



# The Waste Not

## 2024 Resolutions to Combat the Ugly Eight

### OUR VISION

*To provide Brown County municipal commercial and industrial customers cost-effective and sustainable solid waste management systems with the focus on resource recovery primarily through recycling, repurposing and energy recovery*

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How are you doing on your New Year's Resolutions as 2024 gets going? Not great? What should not wait is changing your habits when it comes to proper disposal of what Tri-County Recycling calls, The Ugly Eight.

These are items that, unfortunately, are improperly put into the garbage or recycling and can cause major issues like fires, machine failure, and risks to the safety of workers in the waste industry. Let's discuss some resolutions you can still get to in 2024 that can change bad habits for good.

**USE THESE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU RECYCLE RIGHT**

DOWNLOAD THE BETTERBIN APP IN ANY APP STORE



SCAN TO USE OUR WASTE WIZARD WEBSITE TOOL



What are the Ugly Eight? Plastic bags, shredded paper, propane tanks, sharps, tangles, textiles, batteries, and YUCK. These items often are mistaken as recyclable. Try to make a habit of using the BetterBin app and linking to the Tri-County Recycling Waste Wizard on your mobile devices. When in doubt, you can quickly check to see if a material is truly recyclable in the system serving Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties. Just because it is made of plastic, paper, or metal does not mean it is recyclable in our area.

The next habit we recommend trying out, go without plastic bags altogether! Most retailers have paper bag options, or sell re-usable material bags. If you attend any kind of vendor fair (like a college job fair or farmers market) there is always someone handing you a reusable bag with their logo. Up-cycle what you have and make your own bags. The goal is to stop using plastic bags as much as possible. If you do use plastic bags, don't put your curbside recyclable materials into them. And **do not** put them into your recycling bin.

Materials that cause delays, fires, or safety hazards are definitely not recycle-bin-friendly and are a majority of the items we call The Ugly Eight. Specifically this includes shredded paper, sharps, tangles, propane tanks, textiles, and batteries. All of these items are not recyclable. They cause a considerable amount of risk to the safety of the employees, machinery, and can litter the environment. Make it a habit to do a monthly drop-off at the correct places for these items. Sharps go to a sharps drop-off at participating pharmacies or hospitals, textiles (of good quality) can go to charities, batteries, tanks like gas cylinders, and computer cords go to the Hazardous Material Recovery Facility, and shredded paper can go to a paper recycler or composter.

Last but certainly not least, is the Yuck. Yuck materials are garbage, liquids, and food in the recycling system. Make it a habit to empty and rinse your food and beverage containers before recycling. That way, the materials will not be rejected and we won't get the ick because there is spoiled food in the system. We trust that common sense will prevail, but sometimes we are surprised with what comes thru the line (like deer carcass, dirty diapers, and uneaten food).

Start the year with these new habits, then you can get to those other resolutions!

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## A Note From Our Director, Dean Haen

During 2023, the Solid Waste Management Board and staff worked toward meeting the goals and objectives of the updated *2023 Resource Recovery Strategic Plan* and the overarching mission and vision for the Brown County Resource Recovery Department.

For more than 45 years, the Department has been providing cost-effective, efficient and environmentally responsible solid waste management services for Brown County and, more recently, northeastern Wisconsin. As an Enterprise Fund, Brown County Resource Recovery uses revenues solely raised through operations to fund its activities.

In 2023, the Department had another busy year with a number of activities accomplished to increase the Department's solid waste management services. During the year, staff prepared a 5-year construction plan for the South Landfill that includes design of the future landfill gas collection system, excavating and constructing Phase Two and intermediate cover of the outside slopes of Phase One.

The South Landfill received 461,000 tons of solid waste in 2023. Phase One is 26 acres and waste began being placed in the third lift. The horizontal gas/leachate collection system, planned for the third lift was designed and materials were acquired with installation planned in 2024. Additional landfill equipment including a refurbished Tana compactor, D5 dozer, off-road truck and sheep-foot roller were purchased. Staff used existing equipment to move almost 60,000 cy of clay from Phase Two to the west side of the property for the future gas extraction and destruction facility. Some additional clay, topsoiling and seeding the disturbed areas will be done in Spring 2024.

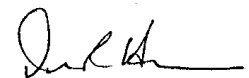
At the Waste Transfer Station, a skid steer was purchased in 2023 as was an additional front-end loader allowing the oldest front-end loader to serve as a backup during breakdowns and scheduled maintenance. The Transfer Station handled over 175,000 tons in 2023. A new Gate Rate Tipping Fee was established as part of the budget process allowing a higher tipping fee during road weight limits in an effort to financially encourage users to redirect their waste directly to the South Landfill.

The volume of material moving through the Recycling Transfer Station was down slightly with 31,600 tons total recycling tonnages.

