



Trees, animals, birds, plants, forests, mountains, lakes and rivers — everything that exists in Nature are in desperate need of our kindness, of the compassionate care and protection of human beings. If we protect them, they in turn will protect us.

- Amma

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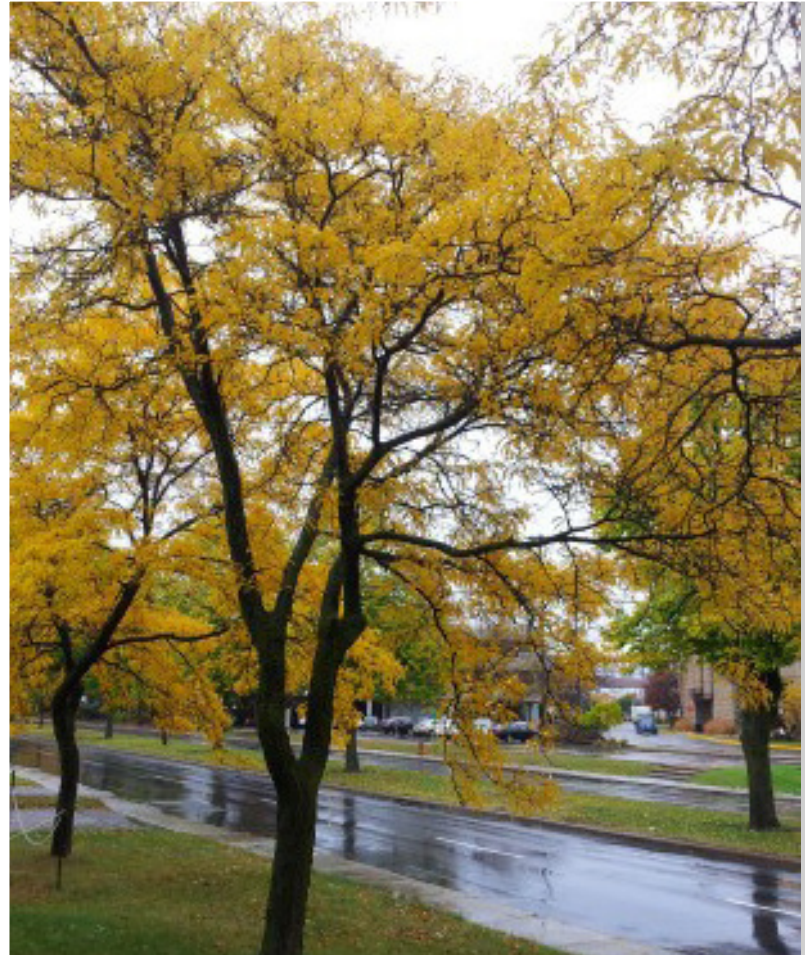


photo is © Clr '14 from [cherylynroberts](#)

GreenFriends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

GreenFriends is one of the projects of Embracing the World, a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest GreenFriends Litter Project, write Karuna at [karunap108@comcast.net](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net)

For Organic Gardening and Permaculture write Maheswari at: [PNWGreenFriends@google.com](mailto:PNWGreenFriends@google.com)

For The Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project write:

Ananya ammasananya@comcast.net and Kalavathi annecrory@gmail.com



## Gardening

### PNW Gardens by Karuna

Last month I asked the PNW Amma satsangs and the Litter Project group to let me know if they planted vegetable gardens this year. At least 70 people responded, either directly or through a satsang leader. There is no doubt in my mind that there were many others in the region who have gardens but didn't respond. I'd say we did good! ☺

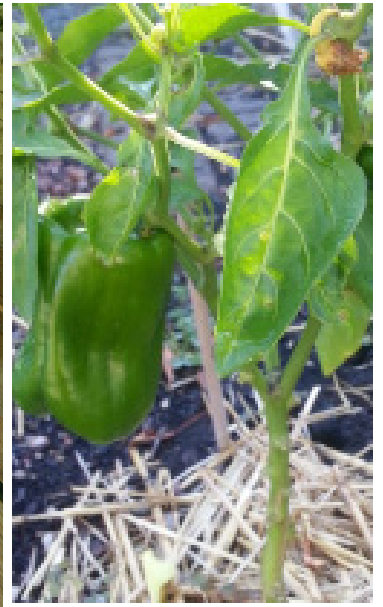
Our gardens ranged from small container gardens located on a porch, balcony or deck to very large gardens. Some people had planted orchards as well. The orchards also ranged from small to large.

