examples of green businesses.



Student mapmakers
 David Almeida, Norma Chia, Keith Falcon, Christine Fonseca, Jose Garzon, Kamil Nowakowski, Jason Perez, Amanda Rodriguez, and Nairobi Walker
Student/teacher assistants
 Tomas Rodriguez and Ninaska Salcedo
Map coordinators
 Regina Weir, Recycle A Bicycle
 Lara Warren, Council on the Environment
Production coordinators
 Betsy Kissam and Regina Weir

Map consultants
 Wendy Braver and Beth Ferguson, Green Map System (www.greenmap.org/nyc); Christina Datz, Lower East Side Ecology Center; Ed Fishkin, Woodhull Hospital; Steve Hammer, Hammer Environmental Consulting; Joe Holtz, Park Slope Food Co-op; Pat Jasaitis, Brooklyn Botanic Garden; Chris Jensen, IS 318; Robert LaValva, Department of Sanitation; Ina Perelson and Irene Van Slyke, North Brooklyn Recycle-A-Bicycle; Glen Reed, NAG; Lou Sones, GAGS; Paul Turci, City Green; Jim Vanwoert, BFI

Mapping the Garbage Trail

Staten Island

1. Fresh Kills Landfill

Our longest cycle trip was to Fresh Kills. When this landfill closes in 2001, all the garbage mounds will be covered with plastic and soil. Grass will grow on top to make these garbage mountains look natural. The landfill is a very interesting place to visit. Scientists have developed ways to recycle and sell captured methane gas produced when garbage decomposes: look for the pipes channeling the gas into tanks for reuse.

Brooklyn: Redhook

2. Groups Against Garbage Sites

How would you feel if thousands of tons of garbage passed through your neighborhood 24 hours a day? Well, Redhook residents don't seem to have a choice. But people like Lou Sones of GAGS (Groups against Garbage Sites) are working to prevent 48 acres of waterfront from becoming a transfer station. Instead, this land could be used to benefit the community. Which would you prefer? For information, call 718-855/5531.

3. Great Harbor Design

Joel Farber of the Great Harbor Design Center, has created "Ice Stone," a tile made with glass and cement. This recycled product can save energy and reduce garbage going to the landfill. His company is not only making money, but helping the environment. Can you think of a way to recycle and reuse a product?

Greenpoint/Williamsburg

4. Newtown Creek

The number of transfer stations in the this area is staggering. NAG (Neighbors Against Garbage) showed us some of the 22 stations here. Each day thousands of diesel trucks, spewing noxious fumes and noise, barrel down these streets to deliver garbage. The garbage is compacted and reloaded for further transport. To improve our neighborhoods, we need a plan to use rail and existing marine transfer stations instead of trailer trucks.

5. BFI Recycling Plant

Do you know what happens to your recyclables? Workers at BFI separate, sort, and bale plastics, metals, bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, and aluminum. They handle 16,000 tons of newspapers and 11,000 tons of bottles and cans each month. We saw firsthand how hard their jobs are. Workers have to sort through contaminated items on conveyor belts to retrieve the good stuff; you can help by recycling carefully. Finished bales go to other destinations to be recycled into new products. Did you know that you need 95% less energy to make aluminum when it is recycled?



Eco-Solutions: Green Businesses and Composting

The mission of green businesses is to reduce pollution and give back to the community in a safe, nonhazardous way.

6. Park Slope Food Co-op

Park Slope Food Co-op composts its organic waste which is then used to grow more organic produce. The Co-op donates food to a soup kitchen. Members, who run the Co-op, buy their food at a reduced cost. Tel: 718-622/0560.

7. Ecomat

Ecomat employees dry-clean clothes in

a nonhazardous way, giving the community a cleaner choice. Tel. 718-230/2990.

8. Recycle-A-Bicycle

The mission of Recycle-A-Bicycle projects is to collect old and unwanted bikes and fix them up so that students and consumers can ride them. Call 718-852/5668 or visit our web site at www.bway.net/~rab

Composting makes nutrient-rich soil for plants out of recycled food waste.

9. Brooklyn Botanic Garden

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden Compost

Center taught us how to make compost. Many people might think compost stinks but it really doesn't. Call the BBG Help line (718-623-7290) to learn how to compost.

10. Lower East Side Ecology Center

Christina Datz Romero has created a community compost center. People bring their food scraps to her at the Union Square Green Market and buy finished compost for their gardens. Christina has 16 aerated compost bins producing about 36 tons of soil a year. In fact, she has created an entire garden from it. Tel. 212-420/0621.