

ENVIRONMENT AND RECYCLING AD HOC COMMITTEE FIRST MEETING REPORT

November 30, 2018/6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Cedar Hill Ranch – First Meeting of Environment and Recycling Ad Hoc Committee Report

Participants:

Primary Lead: Joyce Conner

Participants: Ann Collins, Mike Conner, Catherine Johnson, Larry Kocian, Kathy Lester, Donna Lewis

Report:

At the beginning of the meeting Donna gave participants packets of and information sheets about Deterra (a drug deactivation system that quickly and safely dissolves prescription pills, patches, and liquids, allowing them to be absorbed by carbon, rendering them inert and non-retrievable, and meant for disposal in safe landfills). She was given these packets by Ronda Jackson, the Robertson County Coalition Coordinator for the "Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse". Donna can get more of these packets and information sheets for the chapter, but would like names of recipients, and number of packets taken by each, as requested by Ronda. For more information, her number in Bryan (where is her office) is (979) 846-3560.

The participants then discussed:

Whether there is enough interest and participating members to create a Standing Committee in the chapter: The general consensus was that there was not at this time. Also, that for this Ad Hoc Committee, participants would take turns as the lead.

The issues/ideas of participants:

- **Ann:** the overuse of plastic items and paper perpetuated by the media. Example, a tv series shows a woman cleaning up a small mishap with an entire roll of paper towels. Why are more of us not using paper straws? She doesn't use single use water bottles.
- **Joyce:** finds problems overwhelming in scope*; losing faith that her efforts are positive acts in that she doesn't believe items are actually being recycled; would like research to show how much of items collected are actually being recycled and not thrown into landfills or end up in our waterways; wants us to be putting information on our website for our members.
- **Kathy:** believes our goals should be education and advocacy; individually we can be advocates by refusing single use plastics, by letting companies know that we would like the choice of paper bags instead of plastic ones (especially at the bulk area) and to encourage reusable tote bags; will ask HEB what happens to the returned plastic bags; have Earth Day topics include recycling, pollinators and climate change, planting natives, water use; would like good sources of information identified so that we know where we and others should put their efforts; would like expert speakers for chapter meeting, perhaps from Environmental Science Depts at A&M, Blinn, or UT.

Also, talked about keyhole gardens that use cardboard and composted material [although Larry is concerned about toner – this might be dispelled by listening to the YouTube]. This might be another topic for monthly chapter meetings.

- **Mike:** lack of good information and research; what is the exact tradeoff of a fabric tote bag versus a number of plastic bags, considering the manufacturing of each; what is the tradeoff of having hybrid cars with toxic chemicals in the batteries and how the electricity is generated; plastic weighs little; cardboard fills up the bins; size of car matters [Kathy suggests that car dealerships determine size of cars depending on sales.]
- **Larry:** plastic is a huge industry pushed by large petroleum companies; has learned that some scrap metal companies will take batteries; start reducing use and modifying behaviors at home so that it becomes a habit, not a hardship (such as using and reusing fewer dishes, using leaves on flower beds, using less or no fertilizer, not cutting grass short); learn and teach about growing organic; would like to know where to turn in used machine oil and put that on the website;
- **Cathy:** she knows of a crate that folds up and can be opened and filled at the register (instead of multiple tote or plastic bags); knows there is something to put into leftover paint to solidify it so it can safely go into the trash; works hard to get rid of plastics in her home and her community, specifically her church group; Koerig coffeemakers encouraging massive use of plastic cups – has gone to glass carafe with no filter; buys coffee in paper, not plastic container; knows where to buy bamboo and paper cups; TSO used to give shredded paper to community for cat litter and Birds and Bees gives out free chicken manure for lawns and gardens; Amazon Prime has Fiji sheets that go into the clothes washer instead of liquid or dry detergent; ways in which we can get our chapter to be more proactive; will write up something for the website about recycling in Rockdale.
- **Donna:** Big Burkees can filter water; Earth Day – topics should include those that are relevant to citizens; how to change bad habits – what can we do and how can we teach others; topics should be relevant by addressing health and savings of money; encourages us (as individuals) to speak up and tell companies when they are doing something good and right, and tell them you will buy more; better than complaining; will identify speaker for a chapter meeting; also wants speaker about snakes and bats.

We discussed locations for possible future events:

Kay Theater – possibly for showing a screening of Albatross. Ask Collier Perry in Rockdale about a popup screen and Geri Burnett about who to contact about the schedule for the theater and whether this film would be of interest.

Rockdale Library – Thursday nights and First Fridays; Earth Day week? They have musicians, book signings, PAWS

This volunteer activity is to be recorded in VMS under **Administrative Work: Board and Committee Work** Description – first meeting to consider issues of a new 2019 Ad Hoc Chapter Committee. You can count 2½ hrs for the meeting, plus preparation time, plus travel time. (Any follow-up activities of this meeting should be entered on the day performed under **Administrative Work: Board and Committee Work** with description of activity.) Additionally, you may count 1 hr. under **Administrative: Hostess** if you brought food.

Next meeting is set to be Friday, January 18, at 6 pm.

*For example, weather.com lists 10 most pressing concerns (plastic in oceans, rising seas [floods], extreme weather, extinction of many animal species, endangered plant kingdom [i.e., forests], displaced people due to climate, famine, water supply, climate related illness, and wildfires;

<https://weather.com/science/environment/news/2018-04-18-earth-day-2018-10-concerning-things-future-of-planet> -

*The BBC describes a fatalistic story that links one disaster to the next. Honeybees die out, Nuclear war breaks out, Bioterrorism releases deadly microbes, deforestation and bad farming lead to loss of topsoil, overpopulation outstrips Earth's capacity to produce food, production of super-lethal weapons, climate change alters balance of gases, AI mishaps lead to human annihilation, etc.

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170815-the-greatest-threats-to-humanity-as-we-know-it>

*Green Living lists several threats to the environment: climate change, species extinction and biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, water scarcity crisis, natural resources drain, deforestation, soil degradation - https://greenliving.lovetoknow.com/Seven_Biggest_Environmental_Threats

*See <https://www.earthday.org/plastic-calculator/> to calculate how much you use plastic