

RE Sources for Sustainable Communities North Sound Baykeeper

News, Events, and Opportunities April 18, 2008

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Bellingham Public Library Lecture Room, 210 Central Ave., Bellingham

3) April 30 and May 1: Geographic Response Plans Workshop- to protect against damage from oil spills

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May 1st; 9:00-11:00am at the Whatcom County Council Chambers, Bellingham

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Thanks!

News, Events and Opportunities listings are provided to the interested community as a service of the North Sound Baykeeper.

The North Sound Baykeeper is your local advocate for the protection and conservation of marine waters in Whatcom and Skagit Counties.

To help support the North Sound Baykeeper project, send a check to North Sound Baykeeper, RE Sources, 2309 Meridian Street, Bellingham, WA, 98225 Specify Baykeeper in the subject line.

RE Sources North Sound Baykeeper website: www.re-sources.org/baykeeper.htm

1) April 15th – 29th: Waterkeeper Earth Day Online Auction

Bid on and win some cool stuff and great adventures, in support of the Waterkeepers! To view all of the items and to bid, visit Charitybuzz.com between September 15th and September 29th

The item submitted by the North Sound Baykeeper is a serpentine carving, entitled, "The Mother", by Shona artist, L. Madzura.

The sculpture weighs 528 pounds, and is approximately 3' tall, 2 ½ ' wide, and 1' thick. The culture of the Shona people of Zimbabwe is focused on family and fertility. Mothers in Shona culture are revered and after death, the mother's spirit is said to watch over and protect the family. Serpentine is a stone native to Zimbabwe and is often used by native carvers.

Link to <http://www.re-sources.org/pdf/charitybuzz.pdf> to view a picture of the carving.

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2) North Cascades Audubon Society- general meeting

Tuesday, April 22, 7:00 PM

Bellingham Public Library Lecture Room

PROGRAM: Marine Bird Health

The SeaDoc Society is a core marine ecosystem health program of the Wildlife Health Center at the University of California Davis . The society operates in the expanse of the Puget Sound/Georgia Strait as a primary area of interest in marine health and has an office on Orcas Island . Joe Gaydos, Regional Director and Chief Scientist of the SeaDoc Society, directs activities in this area and will be discussing the big picture regarding local marine bird health.

The society has sponsored studies that have looked at the health of seabirds and, unfortunately, is having to focus on the reasons for the dramatic declines in their populations. Joe has testified at a Department of Fish and Wildlife hearing on setting limits for hunting scoters, after which there may be some hope for lowering the hunting limits based on data on scoter numbers and reproduction rates. Of particular interest to us is one study that looked at factors in the decline of the Cherry Point herring fishery. Join us for an informative evening and remember that meetings of the North Cascades Audubon Society are FREE and open to the public. Invite a couple of friends to join you. We'll save a seat for you.

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3) April 30 and May 1: Geographic Response Plans Workshop

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Mount Vernon

In advance of fully updating the Geographic Response Plans (GRP) for oil spills in the North Puget Sound regions, members of the public and the oil spill response community will have two opportunities to attend workshops that will describe what GRPs are and how to best provide comments on the plans.

April 30th, 7:00-9:00pm at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Mount Vernon , WA

May 1st; 9:00-11:00am at the Whatcom County Council Chambers, Bellingham , WA

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and other partners involved in oil spill prevention, preparedness and response will host the workshops. The sessions are scheduled to occur in advance of the planned complete update of Chapter 4 of the GRP for both the North Puget Sound and San Juans in 2008. The workshops are designed to introduce the public to what GRPs are (and are not) and how to best provide feedback. The partners seek to gather comments and suggestions from the public and other interested parties to help update the State ' s existing site-specific response plans for marine oil spills in the two regions.

These geographic response plans are triggered during the first few hours (up to ~24 hours) after an oil spill. The plans are typically tailored to specific beaches, shores, or waterways. GRPs help minimize damage to sensitive areas threatened by a spill.

Ecology and USCG are looking for natural, cultural and economic resource information, GIS data, additional contacts, changes to access points and other related information to help update these response plans.

