

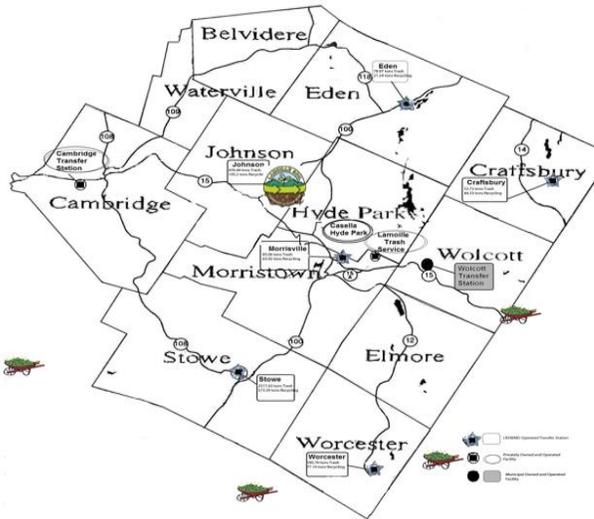


# LRSWMD Annual Report

Fiscal Year 20: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020



**District Profile:** The mission of the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District (LRSWMD) is to reduce the quantity and toxicity of the trash generated and going to the landfill while maintaining or improving overall environmental quality (air, water, and soil), treating customers and employees with respect and operating within a balanced budget.



The LRSWMD is comprised of 12 towns; each community either appoints or elects a representative to serve on the Board of Supervisors. The District guides member communities towards compliance with Vermont state solid waste regulations, hosts at least three hazardous waste collections annually, provides outreach and education on materials management in schools and in communities, offers free use of collection receptacles for community events, sells recycling and composting bins at subsidized costs, and operates collection facilities. No taxes are assessed on member towns; the LRSWMD operating budget is created through user-fees assessed at the six drop-off locations and a surcharge assessed to haulers of municipal solid waste.

**Facilities:** LRSWMD operations are comprised of six drop-off locations across the District, one commercial composting facility located in Johnson, and the administrative office located in Morrisville. Services vary by location but include bagged trash for disposal, mixed recycling, and organics collection at minimum. Management of other difficult to dispose of items like tires, e-waste, and appliances are also provided at some locations.

It has been an unusual year and our facilities have not been insulated from the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we were still able to achieve some impressive accomplishments over the course of this fiscal year. As a result of the fractured experience of FY20, the Facilities portion of the report will be presented in three sections: the first three quarters of the fiscal year representing pre-COVID-19; the final quarter of the fiscal year which included the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the graph comparing the total tonnage of municipal solid waste and recycling collected at our facilities for the last three fiscal years.

## Section One: June 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

**CRAFTSBURY:** Open Saturday, 9am – 1pm. *A few fun collection facts:* Congratulations for boasting the highest recycling rate among all LRSWMD drop-off facilities. A 2% increase was gained over last year to achieve a 42% recycling rate. A 6% increase in food scraps was also seen with 769 buckets delivered. Keep up the impressive work!

**EDEN:** Open Sunday, 9am – 2pm. *A few fun collection facts:* 139 buckets of food scraps were collected and a recycling rate of 21% was achieved.

**JOHNSON:** Open Fri & Sat, 8:30am – 3:30pm. Site modifications were performed here. Investments were made to upgrade equipment in order to improve safety and security for staff and customers and to expand the services offered at this location. This was achieved by removing one aging compactor and installing safety gates at the hoppers. *A few fun collection facts:* A 24% increase in the number of buckets (1207) of food scraps was



achieved and a recycling rate of 20% was reached. Also, 18 tons of tires and eight tons of scrap metal were taken in making this our second busiest site.

**MORRISVILLE:** Open Saturday, 8:30am – 1:30pm. *A few fun collection facts:* a 10% increase in the number of buckets of food scraps was gained and the recycling rate remained the same as last year at 36%. This is the second highest recycling rate among our facilities. Keep it up and take the challenge to increase that recycling rate for next year!

