

NORTH SHORE JOURNAL

Friday, September 3, 2021

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Christine Mallory, Editor

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Super One a Local Recycling Option for Plastic Bags & More

by Kitty Mayo

Ever wonder what happens with the used plastic grocery bags that you drop in the bin at the grocery store? If you're like me, you do your best to bring a reusable shopping bag to the store, but sometimes you leave it behind. When stuck having to use a plastic bag, I try to make sure to use it again for another purpose (fish guts!), or bring it back to be recycled.

With a fair amount of skepticism about whether those bins of plastic bags ever really got recycled, I decided to check into it.

According to Super One Foods (Miners, Inc.), all of their stores

around the midwest collect plastic bags for recycling, and they really are recycled. They send the plastics to UNFI Distribution located in Hopkins, Minn. where they are turned into Trex composite decking and railing material. Super One estimates recycling over 6.5 million pounds of plastic shopping bags, and 125 million pounds of film wrap in 2020.

Unfortunately, most plastic bags never get recycled. Some well-wishing folks add them to their regular recycling, where they create expensive problems getting tangled in equipment. In a 2018 report by the EPA less than 10% of plastic bags

make it into the proper recycling stream.

Even environmentally-conscious shoppers have a hard time avoiding plastic packaging, but Super One goes beyond accepting plastic shopping bags, and are a surprising place where so many more single-use plastics can be sent to actually get recycled.

Here's a list other plastics you can leave at their bins (*always make sure items are clean and have no other garbage in them): shopping bags (with handles), newspaper sleeves, drycleaning bags, bread

bags, salt bags, cereal liner bags, "storage" bags (like sandwich bags), ice bags, and packaging air pillows.

Single-use plastics are made primarily from fossil-fuel chemicals (petrochemicals), and most are burned, landfilled, or dumped into the ocean.

According to a 2019 report by Australia's Minderoo Foundation, 98% of single-use plastics are made with "virgin" fossil fuels (not recycled), and the production makes a significant contribution to carbon emissions.

Bear Trouble: Forest Services Say Thank You, But Please Find New Ways to Help

by Kitty Mayo

The U.S. Forest Service battling the fires in Lake and Cook counties has the extreme gratitude of the residents, however, some of that generous expression of thanks has created problems with bears.

Direct donations of food and supplies have been sent to support the efforts of the people working so hard to stop the fires that are threatening our homes, buildings, businesses, and the great outdoors. Receiving too many unrequested donations has created the need to stack them on pallets outside. Well, the bears have found out.

As appreciative of the sentiment as the USFS is, they are asking that no one sends anything directly. In addition to attracting wildlife, simply contending with unasked for deliveries is pulling people and resources away from putting all of their attention into firefighting.

You want to help, so what can you do?

- The USFS says they love to see signs on roadsides showing support and thanking them for their sacrifices.
- Make donations to the Red Cross who is playing an active role in supporting people displaced by our local fires at: <https://www.redcross.org/donate/donation.html/>, or call 1-800 HELP NOW (1-800-435-7669).
- Call your local fire department and find out how you can train to become a volunteer.
- Make a donation directly to your local fire department.
- Consider becoming a wildland firefighter. Check out this information from the National

Wildfire Coordinating Group: <https://www.nwccg.gov/how-to-become-a-wildland-firefighter>.

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is a great way for citizens to become actively involved in supporting their community during an emergency. CERT training can give non-professionals the knowledge to assist professional emergency responders in the event of a disaster, crisis, or emergency, including wildfires. Contact your county's emergency management office to find out more.

According to the facebook page for the U.S. Forest Service as of Tuesday, August 31st, the Greenwood Fire is at 26,000 acres and is now 37% contained. Reports indicate that cooler temperatures, and significant rain over the weekend allowed firefighters to make good progress in containing the fire.

The John Ek Fire is at 1,339 acres, and the Whelp Fire is at 50 acres. Because of the remoteness of these fires, the USFS has had considerable difficulty getting crews and equipment on the ground.

Watch for regularly held community meetings for updates that are typically livestreamed through facebook at: Facebook U.S. Forest Service-Superior National Forest. The videos are also recorded to be viewed later.

Another great website that is updated frequently about wildfires with maps is the Inciweb: The Incident Information System. Go to: <http://inciweb.nwccg.gov>.

Covid Update: Regional Hospital Systems Say Nearing Capacity

by Kitty Mayo

At a press conference on Tuesday, August 31st, health care professionals from across the region joined to convey the message that hospitals are nearing capacity.

Urging residents to do everything within their power to prevent the spread of Covid-19, representatives from St. Mary's/Essentia, St. Luke's, and Grand Itasca (Grand Rapids) addressed concerns with hospitals being stretched to near their limits.

Area hospitals are reporting that several factors are contributing to the concerning situation that can affect patient care:

- a surge in Covid cases primarily among the unvaccinated with the very contagious Delta variant
- exhaustion among health care workers, doctors, nurses and support staff leading to people reducing work hours, retiring or leaving the healthcare profession, and working extremely long hours with few days off
- a greater percentage of people very sick with other issues, including conditions that may have become more severe because of lack of seeking care during the pandemic, health conditions related to damage from a previous Covid infection (such as cardiac problems and strokes), and increased health problems related to higher amounts of drug and alcohol use during the pandemic

Doctors stated that the primary strategy for reducing illness, death, and spread of Covid is vaccination. Masking in all indoor public settings was also strongly recommended for everyone, unvaccinated and vaccinated.

Booster protocols still being defined. The need for boosters for the Covid-19 vaccines is still under

scrutiny, with data from multiple studies still coming in and being analyzed. At Lake View, Greg Ruberg, CEO/president, says that "the medical experts are still waiting to see the data. We expect to be moving in that direction at some point."

Ruberg says that while capacity at Lake View is still good, there is concern about pressures throughout the industry countrywide.

Upcoming vaccination opportunities in Lake County follow and are for anyone to receive their first or second dose (not boosters).

Wednesday, September 8 from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

- Lake View Hospital and Medical Clinic, 325 11th Ave., Two Harbors
- Vaccine: Pfizer
- Anyone age 12 and up is eligible to be vaccinated.
- Register on the Lake County website.

Wednesday, September 15 from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

- Lake View Hospital and Medical Clinic, 325 11th Ave., Two Harbors
- Vaccine: Pfizer
- Anyone age 12 and up is eligible to be vaccinated.
- Register on the Lake County website.

Wednesday, September 15th 4:30-6:00 pm

- Health and Human Services, 616 3rd Ave, Two Harbors
- Vaccine: Janssen (J & J)
- Anyone age 18 and up is eligible to be vaccinated.
- Walk-in

Wednesday, September 22 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

- Lake View Hospital and Medical Clinic, 325 11th Ave., Two Harbors
- Vaccine: Pfizer
- Anyone age 12 and up is eligible to be vaccinated.
- Register on the Lake County website.