For more information please see the website:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/preparedness/GRP/GRPWorkshop.htm>

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4) **Drugs in drinking water: Experts aren't rattled**

April 12, 2008 - Frank Greve, The Seattle Times

WASHINGTON -- Lots of people lunged for bottled water after they were told last month that tap water in many U.S. cities contains traces of pharmaceuticals.

"They wanted five-gallon bottles, half-liter cases, anything that wasn't municipal water," said Jennifer Brandon, who was taking phone orders for home-delivered Deer Park water. Responding to the public alarm, Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., called for a hearing on the federal response to drugs in drinking water, scheduled for Tuesday.

Despite the sudden clamor, however, many water-quality researchers kept doing what they had done for years about contaminants in tap water: nothing. They kept drinking local tap or well water, a half-dozen of them said.

For one thing, they know bottled water is less-regulated than are municipal supplies.

There *are* reasons to worry about the safety of drinking water. Contaminants commonly found in drinking water include traces of pesticides, herbicides, flame retardants, DEET, mosquito repellent, aircraft de-icers, lead, arsenic, mercury and esters, ketones and other chemicals found in personal-care products. Not to mention additives in toothpaste meant to retard gum and tooth disease.

So why are experts relatively unfazed?

Here are some reasons:

- Improved detection technology means that we're concerned about levels of contamination that were undetectable in years past.

In the 1970s, the best detection technology picked up compounds at concentrations of one part per million. Today, concentrations of one part per trillion or even quadrillion are detectable.

With each zero of added sensitivity, myriad other chemicals are evident in water, said Christian Daughton, a research scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Exposure Research Laboratory in Las Vegas. Among them are many of the drugs now reported in drinking water.

- Even poisons are not always **toxic**.

Toxicology's most basic principle, researchers said, is the maxim that "the dose makes the poison." One margarita is fine for most people, in other words, but 10 could be fatal, depending on vulnerability and timing.

Toxicologists apply this principle to all poisons, but the public doesn't, according to a landmark 1991 study that examined differences in how the two groups regard risks. Its lead author was University of Oregon psychology professor Paul Slovic, founder of Decision Research, a think tank for risk assessment in Eugene, Ore.

According to Slovic, people take an "all-or-none" view of toxicity when it comes to unwanted exposures.

"What's critical to understand is that it's the dose that's important," Daughton said. "Just because a **toxic** substance is around, doesn't mean you're exposed to it. Your body has to come in contact with it. Your body has to absorb it. Your exposure has to be of some duration and during a critical period of time."

- Effects on animals may not predict effects on humans.

In Slovic's study, two-thirds of laypeople believed a substance that causes cancer in animals is reasonably sure to cause cancer in humans. (Six in every 10 toxicologists disagreed.)

In the case of drugs in water, reproduction in fin- and shellfish and amphibians seems to be the most affected, and the suspected culprits are natural and synthetic forms of the female hormone estrogen and substances that mimic them. In a widely cited experiment, fish in an otherwise pristine Canadian lake lost reproductive vitality when exposed to less than six parts per trillion of a commonly used synthetic form of estrogen.

The findings "raise a red flag" about other effects these drugs may be having on wildlife and possible risks to humans, said Karen Kidd, an environmental toxicologist at the University of New Brunswick's Canadian Rivers Institute who led the study.

But it is important to realize, Kidd said, that estrogens rarely are found in drinking water. Moreover, one reason fish are affected is because they're always taking up compounds through their gills. Hence, "they're getting exposed to more drugs than the average human would be from drinking water," she said.

No research has found a hazard to humans from estrogen or any other pharmaceutical in drinking water, Kidd and others noted, and Kidd said she continues to drink tap water.

- Scientists understand big numbers and use them to gauge risk. Most other people get lost in the zeros.

"There's no evolutionary reason for them to understand very big or very small numbers," said Ellen Peters, a colleague of Slovic's at the University of Oregon and at Decision Research.

When faced with a probability like one chance in a million, Peters and others said, most people glom onto the "one" and exaggerate its importance.

- Most people think irrationally about risks.

