

West Boylston Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2011

The start of FY 2011 began the second year of West Boylston's Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) trash program and the first year of "single stream" recycling. Initiated by the Board of Selectmen, "single stream" allows residents to put out all their recyclables mixed together, rather than having to separate paper, cardboard, and containers. It was hoped that this "single stream" recycling would make it easier for residents to recycle and result in a higher recycling rate and less trash. However, our recycling rate remained about the same (32%) in FY11. Our trash tonnage actually increased slightly, going up from 1,394 tons to 1,421 tons, a 2% increase.

The good news is that the town's trash budget in FY11 is in better shape than it has been in years. Because the town negotiated new collection and new disposal contracts during the year, both of those costs decreased, with collection going down about \$20,000 and disposal going down about \$10,000. In addition, the PAYT bag fees brought in \$152,000 to the town. The total cost of the FY11 trash program was \$361,751 (Collection - \$221,699 + Disposal - \$103,082 + Bag cost - \$36,970 = \$361,751). With the bag fee revenue, the net cost of the trash program amounted to only \$209,751. This is a huge improvement from FY09, the year before PAYT started, when the town's net trash collection and disposal costs totaled \$395,492. It is also an improvement over FY10, when these costs amounted to \$275,976.

The positive changes mentioned above resulted in a \$140,000 surplus in the town's trash budget for FY11. It was therefore voted at the May 2011 Town Meeting to no longer require that the bag fee revenue go into the revolving fund for bag fees, which could only be spent on trash related expenses. Instead, the bag fee revenue would go into the town's General Fund, which could be used for any type of town expense, and the May 2011 Town Meeting specifically directed that this \$140,000 surplus be spent on the schools.

At the May 2011 Town Meeting, SWAT was pleased to report that West Boylston was awarded the Mass. Municipal Recycling Council Recognition Award. This award was given because our PAYT program has resulted in our households averaging less than 1,200 pounds of trash a year, far below the state average of over 2,000 pounds. Less trash is, of course, our goal because it means that we pay less in disposal fees and we send less to an incinerator. In FY11, West Boylston was also honored with the Central Mass. Municipal Recycling Council Recognition Award because our recycling rate went up to over 30% after PAYT was instituted in July 2009. The success of our PAYT program was also highlighted in the EPA's Summer Bulletin.

In April, 2011, SWAT welcomed new member Mary Ambrose. On behalf of SWAT, she collaborated with the elementary school principal and three third grade teachers, as well as Wachusett Greenways volunteers, to introduce an educational poster contest in which third graders campaigned for less littering, picking up after your dog on the Rail Trail, and recycling. SWAT judged these posters and hung them at municipal buildings, stores, and the Rail Trail itself, where Eric DeRivera constructed a display case for them. Further educational efforts were made by SWAT when it put out six Community Bulletins on the local cable TV station urging residents to recycle and compost. SWAT members also participated in a very rainy Earth Day litter pick-up in West Boylston, which was sponsored by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.

SWAT was pleased that the Board of Selectmen passed a "Recycled Procurement Policy" during FY11 and hopes that this policy will increase the amount of recycled content in materials purchased by town departments. SWAT voted to add its name to the many organizations supporting update of the Bottle Bill, which would increase

recycling and reduce litter and trash. Assistance was given to the Town Administrator in compiling the DEP Report on the first year of PAYT, and members toured the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center in West Boylston.

Three SWAT meetings were held during FY11 and reports were given to both the October 2010 and May 2011 Town Meetings. Members also attended the February 11, 2011 Board of Selectmen's meeting at which Finance Director Mike Daley gave a glowing report on the first year of the PAYT program.

Julianne DeRivera, Chairman

Judy Doherty

Craig Gonyea

Elise Wellington

Mary Ambrose