



VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1

POLLUTION PREVENTION VIEW

WINTER 2015

NEWSLETTER FROM THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

No Butts About It

The good news — cigarette smoking in the U.S. has decreased by 28% in the past decade. The bad news — more than 4 trillion cigarette butts are littered onto the ground each year. Discarded cigarette butts are not only unsightly, they get washed away by rain into streams, rivers and other waterbodies and have harmful impacts on the environment.

Most cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate (a form of plastic) and do not easily break down, posing a hazard to marine life and other animals when they mistake them for food. Devastating forest fires have been started from carelessly discarded lit butts. Contributing to the problem is that No Smoking laws require most people to go outdoors to smoke and there aren't any receptacles for the extinguished butts. Also, automakers have been phasing out ash trays as a standard feature in new cars.

Fortunately, two Connecticut families have been working to address the problem and recently received a **GreenCircle Award** from CT DEEP for their efforts. Dave Steinmetz of Woodbridge created the *No Butts About It* cigarette litter campaign with his sisters Amy and Allie. His cousins, Dan and Sam Kruger from Orange, joined the effort a few years ago. It all started in the mid-1990s after the Steinmetz family volunteered to do a beach clean-up and noticed that they were picking up massive amounts of cigarette butts. They kept a tally at subsequent clean-ups of the different kinds of garbage collected and found that cigarette butts greatly outnumbered all other types of litter. To bring awareness to the problem, they posted a hand-drawn sign with the message "The Earth is Not Your Ashtray" at the beach gatehouses and handed out free disposable ashtrays. At the next beach cleanup, the amount of littered butts was reduced, so they knew they were on the right track. The three boys then created a website where others could learn about the issue and download their poster.

No Butts About It continues to work with municipalities, businesses and others throughout the state, including at Hammonasset Beach State Park, to raise awareness and provide solutions to cigarette litter. Their



Sam and Dan Kruger collect cigarette butts at Gulf Beach in Milford.

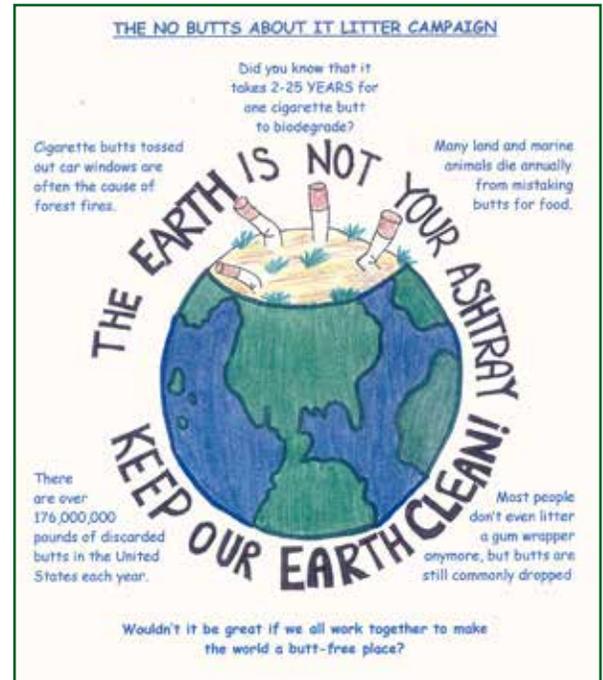
Continued on page 2

No Butts About It

Continued from page 1

campaign has partnered with the national organization *Keep America Beautiful* to create the first statewide cigarette litter prevention program. Places that have implemented a prevention initiative have decreased cigarette litter by 50% or more. Dan Kruger says, "It's so easy to make a big difference because most smokers are very receptive to changing their habits once their awareness is raised." His brother Sam agrees, adding that the program has been increasing environmental consciousness about littering in general.

For resources to start a campaign in your town or at your business, visit <http://preventcigarettelitter.org> or <http://nobuttsaboutit.net>.