David Ropeik, a risk-communication consultant in Boston, said people feel less threatened by health risks that they choose, such as smoking, than by risks imposed on them, such as contaminated drinking water. They accept familiar risks, such as riding a bicycle, more than risks that surprise them. They also tolerate visible risks, such as choppy seas, better than invisible ones, Ropeik said. Drugs in drinking water earn mistrust on all counts.

McClatchy researcher Tish Wells contributed to this report.

<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=water12&date=20080412&query=toxic>

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5) Questions to ask before buying a supposedly "green" product

April 12, 2008 – Tom Watson, The Seattle Times

How many "green" products will it take to stop global warming?

If you answered, "as few as possible," you're on the right track. We can't buy our way to a greener world. It takes behavioral change, which often involves buying fewer products, not more. Every product has an environmental cost, from processing to transportation to disposal.

That doesn't mean we should spurn all of the thousands of green products now flooding the marketplace. But before you buy a product trumpeted as eco-friendly, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it less wasteful or less **toxic** than a product you use regularly? Those types of products — such as recycled-content toilet paper, organic food or a front-loading washing machine — are often the most effective at reducing our environmental impact.
- Do you really need it? Sales of "natural" household cleaning products have soared, increasing 26 percent in the past year, according to industry research. But many of those products are superfluous, since cleaning jobs can often be handled with nontoxic ingredients you already have around the house, such as vinegar or baking soda.
- Can you change your lifestyle or habits instead of buying a product? For example, instead of purchasing a hybrid car, perhaps you could take the bus, bike or walk to work, move closer to your job or join a car-sharing program.
- Will it make a green behavioral change easier? If having a great pair of walking shoes helps you walk more instead of driving, then those shoes make a green contribution, even if they're not made from recycled materials.

As we celebrate Earth Day this month, the marketing of green products has reached a fever pitch. Here are a few examples of products that can truly call themselves green:

Get into hot water

For a hot green investment, consider a solar water heater. Despite our rainy, cloudy reputation, Western Washington works surprisingly well for this.

And by reducing the costs of heating water, a solar hot-water system will pay for itself in 6 to 12 years, says Larry Owens, president of the nonprofit Shoreline Solar Project.

To make it even more inviting, you don't have to pay Washington state sales tax on solar water-heating equipment, and you can get a federal tax credit until the end of this year.

On the rack

A clothes dryer typically uses the most electricity of any appliance other than the refrigerator. Hang clothes outside on a line or rack when you can.

But although we have may enough sun for solar energy, if you want to regularly hang your clothes to dry them, you will need an indoor clothes-drying rack. Visit Bed Bath & Beyond or other local housewares stores, or search online for "wood clothes-drying racks" to find models for \$10 and up.

Eat a peach

Of all the fruits and vegetables at the grocery store, peaches usually contain the highest levels of pesticides, according to the Environmental Working Group

(www.foodnews.org). So this summer, when they're ripe, seek out Washington-grown organic peaches at neighborhood farmers markets, Pike Place Market or your local grocery.

Calling all greens

The price is right for this last product — no charge, and waste-free as well. As phone-directory publishers start to make it easier to opt out of receiving paper phone books, you

can finally find online phone directories that are up-to-date and easy to use, once you get the hang of them.

For example, the Dex Electronic Directory (www.dexpages.com) shows pages just like the print version. So let your fingers do the walking — right across your keyboard.

A brand new bag

This is one of the few regions in the country where most residents can put food scraps in with their yard waste. It then gets picked up and turned into compost products sold at area stores.

To conveniently collect food waste in your kitchen, first get a container (from your city or online, or reuse a container), and then line it with an approved compostable bag. See www.recyclefood.com for an extensive list of stores in King County that sell these bags. Be sure you get the right size bag — about 2.5 gallons. Tossing the whole bag in the yard waste makes food-waste collection much easier.

From bike to package

For those who would ride in the city if they could safely store their bike in a small space or easily transport it, a folding bike may provide the solution.

Folding Bikes West (www.electricvehiclesnw.com/fbw) in Ballard offers several models (most pedal-powered, but one electric) that fold up in 30 seconds into a compact 25-pound package. Priced at \$400 and up, they're still much cheaper and greener than a car.

Tom Watson is project manager for King County's Recycling and Environmental Services. Reach him at tom.watson@kingcounty.gov, 206-296-4481 or

www.KCecoconsumer.com.

