

# RE/NEWS



Tips and resources for smart residential recycling, composting, waste disposal, and keeping our water clean

Volume 1 / Issue No. 2 Winter 2018



## 40 Years of Making a Splash

*Cleaning the St. Louis River*

In late September 1978, the operator on duty at the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District noted in the first hand-written log book, that the first flow of dirty water had arrived at the WLSSD treatment plant. Years of planning, engineering and construction had come down to this moment...and clean water flowed out. In fact, the water cleaned by the WLSSD treatment plant met all state and federal water quality requirements from day one.

It's easy to forget how far we've come in the past 40 years to return our waters to a level of quality that will support human sports and recreation. Today, the St. Louis River and Lake Superior are a source of recreation, commerce, tourism, drinking water

and an enriched quality of life in the region. However, remediating these waters has not been an effort without hard work, political struggles, and the commitment of cities, businesses and residents in the region.

In the early 1970s, the St. Louis River was in trouble. Years of dumping waste into the water had left the river a polluted mess, threatening wildlife and causing significant fish kills. Recently, a resident shared that he remembered how the St. Louis River was before WLSSD's modern, effective wastewater treatment plant began operations, saying that his " brother used to bring home the odd walleye from the St. Louis River prior to the

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*Questions?*

Visit [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com) or call the Hotline at 218.722.0761

# Garden Green® Compost Grows Great Gardens!

Not to brag (here it comes), but WLSSD has the world's best compost advertising campaign ever, right in our own communities. Not only do we use local talent to highlight the glory of Garden Green® compost, but we help grow amazing things: food, flowers, knowledge and enthusiasm, to name just a few of the harvests of our Garden Green® Grant-Exchange Program.

WLSSD partners with local organizations to sow interest in soil health while providing a living demonstration of our compost in action. WLSSD grants small amounts of Garden Green® compost to local grantees that agree to amend their soils according to best practice, and then go on to GROW, showing passers-by and the rest of us the benefits of compost.

Have you seen our small white signs in community or school gardens near you? Special thanks to this year's crop of grantees for showing us how good soils yield great results.

Inquire about the 2019 Grant-Exchange program at [grants@wlssd.com](mailto:grants@wlssd.com).



*Living example: Garden Green® helped Duluth Edison Charter Schools North Star Academy garden flourish.*



*Student farmers at Meyers-Wilkins School worked with the Duluth Community School Collaborative and the Healthy Northland Farm to Food program to grow delicious snacks and lovely flowers.*

## WINTER TO-DO LIST



Old holiday light strands piled in a tangled heap? Recycle them FREE at WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center. We'll take other electrical cords, too. Small electric appliances like coffee makers can also be recycled for just \$2 each!



Deep-frying a turkey this holiday season? Remember, you can bring used cooking oil to WLSSD's Household Hazardous Waste Facility. Any leftover food scraps can go to a Food Scrap Drop Site. Check out the details on page 3.



Design a new garden bed for springtime planting. Whether it's for vegetables, flowers or to try out the latest pollinator-friendly plants, the University of Minnesota Extension is a great place to start. Look for the yard and garden section at [extension.umn.edu](http://extension.umn.edu) to learn more.



New Year's challenge: Bring the reusable coffee mugs and water bottles wherever you go. Reduce the purchase of single-use cups.



### FACT:

IN THE NORTHLAND, WE STILL THROW AWAY MORE THAN 870 TONS OF CARDBOARD EVERY YEAR. THAT'S ENOUGH TO COVER THE LENGTH OF THE LAKEWALK 74 TIMES.

We've made great progress in keeping recyclable products out of our landfills. But the facts show that we have a long way to go. Learn what you can do to recycle more at [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com).



# 40 Years...

## Continued from page 1

plant going in and the whole house reeked as soon as he put a knife to a fish. It had a very distinctive odor.”

The cleanup of the River had been a long time coming.

In the 1800s, typhoid outbreaks killed hundreds and Duluth moved its drinking water intake a long way out in the lake in response.

In 1938, newspapers reported that 13 pipes just in Duluth dumped “a never-ceasing flood of pollution” directly into Lake Superior.

In the 1950s, the river killed thousands of walleye and suckers and they rotted

on the riverbanks. Around that time, somebody took a picture of Lyell Brand, a local sportsman and environmental activist, poking a stick into a layer of sludge on top of the water, the river hidden below the lumpy brown mass.



*Lyell Brand pokes a stick at the surface of the St. Louis River (credit Willard Munger family archives).*

And there was despair. “People won’t get interested until the water from their faucets starts to turn brown,” said Rep. Willard Munger of Duluth in 1952.

Citizens didn’t give up, however.

They formed groups to fight pollution in the River, and with Munger’s diligence, Minnesota passed a law to allow communities to band together to address water pollution and treat wastewater. Eventually, nearly 20 communities on the lower St. Louis River joined forces, and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District was created in 1971 to clean up the river and the land surrounding it.

