SWANA: 2010 PUBLIC EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARD

Nomination Packet

North Shore Recycling Program

Composting How-to Video Series

Prepared by:
Amanda Vantol
Community Program Coordinator
North Shore Recycling Program

March 2010
2010 PUBLIC EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARD

NOMINATION FORM

Program/Facility Nominated:
NorthShore Recycling Program’s "Composting How-to Video Series"

Contact Person Name & Title: Allen Lynch, Manager, NorthShore Recycling

Address: 149 East 2nd Street

City, State, Zip/Province, Postal Code: North Vancouver, BC V7L 1C3

Phone #: 604 984 9730 Fax #: 604 984 3563 Email: allen@nshrp.bc.ca

Nomination submitted by (if different than information listed above):
Name: Amanda Vantol Phone #: 604 984 9730 Email: amanda@nshrp.bc.ca

If selected for an award, how would you like the name of the organization to read on the award (limit of 50 characters)?
North Shore Recycling Program

2010 Applications must be submitted to SWANA no later than Friday, April 2, 2010

*** PLEASE NOTE THAT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS HAVE RECENTLY CHANGED ***
See the attached Entry & Eligibility Requirements sheet for further information

Application Checklist (Please make sure the following items are included in your submittal packet):
- Completed nomination form with signed release statement (this page), to be scanned and included in digital submission
- 1 copy of your award submittal on a CD-ROM OR via the SWANANET FTP site.
- Executive Summary of your nomination (NO more than 200 words)
- At least 2 pictures of your operation (may be included in nomination text)
- Check or credit card payment (made payable to SWANA) for nomination fee (in U.S. dollars)

Please mail all application packages to:
SWANA
ATTN: Technical Programs Department
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 700
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Release Statement: I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge. SWANA reserves the right to publish the enclosed information. Nominations become the property of SWANA. My signature gives SWANA the right to reprint or make available for purchase any portion of this submittal.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: March 31, 2010
Executive Summary

The North Shore Recycling Program’s Composting How-to Video Series was created to address common barriers to composting on the North Shore: a fear of bears as well as lack of knowledge about composting best practices and pest prevention techniques. Addressing these barriers will result in an increase in onsite organics management, which supports the NSRP’s progress towards an organization goal of reducing solid waste going to disposal by 25% over 2006 levels by 2011.

Utilizing new media, the video series also allowed the NSRP to teach composting basics to a larger audience than could be reached individually.

The series consisted of seven videos:

- “How Composting Works”
- “Siting a Compost Bin”
- “Carbon Sources”
- “Aerating Compost”
- “Deterring Compost Pests”
- “Harvesting and Using Compost”
- “Composting in Bear Country”

The video series has proven to be a successful program. All objectives originally set out were achieved.

Picture 1: Frame from “Siting a Compost Bin”
1) Statement of Intent:

The North Shore Recycling Program’s Composting How-to Video Series educates North Shore residents about backyard composting in an effort to improve the efficiency of existing compost bins and inspire the creation of new compost bins. Both of these actions increase the onsite management of organic waste on the North Shore, helping the NSRP reach our organization goal of reducing solid waste going to disposal by 25% over 2006 levels by 2011.

Created and distributed in mid-2009, the video series is now allowing NSRP staff to evaluate its effectiveness.

We chose to submit our application in the Public Education category due to the fact that our nominated program, NSRP’s Composting How-to Video Series was developed to change the attitudes and behaviors of North Shore residents regarding onsite organics management, a solid waste management issue.

Picture 2: Frame from “Composting in Bear Country”
2) Research/Planning

**Background**

The North Shore Recycling Program is the tri-municipal agency responsible for recycling collection, waste reduction and environmental education in three municipalities: the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, and the District of West Vancouver, collectively referred to as the “North Shore”.

Since 1993, the North Shore Recycling Program (NSRP) has operated a composter sales program to make backyard compost bins available to North Shore residents at a subsidized price. To date (March 11, 2010), more than 16707 compost bins have been sold to North Shore residents.

In a recent telephone survey, it was determined that over 61% of households on the North Shore already have a compost bin; however, a fear of bears as well as lack of knowledge about composting best practices and pest prevention techniques are major difficulties associated with composting on the North Shore.

