

RECYCLING REPORT

(Winter of 2018 Newsletter)

In the fall issue of our newsletter, we published total gallonage and tonnage of 2017 recycled items. We reported 6,350 gallons of oil and antifreeze and 1,368 tons of solid materials collected and recycled. Over half of the weight of solid recycling was composed of lightweight materials such as paper, plastic, aluminum cans, etc. These numbers are very impressive, especially when you put them in context, which we hope will increase the commitment of members and their neighbors to recycle.

For example, if the recycled oil and antifreeze were poured into 55-gallon drums and lined up, the line of drums would stretch about 83 yards. Also, the tonnage of recycled materials computes to 2.74 million pounds of recycled items. And if you divide that number by the number of citizens living in Rabun County, then each citizen carried an average of 168 pounds to the centers last year. Of course, people with primary homes elsewhere recycle, so the “per Rabun citizen” is only theoretical. The point is, recycling is a robust activity in our County.

But there is no doubt that recycling can be significantly expanded with more focus and responsibility from those not yet participating. You don't have to drive down many roads to realize a lot of recyclable materials are being tossed from the windows of moving vehicles. And a day spent watching the trucks dump their loads at the landfill sites will expand your recognition of how much better we can do.

Here's one more context to consider: those who watched the Super Bowl probably saw the ad which asked viewers to imagine the next car they buy would be the last one they ever could own, and how much care they would need to take to make it last as long as possible. Then they were “advised” that they only have one body and mind, and were they doing as much as possible to make them last as long as possible? That same thought applies to our environment: we only have one, and it will be what we permit it to become. Without recycling, all our trash would be going into landfills, and the rate of depletion of forests and raw materials necessary to provide packaging and other products would accelerate dramatically. Thanks to all of you who diligently recycle. For others, think about how little effort it might take to recycle more than you are doing now. And please encourage your friends and neighbors to join with you in keeping our landscape one of the most beautiful you will find in this wonderful country.