

Teton County Administrative Policies
Environmental Stewardship Policy

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Vision: Preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community, and economy for current and future generations.

Environmental stewardship is the responsibility for environmental quality shared by all those whose actions affect the environment. Environmental stewardship is recognized as a path to having a more sustainable and climate resilient future.

Teton County's commitment is inclusive of responsible resource management, environmental stewardship, and waste diversion. This policy describes and incorporates our community's environmental ethics, values, and goals.

This policy's purpose is to establish the means in which we operate with an environmentally conscious approach, to help with decisions today, and to guide future elected officials and staff in their decision-making.

Environmental stewardship, resource efficiency and waste diversion involves, but is not limited to, lowering our community's environmental impact, making choices and plans with environmentally conscious checks and balances, maintaining responsible and equitable waste management practices, and establishing new efforts to mitigate landfill waste by recycling or creating other opportunities for waste diversion.

This policy aims to establish and sustain a positive environmental legacy for the Teton Valley community today and for future generations. In doing so, the County is committed to minimizing its overall impact on the environment while encouraging and activating environmentally responsible behavior on the part of its residents and visitors.

This policy will assist in conserving energy, protecting water, and preserving ecosystems; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; minimizing waste and inspiring public consciousness in support of environmental sustainability. Teton County will identify, measure and understand the direct and indirect impact of its operations and develop innovative and realistic solutions for mitigating those impacts. It also complies with, and in some cases exceeds, environmental laws and regulations.

Establish Teton County's commitment to regularly communicating progress in implementing initiatives, results, establishing targets and achieving goals.

This policy aids in shaping future decisions, policies, amending existing policies, guiding the formation of partnerships with Teton County, as well as integrating select requirements associated with memberships or partnerships.

Section 1: Environmental Impact and Proactive Decision-Making

1. Our philosophy accepts that natural resources must be used in the most ethical, economical, and sustainable way possible as Earth and human systems are interconnected and interdependent.
2. Sustainability is defined as "the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (*Brundtland Commission of the United Nations, March 20, 1987*)
3. Our waste diversion and recycling initiative is a whole systems approach that aims to change the way materials flow through our community, resulting in reusing waste-resources, and minimizing the amount of waste we haul to the landfill, thus saving economic and environmental resources. This is a conceptual ideal rather than a hard target. Our waste diversion goals are to maintain a rate of at least 34% with a near term (3-year) goal of +50% and long-term goal of +65% in 5 years of all material diverted from being sent to a landfill (or other better, agreed upon measurement).
4. The guiding principles of environmental resource efficiency and waste diversion are: thinking of waste as a *resource, instead of used-up landfill bound waste*; conserving natural resources through waste prevention and recycling; enabling and promoting food waste prevention practices; turning discarded resources into jobs and new products; promoting products and materials that are durable and recyclable; discouraging products and materials that can only become trash after their use; and using education as a tool to maximize community engagement.

Section 2: Objectives & Desired Results (each ties to an economic value)

- Protect our local environment
- Maintain & prevent contamination of surface and groundwater resources
- Preserve landfill space
- Reduce liabilities due to additional screening of materials (removing divertible materials)
- Reduce liabilities due to less material being landfilled
- Reduce hauling to the landfill costs (since recyclable materials can subsidize hauling costs to processing centers)
- Create local jobs

Section 2: Maintains The Right to Pursue Diversion Initiatives

1. Teton County Idaho's operational initiatives, such as waste diversion, do not currently align with all partners or their operational initiatives. We must preserve Teton County's ethical values & goals as well as be in manageable oversight of operations.
2. Retain all decision making and rights of management for all types of waste & diversion without administrative restriction or financial repercussions
3. Avoid management situations that may cause diversion services or operations to become more expensive or reduced.
4. Avoid situations that could regulate or inhibit diversion infrastructure and operational expansions
 - *Many current County agreements' structures have the ability to impact operational financials and potentially inhibit diversion*
5. Continue to support and seek collaboration with a wide range of community stakeholders including municipalities, NGO's, and citizens to ensure successful and sustainable diversion initiatives.

Teton County Idaho Recycling/Waste Diversion percent Formula:

- Total inbound waste (Trash Transfer Station and Recycling Center) - "minus" - Outbound waste (shipped to landfill) – "divided-by" – Total inbound waste.

- *Example from 2023:* 38,770 tons – 25,536tons/38,770 = 34% recycling/waste diversion rate (Based on 2023 waste data for Teton County Idaho)

Specific Points in Teton County Idaho Resolution

- The highest and best uses of waste resources are:
 - 1) Reduce (or source consumption reduction via education about and instilling habit for environmentally sound purchasing habits)
 - 2) Reuse
 - 3) Recycling
 - 4) Diversion...
 - 5) Mitigation of Hazardous Waste entering our ecosystem
 - 6) Advancing value based initiatives such as *composting, energy recovery and* alignment with the US EPA's Waste Management Hierarchy
- Local governments have the unique opportunity to lead by example and establish criteria needed to promote resource efficiency and minimize waste, so that manufacturers produce, and businesses sell materials that can be safely recycled or composted.
- Recognizing that capital investments may be required to provide adequate indoor and outdoor space and infrastructure for expanded recycling and other waste diversion and waste-recovery programs.
- Natural resources such as clean water, clean air, healthy wildlife populations, and open spaces are paramount to the well-being of our community

History of Waste Diversion in Teton County

- Diverting waste (specifically construction) since 2000
- Encouraging reduce-reuse-recycling habits since 2005
- Diverting/Recycling since ~2009 when the current recycling tent floor was repaired
- Refined Recycling since ~2015 when the diversion plan was adopted via

Action Commitments & Progress Measurements:

- Within 180 days of Environmental Policy Adoption;
 - 1) Renew the Waste Diversion Plan:
 - a. review, update, revise existing Waste Diversion Plan's operational, statistical, and strategic plans previously produced by Teton Valley Community Recycling, RAD Curbside & Teton County to guide this process. Thus, creating a 1 year, 5 year and 10 year plan and outlook
 - b. Regularly publicize where each diverted material went to, what it was turned into or how it was used/exists
- Presentation & suggested adoption of both Policy and Plan by each city within Teton County Idaho boundaries as well as Alta, Wyoming & Grand Targhee Resort
- Identify a select group including County Public Works Director, Transfer Station Supervisor, Teton Valley Community Recycling & RAD Curbside that will commit to reviewing the plan annually and updating/revision.
 - Representatives from each of the above jurisdictions shall be included and required to participate in the annual review/revision/update of the plan
 - This plan shall be revised and designed to achieve the initial goal of increasing waste diversion for Teton County as a whole, to ___% or better by the year 2030.
 - Establish an annual review of the plan & its 1-year, 5-year, & 10-year objectives
- Integrate the Environmental Policy throughout applicable and appropriate County decision making and operations.

- Add to all County RFPs & RFQ's to request information regarding environmental impact, resource conservation, waste plans, waste reduction practices & waste mitigation efforts.
- Review household hazardous waste (HHW) policies and set goals to improve HHW management at Teton County in efforts to protect our watershed. Take the necessary actions to mitigate potential danger to source water, water quality & recreation waterways, etc
- water?

Public Awareness & Engagement

- **Commitment to Host Annual Public Question & Answer Meetings with a panel:**
Teton County Commissioners; Teton County Transfer Station Supervisor; Teton Valley Community Recycling; B on 33: Beautifying Our Byways; RAD Curbside; Citizens' Climate Lobby; Riverwind Foundation