The U.S. Clean Water Act in 1972 was passed and provided funding for modern, effective wastewater treatment plants across the county. With 75% federal money, along with the remainder from state and local sources, the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District built a large, regional treatment plant and a system of pipes to collect dirty water from 18 communities in the

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## RECYCLE YOUR FOOD SCRAPS

- Keep a container near the kitchen sink.
- Line the container with a compostable bag (available for free at most drop sites) with the Biodegradable Products Institute logo.
- Fill with food scraps—from prep, plate scraping, fridge clean-out....
- Drop full bags off at a Food Scrap Drop Site.



### FOOD SCRAP DROP SITES

#### YARD WASTE COMPOST SITE

27th Ave W & the Waterfront  
*Free bags available from staff*

#### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

27th Ave W & the Waterfront  
*Free bags available from staff*

#### MATERIALS RECOVERY CENTER

Rice Lake & Ridgeview Roads  
*Free bags available from staff*

*WLSSD Locations available during regular facility hours. Check [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com) for hours.*

#### MARSHALL HARDWARE

Parking lot at 4415 E. Superior St.  
*Bags for sale in store*

#### CHESTER CREEK CAFÉ

1902 E. 8th St.  
*Free bags inside café*

#### WILLARD MUNGER INN

7408 Grand Ave.  
*Free bags available from staff*

#### LAKE SUPERIOR COLLEGE

W-building parking lot at  
2101 Trinity Rd.

*Free compostable bags also available at WLSSD Office, 2626 Courtland Street, Duluth*

Email [gardengreen@wlssd.com](mailto:gardengreen@wlssd.com) with questions.

# 40 Years...

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region, reaching as far as Carlton County. The plant opened for business in September 1978.

In December 1978, the Cloquet Pine Knot newspaper ran a story with the headline "Treatment plant radically improves water in weeks."

In 1980, a fisheries study found breeding-size trout in the harbor. In 1982, the Duluth EPA lab said the river tested clean enough to support "a healthy aquatic community."



WLSST construction (April 1978)

The work of cleaning up the river continues. Although the waters are improved and thriving, the legacy of pollution still exists in the sediments. Wastewater treatment plants and pollution prevention programs work together to help keep our region's waters clean. Our entire community must remain committed to ensure we support efforts to continue to improve the River and remedy the pollution of the past.

While aging infrastructure, increasingly stringent water quality standards, and new pollutants continue to provide challenges, WLSST and the communities it serves remain dedicated to the mission: to protect public health and safety, preserve our natural resources, and to prevent and abate pollution. The recovery of the St. Louis River, now a premier walleye fishery and recreation destination, is a testament to that dedication.



WLSST's wastewater treatment plant today

We invite you to tip a glass of cool, clean Lake Superior water to celebrate our 40th, and we look forward to working with everyone toward an even cleaner future. ●

## 4 TIPS FOR BETTER RECYCLING



- 1 Flatten as many of your containers as possible to save space and make transporting recyclables more efficient.
- 2 Rinse containers and remove caps from glass bottles.
- 3 Don't put plastic bags in your household recycling bin. Use paper bags to collect recycling since the bag can be recycled with other paper.
- 4 Shop wisely. Buy reusable, returnable and recyclable items. Buy items made from recycled material.

## NO CURBSIDE RECYCLING?



Look for recycling information in your town or city newsletter or at [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com). You'll find convenient recycling drop-off centers near you.

CANOSIA	GRAND LAKE	NORTH STAR
DULUTH	LAKEWOOD	RICE LAKE
FREDENBERG	MIDWAY	SOLWAY

Bring these items to a recycling drop-off center.

- **PLASTIC** (household bottles, tubs, jugs, jars and lids)
- **GLASS** (food and beverage bottles and jars)
- **METAL** (food and beverage cans)
- **NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES** (including glossy inserts)
- **OFFICE PAPER** (letter, copier, notebook and computer paper)
- **BOXBOARD AND PASTEBOARD** (cereal, soda and pasta boxes)
- **CORRUGATED CARDBOARD** (clean, free of oil and food)



Now recycle your clean and dry plastic bags in the neighborhood. Look for the plastic bag recycling cart inside your recycling drop-off center.



WESTERN LAKE SUPERIOR SANITARY DISTRICT

# FACILITY HOURS

For holiday hours or questions,

Visit [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com) or call  
the WLSSD Hotline at 218.722.0761

## Materials Recovery Center

Corner of Rice Lake & Ridgeview Roads

Mixed waste	.....	\$22/cu yd
Microwaves	.....	1 free per day, \$5 each add'l
Appliances	.....	\$5 each
Tires*	.....	4 free per day, \$3 each add'l
Household Electronics	.....	\$15, 12, 9, 2 or <b>FREE</b>
Recyclables, fluorescent bulbs, metal	.....	<b>FREE</b>

\*other prices apply for larger commercial & off-road tires

### YEAR-ROUND

Tuesday	9am - 4pm
Wednesday	9am - 4pm
Thursday	9am - 4pm
Friday	9am - 4pm
Saturday	9am - 4pm
Sunday, Monday	Closed

## Household Hazardous Waste Facility

27th Ave West & Courtland Street

Paint products	.....	<b>FREE</b>
Button batteries	.....	<b>FREE</b>
Used oil and filters	.....	<b>FREE</b>
Chemicals and pesticides	.....	<b>FREE</b>
Fluorescent bulbs	.....	<b>FREE</b>

### YEAR-ROUND

Thursday	9am - 4pm
Friday	9am - 4pm
Saturday	9am - 4pm
Sunday - Wednesday	Closed

## Yard Waste Compost Site

27th Ave West & Courtland Street

Holiday Trees ..... **FREE**  
**'Treecycle'** your holiday tree this season.  
 Wreaths, stands, garland & other holiday decorations should be placed in your trash.  
 Full list of 'Treecycle' locations at [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com).

