Office Composting Project: Using bicycles to collect food waste

By Erica Spiegel
UVM Recycling & Waste Manager
October 2012
Collecting Food Waste at UVM

- UVM has been collecting food waste for composting for over almost 20 years!
- Collection effort has always been in dining halls and residence halls
- On average, **9 tons per week** at UVM are kept out of landfill by composting.
Composting Off Site

• A contracted hauler collects food waste 5 days/week from 8 campus locations.
• Food waste is delivered to Green Mountain Compost facility in Williston.
• Mixed with other organic wastes (leaves, manure, etc) Turned into natural soil fertilizer = compost
How Could We Expand Collection to other areas of campus?

• Staff in office areas were asking about composting.
• Not feasible to route compost truck to academic or administrative buildings.

• Enter: One Revolution Compost!
One Revolution is a small, member-owned business started by 2 UVM students (and their dad).

One Revolution approached UVM last year with idea of collecting food waste via bicycle.

Company now employs other students who are affiliated with UVM club B.U.G. (Bike Users Group)

Company is a “certified vendor” at UVM.
Summer 2012 Pilot Program

• 25 offices in academic & admin buildings were selected to participate.
  – 284 East Ave
  – Waterman Presidents Row
  – Jeffords
  – 109 So Prospect
  – Morrill Hall & others!

• Offices given small cellulose-lined paper bag to keep in their break room, and a clip to seal the bag.
  www.uvm.edu/compost
What goes IN the bag?

University of Vermont
Offices
Composting Guidelines

Compost this...
All Food Leftovers
Fruit and Veggie Peels
Egg Shells
Meat and Bones
Dairy Products
Coffee Grounds and Filters
Paper, “Clamshell” Boxes
Tea Bags
Wooden Stirrers
Ecotainer Paper Coffee Cups
Brown Paper Napkins
Brown Paper Towels

But Not That...
Plastic Utensils
Straws
Frozen Food Boxes
Coated Papers
Bags or Wrappers
Styrofoam
Creamer Cups
Rubber Bands, Twist Ties
Metal, Glass or Plastic of any kind

When in doubt, please leave it out!

Questions about pickup schedule?
email: onevolutionvt@gmail.com
or call 1-877-4BIKEVT
For more info: http://www.uvm.edu/compost
One Rev Collects

• One Rev “rider” collects full bags 2 x per week directly from offices.
• Offices are given a new bag in exchange.
Combined with other food waste!

• Cycled over to Davis Center Loading Dock.
• Materials are weighed on scale & data is recorded.
• Food waste is added to the carts that are already being used by Dining Services (and already being serviced by compost truck).
Survey of participants after two months in Pilot Program:

- NO problems with odors
- NO problems with pests
- NO problems with leaks or with bags
- 94% of participants want to continue the program into the Fall.
- 61% said pickup can be reduced to one day per week.

Average of 110 pounds per week of food waste being collected from office areas.
Next Steps: Expand program this Fall.

- In October...expanding the program to include more office locations, new buildings
- Reducing pickup to one day per week.
- All PPD Zone Maintenance break rooms will be added

Now you too... can compost your lunch room leftovers!