[Thanks to all of you who sent in descriptions and pictures of your gardens. I have had computer problems this month and as a result lost all of those emails, so was not able to include that level of detail in this article.]





## Gardening (contd.)





## Gardening (contd.)

### City Fruit



A/P Photo Dean Fosdick

City Fruit is an organization that harvests unwanted fruit and delivers it to food banks and feeding programs. Since 2008, volunteers have harvested and donated more than 80,000 pounds of fruit. This year, they harvested 24,000 pounds of fruit in Ballard, Phinney/Greenwood, South Seattle, Wallingford and West Seattle. City Fruit also takes care of 16 orchards in Seattle.

The group does more than simply harvesting and donating food. Here are the goals from their website:

#### Our Goals

**Conservation:** Preserve fruit trees on public and private properties; document historical orchards.

**Preservation:** of the urban tree canopy: Increase fruit trees planted on public and private properties; map fruit trees.

**Stewardship:** Improve the care of fruit trees and reduce the impact of fruit pests and diseases using non-toxic methods.

**Harvest:** Increase the amount of fruit harvested by supporting harvesting groups, developing the capacity of neighborhoods to harvest, and promoting harvesting by tree owners.

**Using and sharing fruit:** Develop the capacity of people and groups to preserve fruit; explore the income-generating potential of urban fruit; effectively link those who have fruit with those who need it.

**Community building:** Build and strengthen connections within community groups through the planting, stewardship, harvest and/or preservation of fruit.

To donate fruit or volunteer write [info@cityfruit.org](mailto:info@cityfruit.org). For more information go to <https://cityfruit.org/>

Another way to help City Fruit is to attend the Cider Taste Fund Raiser, Nov. 6 from 5-9 pm at the Palace Ballroom in Seattle. The celebration will include cider tasting, a marketplace and more. All proceeds benefit the 2015 harvest. Info: [cityfruit.org/cidertaste](http://cityfruit.org/cidertaste).

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Contemplating the Duwamish by Saroja



The Pacific salmon are now spawning after their arduous journey from Puget Sound. The ones who traveled via the Duwamish Waterway to areas upstream did so having to navigate through PCBs, mercury, arsenic, lead, and 40 other pollutants, a toxic stew that has rendered a 5.5-mile portion of the Lower Duwamish a Superfund Site (Superfund Site is a designation given by the Federal Government to the nation's most toxic and hazardous waste sites). It wasn't always so.

Down at the south end of Elliot Bay, the Duwamish River empties its fresh water into the Bay and takes in salt water from the sea. Before the early 1900's this estuary was a vast basin, a complex system of channels, intertidal mud-flats, ringing tidal marshes and swamps. The combined floodplain habitat area was approximately 5,300 acres. The river itself was once serpentine, with bends sharp and shallow, special places where fish were drawn to feed and hide from predators. This entire area was teeming with fish and wildlife and was home to an early people who lived in villages all along the river.

When the developing pioneers first came to Puget Sound, the challenge of building and transporting on Seattle's many steep slopes led so easily to a vision of using this big flat space. Oh, the possibilities they must have seen! Early on, a piling-supported rail line was built, crossing over the water-y, marshy area between West Seattle and Beacon Hill. Better yet came the idea of a complete alteration, an alteration that eventually turned out to be a very costly decision, as today we try to make amends.

Beginning in 1905, massive engineering projects began transforming the estuary. The river itself was dredged, broadened, straightened, diked and channeled. It was at this juncture that the word 'river' was replaced because it no longer behaved like a river. It is now called the Duwamish Waterway. The swamps were totally eliminated, and of the intertidal shallows and flats, only 2% remain. This devastation was further accomplished by then bringing in millions of cubic yards of garbage, concrete, contaminated dirt and sand to cover up the entire estuarine area to make it

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration (contd.)

suitable for building.