<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=ecoconsumer12&date=20080412&query=toxic>

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6) Response tug to provide year-round protection against oil spills

April 14, 2008 – Washington Department of Ecology

OLYMPIA – A state-funded emergency response tug will be stationed at Neah Bay , ready to prevent oil spills 365 days a year under a contract extension agreement signed today between the Department of Ecology (Ecology) and Crowley Maritime Corporation (Crowley).

The extension agreement marks the first time that a response tug will be stationed at Neah Bay for a full year of service.

During the 2008 legislative session, Gov. Chris Gregoire and lawmakers provided \$3.7 million for emergency response tug service. Under the contract, Crowley will station a high-horsepower, ocean-going tug at Neah Bay from July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009.

“Every year, thousands of vessels carrying billions of gallons of oil make transits through the Strait of Juan de Fuca ,” said Gov. Gregoire. “If we had a major oil spill in the strait, the costs to our environment, our economy and our quality of life could be astronomical. We must do all we can to protect our pristine shorelines. Keeping a response tug at Neah Bay year-round helps fulfill that mission.”

Gregoire said that the current state level of funding is enough to keep the tug at Neah Bay for a year – until a permanent, stable funding source can be established.

Crowley took over the state contract to keep a response tug ready at Neah Bay during winter seasons beginning Jan. 1, 2007, but public funding ran out in early March 2008. Under the extension, the maritime company will provide a year of tug service at the same rate set in the 2007 contract – \$8,500 a day plus fuel costs.

“Crowley is pleased to be part of the Department of Ecology’s and our state’s effort to protect our marine environment,” said Scott Hoggarth, general manager of marine services for Crowley in Seattle . “This proactive measure affords our communities peace of mind that the pristine waters of Washington state and our coastal neighbors will continue to be protected. Crowley appreciates the partnership and support of the Makah Indian Tribe in this endeavor as well. It is gratifying to be part of this environmentally conscious measure, taking a preventative position when it comes to protecting our coastal and inland waters and shorelines.”

Since 1999, state-funded response tugs stationed at Neah Bay have kept disabled ships from drifting onto rocks and causing major oil spills during the stormy winter months. The tugs have stood by or assisted 40 ships that were disabled or had reduced maneuvering or propulsion.

Since 2002, state lawmakers provided Ecology \$1.4 million per year with the goal of providing about 200 days of response tug service.

“The state Legislature has long recognized the importance of having a tug stationed at Neah Bay ,” said state Sen. Harriet Spanel. “Many of us have understood the need for and have worked for funding for a year-round tug for some time. The state money for a year-round tug is only for a single year of service. We are working with our Congressional delegation to find a stable, long-term funding source so we can continue to keep this critical, proven resource.”

Spanel said a major spill could severely hurt Washington’s fishing and shellfish industries, further endanger salmon runs, kill birds and marine mammals, ruin public beaches, and disrupt Washington’s economy.

There are nearly 9,000 oil tankers and cargo ships transiting in and out of the strait each year. Cargo ships can carry more than two million gallons of cargo oil and tankers can carry up to 36 million gallons of crude oil and other petroleum products.

Beaches in the Olympic National Park, the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, three national wildlife refuges, and tribal lands are directly at risk for major oil spills since they are adjacent to the shipping route.

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2008news/2008-088.html>

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7) NEWS: Beach trash: 7 million items

April 16, 2008 - H. Josef Hebert, The Seattle Times

WASHINGTON — The world's beaches and shores are anything but pristine. Volunteers scoured 33,000 miles of shoreline worldwide and found 6 million pounds of debris from cigarette butts and food wrappers to abandoned fishing lines and plastic bags that threaten seabirds and marine mammals.

A report by the Ocean Conservancy, to be released today, catalogs nearly 7.2 million items that were collected by volunteers on a single day last September as they combed

beaches and rocky shorelines in 76 countries from Bahrain to Bangladesh and in 45 states from Southern California to the Maine coast.

"This is a snapshot of one day, one moment in time, but it serves as a powerful reminder of our carelessness and how our disparate and random actions actually have a collective and global impact," said Vikki Spruill, president of the Ocean Conservancy.