Although these difficulties were commonly cited as barriers to composting successfully or at all, it is not the quantity of available information that is the problem. “Information” about composting abounds – in our own NSRP brochures and hand-outs, in regional brochures, on the web, in books, in gardening magazines, even a free Compost Hotline. The difficulty, as with anything, is that busy people are expected to seek out needed information and teach themselves, and that seems to be something few people have the time or inclination to do well. Also, with a hands-on activity such as composting, attempting to learn techniques via print material can be difficult and attending workshops is not something everyone has time for.

Conceptualized, planned, filmed and released in 2009, the NSRP’s Composting How-to Video Series aims to address the ineffective preponderance of written information, making quality composting instruction quickly and easily available to North Shore residents using the advantages of video and the internet.

**Target Audience**

North Shore residents who are just starting to compost or are having difficulties with an existing compost bin are the direct target audience for the Composting How-to Video Series; however, we are hoping that residents considering composting will be inspired to action after viewing the videos and discovering that composting is simple.

An additional audience for the Composting How-to Video Series is the new generation of North Shore residents who are accustomed to gathering the information they need from the internet. The NSRP is working to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to providing information and instruction in the most up-to-date ways.
Program Goals

**Goal 1:** To support the NSRP’s organizational goal of reducing solid waste going to disposal by 25% over 2006 levels by 2011. The series supports this organizational goal by addressing the barriers to backyard composting identified by our pilot programs and surveys in 2008, thus increasing the onsite management of organic waste on the North Shore.

**Goal 2:** To create simple tools we can use to teach composting basics to a larger audience than we might be able to reach individually

**Goal 3:** To create an in-depth resource that can be referred to those residents with whom we have already made contact through our introductory composting programs.

**Goal 4:** To have the videos viewed 500 times each in 2009, and 1500 times each in 2010 by North Shore residents

**Goal 5:** To position the NSRP as a leader in using new media tools in support of our strategic plan goal of “being a leader in communication, community outreach, education and social marketing”

We also had a minor goal of making the video series be somewhat timeless, so they could be used for many years without becoming dated.

Anticipated Obstacles/Opportunities

The main anticipated obstacle was NSRP staff’s lack of experience in video production. This was overcome by hiring a local, free-lance film producer looking for an opportunity to hone his directing and production skills.

We also found that the long web address required to post the videos on the NSRP webpage was an obstacle to easily directing North Shore residents to the videos. This was solved by creating an easy-to-remember subdomain ([howto.northshorerecycling.ca](http://howto.northshorerecycling.ca)), posting the videos on YouTube, providing links from the NSRP homepage and creating small business cards that could be given to residents when they visited our office or talked to us at community events.

Time availability in 2009 to do focused promotion was also an obstacle due staffing resources.

Opportunities for the videos include distributing them via Facebook, Twitter and the NSRP’s e-newsletter. A well-researched search engine optimization campaign, contests to get people watching the videos when they have composting questions, local home shows and community events are also opportunities that are being explored to promote the series and get the views by North Shore residents up to goal levels.

“Just finished watching all your new composting videos and want to congratulate you on an excellent job. Our family has composted for years but I’m sending your website address on to the few people I know who still don’t compost. Keep up the good work.” ~Brian, North Shore Resident
3) Implementation/Execution

Program Implementation

The video series was conceptualized in May of 2009 and filmed on location in a NSRP staff member’s backyard during June and July of 2009. While fewer videos were originally planned, it was decided to include less information in each video and make a greater number of them to increase the ease of finding information. All seven videos are about 2 to 3 minutes long. The timeline can be seen in the Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 28, 2009</td>
<td>First meeting with Producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9, 2009</td>
<td>NSRP staff meeting to agree on schedule, locations and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2009</td>
<td>Meeting with Producer to finalize plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 17, 2009</td>
<td>Deadline to create outlines for videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19, 2009</td>
<td>First Shoot Day (Videos 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25, 2009</td>
<td>Screening and feedback for Videos 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26, 2009</td>
<td>Second Shoot Day (Videos 3 and 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3, 2009</td>
<td>Third Shoot Day (Videos 5 to 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10, 2009</td>
<td>Screening and feedback for Videos 3 to 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 15, 2009</td>
<td>Final Videos delivered to NSRP by Producer and uploaded to NSRP website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Timeline for Composting How-to Video Series

Most of the videos were filmed using an outline, with NSRP staff ad-libbing the script. The two videos that used a narrative over images were the exception. Time at a local studio was donated for recording the narratives. Captions for all videos were discussed and added after the videos were edited by the producer. The Composting How-to Video Series included 7 videos:

- “How Composting Works”
- “Siting a Compost Bin”
- “Carbon Sources”
- “Aerating Compost”
- “Deterring Compost Pests”
- “Harvesting and Using Compost”
- “Composting in Bear Country”

**Video 1: How Composting Works (2:15)**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6pS4Acn3Ng](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6pS4Acn3Ng)

The first video in NSRP’s Composting How-to Video Series is entitled “How Composting Works” and provides an overview of backyard composting.

