

RE/NEWS

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



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Recycle Your Holidays

Celebrate in waste-free style

The holiday season brings family gatherings, traditions, company parties, treats around every corner, and heaps of trash. In fact, Americans produce 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and the New Year, yikes! And that doesn't include the extra swell of recyclables that we all send to the curb during the holiday rush. This year, let's put the waste-free shell in the nutcracker. Here are a few tips to reduce the holiday trash bulge.

Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Friendsgiving or Festivus, think about how you can pull it off without sending a slug of food into the trash. On

average, 40% of the food we purchase ends up in the trash. The first step is to purchase less. If you're hosting, check an online portion calculator to help you decide how much turkey you actually need.

Do your best to rightsize other dishes to avoid excessive leftovers. Some hosts have a leftover party and encourage all guests to bring a reusable to-go container to fill with bits of turkey, green bean casserole, and pie. Others send holiday leftovers straight to the pot for a soup or stew. The freezer is also a great option for anything that **continued on page 2 →**

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Visit wlssd.com or call
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Recycle Your Holidays...

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won't get eaten in the next three days. Finally, if the baked beans do end up crusting over in the back of the fridge, make a run to a WLSSD food scrap drop site. We'll compost it for you and keep those resources out of the landfill.



Gifts can be a touchy subject, but they offer another wealth of options when it comes to reducing waste. Skipping the gifts altogether is as waste-free as you can get, but it's a hard sell in most groups. How about making some guidelines instead? Try mandating that all gifts must be re-gifted from things you already own, no shopping. Love

the rush of shopping for the perfect gift? Try limiting it to resale shops instead of standard retailers. This way there's no extra packaging or wasted resources from producing new stuff. Want to take it a step further? Try requiring gifts to be experiences only, or get your creative juices flowing with all homemade gifts. Once you've agreed on a waste reduction strategy, remind your guests to continue the trend when they choose their wrappings. Use an old newspaper, pick up some flour sacks (they are cost effective and a great size for wrapping), or just skip the wrapping altogether.

Decorations can also create a glittery pile of waste. For starters, be sure that you're reusing decorations from one year to the next. Homemade

decorations like popcorn

or dried cranberry stringers can also make great waste-free decorations. If you choose a fresh tree, be sure that it traveled the shortest possible distance to get to you, and always drop your tree off for Treecycling after you're done celebrating. If you choose an artificial tree, keep in mind that it takes about 20 years of use to make up for the resources used to create the tree. Make sure it's a tree that you will love for years to come. Opt for LED light strands to save energy, and be sure to recycle old lights at WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center.

And that's a waste-free holiday season in a nutshell! •



It's Fun to Celebrate the C-W-A!

In 1972, the Clean Water Act (CWA) set into motion initiatives to improve water quality in U.S. waterways. Congress appropriated funds to build and upgrade wastewater infrastructure across the country, including millions of dollars to construct WLSSD's wastewater collection system and treatment facilities.

WLSSD kicked off the 50th year of the Clean Water Act with staff, family and community at an open house on October 18th—50 years TO THE DAY of the passage of the CWA—to recognize water quality improvements and to

highlight WLSSD's efforts to restore and protect the St. Louis River!

The event serves as a reminder to celebrate clean water every day and take actions that keep our rivers and lakes swimmable and fishable!

- 1. Don't rush to flush!** WLSSD welcomes toilet paper and natural human byproducts. Anything else (like rags, paper towels, and "flushable" wipes) can clog pipes and damage equipment en route to WLSSD. Every time you decide to flush one of these items instead of throwing it in the trash, WLSSD staff have to pull it out and bring it to the landfill—YUCK!
- 2. Refrain from sending stain down the drain!** Products like paints, stains, and motor oil are reused, recycled or safely disposed of at our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility.
- 3. PFAS are Pfrustrating!** PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are human-made chemicals used to make things slippery. Non-stick cookware,

rain- and stain-proof fabrics, food packaging, cosmetics and other common household items can contain PFAS. There is no way to remove these chemicals from wastewater, so upstream pollution prevention is our community's best bet! When you use your consumer power to avoid purchasing PFAS-containing products, you'll reduce your exposure and reduce the demand for their manufacture, keeping them out of the environment.

- 4. Heavy metals are meddlers!** Did you know WLSSD works with dental practices to collect mercury-containing "silver" fillings so they don't go into the sewer system? Every little bit adds up to keep mercury out of the water. You can do your part by bringing heavy metal-containing household items—like fluorescent bulbs, button and lithium batteries, and old fever thermometers, to the HHW Facility free of charge. •





WESTERN LAKE SUPERIOR SANITARY DISTRICT

FACILITY HOURS

*For holiday hours or questions,
Visit wlssd.com or call
the Hotline at 218.722.0761*

MATERIALS RECOVERY CENTER

Corner of Rice Lake &
Ridgeview Roads

Mixed waste	\$24/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 FREE
Recyclables, fluorescent bulbs, metal	FREE

*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	FREE
Button batteries	FREE
Used oil and filters	FREE
Chemicals and pesticides	FREE
Fluorescent bulbs	FREE

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 .	

