

Ripple Effect #14

Back-To-School Waste Reducing Tips

Students are heading back to school and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a list of tips to help you make choices that are good for our environment. Students, parents and teachers can all make a difference in reducing waste at school. By practicing the “3 Rs” of waste reduction—reduce, reuse and recycle—we can all do our part. For a complete list of tips, go to the EPA website at www.epa.gov.

- When starting a new school year, sort through your old materials. Many of last year’s supplies can be reused or recycled.
- Buy smart! Purchase and use a wide assortment of supplies made from recycled products, such as pencils made from old blue jeans or binders made from old shipping boxes. Many types of recycled paper products contain a percentage of post-consumer waste (PCW). You can also reuse items like refillable pens, rechargeable batteries and scrap paper for notes.
- Waste from packaging accounts for 30 percent of all waste generated each year. Use schools supplies wrapped with minimal packaging, use compact or concentrated products or buy products that come in bulk sizes.
- Save packaging, colored paper, egg cartons and other items for arts and crafts projects. Look for other ways you can recycle and reduce the amount of packaging you throw away!
- Use nontoxic products, inks and art supplies, such as vegetable-based inks, white tape instead of whiteout, water-based paints and batteries with less mercury.
- Use and maintain durable products or ones with a lifetime warrantee. Sturdy backpacks and notebooks can be reused for many years, which helps reduce the amount of broken items tossed away each year.
- If you bring your lunch to school, package it in reusable containers instead of disposable ones and carry them in a reusable plastic or cloth bag or lunch box. Bring drinks in a thermos or water bottle instead of disposable bottles or cartons.
- Borrow or rent your decorations and supplies for school parties, dances and proms. If you buy these supplies, try adopting a theme that can be used from year to year, so you can reuse your decorations and supplies. Your school’s theater or acting class is a great place to start finding props and decorations.
- Pass it on! Share the “buy smart” message with your family, friends and schoolmates. Waste less by reducing, reusing and recycling. Volunteer for, or start, an environmental club or recycling project in your school.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at www.redriverbasincommission.org.