

Recycling in Skagit County: Guidelines, Access, Accountability

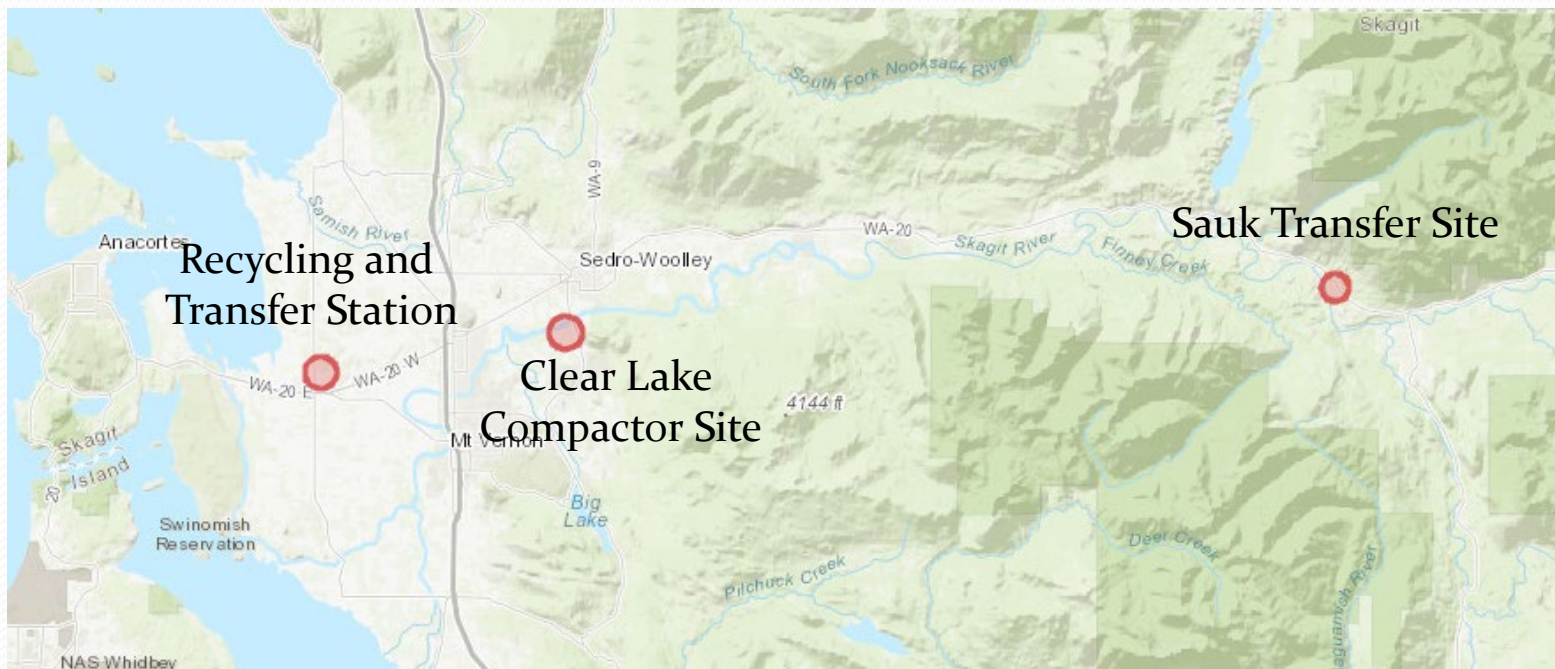
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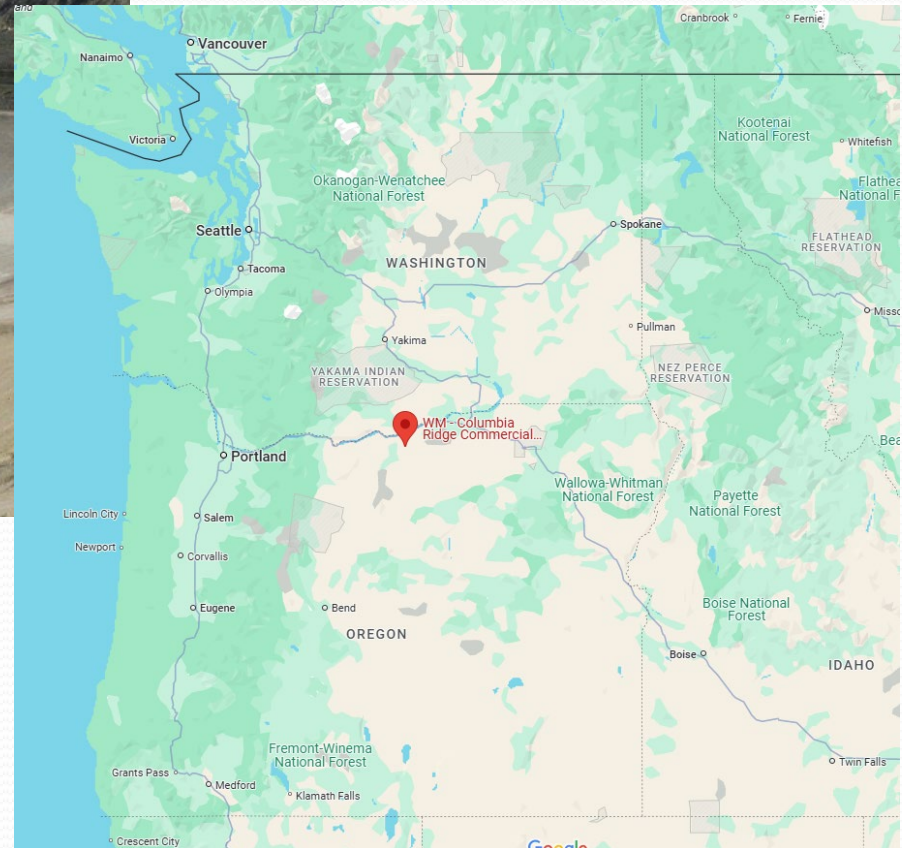
Solid Waste in Skagit County