The 378,000 volunteers on average collected 182 pounds of trash for every mile of shoreline, both ocean coastlines and beaches on inland lakes and streams, providing a "global snapshot of the ocean-trash problem."

The most extensive cleanup was in the United States, where 190,000 volunteers covered 10,110 miles — about a third of the worldwide total — and picked up 3.9 million pounds of debris on a single Saturday last September, according to the report.

That's 390 pounds of trash per mile, among the highest rates of any country, although the high number also reflects the large number of U.S. volunteers who took part, Spruill said. By comparison, volunteers in neighboring Canada collected 74 pounds per mile and those in Mexico, 157 pounds per mile, said the report. About 65 pounds of trash were collected per mile in China and 46 pounds per mile in New Zealand. Volunteers covered one mile in Bahrain and found 300 pounds of trash.

But Spruill said the volume of trash collected tells only part of the story. It's the items that are found that tells us about the behavior of people enjoying the beaches and coastlines of the world.

"It represents a general carelessness we have. ... We're the bad guys. Trash doesn't fall from the sky. It actually falls from our hands," Spruill said.

The debris ranges from the relatively harmless, although annoying and an eyesore, to items that annually result in the death of hundreds of thousands of seabirds and marine mammals caught in abandoned fishing lines and netting.

The volunteers collected and cataloged nearly 2.3 million cigarette butts, filters and cigar tips. And they found 587,827 bags; more than 1.7 million food wrappers, containers, lids, cups, plates and eating utensils; and nearly 1.2 million bottles and beverage cans.

Divers also scoured waters offshore, collecting about 160,000 pounds of debris from cigarette waste and food containers to more threatening items: abandoned fishing lines, plastic bags, rope, fishing nets and abandoned crab and lobster traps.

The International Coastal Cleanup also focused attention on the damage these items can do, program sponsors said.

The volunteers came across 81 birds, 63 fish, 49 invertebrates, 30 mammals, 11 reptiles and one amphibian that all had become entangled in various debris, most often discarded fishing line, rope or plastic bags, according to the report.

Among other items that entangle animals and birds were balloon ribbons and strings, building material, vehicle tires, wire, and beverage six-pack holders.

In all, 57 percent of the trash was related to shoreline recreation, 33 percent from smoking, 6.3 percent from fishing or waterway activities, 2 percent from dumping and less than 1 percent was medical or personal-hygiene-related, the report said.

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<http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=beach16&date=20080416&query=fish>

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8) Hagen to test fish for mercury

April 17, 2008 – Dave Gallagher, The Bellingham Herald
<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/255/story/383263.html>

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9) A warning for those recycling electronics

April 18, 2008 – Lisa Stiffler, The Seattle Post-Intelligencer

[From the North Sound Baykeeper: this article mentions the RE Store and RE Lectronics, both of Bellingham, as BAN approved computer recyclers. The RE Store is no longer accepting electronics, but RE Lectronics has just reopened as an independent non-profit and is accepting electronics. Contact them at (360) 734-1235 or at pickup@relectronics.org]

Green-minded consumers beware. Free electronics collection events touted as planet friendly aren't always as ecologically sound as they seem, says a watchdog group focused on preventing the export of dangerous e-waste.

The trouble is it's nearly impossible for well-meaning consumers to know what happens to the pollutants in the products they're dropping off. The products can be shipped all over the world and pass through multiple handlers before reaching their final resting place.

"One Earth, One Day, Rid Your Junk the Right Way!" is the slogan for Saturday's free collection of electronic waste organized by the national trash hauling chain 1-800-GOT-JUNK?. Collections are happening in Seattle, Bellevue, Olympia and about 70 other cities nationally. They say they have taken steps to make sure the material will be disposed of properly.

But after taking a look at the list of recyclers who will be getting the dumped computers, TVs, cell phones, printers, keyboards and other waste, e-trash experts with Seattle's Basel Action Network are concerned about where the refuse is going.

"Avoid this event like the plague if you want to do the right thing," said Jim Puckett, coordinator for BAN. "We are not convinced this is a sustainable pathway."