**STOWE:** Open Wed – Mon., 7:30am – 3:00pm. The chronic drainage issue was addressed this year. Two culverts were put in which reduced the amount of water flowing into the lower yard. This noticeably reduced ice accumulation and made swapping out the trash trailer easier. *A few fun collection facts:* There was a drastic increase in the number of buckets collected – a 72% increase to be exact with 4124 buckets! Over 190 tons of scrap metal and 13 tons of tires were handled. A recycling rate of was 19% reached and would be great to see this increase; this may be realized by instituting a hybrid, source-separated recycling collection system in the near future.

**WORCESTER:** Open Saturday, 7:30am – 1:00pm. *A few fun collection facts:* Just over a hundred more buckets came in for a 25% increase with 547. The recycling rate was 31%, the third highest among our facilities.

**LAMOILLE SOIL:** Open by appointment only. The Lamoille Soil Compost facility has been accepting food scraps since October 2017. In FY20, 122 tons of food scraps were diverted from the landfill. This more than doubles the entire amount captured in the first two years of operation. Fifty-seven tons were delivered by residents to our drop-off facilities in 8,000+ five-gallon buckets and 65 tons were delivered from commercial haulers directly to Lamoille Soil in totes or by the trailer load.



The increase in the amount of food scraps coming in yielded a significant increase in the amount of finished compost produced. A total of 141 yards of compost was sold to our local communities in a variety of forms; bulk for \$50 per yard, \$5 in repurposed 5-gallon buckets, \$3 to refill a bucket. The bucket refill program gained popularity this year as over 400 were refilled supporting our waste reduction mission. For comparison, last year, only 74 bucket refills were sold.

Lamoille Soil was generally unimpacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the onslaught of COVID-19 Victory Gardening had us completely sold out of finished compost by the beginning of June! The popularity was humbling, and we hope it continues into the future.

## Section Two: April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020

As defined by the Governor of Vermont, “solid waste management is an essential service” and as such the LRSWMD faced multiple challenges the last quarter of the fiscal year to continue to provide services to our 12 member communities. Clearly, the first challenge was keeping our frontline workers safe which meant finding creative ways to work around individual circumstances (day care, school closing, and/or personal health issues). Accommodating these situations and practicing social distancing resulted in a myriad of adaptations to our sites in order to continue to staff our facilities.

LRSWMD drop-off locations have always been self-serve and operating under the ‘use at your own risk’ assumption. The Community Service program that has provided workers at the Morrisville location shut down at the start of the pandemic, thereby eliminating the assistance that many customers had become accustomed to here. Initially, until there was a better understanding about how the disease was transmitted,

our attendants were prohibited from handling any items that customers brought in for disposal. This created a bit of customer confusion when we strongly messaged and imposed the “site attendants are unable to assist with handling your materials. All items must be able to be unloaded on your own when you arrive to the site” reminder at all locations. The COVID-19 conditions did require us to make other customized adaptations to the services provided at each location which are highlighted below.

**CRAFTSBURY:** The Craftsbury community created a committee to help with the messaging of the changing landscape of operations here. Thanks to Penelope Doherty and her team for keeping the local community informed. We were able to staff this location every other week fairly consistently. Site attendants were no longer permitted to handle customer materials. Long-handled poles for collecting money to reduce person-to-person contact were made available.

**EDEN:** Due to logistics of trucks, trailers and staff limitations, this site was closed on March 21 and has yet to re-open. Data-based decisions and discussions with the Eden Selectboard are in process for future options.

**JOHNSON:** Sundays were added to the schedule here to accommodate for the closure at Eden and to provide an option for accepting bulky items and scrap metal normally accepted at other locations. Long-handled poles for collecting money to reduce person-to-person contact were made available.

**MORRISVILLE:** This location was fairly consistently open every other week, and site attendants were prevented from handling items brought in by customers. Long-handled poles for collecting money to reduce person-to-person contact were made available.