- Curbside collection and self-haul
- All collected material is transported to Ovenell Transfer Site





WM Columbia Ridge Landfill, OR



Current U.S. Recycling

- Majority of U.S. communities switched to single-stream recycling
 - Bellingham switched in 2024
 - U.S. has a 35% recycling rate
 - 66 million tons of recyclables/year (EPA SMM Report)
- Some material handled domestically
 - Steel, glass, cardboard & paper, rigid & flexible plastics
 - Aluminum (partial)
 - Mixed film plastics



Historically Exported to China

- At least 1/3 of those materials were exported
 - Majority (16-17 million tons) went to China/Hong Kong



Blue Skies Timeline

- June 2017 – China announces import restrictions
- Fall 2017 – Recycling market is volatile
- January 2018 – Import restrictions implemented
 - Mixed paper and plastics
- March 2018 – China's new 0.5% contamination standard imposed
- June 2018 – China announces complete ban by 2020



Effects in Skagit County

- \$\$ Increases to Cities
 - Renegotiating contracts
 - Increases to customers
- Changes to drop off services
 - Plastics
 - Glass
- Greater focus on reducing contamination
- 7 years before any expansion of services

Recycling in Skagit County

- Curbside service mandated in Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley (single stream)
- West of Highway 9, residents can subscribe to curbside recycling service through WM (single stream)
- Drop-off at Skagit River Steel & Recycling (source separated)
- Drop-off at County transfer sites (source separated)
- Boutique services available in select cities (Ridwell, source separated)



RECYCLING

NO PLASTIC BAGS OR
BAGGED MATERIAL

WM.

DRY PAPER AND CARDBOARD



Including:

- Paperback books, catalogs and magazines
- Non-foil wrapping paper

Flatten all boxes (Do not tie up)

Remove plastic liners from dry food boxes

PLASTIC

BOTTLES, JUGS, TUBS AND CUPS



Empty of all food or liquid (No lids)

METAL

ALUMINUM AND TIN CANS



Including:

No sharp or greasy metal

Remove lids and put lids in the trash

GLASS

JARS AND BOTTLES



Empty of all food or liquid (Labels OK)

RECYCLING TIPS

- Empty and rinse out all food residue. Labels do not need to be removed.
- Empty recyclables out of bags and boxes into the cart so they can be easily sorted at the recycling facility.
- IGNORE THE NUMBERS, RECYCLE PLASTICS BY SHAPE!

wmnorthwest.com



Where does the recycling go?

- Waste Management
 - Cascade Recycling Center in Woodinville, WA
 - Material Recovery Facility (MRF)
 - Baled and sold



Where does the recycling go?

- Skagit River Steel, Burlington, WA
- Baled and sold



A glitch in glass recycling

- Ardagh glass packaging closed doors, July 2024
- Local glass recycler, SMI can only process so much
- Glass is heavy, costly & logistically challenging to transport
- Glass recycling at Skagit County suspended October 2024, reinstated April 2025
- **Customers could still recycle glass in curbside carts**
 - Carts serviced by WM, existing contract with SMI
- Local markets reemerged, long term solutions developed

Recycling today builds tomorrow

- Keeps valuable materials in use and out of landfills
- Protects resources for generations ahead
- Saves energy and lowers environmental impact
- Supports jobs in recycling and manufacturing
- Fuels a resilient, thriving local economy



Protect our local recycling system

- Follow the basics: Recycle Right
 - **EMPTY. CLEAN. LOOSE.**
 - “When in doubt, throw it out”
 - Only place accepted items in recycling
- Why it matters
 - Contamination can send entire loads to the landfill
 - Clean materials support strong domestic markets
 - Proper sorting protects our regional recycling system
- Recycling is a morally neutral care task
 - Follow your local guidelines—that’s success!



DIY

**Recycling
(Right)**



FREE YOUR RECYCLABLES

Place items directly in recycling container.

LIBRE SUS RECICLABLES.

Coloque los artículos directamente en
el contenedor de reciclaje.

For more information, visit:
wm.com/recycleright

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Don't Bag Recyclables - Place items
directly in recycling container.



Items not accepted

- **Plastic bags & wrap**
 - Plastic grocery bags, films, bubble wrap
- **Shredded paper**
 - Too small for, and difficult to separate in, the recycling sorting process
- **Food soiled items**
 - Pizza boxes, paper plates, napkins, paper towels
- **Plastic film and foam**
 - Styrofoam blocks, peanuts
- **Hazardous items and tangles**
 - hoses, wires, electronics, batteries
- **Glass and ceramics**
 - Mirrors, window glass, lightbulbs, ceramic dishes

Contact Info

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www.skagitcounty.net/recycling

Recycling resources:

www.wmnorthwest.com/skagitcounty

www.wm.com/us/en/recycle-right

<https://www.ridwell.com/>

