

# History of Dartmouth Recycles



Established on July 1, 1988, DARTMOUTH RECYCLES was a campus-wide attempt to divert as much of the College's waste stream as was economically feasible from entering the local landfill. The impetus for the program is two-fold. First, the College was searching for a means by which to reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill, as landfill tipping fees were increasing every year. Second, the Environmental Studies

Division of the Outing Club (ESD) had already begun a recycling program that, while well received by the College, was just too small an operation to meet the demands of the Campus.

In December of 1987, Dick Plummer, then the Director of Buildings and Grounds, suggested that the College establish a Campus-wide recycling program. Bill Hochstin was hired to research and direct a recycling program that would be comprehensive in its goal to reduce the escalating costs of disposal. Hochstin contacted James Hornig, the chair of the Environmental Studies Program, who in turn set up a meeting with Professor Andrew Friedland, who teaches an Environmental Policy Formulation class. After a few meetings, Hornig and Friedland convinced the class to audit the College's waste stream and "provide conclusions to the College's waste stream".

From March to May of 1988, the class researched the College's trash. The students monitored the entire College's trash for one week in April, weighing and sorting the trash from each bag. The trash was then categorized, and the class projected volumes of each category of trash based on the amount collected that week. The final report entitled, "Reduce, Recycle, and Educate: A Solid Waste Management Program For Dartmouth College" claimed that 52% of the College's waste stream was potentially recyclable. With this report in hand and two students from the class as interns, Hochstin established DARTMOUTH RECYCLES on July 1, 1988.

## **Projects**

Some of the first projects that Hochstin and the interns worked on were researching markets for aluminum cans and white paper, the first products that were recycled. In addition to this, they designed containers for the recycling of these products around Campus. An integral part of the program that began at its inception and continues today is the training of and support from the custodial staff at Dartmouth. Hochstin approached the staff not only to train them, but also to receive their valuable input and suggestions.

DARTMOUTH RECYCLES has grown in many directions by expanding the lists of items recycled and by creating or participating in new recycling projects. The following are several of the projects that DARTMOUTH RECYCLES (DR!) has been a part of:

## **Newspaper for Bedding**

In the Fall of 1988, DR! wrote a grant with Greg Fairbrothers (Tuck '88) through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Cabot Coop Farmers to investigate the use of a rotary hay bale chopper for

the reuse of newspaper as animal bedding. At the time the College was paying \$45 per ton to get their newspaper recycled which was cheaper than the \$60 per ton the landfill charged for disposal. The farmer covers the stall beds with the newspaper and then composts it along with the manure. In order to be used safely as fertilizer, the newspaper print was checked for toxicity and then determined safe.

### **Enviromug**

As a means to encourage students, faculty and employees to use less disposable paper goods in the dining facilities, the interns designed a 22 oz plastic mug that could be reused in place of paper or plastic cups. The mug, which is redesigned each year, is sold on Campus and is usable anywhere on Campus for a discount at DDS.

### **Trashcapade**

An event that sparked increased awareness at Dartmouth and served to bring recycling to the forefront of Campus issues was the Trashcapade. During the fall of 1989, over 100 students and faculty carried their trash on their backs for one week. At the end of the week, all participants weighed their trash and recyclables during a special event with environmental speeches and music on the green. The event, sponsored by ESD and DR!, allowed people to witness the reality of all of the trash they generate. It was also an opportunity for people to examine their own trash and realize that much more of it could be recycled.

### **Composting**

Rather than throw away the fruit and vegetable scraps (pre-consumer) that Dartmouth's dining services produces every day, a composting program began in the fall term of 1991. Composting began in the spring of 1992 at the Fullington Farm site. The two main components composted were vegetable scraps (200-300 pounds delivered daily) and cow manure from a local farm. The composting that spring diverted over 50,000 pounds of waste from the main waste stream.

### **Tubestock**

An event known as Tubestock occurred on the Connecticut River during the summer. While the day is spent floating on the water on inner tubes and listening to a live band play on shore; not everything that happens is benign. Because many people drink and eat while out floating, the Connecticut has been repeatedly "trashed" by cans, bottles, garbage and abandoned tubes. In response, DR! and ESD created recycle floats in 1992 and 1993 that were on the water among the crowds, giving tubestockers a place to dispose of their trash. In addition, the Student Assembly provided a stipend to allow ESD to buy tubes from anyone willing to turn them in at Ledyard, thereby providing a financial alternative to letting them float downstream.