**STOWE:** One of the first actions taken was to reduce the number of materials accepted when the pandemic began until there was a better understanding of how the virus was transmitted. Services were scaled back to accept only recycling, food scraps, and trash. Long-handled poles for collecting money to reduce person-to-person contact were made available. Bottles and cans could be left only for donation because the Bottle Redemption Room was closed to the public to allow for one-way traffic flow for recycling. A significant increase in the amount of bottles donated was noted with this closure at the start of the pandemic. The Reuse Room was also closed to slow the spread and remains so until further site renovations can be completed.



A membership was purchased with the Northeast Resource Recovery Association allowing a pilot program for glass recycling to be initiated at Stowe in April. Within three months, and with a very soft advertising campaign, customers diverted over 10 tons of glass. The result was an overall savings of almost \$1000 on hauling and tipping. The success of this pilot creates the basis for separating other materials and potentially expanding such separation practices to other facilities.

**WORCESTER:** New traffic patterns were established to allow for physical distancing and long-handled poles for collecting money to reduce person-to-person contact were instituted. Hours were extended for three weeks to provide additional time to accommodate the reduction in the number of people permitted in the yard at one time.



We fully understand and recognize that these disruptions in service may have added an inconvenience or source of frustration on top of all the other COVID-related changes to normal routines. However, with limited resources and options, the health and safety of both staff and customers had to be incorporated into our required operating procedures. While many services have been restored, we

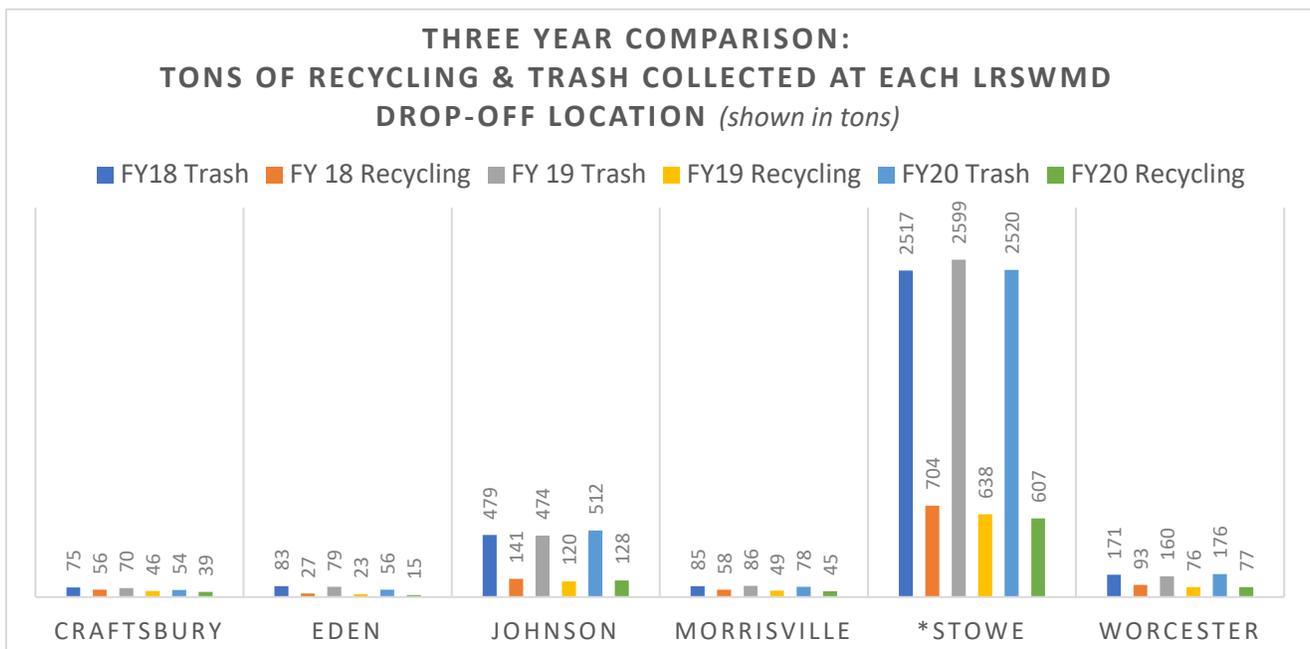
continue to closely follow the State guidelines for return to work, CDC guidelines on best practices, and

industry recommendations for safety. Operational decisions are informed with a critical lens prioritizing safety of staff and our public.