### LATE DECEMBER - JANUARY 31

Daily	7am - 5pm
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Season is over for regular services.  
Site reopens in April as weather permits.

Residential prices are listed. Non-residential customers call 218.722.3336 for pricing.

# CARLTON COUNTY FACILITIES

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

1950 Hwy 210, Carlton

Household hazardous waste accepted at no charge from residents.



Closed for the season  
Reopens in May 2019  
Residents may also use the WLSSD HHW Facility.

## Transfer Station

1950 Hwy 210, Carlton

Solid/demolition waste, appliances, electronics, tires and brush accepted for a fee from Carlton residents. Look for the food scrap drop site, too.

Winter hours - November 1 to March 31  
Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:00 pm  
Saturday 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

For rural recycling shed locations and hours, visit [www.co.carlton.mn.us/254/Recycling](http://www.co.carlton.mn.us/254/Recycling)

# TRASH TRIVIA



## QUESTION

**When was the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District created?**

All answers received by 5 pm on Friday, January 4, will be entered into a drawing for a reusable shopping bag kit with recyclable items. Please email your answer to [re-news@wlssd.com](mailto:re-news@wlssd.com).

## LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER

**Q. Where can clean, dry plastic bags be recycled?**

**A.** Most grocery stores and department stores have receptacles for plastic bag recycling. You can also recycle them at WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center and Household Hazardous Waste Facility. This past summer, the rural recycling drop-off centers also added plastic bag recycling service. See details on page 4.

A local hauler also provides service for commercial plastic film collection. Businesses should contact WLSSD (218.722.3336) for more information!

\*Limit one Trash Trivia winner per household per year

# Q&A



*Have a question?*

Email your question to  
[re-news@wlssd.com](mailto:re-news@wlssd.com) or  
contact us at [wlssd.com](http://wlssd.com)

## Where can I safely dispose of used sharps?



Got sharps?

We'll take them off your hands! WLSSD accepts sharps at its Household Hazardous Waste Facility from area residents, year round. Sharps, used or unused, can be dropped off at no cost. Don't forget about used pet sharps!

Just collect your sharps in a thick plastic container or red sharps bin, secure the lid with tape, and drop them off. We have stickers available at HHW to clearly label your container. •

## What do I do with my old mattress and box spring?

Finally tossing out the pull-out couch from Grandma's basement? Upgrading to a king, or just have an old mattress that needs to go? We can help! Clean and dry mattresses are accepted at WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center for \$12 each. Wet and/or dirty mattresses can also be dropped off for \$14 each.

Need it picked up? Check with your garbage hauler. Some furniture stores also accept old mattresses with the purchase of a newer model. •

## No Time to Waste *Finding Disposal Options is as easy as 1-2-3*

It's our aim to provide great customer service while providing convenient and affordable options for residents to dispose of materials that are often difficult to manage. Some wastes can be hazardous to human health and the natural environment, so we appreciate that our community members rely on our popular facilities for proper disposal as they manage their busy lives.

Customer convenience is important, and we review our operations to ensure safety, effectiveness and efficiency while meeting the varied needs of the people in our area. We do our best, but also realize that WLSSD hours, locations and types of services won't be convenient for everyone.

What can you do if our facility hours and services don't work with your

schedule? The good news is, depending on the materials you have for disposal, there are other local facilities with hours or locations that may better suit your needs. Finding these resources is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. WLSSD's disposal guide (available 24/7 on our website homepage) allows you to search by waste type and provides you with disposal options in our region.
2. Search online for waste drop-off locations, dumpster rentals and junk pickup services in your area. A number of privately-owned waste disposal services operate in the region such as landfills, recycling sites,

and waste hauling services. Be sure to contact these businesses in advance to be sure you understand the types of wastes they can accept, their hours and pricing.

3. Our helpful staff can provide you with information about proper disposal options. Staff is available Monday-Friday from 8-4:30 at 218.722.3336.

We're proud to provide safe, reliable waste disposal options and positive experiences, and reduced waste sent to landfills. Working together to properly manage wastes, we can care for our beautiful region. •

# RE/NEWS

Recycled paper made with 10% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine-free

A newsletter about solid waste and wastewater treatment within the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District, published for residents of the WLSSD service area. Comments and questions are welcome at [re-news@wlssd.com](mailto:re-news@wlssd.com) or 218.722.3336. WLSSD provides award-winning wastewater treatment and solid waste management for a 530-square-mile service area in St. Louis and Carlton counties.

### WESTERN LAKE SUPERIOR SANITARY DISTRICT

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