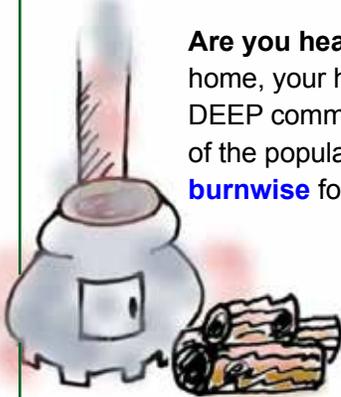
Eco-Tips for the New Year

Did you get some new electronic “toys” this holiday, like a new flat screen TV, laptop or tablet?

Be sure to recycle your old ones — and it's now free and convenient! Connecticut has a ban on throwing electronic waste in the trash since these devices can contain many toxic substances and heavy metals, including lead, mercury, plastic, copper, and brominated flame retardants. **To find a drop-off location in your town, visit www.ct.gov/recycle.**



Are you heating with wood this winter? Burning the right wood the right way can protect your home, your health and the air we all breathe. To help separate wood burning facts from legends, DEEP commissioned its own “mythbusting” team and is showcasing the findings in a video parody of the popular television show. Check it out on YouTube — ctdeepvideos or visit www.epa.gov/burnwise for wood burning tips.



Looking for a de-icer for your front steps or sidewalk? All de-icing products have environmental impacts — including dangers to plants and animals, run-off into waterways or pollution in producing them. Products that contain calcium chloride are a bit better than products with salt and acetate.

But no matter what you use, it's still best to practice pollution prevention:

- Clear snow as soon as possible and keep it clear. Think of it as free exercise (or hire a local youngster).
- If you must use something for traction, like sand or birdseed, be sure and sweep it up for later reuse or disposal so it won't clog storm drains or end up in streams.
- Put the product down as sparingly as possible — just enough to detach the ice from the walk so you can finish shoveling it. For specific product suggestions, check out [EPA's Design for the Environment](#).



Throwing Money out the Windows (and Doors)

Dennis and Karen never realized how much money was just “going out the door” of their cape-style house before their energy audit this month. They had heard of Connecticut’s home energy assessment program, but finally decided to schedule an appointment after a friend spoke highly of his recent audit.

They visited the Home Energy Solutions page on EnergizeCT.com, where they learned more about the program and how to contact an authorized contractor to schedule an appointment. During their in-home visit, an assessment was conducted to determine potential energy



Technician sets up the blower door test.

Other on-the-spot services performed at Dennis and Karen’s home audit:

- Wrapped hot water pipes with insulation, and sealed ducts
- Replaced incandescent light bulbs with efficient LEDs and CFLs
- Installed water-saving showerheads and aerators on faucets
- Assessed existing appliances (determined that older refrigerator should be replaced, provided rebate)
- Tested furnace (found it was working well — 90% efficiency)
- Checked insulation in attic (was installed in 1960s — it needed to be upgraded; rebate and names of professional installers provided)

savings. The technicians identified where their house was losing energy using specialized equipment. Efficiency tests on the furnace and water heater were also conducted. Not only did the technicians find ways to save on energy costs, they did a variety of improvements on the day of the visit, which jump-started the savings for Dennis and Karen.

The technicians started by performing a blower door test to determine the cubic feet of air per minute flowing through the home. A built-in industrial fan was placed over the front door, which reversed the airflow so that the crew could find the sources of air leaks and drafts. Dennis recalls, “They pinpointed that most were coming from the doors and windows. The crew then caulked, installed weather-stripping and door sweeps and provided other energy savings improvements.” Karen was pleased. “The whole process only took 3 hours and when they were done, they repeated the blower test and it showed a significant improvement. We received a follow-up report that details how much we will save — more than \$500 per year just from the improvements they made that day!”