Despite all the COVID changes, customer needs, and new programming, the LRSWMD Site Attendants leaned into these challenges and performed with an exceptional level of dedication while trying to keep themselves and their families safe from this highly transmissible disease.

### Section Three: Total Annual Tonnage for Three Fiscal Years

The table below depicts the annual tonnage of waste and recycling from all six drop-off sites, comparing the two previous fiscal years to the current FY20. A total of 3,396 tons of solid waste was collected, down 2% from last year, while recycling was down 4% this year at 912 tons. Some of our locations experienced intermittent closures during the final quarter of the year impacting tonnages.



\*Please note that Stowe is the only facility that is open six days a week; Johnson is open two days a week. All other locations are open one day a week.

**Member Services:** With funding assistance through a grant from the State of Vermont, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation, three Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection events were held. The collections are an effort to directly support the mission of the District to reduce both the volume and toxicity of materials going to landfills. The events were held in Stowe, Jeffersonville and Craftsbury. The event usually held in Morrisville was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

These three household hazardous waste events supported 559 total participants; 69% of these participants used more than one collection to dispose of hazardous waste. Many of these repeat visitors were bringing paint and oil. PaintCare, in concert with these collections, captured 1,265 gallons of unused paint from District businesses and residents. All materials collected at these events will be recycled or responsibly disposed.



Unique this year, the Towns of Craftsbury and Worcester participated in a US Dept. of Agriculture funded project to increase the safe collection of batteries, mercury thermostats, pharmaceuticals and pesticides. This project was initiated through the Product Stewardship Institute with assistance from the LRSWMD. Outreach materials were developed about safe disposal and collection options for these materials; new Call2Recycle battery collection sites were established, and information was provided for locations of thermostat collection centers. These collection options for batteries and thermostats have continued beyond the term of the project and have always been accepted at LRSWMD locations all-year long.

‘Special wastes’ are materials that are not collected with regular trash or recycling. Many of these items are not collected by curbside haulers or by privately run facilities either. We are proud to report that a myriad of special wastes were diverted by the LRSWMD for proper recycling, reuse, or disposal this year:

- 823 refrigerant-containing appliances
- 12 tons of textiles and books
- More than 15,000 feet of fluorescent tube bulbs
- Over 2,300 CFL & other mercury-containing bulbs
- 36 cubic yard of maple tubing
- More than 34 tons of tires
- Over 4 tons of film plastics
- 57 tons of e-waste
- 1160 propane tanks
- 219 tons of scrap metal



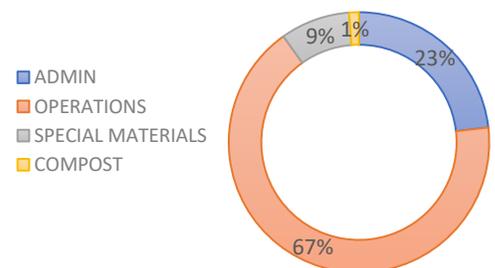
Green Up Day is organized locally in each of our twelve District towns. LRSWMD contributed \$1,200 to Green Up Vermont on behalf of our member towns to support the statewide event. Contact your local Green Up representative to get involved.

LRSWMD continues to offer all District members easy and convenient ways to reduce the amount of organic waste they send to the landfill. Backyard composting receptacles are available all-year. Forty-eight Soil Savers and nineteen Green Cones were sold along with 289 5-gallon buckets with gamma seal lids. This was a significant increase in all compost items compared to last year. A slight decrease in the number of recycling bins were sold at sixty-nine. We also donated a combination of these same items to local organizations for fundraisers and waste reduction program implementation totaling over \$120.