Both transfer stations continue to experience an increased number of small fires due to improper disposal of lithium batteries. In response, staff has offered the Brown County public free disposal of all household batteries at the Hazardous Material Recovery Facility. Infrared camera technology capable of detecting hot spots on the Recycling Tip Floor are expected to be installed in 2024. If successful, IR cameras will be installed at Waste Transfer Station. The cameras will also allow 2-way communication with customers using the Recycling Transfer Station.

The Hazardous Material Recovery Facility volume of hazardous material collected was down from 2023 with the number of customers served down as well. After seeing a record number of users in 2021, the program saw just over 8,500 residents making use of the facility in 2023 consistent with the program's long-term average participation.

Overall an excellent team of staff continue to do everything it has done in the past while additionally moving into more in-house construction. In conclusion, Brown County will continue to provide cost effective solid waste management services with excellent customer service.



## Road Weight Limits Begin February 3rd

**ROAD WEIGHT LIMITS  
ARE NOW IN PLACE**

Starting Feb 12th

Gate Rate is

\$71/ton.



As of February 3, Wisconsin Road Weight Limits were imposed by the Wisconsin DOT. Starting on February 12th, a higher Gate Rate of \$71.00/ton at the West Transfer Station will be charged until weight limits are lifted. The Gate Rate at the South Landfill remains \$53.00/ton.

## Battery Recycling Legislation Introduced



The demand for more powerful rechargeable batteries has grown significantly in the last several years with devices and vehicles powered by these batteries becoming increasingly more powerful. This growth in both the number of batteries and an increase in power output, comes with a corresponding need to safely manage old batteries and battery-containing device (BCDs).

Batteries pose a danger to the workers in waste and recycling facilities due to electrical discharge, exothermic chemical reactions and sparks that result in fires. These batteries hold a considerable charge even when they no longer provide enough energy to power a device, and when damaged they can spark or heat up and cause a fire. Rechargeable batteries, especially the powerful lithium-ion batteries found in many electronics, have been the cause of fires at landfills, transfer facilities, recycling processing facilities, and in waste and recycling collection trucks.

Most consumers are unaware of the dangers of rechargeable batteries in the waste stream and those who are aware have few convenient and affordable options to divert rechargeable batteries to recycling or proper disposal. Developing reliable, convenient and affordable options to collect, store and transport waste batteries is essential to public safety.

Several options exist for improving collection of batteries and battery-containing devices to reduce the number that end up in trash or recycling bins in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Senate Bill 906 is a first step towards addressing this issue. The bill would require the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to prepare educational materials to inform the public about the dangers of rechargeable batteries in the waste and recycling streams and about existing options for properly recycling rechargeable batteries.

The bill also requires the WDNR to provide grants to responsible units, municipalities, businesses, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of expanding rechargeable battery collection and recycling operations, creating new sites for the collection or recycling of rechargeable batteries, purchasing rechargeable battery collection and shipping kits and equipment for handling damaged or defective rechargeable batteries, and transporting rechargeable batteries to third-party collection and recycling facilities.

In addition, the bill would provide grants to solid waste facilities and materials recovery facilities for the purpose of installing, upgrading, or expanding fire detection and suppression systems to address the increased risk of fire due to the presence of rechargeable batteries in the waste and recycling streams. The bill would be the first step in establishing an extended producer responsibility program requiring manufacturers of batteries and battery-containing devices to take responsibility for the end-of-life disposal of the products they sell in Wisconsin.

This bill has bipartisan support in the legislature and has been supported by the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW) and the Wisconsin Council on Recycling as a first step towards reducing the number of batteries in the waste stream.

**BE A BATTERY HERO**  
Put batteries in their place.

**Batteries don't belong in the trash or recycling.**

BROWN COUNTY  
**Resource Recovery**

2561 S. Broadway  
Green Bay

# Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference in Wisconsin Dells (WIRMC)

There is still time to register for the Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference (WIRMC). WIRMC is the statewide conference for solid waste industry professionals and others interested in recycling, solid waste and composting. It is an exhibitor and lecture conference for those interested or working in the waste management industry. It will be held on February 28-March 1, 2024 at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI.

This years Keynote Speaker is Nathan Rutz, Director of Soil at Rust Belt Riders Composting in Cleveland, OH.



Credit: WIRMC, 2022 Keynote Speaker Rob Greenfield



Online registration ([www.wirmc.org](http://www.wirmc.org)).

## Follow Us

For facts, general information and ideas on how to reduce waste, follow us on Facebook and Twitter! We post information you want to know several times a week.



If you are interested in reading more about a resource recovery topic online or in our newsletter let us know! We would love to hear from you.



## Brown County Port & Resource Recovery Department

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Waste Transfer Station  
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South Landfill  
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Phone: 920-492-4950

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