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.



Don't Let FOG Ruin the Party!

From deep-fried turkeys to latkes, food is a great way to bring people together during the winter months. When planning your meal, don't forget about the fats, oils and grease (FOG) you might create.

It's tempting to dump FOG down the drain. Don't do it! When fats, oils and grease enter pipes and sewer systems, they can cause sewage backups or buildup. Over time, damage caused by these backups leads to costly repairs.

What should you do instead? Cool and drain FOG into a sealable container. If you won't reuse it, place the container in your household trash. Scrape or use a paper towel to collect any additional FOG remaining on your dishes before washing. If you only generate small amounts of FOG from daily cooking, keep a container in the refrigerator to collect it each day; throw in the trash when full.

Planning a big fish fry or other deep-fried feast? Cool and drain used cooking oil to bring to WLSSD's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility. We aren't able to return your container, but reusing the bottle your oil came in works well. Do your part during the post-party clean-up to help properly dispose of FOG! •

FOOD SCRAP DROP SITES

CHESTER CREEK CAFÉ

1902 E. 8th St.
Free bags inside café

LAKE SUPERIOR BREWING

5324 E. Superior St.
Dumpster located on west side near Lakewalk

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

2501 Woodland Ave.
Free bags available from staff

LAKE SUPERIOR COLLEGE

W-building parking lot at
2101 Trinity Rd.

WILLARD MUNGER INN

7408 Grand Ave.
Free bags available from staff

YMCA @ ESSENTIA WELLNESS CENTER

4289 Ugstad Rd., Hermantown
Free bags at Member Services desk

MATERIALS RECOVERY CENTER

Rice Lake & Ridgeview Rds.
Free bags available from staff

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

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

YARD WASTE COMPOST SITE

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

WLSSD Locations available during regular facility hours. Check wlssd.com for hours.

Free bags also available at WLSSD's Administrative Office, 2626 Courtland St.

Q&A



Have a question?

Email your question to
re-news@wlssd.com or
contact us at wlssd.com

How much pizza is ok to recycle with my pizza box?

A Short answer? Pizza is not recyclable! However, the latest research shows that a bit of grease isn't too problematic for the recycling process. As long as you scrape crumbs, sauce, and cheese in with the rest of your food scraps (or the trash), your pizza box can be recycled. This high-quality cardboard can be remade into new products many times over; don't let it go to waste! •

I've swapped out my holiday light strands for LEDs. What can I do with the old lights?

A First of all, kudos for making the switch to long-lasting, energy-efficient LEDs! Your old lights can be dropped off free of charge at WLSSD's Materials Recovery Center. Just make sure to remove them from your tree first! The MRC also accepts real holiday trees for treecycling at no cost, but they must be free of decorations. •

Taking Film Plastic Recycling to the Nex(Trex) Level



Film plastic piles up quickly in most households, especially around the holidays. Everything from plastic mailers to shopping bags can be collected for recycling, but it can't go in your curbside recycling bin. WLSSD and many big box stores have drop-off collection programs available to rid you of your ever-growing bag of bags. Most recently, WLSSD joined the NexTrex program from Trex decking, the largest film plastic recycler in the US. This brings a more sustainable recycling program with expanded recycling options to the Northland.

What's in it for you? Even more film plastic can be kept out of your trash, and just in time to save your swelling can from the holiday haul. Drop off bins are available at each of WLSSD's facilities and our rural recycling sites.



Here are the basics:

- All plastics must be clean and dry
- Stretch film and pallet wrap
- Grocery and retail shopping bags
- Produce and bulk food bags

- Bread and bakery bags
- Case wrap (think flats of water bottles or soda cans)
- Dry cleaning bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Paper product wrap
- Electronic wrap
- Cereal and cracker box liners

What's new:

- Resealable food storage bags (leave those zippers on!)
- Plastic shipping envelopes
- Air pillows
- Bubble wrap
- Ice bags
- Wood pellet bags
- Salt bags



Reminders to avoid:

- Frozen food bags
- Candy wrappers and chip bags
- Net or mesh bags
- Pet food bags
- Six pack rings
- Vinyl curtains or tablecloths
- Shiny, crinkly film

Visit wlssd.com or nextrex.com for more information about film plastic recycling. May all your holiday recycling be merry and light! •

CARLTON COUNTY RESIDENT FACILITIES

Transfer Station

1950 Hwy 210, Carlton
218.879.9089

Year-Round

Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4 pm
Saturday 8:30 am - 1 pm

Solid/demolition waste, appliances, electronics, tires and brush accepted for a fee from Carlton County residents.

Construction and demolition waste accepted Wednesdays only; mixed waste not accepted on Wednesdays.

For rural recycling shed locations and hours, visit co.carlton.mn.us/254/Recycling-in-Carlton-County



RE/NEWS



Recycled paper made with 30% post-consumer waste,
processed chlorine-free and acid-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 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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