**Maine Composts Week May 8-12, 2017**

Hello,

My name is Travis Blackmer and in conjunction with others around the state we are putting together a new initiative called MAINE COMPOSTS WEEK! The goals, purposes, and plans are outlined below. What we are looking for is GREAT compost sites that might be willing to open their facilities/locations/piles to students and provide them with some information about the practices and science behind composting!

If you are interested (no commitment required today!), could you please contact me with the following information so that we can start a dialogue about your participation in this event! ([travis.blackmer@maine.edu](mailto:travis.blackmer@maine.edu))

Contact Person’s Name:

Email:

Phone:

What is the Compost Site Associated with (farm, community, commercial business, etc.:

Brief description of your facility and size:

Address:

Which day(s) M-F May 8-12 would you be interested in hosting student tours?

Do you have any age range restrictions (don’t want under 10, over 14, etc.)?

Is there a limit to how many tours you’d be willing to line up (saying 1 is fine, if you can do several that’s great!)

Time amount for each tour?

Is there a maximum amount of students you’d feel comfortable hosting (under 30, 50, 100)?

Additional Information you find important to note:

**Maine Composts Week Outline May 8-12, 2017**

**Purpose**: To engage the state of Maine on the topics of composting, anaerobic digestion, food insecurity, solid waste/materials management to: 1) promote business and service providers who excel in organics management; 2) reduce wasted materials; 3) highlight best practices in organics management; 4) promote composting being integrated in K-12 education, businesses, and household behavior; 5) provide resources that enable schools, business, households, communities and institutions to compost effectively; 6) promote food diversion as a first option to manage organic materials before composting.

**The Issue**: Landfill capacity is limited and valuable. Presently Maine’s solid waste stream is 40% organic in nature. These materials, typically wet and dense, are also a valuable resource that when managed and processed properly, add value to society. Maine’s recycling (diversion) goal of 50% remains unmet and progress has plateaued in the past decade. By diverting 25% of all organic materials Maine could easily achieve its goal! Maine currently composts around 5% of its potentially compostable/digestible material.

In addition, Maine as well as much of the country, has a food security issue.  Highlighting composting and other organics management processes as well as food diversion and food waste reduction are key ways to make inroads into this larger societal issue.

**When**: May 8-12, 2017 coinciding with International Compost Awareness Week (May 7-13, 2017)<http://compostfoundation.org/icaw>

Competitions Announced after Winter Holiday Break. Submission deadline April 15th for artistic/creative/media contents.

**Who**: (Potentially!!!)

Mitchell Center

Maine DEP

Cooperative Extension

4H

Maine Resource Recovery Association

Maine Municipal Association

Natural Resources Council of Maine

Organics Service Providers (We Compost It!, Garbage to Garden, Exeter Argi-Energy, Casella Organics)

Maine Colleges and Universities

MOFGA

Environmental and Public Groups (Audubon, Community Gardening Groups, Libraries of Maine, zero-waste groups, Renew Rockland, Hampden Citizens Coalition, MORE!!!)

Solid Waste Companies (Casella, Waste Management, ecomaine, CPRC, Haulers)

Regional Cooperatives (MRC, Mid-Coast SW, Tri-Community, BoothbayRRD, and MORE!!!)

Public Landfills (Tri-Community, Presque Isle Landfill, Bath Landfill, Brunswick Landfill, Hatch Hill)

Businesses with a track record for Organics Excellence (Hannaford, Restaurants, LL Bean, Poland Spring, More)

**Activities:**

·       Learn about composting. Short videos and digital materials about the nutrients cycle, various types of composting/organics management, social media blasts, sharing contest social media submissions, etc.

·       Food diversion. Information about local food banks, food diversion initiatives, and food security activities, food drives.

·       Visit a composting site. Tours across the state at compost facilities (private, public, 4H, etc.), target audience schools

·       Learn about your waste. Schools doing self-sorts. Provide a manual for what is needed for materials, sorting protocol, data sheets to submit. Likely best to have schools collect food scraps in a bucket and weigh before combining with standard trash.

·       Start composting today. Big push for backyard composting and use of existing programs, towns advertising the MRRA offerings, supermarkets having displays, community level social media blasts, resources and information about how easy it is!

·       Composting Documentary Day. Watch DIRT or other composting related movie/documentary (<http://www.dirtthemovie.org/>) streaming available for $2.99.

·       Contests. The following contests/challenges will be offered during Maine Composts Week, or for submission prior to with the winners announced during Maine Composts Week.

a.      Mason Jar Challenge. Students will be challenged to not throw away more than the volume of a mason jar during the week. They must either recycle or compost all materials, otherwise they must place those items in a mason jar.

b.      Waste in you BackPack. Students must carry all “trash” in their backpack for a week. They are not allowed to throw any materials into a trash car. In each school, the student with the least amount of non-divertible garbage is the winner!

c.       Social Media Competition. Students can enter submissions related to the topic of composting in categories: 1) Maine Composts Logo; 2) Digital Banner/Picture; 3) Vine Competition; 4) 30 second advertisement

d.      Poster Competition. Students can enter a poster competition (hand drawing, no computers!) about composting. Suggested age ranges 0-6, 7-10, 10-13, 14-18, 18+. Possible that top picks get made into calendar (print/digital depends on budget and cost).

e.      Town scraps for the week. Challenge communities to set up a site where residents can collect their organic materials and drop them off to see how much could be diverted in week. From a household’s perspective, they should also pay attention to how much less garbage they produce without food scraps and other compostable materials.

f.        Most food scraps diverted: Challenge restaurants and businesses with cafeterias to divert their food scraps for a week. Two categories: A) restaurants and businesses with access to a service provider for organics and B) those without a service provider that must find another means to dispose of their organics (local farmer likely the best option)

g.       Best Compost Bin. We want to see your Do-It-Yourself compost bin! Take a picture of your bin and submit it! Divisions for LARGE bins (greater than 1.5 cubic yards) small bins, vermicomposting bins, (any others???)

Prizes will be actual compost, kitchen compost bins, free/reduce service by a composting company, or some other biodegradable prize (NO PLAQUES!)

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