Through the bottle redemption donation program, \$16,600 was split evenly between the United Way of Lamoille County and the Lamoille Community Food Share. These two organizations encompass a large portion of the District region. Funds donated are not restricted to how they must be used and are left up to the organizations decide where they are most needed.

**Annual Budget:** The net position of the district increased by \$3,689 in FY20 for a total financial position of \$992,324; \$510,283 is identified as unrestricted funds with most of that being capital assets. Disposal and recycling income exceeded budget expectations by \$55,888 perhaps due to the increased amount of time residents were spending in their homes cleaning out during the early days of COVID. Income from construction and demolition disposal was lower than budgeted by \$23,425. Salaries and wages were also less than budgeted by \$29,494 mainly due to COVID absences. The FY2020 budget of \$1,703,500 fell short of income projections by \$40,691. LRSWMD invested \$151,780 in capital assets

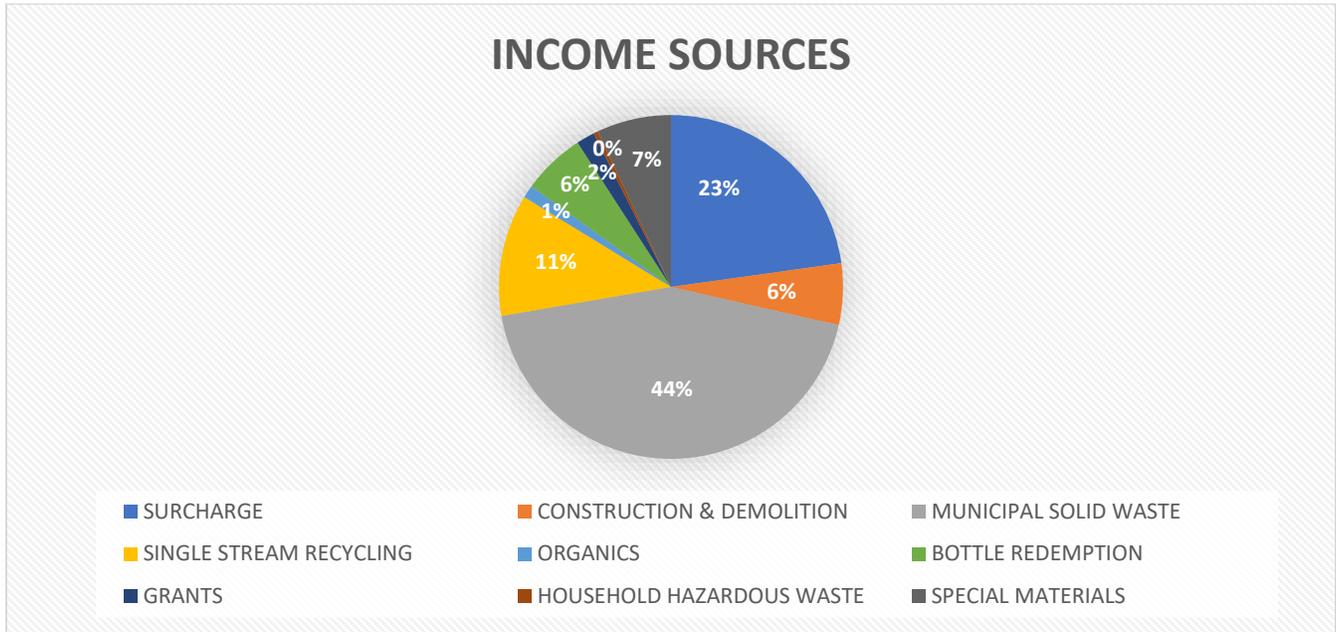
INCOME BY DEPARTMENT



including: a new attendant shed, two 40-yard dumpsters, refurbished compactors, scale rails, stake body truck, and stormwater improvements.

The District does not rely on municipal taxes but instead it derives funding from the \$21/ton surcharge and fees charged at our facilities for recycling, trash, and special materials. The surcharge receipts totaled \$380,177 and facility programs yielded \$1,253,956. In addition, District staff take advantage of grant opportunities which equaled \$28,676 in FY2020. Looking ahead, the budget for FY2021 is \$1,253,100.