The concern is that the waste will be shipped to China or other southeast Asian or African countries, ultimately being melted down or dunked in acid to recover trace amounts of valuable metals. BAN was the first organization to publicize this sort of activity in 2002, documenting towering heaps of scrapped electronics and the poisoning of people and the environment. The electronics contain lead, mercury and other toxic ingredients requiring careful handling.

Officials with GOT-JUNK? said the waste collected in their event will not be exported.

"This is our opportunity for one day to make sure what we pick up is not being dumped in a landfill or sent overseas," said Tania Hall, senior spokeswoman for the company.

"Everyone is doing the best they can. This is a good event."

Hall said the participating GOT-JUNK franchises were required to visit the recycling facilities they're using or get a letter of assurance that they would not send the waste abroad. "We took this very, very seriously."

BAN remains skeptical.

"We are highly unconvinced," Puckett said. Recyclers can obscure what's happening to the e-trash by having brokers send the waste overseas so they can honestly claim that they do not. Or they can claim the waste isn't being "disposed of" by classifying the dangerous recovery of metals as "recycling."

Watchdogs warn that free collections -- while often well-intended -- can result in cost-cutting elsewhere at the expense of the environment.

"This material is very expensive to deal with properly in this country," Puckett said.

Jason Purcell learned that lesson in a recent e-waste collection event he organized at Seattle Pacific University. Purcell, an adjunct faculty member in physical education and martial arts, organized a free recycling event last month that generated 14 commercial truckloads of trash. A school parking lot the size of football field was filled 4 to 8 feet high.

Expecting to fill only a truck or two, Purcell had to supplement his handful of volunteers with a crew of paid workers. Even so, much of the waste from the weekend event remained in the lot for days. TVs with broken screens sat in the rain.

The \$13,000 received in donations from people dropping off waste paid for the labor; \$500 went to the Union Gospel Mission -- the intended recipient of extra proceeds. It cost an additional \$15,000 to pay for the disposal -- in part because of contracts canceled by recyclers, said Purcell, which he blamed on meddling by BAN, an accusation the nonprofit denies.

Recycling and disposal was handled by a California company, which BAN investigated and deemed responsible -- though it's still unclear where a small portion of the waste wound up.

Despite the headaches, Purcell said it was a success, getting thousands of tons of trash out of closets, backyards and landfills and put to reuse or safe disposal. He wants to do it again -- and has ideas for doing it more cheaply and efficiently.

"We need to raise awareness," he said. People need to understand "there are toxics in this stuff and make sure this stuff is handled properly."

The hope is that the situation in Washington will improve come January when a free, statewide electronics take-back program takes effect. By law, electronics manufacturers selling items here must finance a program that will accept at no charge scrapped TVs, computers and monitors from residents, small businesses, small governments, charities and schools.

For now, consumers can participate in free events or take electronics to businesses and nonprofit groups that recycle or reuse the items. Disposing of outdated computer monitors and TVs in this way can cost \$10 to \$50 each.

In coming months there's likely to be even more dumped TVs as U.S. broadcasts will go to a digital-only format in February. Some analog TVs can be adapted to get the new signal, but older ones will become obsolete.

Dan Cleator is general manager for the GOT-JUNK franchise organizing the Seattle collection. They're not accepting TVs but will take other electronics.

Cleator doesn't expect the event to cost his business much money, as his recycler, MIC Total Recycle, is accepting the trash for free. BAN tried to research where the waste from MIC would end up, but ran into a dead end at a California recycler being used.

Cleator said he was assured none of the debris would be shipped abroad and that he trusts MIC. He also appreciates the questions raised by BAN.

"I agree with their concerns, and I know our company does as well. I've heard some of the horror stories about kids in Asia getting lead poisoning. Personally and professionally, it would kill me if I knew that was going on."

E-WASTE DISPOSAL

1-800-GOT-JUNK? e-waste collections are being held in Seattle, Bellevue and elsewhere, though TVs are not accepted at many locations and a local watchdog group is concerned about where the waste is going: 1800gotjunk.com/earthday.

Basel Action Network tracks e-waste: ban.org.

BAN-approved Washington recyclers: InterConnection, Mojo Systems, Re-PC, RE Lectronics and The RE Store, Total Reclaim.