The newly tamed and pliable waterway was attractive to business, and they came in droves: mills, shipyards, the Boeing Company's manufacturing plant along the riverbank. Early on, they freely used the river to dispose of their waste, this another layer added onto a river floor already made toxic. Then in the 1930's came PCBs - an elixir that makes paint last longer and caulk seal better, but is deadly to organic life. These chemicals are still finding their way into the river from our use of it years ago.



Since 1980 there have been many positive plans put forward and fruitful actions completed on behalf of the Duwamish Waterway and its neighborhoods. Numerous players, albeit sometimes very contentious, are now dedicated to cleanup, with 'making fish and shellfish fit to consume' their *raison d'être*. And it is the PCBs that are the biggest concern and the major impetus: fish in the Duwamish have 20 times more PCBs than those found in Puget Sound.

In September, The Port of Seattle hosted a Duwamish 101 tour for what turned out to be an audience of nearly 200. This was an opportunity for all the major parties involved in the cleanup\* to showcase their work. We rode about three miles up the Waterway on an Argosy boat and were introduced to the various restoration sites. As we were motoring along, I realized how close I've been to the river: working, birding, regularly crossing the 1st Av S Bridge, and now living on a ridge immediately above it. I have this big feeling in my heart for the river - it has had so much to absorb and holds so many stories. It now has pockets of improved habitat; i.e., restored shorelines again providing habitat for migrating salmon. The habitat restoration sites are being called a 'string of green pearls.'

Back on land, I am touring by car the completed restoration sites we saw from the boat. At all of them, parks have been developed also - picnic tables and benches and art and interpretive signs, all surrounded by native trees and shrubs - another way for the agencies to introduce the public to the river, to bring people down to it. Basically, one



doesn't readily see the river. Even driving on the two major arterials that parallel the water, one is not much aware of it; the physical footprint of industry hides it. [I am using a map entitled *The Green-Duwamish River, Connecting People with a Diverse Environment*.\*\* It is a wonderfully done visual and textural tool for learning more about the river.]

All the parks have signs warning people to not eat the "resident" fish; i.e. crab, shellfish, bottom-feeding fish like flounder; and to limit consumption of and remove the fat from the migrating salmon. Regardless, there are many people who either haven't seen

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration (contd.)



the signs or for economic and/or cultural reasons continue to eat these poisoned fish. There has been considerable outreach to this population, especially those living in the South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods.

I am leaving my tour of the Hamm Creek Restoration Project for last because this is the heart of my story and the place I'm most excited about visiting. It was in 1979 that a man named James Beal took it upon himself to start cleaning the Duwamish River at this place called Hamm Creek. He was one of the early activists, an inspiration, for a project that has now spiraled to a project involving so many people and millions of dollars. I've included links below to a couple of engaging

newspaper articles about him.\*\*\*

James Rasmussen of the Duwamish Tribe has said that years ago the cause of pollution was industry/individuals at an 80/20 ratio, and that that is now completely reversed. Everything we wash down the sinks and toilets, all the fertilizers and pesticides we use are candidates for damage to the ground water. When a winter storm comes and the rain cannot be absorbed fast enough, this runoff rushes into Seattle's antiquated sewer system and the filtering of above mentioned chemicals cannot keep up. Replacing the sewer system deemed too costly a project, government is instead opting for amelioration.

One visible project: residents in many neighborhoods are being encouraged to help protect their watersheds by building rain gardens, using plants that can take in these overflows, and/or installing rain receptacles. In many cases government is footing a majority of the cost. In my neighborhood of Highland Park, the sewer/storm water drains into the beautiful Duwamish. A way to help with Duwamish habitat restoration is to contact the Duwamish Alive Coalition [www.duwamishalive.org](http://www.duwamishalive.org). In the spring and fall volunteers are invited to family friendly work parties, removing debris, planting native plants, removing invasive weeds, etc. We've just missed the fall party, which was held on October 18, but spring will come soon!