**Video 2: Siting a Compost Bin (1:59)**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGfVevusqMQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGfVevusqMQ)

*Picture 5: Frame from “How Composting Works”*
Video 2 shows that the first step to successful composting is choosing the right location and discusses a variety of factors that contribute to the perfect location.

**Video 3: Carbon Sources (2:11)**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbiB0oKQRuU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbiB0oKQRuU)

A lack of carbon is the most common cause of problems in backyard compost bins. This video aims to educate residents about common sources of carbon for their compost bins.

**Video 4: Aerating Compost (2:24)**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TYGuXXor4Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TYGuXXor4Y)

Oxygen is essential to creating a successful compost bin. Without it, compost bins can become slimy and smell bad. This video teaches North shore residents how to properly and efficiently aerate a compost bin.

**Video 5: Deterring Compost Pests (2:38)**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K18hbGPEbW0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K18hbGPEbW0)

No compost bin is pest proof; however, residents can ensure their bin is not a pest-attractant by following the simple tips listed in this video. Most of this video was created using a combination of video and still images with a narrative playing over top.

**Video 6: Harvesting and Using Compost (3:19)**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGCz8UQTWSU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGCz8UQTWSU)

This video discusses how to properly harvest a compost bin and shares the many ways you can use compost to support a natural, healthy garden.

**Video 7: Composting in Bear Country (3:22)**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7Lr2e1IncU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7Lr2e1IncU)

Video 7 was filmed similar to video 5, in that it used a series of still images and video clips with a narrative playing over top. The guidelines described in this video were finalized through a partnership with the North Shore Black Bear Society and our provincial Bear Aware Program.

**Program Requirements**

**Budget Expenditures**

Coming in under our budget of $5000.00 from our promotion account, the total direct cost to create the *Composting How-to Video Series* was $4612.00. The majority of these funds were used to secure the services of a professional video production company to shoot, edit and produce the videos, as well as provide mentoring for NSRP staff in the process of video production. *(See Table 2 for a break down of budget expenditures).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Production, Freeman Video</td>
<td>$4470.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$142.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4612.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Budget Expenditures for Composting How-to Video Series*
Staff Time
Three NSRP staff worked on this project for about 40 hours each, making the total staff time spent on the project about 120 hours. Staff time spent on this educational video series included the time to plan content, write outlines and scripts, gather props, film, “screen” drafts, create captions and approve final versions. Time was also spent promoting the series, creating promo cards and gathering stats.

Partnerships
The guidelines described in the “Composting in Bear Country” video were finalized through a partnership with the North Shore Black Bear Society and our provincial Bear Aware Program. A series of meetings were held between the three organizations to ensure we were all encouraging the same practices.

The Bear Society and Bear Aware program learned a lot about composting and were able to update their brochures with the relevant information. North Shore Recycling Program was able to ensure they were not inadvertently attracting bears to North Shore neighborhoods by encouraging composting.

Further partnerships are being considered for the recycling videos planned for 2010.

Accomplishments
The project came together fairly flawlessly, with little in the way of edits required. The producer managed to capture the look and feel we had originally planned, without much in the way of reworking.

Creativity
At the time of production, our online research turned up no other municipal agencies in Canada producing professional production how-to videos for use on the web. A follow-up search in late March, 2010, shows the same results, at least from Canadian municipalities.

Some informal instructional videos of a much different ‘look and feel’ are being utilized by Vancouver-based organization City Farmer and many similar how-to videos can be viewed on YouTube, but they all seem to be lacking important information required for successful composting.

Our search did turn up some higher production videos from the United States (mainly agencies in California), but none are step-by-step, easy to follow, short how-to videos such as the ones produced by the NSRP.

Also, our videos are specific to the North Shore, with its climate, topography, pests and bears.

