



Northeast Resource Recovery Association

“Partnering to make recycling strong through economic and environmentally sound solutions”

Recycling Partnerships Across New Hampshire

A series of case studies

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) engaged local solid waste management stakeholders, including Transfer Station operators and town leaders, to better understand the benefits and challenges of partnerships between transfer stations across New Hampshire. In addition to individual outreach, NRRA also explored the topic of partnerships with members during monthly Member Operations & Marketing (MOM) meetings that consist of NRRA solid waste operators from across the state. In May 2023, the NRRA Member Services Manager, along with the Public Works Director for the town of Gilford, NH, presented a partnership workshop called “Working Together Helps Us All” and “Foam Recycling” at the 2023 Annual Recycling Conference and Expo. The workshops were well received, and multiple towns reached out to discuss future ideas for partnerships.



Household Hazardous Waste Event Partnerships

NRRA Member Services reached out to member towns located in lower Coös County and Upper Grafton County to discuss potential partnerships for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Events. The towns of Carroll, Whitefield, Bethlehem, Lancaster, and the Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District (which includes 7 Upper Grafton County towns) each host their own annual HHW event. However, after being provided technical assistance around the benefits of partnerships, the town of Monroe, NH was able to join the Pemi-Baker District HHW event. In addition, the town of Dalton was interested in combining with another local town and plans to do so in 2024, as they did not have available funding for 2023.

Highlights of Existing Successes

Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District & Monroe, NH – HHW Event held at Littleton, NH

- Littleton hosts a Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District HHW collection event every August.
- Monroe has partnered with Littleton as a source to recycle their loose, source-separated recyclables for the past four years.
- The last Monroe HHW event was in July 2018. They partnered with Haverhill, NH.
- Littleton’s HHW event is heavily staffed with vendor employees, Littleton employees, and a district staff member. Proper staffing ensures that the event will run smoothly, since 19 towns from the District are invited to participate.

Dalton, NH partnership with neighboring town (future plans)

- Dalton has partnered with both Littleton and Lancaster over the years as a source to recycle their loose, source-separated recyclables, with Monroe bringing material to the facility via a town truck and trailer.
- Dalton is also in close proximity to other towns who host their own HHW day event. Lancaster, Littleton, and Whitefield are all within 20 minutes of Dalton. Bethlehem and Carroll are a little farther away but still within 30 minutes of most of Dalton's population.

Challenges

- Residents may need to travel a longer distance depending on the location of the HHW event.
- Not hosting or participating in annual HHW events may mean a larger quantity of HHW material at the next event, which would increase the cost of the HHW event, or worse, the potential for improper disposal of household hazardous waste.
- HHW events can be expensive to host. Costs include the setup fee, labor, and disposal costs of leftover waste such as empty plastic containers and paint cans.

Opportunities

- **Partnership community events save money for all communities involved.** For example, by participating in the Littleton HHW event, Monroe paid \$650 toward the \$2000 total setup fee for the event. This shared cost was lower for both communities versus hosting two individual HHW events, with each community paying \$2000. In addition, because Monroe went through NRRRA directly, instead of through the District, the District's expense budget line was also decreased.
- Monroe residents had access to another District event held in Plymouth, NH.
- The NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) HHW grant offers a larger grant match (per-capita) for events that serve more than one community. For 2023, it equated to a \$0.05 increase from \$0.12 per capita to \$0.17 per capita if more than one community was served.
- In the case of the southern Coos and Upper Grafton County towns, a large, combined effort could make multiple events throughout the year available to residents instead of just a once per year event. This could possibly create a safer and more environmentally sound alternative to storing material for longer amounts of time or improper disposal.



