



Waste + Material Use

Our regional waste and recycling volumes are estimated to be approximately 13,300 and 1,830 tons respectively based on the Sneffels Waste Diversion Planning Project completed based on 2015 data. Waste, specifically municipal solid waste, accounts for 4% of San Miguel County and Ouray County's emissions. On average each person generates 8.7 pounds of waste a day (2019 GHGI benchmark), slightly below the Colorado average (9 pounds/day) yet nearly double the national average (4.5 pound/day). San Miguel County and Ouray County's dependence on tourism likely contributes to our high waste rate along with the rest of Colorado. GHGs associated with waste primarily come from organic matter (food scraps, leaf litter, wood, etc.) as it decomposes into methane.

All materials sent to landfills and recycling facilities are transported outside of our regional boundaries to Montrose or Grand Junction and are thus considered Scope 3 emissions. Despite waste being outside our inventory scope, we still track waste volumes and implement programs to decrease material sent to the landfill. Reducing waste is a high priority value within our communities due to our direct ability to reduce waste through the 4 R's: refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Waste & Material Use

Opportunities to reduce emissions in this sector include diverting and/or salvaging organic materials and increasing the efficiency of hauling and processing. Interestingly a range of benefits come into play from diverting/salvaging organic waste including fertilizer and biogas production, which may be used for local food and energy production. At approximately 45% of our waste stream (according to the Sneffels Waste Diversion Planning Project completed in 2015), and a high contributor to GHGs due to the production of methane, increasing composting is a high priority for our region.

Estimates of Food Waste Weights and Volumes					
	Amount	Pounds/Week	Cubic Yards/Week	Tons/Week	Tons/Year
San Miguel County					
Households	3234	13	28	21	1093
Restaurants	100	300	20	15	780
Total			48	36	1873
Ouray County					
Households	1943	13	17	13	657
Restaurants	25	300	5	4	195
Total			22	16	852
Two County Food Waste Total			70	52	2725
Add Two Parts of Wood Chips			140	45	2325
Total Wet Compost Materials			210	97	5050

Figure 16

We continue to work toward increasing the rate of composting as a method of reducing GHG emissions in our region. Large festival events have had the greatest success with composting food-related waste (with Planet Bluegrass accomplishing a 75% diversion rate!). This is due to the highly controlled festival environment where food vendors can be required to utilize compostable materials which are then collected and transported to a regional compost facility. Small scale composting programs are on the rise, with a successful community composting program in Ophir, a free commercial and residential composting drop-off location in Telluride, and a residential compost pickup program developed by a local entrepreneur. Other composting opportunities continue to be explored with varying levels of progress toward development. Expansion/improvement in these facilities along with the formation of partnerships to increase the regional composting network will allow for major reductions in both emissions and tonnage of waste.

Waste Trends + Accomplishments



General Waste:

- A composition study of condo waste stream is being conducted and coordinated with the EPA. Updated information will be provided when available.
- Continuing to work on gathering improved information on our regional waste and better understand its composition.
- Compost, recycling, and trash management for waste diversion at most large-scale area events and concerts.

Composting:





































- With local encouragement and financial support, regional green waste and food-related waste are now compostable at 3XM, a private composting company located in Olathe, CO. Efforts are in place to increase our region's use of this service.
- Dirty Sturdy's, a private composting business, collects food waste from residents and businesses throughout the region which is then composted and utilized locally. They recently received a local grant to expand their collection capacity.
- The Town of Ophir has successfully operated a community composting program since April 2019, diverting approximately 24,000 pounds of food waste by September 2021.

Single Use Plastic:

- Telluride and Mountain Village passed regulations in 2010 to ban single use plastic bags at grocery stores and implemented a 5-cent fee for paper bags.
- Ridgway students initiated the "Carry On Ridgway Reuses" campaign in 2018 that led the way toward Ridgway Council acting against single use plastic bags and straws.
- TMV enacted the Planet Over Plastics Initiative in 2019 to reduce single use plastics in Mountain Village.
- In response to Green Business Program participant requests, EcoAction Partners began collecting plastic film in 2019 for upcycling into Trex decking. Over 1100 pounds have been collected since program inception and it continues to expand.
- Many restaurants have converted takeout materials from plastics to compostables, and the region continues to work toward a collection program for these commercial compostable materials.

Waste Recommendations

OBJECTIVE 1: Reduce the overall volume of waste transported to landfills through efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle, repurpose and compost.



















ACTION	GHG REDUCTION POTENTIAL				CO-BENEFITS					TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Require waste haulers to improve waste stream monitoring and data availability.					=	\$		+		1-3	Waste Management, Bruin, 3XM
Encourage waste haulers to use clean energy vehicles.					=	\$		+		3-5	Waste Management, Bruin, 3XM
Expand plastic film up-cycling program and other recycling programming.					=	\$		+		1-3	EAP, Trex
Continue and expand hazardous waste collection services.					=	\$		+		Ongoing	SMC, EAP, Waste Management, Bruin, 3XM
Decrease festival and event waste, requiring local management contracts where appropriate.					=	\$		+		Ongoing	Festival owners and managers,
Support restaurants and businesses with waste reduction.					=	\$		+		Ongoing	EAP, all regional governments

KEY



Waste Recommendations

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase composting use and capacity in the region

ACTION	GHG REDUCTION POTENTIAL				CO-BENEFITS					TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Increase community compost programs and individual residential composters, and encourage participation in composting programs.					=	\$		+		1-5	Waste Management, Bruin, 3XM, EAP
Make finished compost available for local use.					=	\$		+		1-5	All regional governments
Implement large-scale green waste collection programs.					=	\$		+		1-3	Waste Management, Bruin, 3XM

OBJECTIVE 3: Decrease construction & demolition waste

ACTION	GHG REDUCTION POTENTIAL				CO-BENEFITS					TIMELINE	PARTNERS
Reduce construction & demolition waste through education, encouragement, incentives, and ordinances.					=	\$		+		3-5	Municipal building departments

KEY