“Wow, again your group has outdone itself. I really like how short and succinct the videos are! We get bear calls all the time so that one has helped me with my responses already!”

~Staff member, Regional District of North Okanagan, Environmental Services

Composting How-to Video Series
4) Results/Evaluation: 30 points

**Target Audience Participation**

The *Composting How-to Video Series* has been well-received by our intended audience. Numerous residents allude to the videos in conversations at community events with very favorable comments. Based on the number of views so far (See Table 4), it appears that the new generation of North Shore residents that are accustomed to gathering the information they need from the internet, our secondary target audience, are also reacting well to the video series. In addition, the videos are easily accessible on YouTube using common search terms. Many of the videos came up in top spots as seen in Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Term</th>
<th>NSRP Video</th>
<th>Spot in Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘composting canada’</td>
<td>‘How Composting Works’</td>
<td>Second spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘composting canada’</td>
<td>‘How to Compost in Bear Country’</td>
<td>First page of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how to compost canada’</td>
<td>‘How Composting Works’</td>
<td>Top spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how to compost canada’</td>
<td>‘How to Compost in Bear Country’</td>
<td>Second spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how to compost canada’</td>
<td>All NSRP Videos</td>
<td>First page of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how composting works’</td>
<td>‘How Composting Works’</td>
<td>Top spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘composting 101’</td>
<td>‘How Composting Works’</td>
<td>First page of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how to compost with bears’</td>
<td>‘How to Compost in Bear Country’</td>
<td>Top spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘how to compost around bears’</td>
<td>‘How to Compost in Bear Country’</td>
<td>Top spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘bears and composting’</td>
<td>‘How to Compost in Bear Country’</td>
<td>Second spot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Results of a search of YouTube on March 30, 2010*

More evaluation of search terms will be done this spring, with a focused search engine optimization plan carried out in May and June. We’ll also be utilizing Facebook, Twitter and our monthly e-newsletter to promote the videos, as well as a contest in June.

**Measuring Success**

NSRP’s *Composting How-to Video Series* has been very successful so far. The original goals set out were either completed or significant progress was made towards them.

**Goal 1:** To support the NSRP’s organizational goal of reducing solid waste going to disposal by 25% over 2006 levels by 2011.

Progress towards Goal 1 is difficult to measure, especially with the many programs and variables that affect the North Shore’s diversion rate, but we can conclude that removing barriers to backyard composting has improved the efficiency of existing compost bins and inspired the creation of new compost bins. Both of these actions increase the onsite management of organic waste on the North Shore, helping the NSRP reach our organization goal of reducing solid waste going to disposal by 25% over 2006 levels by 2011.

“We have web videos about backyard composting in Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi, but not English, so we are planning to link to your wonderful page. If you can’t be the best, then steal from the best!”

(Staff Member, City of Vancouver)
**Goal 2:** To create simple tools we can use to teach composting basics to a larger audience than we might be able to reach individually

This goal was achieved by creating the video series and successfully uploading it to our website (howto.northshorerecycling.ca) and YouTube. The videos are reaching more and more people every day.

**Goal 3:** To create an in-depth resource that can be referred to those residents with whom we have already made contact through our introductory composting programs.

Referring residents to the videos is something that has been done many times over the last year. At a recent home and garden show, NSRP staff members talked to over 400 people over 18 hours and were able to refer many of them to the videos when little time was available to answer questions.

**Goal 4:** To have the videos viewed 500 times each in 2009, and 1500 times each in 2010 by North Shore residents

Progress towards Goal 4 is ongoing with 2147 views total as of March 30, 2010. The views on each individual video can be seen in Table 4 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Views on YouTube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>How Composting Works</td>
<td>696 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Siting a Compost Bin</td>
<td>243 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Carbon Sources</td>
<td>252 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Aerating Compost</td>
<td>299 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Deterring Compost Pests</td>
<td>204 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Harvesting and Using Compost</td>
<td>225 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30, 2010</td>
<td>Composting in Bear Country</td>
<td>228 views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2147 views</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal 5:** To position the NSRP as a leader in using new media tools in support of our strategic plan goal of “being a leader in communication, community outreach, education and social marketing”

Based on our research revealing a lack of similar programs, it appears the Composting How-to Video Series has made NSRP a leader among municipal recycling programs in using new media to educate residents about ‘how-to’ information. The video series also enhanced our Twitter and Facebook pages, both of which are new media tools.