\* Lower Duwamish Waterway Group (Boeing Company, City of Seattle, King County, and Port of Seattle: these four have been identified as major polluters and share responsibility for cleanup); Businesses along the Waterway who contribute to pollution; DRCC (Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition which includes the Duwamish Tribe); ECOSS (Environmental Coalition of South Seattle); EPA; Washington Department of Ecology, to name the primary parties.

\*\* The Green-Duwamish River Map. To request a copy, contact the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition at [contact@duwamishcleanup.org](mailto:contact@duwamishcleanup.org).

\*\*\* James Beal:

<http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/John-Beal-1950-2006-River-steward-neverbacked-1207200.php>

<http://seattletimes.com/pacificnw/2004/1003/cover.html>



# Saving the Earth's Resources

## Is Degrowth the Answer to the Litter and Pollution Issue?

by Vandita (Halfmoon Bay, B.C.)

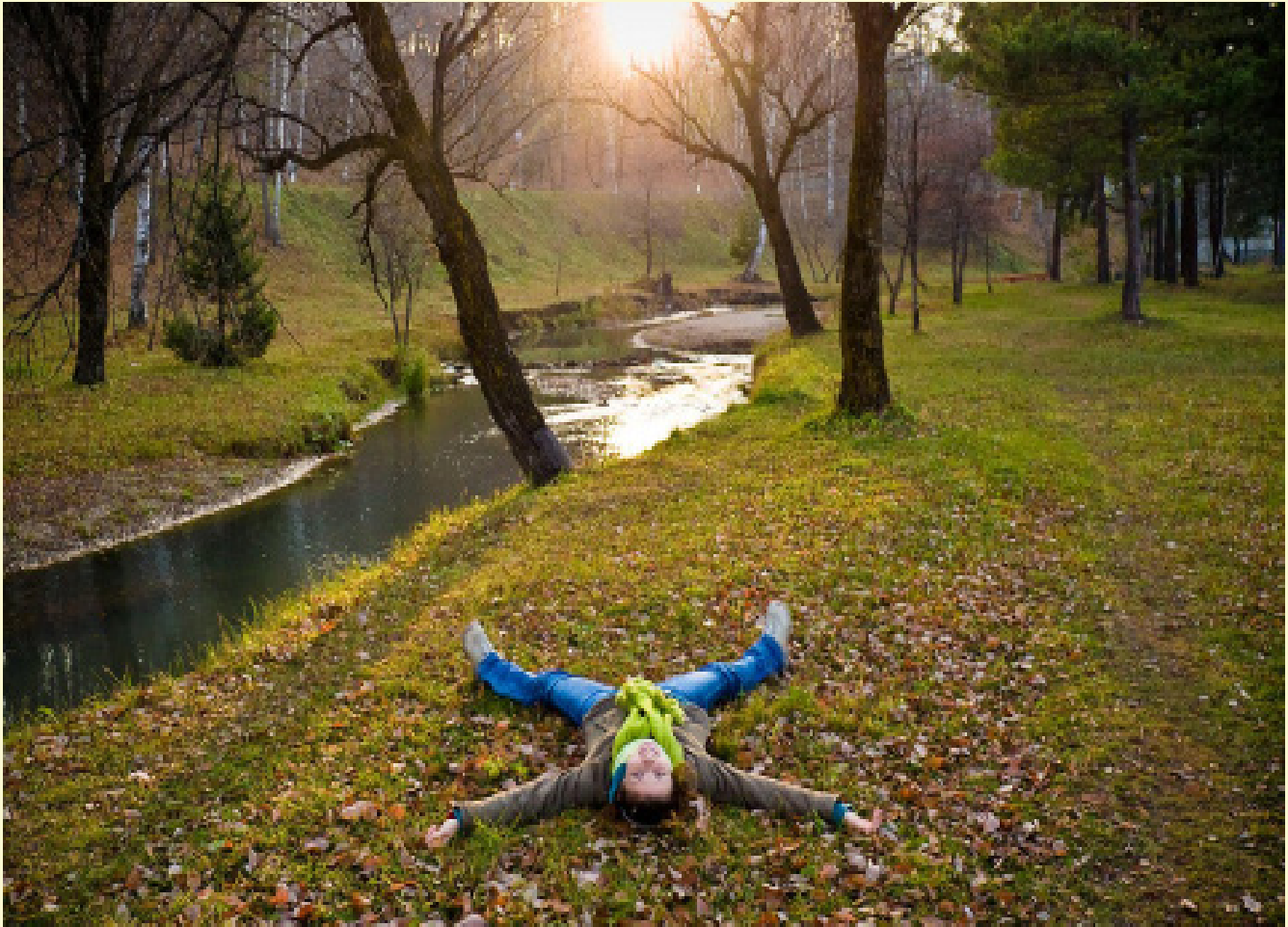


Photo by Alex Polezhaev from Novosibirsk, Russia (In the sun)

[CC-BY-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

**Degrowth** (in French: *décroissance*,<sup>[1]</sup> in Spanish: *decrecimiento*, in Italian: *decrescita*) is a political, economic, and social movement based on [ecological economics](#) and [anti-consumerist](#) and [anti-capitalist](#) ideas.<sup>[2]</sup> It is also considered an essential economic strategy responding to the limits-to-growth dilemma (see [The Path to Degrowth in Overdeveloped Countries](#) and [Post growth](#)). Degrowth thinkers and activists advocate for the downscaling of production and consumption—the contraction of economies—arguing that [overconsumption](#) lies at the root of long term [environmental issues](#) and social inequalities. Key to the concept of degrowth is that reducing consumption does not require individual martyring and a decrease in well-being.<sup>[3]</sup> Rather, 'degrowthists' aim to maximize happiness and well-being through non-consumptive means—sharing work, consuming less, while devoting more time to art, music, family, culture and community.

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)



## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)

