Big Ideas

- Montezuma County Landfill is a County owned enterprise that must operate with positive account balances.
- Montezuma County Landfill has plenty of space to provide for glass and compost recycling services if the required permitting is approved.
- Recycling should not be politicized! This is an economics issue, ALL COMMODITIES HAVE VALUE! Maximizing commodity value in a world with finite resources is key.

Essential Questions

- How can Montezuma County residents, agencies, and organizations facilitate improvements in recycling program?
  - Specifically, compost, glass and plastic recycling...
- How can we align educational programs with a fragmented and differentiated regional recycling services? (i.e. Montezuma County, Cortez, Durango, and Telluride all have different recycling programs and expectations)
- Where will funding for new glass, plastic, and compost collection and processing come from?
- What local economic benefits can be realized to help cover the costs of recycling? (Compost sales, glass for road base, local "trex" manufacturing, etc.)
Every Rural Area Struggles with . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Recyclables Tons</th>
<th>Long Hauls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low population/density</td>
<td>Higher costs/lower revenues for recyclers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of policy incentives</td>
<td>Bigger environmental footprints</td>
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<td>High unit costs</td>
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Challenges

- The largest challenge facing Montezuma County Landfill is the lack of response from State and Federal regulators regarding compost permitting. While we wait for the permit, 37.5% of our waste continues to be compost-able organics which could be generating revenue.
- Purchasing the type/size of glass crusher required for glass processing is currently prohibitively expensive.
- Some local waste managers will only offer single stream recycling option because it is cost prohibitive to provide separated bins for customers.
- Single stream recycling is cost prohibitive because of the low commodity value.

Solutions

- **Hybrid Single Stream**: Residents separate and bag commodities which are placed into a single recycling bin. The bags are then easily separated at landfill. This method is estimated to be 37% cheaper than land-filling.
- **Utilizing the Media**: Local media outlets are used as advertising and educating the public about recycling through the production of newsworthy stories and an intentionally collaborative relationship with local reporters.

![Recycling Bins Required for glass and plastic](image)

![Tons Recycled in Montezuma County](chart)

**Current Recycling Tonnage**

- Tons Recycled in Montezuma County
- Chart showing the increase in tons recycled from 2008 to 2014.
How Southwest Colorado Compares

- Recycled 13% (14,000 tons)
- Composted 4% (2,000 tons)
- Disposed 85% (91,000 tons)

SWCCOG Region (2014)

- State of Colorado (2013): 19%
- United States (2013): 66%

SWCCOG MSW Composition (by weight)

- Organics, 37.5%
- Paper, 24.2%
- Plastics, 12.7%
- Metal, 6.5%
- Glass, 8.8%
- Other, 9.8%

LANDFILL NUMBERS

- Tip Fees for MSW*
  - Archuleta = $52/ton
  - Bondad = $46/ton
  - Montezuma = $39/ton

- Landfill Capacities
  - Archuleta – 20 to 30 years
  - Bondad – at least 20 years
  - Montezuma – over 40 years (full build-out)

* Fees converted to $/ton as needed
Montezuma County Recycling Uses

- **Regional Economic Benefit**: Local industries utilizing recyclable materials to produce relevant useful materials:
  - **Compost**: Soil production through the diversion of organics is the simplest and most powerful method for generating localized economic benefits, for reducing landfill methane production, and for meeting state recycling goals.
  - **Plastic**: Plastic resin to produce a variety of plastic recycled commodities, such as; building materials, plumbing materials, landscaping materials, and packaging materials.
  - **Glass**: Crushed glass road base, glass for smelting, as an abrasive media, and as a landscape material.

Events & Projects

- **Student plastic collection**: Southwest Open School students contact and set up plastic recycling pick-up schedule with local business partners to highlight local need for plastic recycling services.
- **Osprey Backpacks Local Sale**: The Osprey “Green Team” decided that their “local’s sale”, which provides donations to local non-profits, would select the Four Corners Recycling Initiative as their sole beneficiary, in order to educate about and pursue plastic recycling services for Montezuma County.
- **Dining For Recycling**: This event is FCR\'s yearly fundraiser geared towards raising awareness about and funding for local recycling efforts.
- **Plastic Drive**: This Southwest Open School sponsored event was targeted at achieving the goal of collecting enough plastic to run a “test” bale through the Montezuma County Landfill.
  - The landfill compactor has never successfully baled plastic.
The Success Story!

Southwest Open School pencil students selected plastic recycling as the service project they wished to pursue in order to promote community improvement.

The Montezuma County Landfill agreed to run a test bale of plastic if the students could collect the necessary quantity. Plastic baling had not been attempted at the landfill since an early 2000s trial baling attempt.

On May 19, the SOWS students gathered to watch as the first plastic bale was baled at the Montezuma County Landfill was run through the compactor.

Bailing was a success and the Landfill agreed to start offering plastic recycling services!!!

Planned Recycling Goals will necessitate additional labor positions at $15 per hour - benefits.

Student-led change is accomplished, students realize the power of action and service learning. Community is rewarded with enhanced economic potential and sustainability.

Montezuma County Wish List

- Glass crusher capable of processing large amounts of product and one that meets EPA guidelines.

- Plastic storage facility to prevent commodity deterioration.

- Government authorization of compost site.

- Funding to hire additional laborer for recyclables.
Community Collaboration

- Restaurants:
  - Stonefish
  - The Farm Bistro
  - J Fargos
  - Jimmers BBQ
  - Pepperheads
  - Lotsa Pasta Thatsa Pizza
- Viva Salon
- Osprey Packs
- KSJD
- Cortez Journal

Montezuma County Rural Recycling Program

References