*We also had a minor goal of making the video series be somewhat timeless, so they could be used for many years without becoming dated.*

We believe this goal was achieved as no dates were used and no specific programs were alluded to. Hopefully this video series will be relevant for many years to come.

**How can the program be improved?**

The existing Composting How-to Video Series can be improved with enhanced marketing to reach a larger audience.
Future video series can be improved by utilizing the talents and opinions of resident focus groups in the planning process and in the first ‘draft’ viewing.

**Potential Future Plans**
- Create NSRP video blogs hosted by a NSRP personality
- Invite North Shore residents to submit videos on their own recycling thoughts and tips
- Create a contest for submitted videos, utilizing social media for promotion

**Can this program be replicated in other communities?**
This program can absolutely be replicated in other communities. We are happy to share the scripts (See Appendix A for a sample script) with communities looking to replicate the series, which could be amended for specific geographic areas and situations.

*Picture 8: Frame from “Deterring Compost Pests”*
Appendix A:

Video Script: Composting in Bear Country
North Shore Recycling Program
Reading Time: 3 min

Intro

Host: Hi, my name is ___________ and this is a GardenSmart Video produced by the North Shore Recycling Program.

Host: Backyard composting is the most effective and environmentally-friendly way to manage your home’s organic waste; however, on the North Shore, many residents avoid composting due to the fear of attracting bears. This video will cover how to safely and successfully compost in bear country.

Host: Bears travel extensively in search of food, and it is normal for them to pass through residential areas sited along ravines, green belts or near forested areas. Conflict only occurs when bears gain access to sources of unnatural food and begin staying in urban areas. By properly managing your compost bin and other more important bear attractants, you can ensure you are not attracting bears to your neighbourhood. In fact, only 2% of calls to the bear hotline in 2008 reported bears attracted to compost bins.

Step 1: Be Unattractive

Host: The first step to composting in bear country is to make sure that you are managing ALL bear attractants on your property in a safe and responsible manner. Bears have a keen sense of smell and can be attracted to your yard for a number of reasons.

Host: Improperly managed garbage is the most common bear attractant. Keep your garbage container clean, store it indoors or in a secure enclosure, only put it out the morning of pickup and consider freezing particularly odorous foods until your pickup day.

Host: Fruit trees and shrubs, bird feeders, unwashed recycling, dirty barbeques and pet food are also bear attractants. Manage or remove these attractants, and you will greatly reduce the chance of attracting bears to your property and neighbourhood.

Step 2: Work Together

Host: Just as important as managing bear attractants on your property is ensuring that your neighbours are managing attractants on theirs. Collaborate with your neighbours to ensure that your neighbourhood is being “bear safe”.

Step 3: Go Big on Brown

Host: There are a few simple guidelines you can follow to ensure your compost bin does not become a bear-attractant. Understanding how your compost bin works is of utmost importance and is covered in our GardenSmart Video entitled “How Compost Works”.

Host: “Brown”, or carbon-rich, material is important to creating a healthy and odourless compost bin. An equal volume of brown material and green material will result in rich, earthy-smelling compost that will not attract bears.

Host: Always smother bear-attracting “green” material with a thick layer of “browns”.

Composting How-to Video Series
Step 4: Add Oxygen

Host: Oxygen-poor compost bins can develop odours that attract bears. In Bear Country, aeration should be done at least every couple weeks, always finishing off by covering with more “browns”.

Step 5: Bury Fruit

Host: As fruit is a significant bear attractant, harvest all fruit on your property immediately as – or just before – it ripens and get in the habit of picking up fallen fruit daily.

Host: If you want to compost fallen fruit, you can bury small quantities deep within your compost bin, covering them with “browns”; however, a better alternative for greater amounts of fruit is to dig a deep hole in your garden and bury the fruit under no less than 12” of soil. Under no circumstances should you leave fallen fruit on the ground or pile fruit on top of a compost heap.

Host: Visit ediblegardenproject.com for information on donating your fruit to feed the community, not the bears.

Conclusion

Host: Following these guidelines will greatly reduce the chance of attracting bears to your property and your compost bin. Remember: manage or remove attractants, go big on brown, add oxygen and bury fruit for a bear-free bin.

Host: For more information, visit our website.