Andover, NH and Wilmot, NH: A future partnership

In July 2023, the NRRRA Member Services Manager met with representatives from both Andover and Wilmot to start a conversation regarding a potential partnership. The meeting of 11 people included town administrators and selectboard members. The discussion included permit changes and types, needed upgrades such as more balers and better storage for their recyclables, and current partnership examples and agreements. While these two towns are not USDA towns, the town of Wilmot did listen and participate in our Conference Partnership presentation and emailed NRRRA soon after the event.

Highlights of Existing Successes

- The Andover and Wilmot facilities are only 1.4 miles apart and are located on the same road. The close proximity would make it easy for the facilities to combine their recycling and solid waste programs in one location, with Andover as the host facility.
- Both communities use the same hauler for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) and Construction and Demolition debris (C&D), so combining sites would not be difficult for logistics.

Challenges

- **NHDES Permit Change Requirement** – The host facility would need to update their permit to accept partnering towns.
- **Staffing Concerns** – Andover would need to hire more staff, which is a challenge due to the industry-wide shortage of workers.
- **Budgeting** – There are many ways to set up a partnership and calculate which town owns what, both logistically and financially. Examples include using a population percentage or a flat fee per year paid to the host town.

Opportunities

- **Increased Recycling** – A partnership would allow Wilmot to be able to restart a recycling program and Andover could possibly increase the number of items they recycle. Increased recycling would lower the amount of household trash that gets thrown away.
- **Grant Funding** – There are a few grant options to help cover the costs of required host facility improvements. NRRRA would assist with grant recommendations.
- **Increased Facility Hours** - increased public access could be possible as both facilities are currently only open two days a week. With more material running through the host facility, it makes sense to have more operators and be open for more hours to the public.



2-Stop Commodity Load Option – Lisbon, NH and Franconia, NH

The Lisbon, NH Transfer Station (representing the NH towns of Lisbon, Lyman, and Landaff) and the Tri-Town Transfer Station (representing the NH towns of Franconia, Sugar Hill, and Easton) both had on-site technical assistance visits from the NRRRA Member Services Manager during the last week of June 2023. During the site visits, both facility managers mentioned they had partial loads of material they wanted to recycle before winter. Lisbon had aluminum cans, steel cans, and two pallets of lead acid batteries and Franconia had steel cans. The facilities are a good example of a potential 2-stop commodity load, where NRRRA sends one tractor trailer to pick up material at two separate locations.

This allows towns to move material more quickly and lessens the need for storage space on site.

Highlights of Existing Successes

- The facilities are located within 20 miles of each other, which makes it possible to set up a 2-stop pickup for both town's commodities.
- Both towns accept source-separated recycling at their facility from the public and bale or palletize material to prepare it for shipment to market through NRRRA.

Challenges

- Both towns have limited times available to load a tractor trailer.
- Lisbon has an additional issue as to where the trailer needs to be situated to be loaded with material, since it will need to be placed during a time and in a location where the public are moving about the facility. The skid steer operator needed to keep an extra eye on the public as they load the trailer.
- Lisbon recently hired a new transfer station manager, and this was their first load of recycling to get shipped out. Because they were new, NRRRA spent extra time with the manager explaining the process and helping submit the Bill of Lading to NRRRA for processing.

Opportunities

- While NRRRA has helped multiple towns set up split loads like this in the past, it is a partnership opportunity that could be utilized more often and by more communities. NRRRA will be promoting 2-stop pick-ups during a future Member Operations & Marketing meeting, with this load serving as an example.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Near-term Actions

Towns could sign up for NRRRA's Full of Scrap newsletter and attend the monthly in-person Member Operations & Marketing meetings, where NRRRA's member services team will promote the distinct types of partnership opportunities.

Medium-term Actions

NRRRA will gather more information on NHDES Solid Waste Permits and make and/or share an information sheet about permit requirements. This will include the different types of permits, requirements, and NHDES contact information.

Long-term Actions

Towns could continue to pursue partnerships in areas other than source-separated recyclables, such as Asphalt, Brick, Concrete (ABC) recycling, glass recycling, and household hazardous waste collections.

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