We just have to look around us to see it. Everywhere there is an excess of material objects, stuff. In the West we get clogged with paper we don't want, and end up being seduced into many things we're told will make us happy, but don't. For children, rich or poor, this generation has at least 2 x the amount of toys and clothes of the previous one, the generation before that, had a fraction. Each of these objects has gone through a long process of labour to produce, its production and transport emitting more carbon into the environment and packaging to be disposed of. Nothing is free, nothing comes without a price which could be as bad as cutting down the rainforest, poor working conditions and/or child labour. Also, it turns out having too many toys is not very healthy for children.

In his book *Affluenza*, James outlines how the populations of the UK and the US suffer a high degree of emotional distress related to the kind of materialism that Becker rejects. Meanwhile, residents of continental Europe are only half as likely to be plunged into misery by their frustrated desire for more stuff. (BBC News Magazine, 5th November 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24759728>)

In the 1950's there was a promise of technology and growth that would make our life easier. Actually it was quite the opposite and has led to even longer working hours for many.

According to a Gallup poll, the working week in the United States is almost a full working day longer than standard. While the 40 hour week is generally accepted as "normal," adults employed full-time have reported working an average of 47 hours each week.

This number has remained relatively steady over the past decade, with the exception of a slight dip to 44.9 hours in 2005/2006. Forty-two percent of respondents reported working a standard 40 hour week with a mere 8% working less than that. Twenty-one percent of Americans now work between 50 to 59 hours with 18% taking their weekly quota to 60 hours plus.

(By Niall McCarthy 9/01/2014, Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2014/09/01/a-40-hour-work-week-in-the-united-states-actually-lasts-47-hours/> )

What happened to the 1950's dream? Has economic growth and technological advances actually resulted in us having a poorer quality of life. Do we consume to make ourselves feel better and to fill the sense of emptiness within us? Why do we need the latest things? As Daniel Vitalis ReWilding Pioneer and Health Strategist said, referring to the Movie *Fantasia*, it's like we are playing the Mickey Mouse role but without the wisdom of Merlin. We have all this technology but are we using it skilfully?

## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)

I recently watched a free viewing of The Sacred Science film and recommend watching it. It shows a group, many of whom are very sick Western people, who go to the Amazon Rainforest to work with Shamans and to attempt to get well. <http://www.thesacredscience.com>. One of the participants, who was placed in a remote hut after his first night, spoke about a feeling of joy listening to the sounds of the rainforest. They were all healed, not everyone physically

but just being there in the loving, compassionate presence of the shaman and carers, submerged in nature, resulted in inner transformation. A young apprentice to the shaman was part of the group. He said in the past he was teased by kids who wanted to enjoy all the pleasure of life. He was very wise, and even as a child he was dedicated to staying calm. He said when he is trained he will be able to help the kids if they come to him. His eyes hinted at a contentment and joy that came from his sense of purpose and mission to serve.

The concept of 'psychological wealth' is an intriguing one pointing to the reality that happiness is not confined to monetary wealth, but in its authentic form is made up of satisfactions in various areas, both external and internal to the self. They define psychological wealth as "experiencing happiness and satisfaction due to positive attitudes, intimate relationships, spirituality, and engagement with meaningful goals" (Psychological Experiences of Joy and Emotional Fulfilment By Chris Meadows)

I saw a post on a Facebook page for Mums here on the Sunshine Coast, B.C. and one Mum was saying she wanted to do some volunteer work for charity with her kids. Then came a stream of posts all with Mums wanting to do the same and with new ideas. I posted about the Litter Project and have had some interest. It's very inspiring, because from a small comment there are changes happening.

Last week I was getting fed up with my own excessive stuff. I cleared out five bags of stuff I will donate to charity. I then bought 2 bags of items from the Thrift store that I will actually use. As a family we often receive hand me downs for our daughter and we often buy 2nd hand. That is better than buying new, but sometimes you can't avoid it.

I also stopped buying chocolate candy. I'm not saying I won't have chocolate ever again but I'm giving it up for 14 days and donating the money I save to an orphanage in Mexico. (I actually want to stop eating it, except on special occasions because it had taken me over; I was eating a lot.) Our recycling box is much emptier now. We all have our thing and chocolate was mine.

Consuming too much is a moral dilemma, but as you become more aware you might start to think about the real cost to the planet. In front of me right now is paperwork shoved all over the place on this desk, (it's on my list to clear-



## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)

out!). It's just never-ending, or is it, it's made from the forests after all, and they are disappearing. On a positive note the digital revolution has helped a lot, greatly reducing the need for paper.

The native people that lived in N. America lived harmoniously with nature. We see their beautiful woven baskets and clothes in museums. They wasted nothing, making everything from the surrounding environment. They respected everything and they knew the true cost of items.

We are so far from that now, but we can do things to bring the best of the old and new together.

Here are some ideas:

- Eat wild indigenous plants,  
<http://www.artofmanliness.com/2010/10/06/surviving-in-the-wild-19-common-edible-plants>.
- Eat local fruit and berries.
- If you eat meat catch it, if you eat fish catch it (if sustainable).
- Grow your own food.
- There are many women who are starting to make Eco products for laundry, cosmetics, shampoo etc. and they are often local.
- Recycle.
- Buy from local farms. Buying locally is usually more ethical, cuts down on transportation, CO2 emissions, packaging and avoids funding unethical practices.

If we consume less and become more aware we will reduce our footprint on the planet. If we do that there is a possibility for all to have a much better quality of life. In order to accomplish that we must put our focus on what is really meaningful.

Convivial degrowth is a relatively new concept, especially in North America. Degrowth or décroissance has been around for a number of years in France and other parts of Europe, with some proponents even calling it a movement. It is not just (or even) about negative economic growth, as the English word might imply, but rather represents a complex paradigm shift away from our current industrial society and its model and culture of consumption and accumulation. (<http://degrowthcanada.wordpress.com/intro/>)

And this just the beginning, a change towards a more compassionate, sustainable way of life, which we can all be a part of and which we can all make a joyful reality.

## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)

### Recycling events

**Date:**

Saturday, November 01, 2014

**Hours:**

9am - 3pm

**Location:**

25700 Maple Valley Black Diamond Rd. SE  
Rock Creek Elementary School, Maple Valley, WA 98038

Or

22307 Dock St. Des Moines Marina  
Des Moines, WA 98198

**Open to anyone in King County**

**Items Accepted:**

The items accepted vary per event. Make sure you look at the event flyer:

**Maple Valley:**

[http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbagerecycling/documents/14\\_RCE\\_maple\\_valley-fall.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbagerecycling/documents/14_RCE_maple_valley-fall.pdf)

**Des Moines:**

[http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbage-recycling/documents/14\\_RCE\\_maple\\_valley-fall.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/garbage-recycling/documents/14_RCE_maple_valley-fall.pdf)





## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)

### Interesting Information from Our Readers

**From Colette who was visiting New York City:**



Chinese artist, Xu Bing was commissioned by the city of Beijing to create something that represented China in the 21st century. Xu Bing was moved to create the Phoenix which was made completely from recycled construction materials. He said that each piece was infused with the suffering of the migrant Chinese workers. The placement of every piece - the hard hats that formed the crowns, shovels

fashioned into feathers and tails made out of architectural girders - were carefully considered.

The Phoenix raises questions about the relationship between capital and labor and the cost of urbanization in the 21st Century. A symbol of grace the Phoenix is said to inhabit high, peaceful places and foretell great events. For the next year Xu Bing's majestic birds will inhabit the spiritual space of St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York City.

I also saw this pigeon birdhouse when I was in New York.



## Saving the Earth's Resources (contd.)



### From Ajayya in Olympia:

Zara Yang and Jakub Bures (22 years old) built a boat made from 5000 plastic bottles. To see pictures and learn more about their project go to:

[http://izismile.com/2014/10/01/a\\_functional\\_boat\\_made\\_out\\_of\\_discarded\\_plastic\\_18\\_pics.html](http://izismile.com/2014/10/01/a_functional_boat_made_out_of_discarded_plastic_18_pics.html)

### From Rajeswari in Vancouver:

Go to <http://bluedot.ca/> to see the video and learn more about David Suzuki and the Blue Dot Tour [This information is about Canada but it definitely is applicable to the U.S. and almost everywhere else in today's world! Karuna]

### From Kothai in Bellevue:

I clicked this picture while strolling through downtown Anchorage. This commercial office space is aptly called the 'solar building'. The solar panels supply upto 6% - 9% of the buildings electrical requirement.





# PNW Litter Project

## PNW Litter Project Stats:

As of October 30, 2014 we had **371** members. **35** members and their guests reported picking up **102.4** hours of litter during October 2014.

The average pick up time was: **2.9** hours; the range was **2 minutes to 30 hours** and the median was 1 hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for **5839** hours since the project began in July 2011. TerraCycle credited us with turning in **139,534** cigarette butts in 2013.

We have turned in **55,200** butts so far this year for a total of **194,734** butts since we started sending them to TerraCycle in January 2013. (We also collected the 5 gallon jar of cigarette butts we use for the litter project display.)

### From Krista

I cleaned up about 4 hours of trash in Oct. There were many cigarette cases and aluminum cans. I thought of Amma saying that there would be no hungry people if all the money that is spent on alcohol and drugs was spent on helping the needy.



## PNW Litter Project

### Straws as Litter by Karuna



[Simply Straws Reusable Glass Straws](#)



[Stainless Steel Straws from Amazon.com](#)

Our last three newsletters have had one or more articles addressing the problem of plastic waste. This article will report on one specific type of litter- plastic straws.

A National Park Service [report](#) said that it is estimated that Americans use 500 million straws a day. That averages 1.6 straws per person per day or 38,000 straws per person between the ages of 5 and 55 years.

648,015 volunteers participated in this year's Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup day. They covered 12,914 miles of coast and picked up 12,329,322 pounds of trash. Straws were, and always are, in the [top ten items](#).

Straws can damage recycling machines so they usually end up in landfills, the ocean garbage patches or in the stomachs of seabirds, marine mammals or other birds and animals.

In 2011, at 9 years of age, Milo Cress recognized the problem straws caused the environment and started his Be Straw Free campaign. He has taken his message to national and international audiences. Here is a message from Milo: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQAXEFdQboc>. To learn more go to: <http://ecocycle.org/bestrawfree>.

**Consider making a decision to go straw-less or to substitute plastic straws with reusable ones.**

**To take Ocean Conservancy's Last Straw Challenge go to:**

<https://secure.oceanconservancy.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=795>