The distribution of income sources for FY20 is shown here:



**Member Outreach:** The State Solid Waste Implementation Plan encompasses multiple outreach requirements and drives much of the projects taken on by the Outreach Team. Some SWIP requirements include: maintaining an A-Z list and other easily accessible information on [www.lrswmd.org](http://www.lrswmd.org), creating and implementing multi-media outreach campaigns on waste reduction, landfill bans, proper materials management practices, food rescue options, and event hosting tips; providing education to 50% of schools and 10% of businesses within the District every five-years; and delivering information on best sustainable management practices and available resources and programs for all District members on proper management of recycling, composting, hazardous and special materials. The work we do continues to exceed the State expectations as the 2019 SWIP report was approved quickly with no required edits or resubmissions needed.

The first part of the year took us to markets and events where conversations and learning opportunities occurred. It was exciting to solidify a partnership with Black Dirt Farm and collaboratively on-board Johnson Elementary School with a school-wide composting program. Another achievement was the execution of the Compost Literacy Tour. As a way to educate and excite residents about the upcoming July 1 food scrap ban, a comprehensive program began in the fall with tours of backyard compost piles of volunteer residents and concluded with book discussions in the spring. Four different titles supporting the benefits of compost beyond the bin were carefully curated and purchased with grant money by the Lanpher Public Library. Partnerships were formed with Master Composters, local residents, and area libraries to bring this program come to life. Over twelve people participated with appreciation.



Instagram



A few impactful business visits were able to take place before the pandemic restrictions went into effect. Assistance was continued via email and over the phone for these and a handful of new businesses over the remainder of the year. This represented just one of several pivots that happened in the latter part of the fiscal year. We were ramping up to roll out the party train to welcome in the final installment of Act 148 – the Food Scrap Landfill Ban! However, farmers markets, parades, and other public events were being canceled faster than a banana peel

disappearing in a compost pile. We shifted the outreach and learning opportunities to printed options, sharing out opportunities of our talented neighboring solid waste entities, and converting our larger events to an online Zoom format.

The [June 16 Community Conversation](#) was one such event. The Lamoille Chamber of Commerce had been partnering with us since February to involve our local legislators and area partners to provide an experienced and diverse line-up of panelists to share knowledge and answer questions about how to approach the upcoming ban. The event was successfully executed and well received by over 20 attendees. A spin-off event, *Waste Wise Wednesdays*, was held for three consecutive weeks to allow a space for people to receive individual conversations for specific questions related to the overall requirements of the law for their specific situations. These were less well attended.

Our good fortune continues as we are hosting an ECO AmeriCorps member for another year. The pandemic cut short the service term of our FY20 ECO but while Cormac Quinn was here, he was able to reach over 400 elementary school children and educators through a robust America Recycles Day program and Waste Solutions lessons across the District. The ECO AmeriCorps program is a cost-sharing program between the LRSWMD and the Department of Environmental Conservation. The service provided by the ECO member greatly increases the capacity building, productivity, and outreach accomplished in a year's time.

We continue to spend about \$12,000 a year to mail 15,000+ Collection Connection newsletters to all business and residential mailboxes within the twelve District town zip codes. We utilize a paid subscription to nine Front Porch Forum communities (\$1300/yr) and a free subscription to MailChimp as monthly methods of communication with the public. If you are listener of our local radio station, WLVB, you may hear the Thursday afternoon (~\$2000/yr), six-minute segment covering timely topics about materials management, facility updates, and breaking industry news each week.

While the outreach workplan is guided primarily by the requirements of the Solid Waste Implementation Plan, many of the programs we offer would continue without the State mandates - like all of the supporting tasks provided to execute services at our facilities. Please remember to radiate patience and kindness towards our staff as we explore continued facility and operational changes to meet those needs as we meet or exceed safety precautions due to COVID requirements over the next several months.

Input from our members is always welcome. Your feedback helps us continually improve our programs and services, strengthen our volunteer opportunities, and learn the greatest needs of our District members.