The region's Take It Back network includes businesses that pledge safe disposal:

takeitbacknetwork.org.

Beginning in January, Washington households, small businesses, small governments, charities and schools will be able to dispose of TVs, computers and monitors for free:

ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eproductrecycle.

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/359577_computer18.html

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10) Products pulled after ingredient in plastic declared toxic

April 18, 2008 – Ian Austen, The New York Times

OTTAWA — Nalgene, the brand that popularized water bottles made from hard, clear and nearly unbreakable polycarbonate, will stop using the plastic because of growing concern over one of its ingredients. The decision by Nalgene Outdoor Products, a unit of Thermo Fisher Scientific based in Rochester, N.Y., came after reports that the Canadian government would declare the chemical bisphenol-A, or BPA, toxic. Some animal studies have linked the chemical to changes in the hormonal system. Those reports also prompted many of Canada's largest retailers, including Wal-Mart Canada, to remove food-related products made with plastics containing BPA, such as baby bottles, toddler sipping cups and food containers, from their stores this week. Wal-Mart also will stop selling baby bottles made with the controversial chemical in its U.S. stores early next year, a spokesman said Thursday. Wal-Mart has sold BPA-free baby bottles for several years alongside bottles with the chemical. But Thursday was the first time the retailer indicated it would convert its entire U.S. stock. Spurred by customer demand, other retailers are also stocking products made without the chemical. A spokeswoman for Target said the chain began testing glass baby bottles in its stores in January and offering them online in February. Babies R Us said its sales of glass bottles have increased fivefold since last spring. "Based on all available scientific evidence, we continue to believe that Nalgene products containing BPA are safe for their intended use," Steven Silverman, the general manager of the Nalgene unit, said in a statement. "However, our customers indicated they preferred BPA-free alternatives, and we acted in response to those concerns." The United States' National Toxicology Program released a draft report Tuesday reporting that some rats that were fed or injected with low doses of BPA developed precancerous tumors and urinary-tract problems and reached puberty early. While the report said the animal tests provided "limited evidence," it also noted that the "possibility that bisphenol-A may alter human development cannot be dismissed." On April 10, the American Chemistry Council,

which says there is no evidence suggesting BPA has an adverse impact on people, asked the Food and Drug Administration to review the chemical. Nalgene's decision to drop the plastic that transformed it from an obscure maker of laboratory equipment into a consumer brand does not mean the company is leaving the drinking-bottle business. It has long made bottles from other plastics that lack the glasslike transparency and rigidity that made polycarbonate popular. In March, Nalgene also introduced a line of bottles made from a relatively new plastic from Eastman Chemical, Tritan copolyester, that shares most of polycarbonate's properties, including shatter resistance, but is made without BPA. A person knowledgeable about Canada's chemical-review program said this week that the government had decided to list BPA as a toxic substance under the country's environmental protection act. Because of confidentiality rules, he spoke on the condition he not be identified. Designation of the chemical will begin a two-year regulatory process that could lead to restrictions or a ban on the use of BPA. Not all consumers are pleased by the actions. Because of Health Canada's review, London Drugs, based in Richmond, B.C., began withdrawing BPA-related merchandise Jan. 10 and replacing it with alternatives made of other plastics or stainless steel. Wynne Powell, the company's president, said the last 10 products were taken away this week. "I had some complaints come to my desk complaining that we were fear-mongering by pulling products," Powell said. "The public was not totally on board." A difficult question for retailers will be how to handle products, including soft drinks, that are packaged in aluminum or steel cans. For the past two decades, the interiors of most cans have been coated with an epoxy resin that is made using BPA to extend the shelf life of the contents and prevent the metal from affecting the flavors of food and drinks. John Rost, the chairman of the North American Metal Packaging Alliance, an industry group, said there was no evidence that the linings expose humans to significant amounts of BPA, a position not shared by all scientists.

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The North Sound Baykeeper is funded by private giving dollars. To help support the North Sound Baykeeper project, send a check to North Sound Baykeeper, RE Sources, 2309 Meridian Street, Bellingham, WA, 98225. Specify 'Baykeeper' in the subject line.

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