More than 17,000 Connecticut households had an energy assessment done last year — check out other families’ success stories at EnergizeCT.com. **Interested in one for your home?** You can learn about the different options and schedule an audit at EnergizeCT.com/hes or by calling 877-WISE-USE (877-947-3873). A \$99 fee includes the assessment and on-the-spot services (air sealing, energy-saving lighting, and water-saving products). The services are available at no charge for income-eligible households.

There’s a lot of new information for homeowners on how to reduce energy use and save money, on EnergizeCT.com. You’ll now find an **Energy 101** section that provides a mini-encyclopedia for energy-related knowledge, complete with short videos. Find out about the three top areas to improve energy efficiency in your home — insulation, thermostats and lighting. The appliances you choose can also make a big difference in energy usage, so check the **efficient product finder** for information on refrigerators, water heaters and more.

Ask Eartha



My aunt passed away in December and the family has been cleaning out her home. We are looking for a place to dispose of her old paint, turpentine and other items with hazardous ingredients. What are the options?

Ross E., East Hartford, CT

While most towns in Connecticut hold household hazardous waste (HHW) collections between May and October (see www.ct.gov/deep/hhw), you still have a few options at this time of year — but they may require a bit more effort and expense.

1. Take it to a participating retailer or transfer station. Automotive batteries may be taken to a battery retailer. Some stores will take back cell phones and rechargeable batteries — www.call2recycle.org. Other stores will also take compact fluorescent lamps (e.g., Home Depot, Lowe's, IKEA). Architectural coatings (paint, stain, varnish, polyurethane) are eligible for collection at participating retailers — www.paintcare.org. Municipal transfer stations will also take some of these items but be sure to check on what they will accept before you go. For other items, go to www.ct.gov/deep/WhatDoIDoWith.



2. Save it for the next collection. If you live in the same town, store the HHW for the winter and dispose of it at the next collection program. If not, ask a friend, relative or neighbor in that town if they are willing to do so.

3. Find someone else who will use it. HHW can be used by others as long as it is safely transported (e.g., sealed to prevent spills). For example, your friend who does woodworking may be able to use that container of turpentine from your aunt's basement.

4. Contract a licensed hauler to remove it. The downside here is that you will have to foot the bill (which may amount to a several-hundred-dollar expense — or more). Transporter lists are on the [DEEP website](http://www.ct.gov/deep) or check the “hazardous waste removal” section of the yellow pages. Another service that may be available in some parts of the state is Safety-Kleen's “Curbside, Inc.” (1-888-449-3733).

5. Take it to a commercial collection facility. New England Disposal Technologies Household Products Collection Centers are located in Sutton, and Westfield, Massachusetts and are licensed by the Massachusetts DEP as commercial collection facilities for HHW. Both are a short drive from the MA/CT line. Visit <http://nedt.org> for hours of operation, the materials they can and cannot take, and the rates that they charge for the materials they accept. Be sure you check with them before you make the drive!

Eartha answers selected environmental questions. Email your question to judith.prill@ct.gov and watch future issues for your answer.

Installing a WaterSense showerhead adds up; you could be saving 2,900 gallons of water and more than 370 kilowatt hours of electricity annually — www.epa.gov/watersense



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127
www.ct.gov/deep
Rob Klee, Commissioner

For a free subscription, please contact Judy Prill at 860-424-3694 or judith.prill@ct.gov. Save postage and paper by signing up to receive P2 View electronically at www.ct.gov/deep/p2view.

P2 View is published by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Office of Pollution Prevention. Editor: Judy Prill. Contributors: Connie Mendolia, Mary Sherwin, Kim Trella.

Publication of this newsletter is funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA. The listing of websites in this publication is provided as a public service and does not constitute an endorsement by DEEP.

Please consider the environment before printing out this newsletter.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact us at 860-418-5910 or deep.accommodations@ct.gov if you: have a disability and need a communication aid or service; have limited proficiency in English and may need information in another language; or if you wish to file an ADA or Title VI discrimination complaint.