



## ***Town of Mount Desert***

21 Sea Street, P.O. Box 248

Northeast Harbor, ME 04662-0248

Telephone 207-276-5743 Fax 207-276-5742

[www.mtdesert.org](http://www.mtdesert.org) [director@mtdesert.org](mailto:director@mtdesert.org)

### **Town of Mount Desert Recycling Program Summary July 26, 2022**

As requested by the Selectboard in late 2021, Town staff checked into restarting the Town's recycling program at the highway garage at 307 Sargeant Drive. Doing so would likely be an interim measure until the solid waste handling facility in Hampden is in operation again. Staff first checked with Ellsworth to see if we could resume our program with them. We cannot - they were short-staffed and were having trouble keeping up with the materials they were receiving.

Staff then contacted representatives of EMR (Eastern Maine Recycling). They are the transfer station located in Southwest Harbor where our household municipal solid waste is hauled by our trucks or dropped off by residents. We also dispose of metals, construction and demolition debris, bulky waste such as chairs and sofas, stumps, and green wood, etc. at the transfer station. At my inquiry, they said they would be interested in providing our recycling center with containers to put recyclables in and transportation services of the collected materials to a central recycling center for processing. Initially, we agreed that placing two containers at Sargeant Drive would suit our current needs, one for just cardboard and one for co-mingled plastics, cans, paper, newspapers, magazines, etc. We have recently added a third container to accommodate the volume we collect. The full containers are hauled to Casella's recycling center in Old Town then in turn hauled to their larger facility in Waterville for processing.

As just noted above, we now have three containers at the recycling center for people to put recyclables in. We have two for co-mingled materials and one dedicated to just cardboard and similar materials. We have set up this arrangement in an attempt to save transportation costs related to the cardboard. Many people do a great job of flattening the boxes before putting them in the container, many do not. The non-flattened or inadequately flattened boxes take up air space in the containers that do not have anything in them. If we were to mix cardboard and the co-mingled materials, the addition of the other materials to the cardboard would quickly fill the container with a very limited amount getting into the free air spaces, and we end up transporting "air" to Casella. We are also able to save costs by separating the cardboard and transporting just a full container of it to Casella. On the days that Casella's compacter is operable, we are not charged the recycling tip fee for clean loads of cardboard. We only pay the transportation costs for that particular load. This has happened a handful of times for us.

A summary of what can be placed in the two co-mingled containers and the cardboard container and what CANNOT GO ANYWHERE BUT IN THE TRASH is shown elsewhere on the Town web site, [www.mtdesert.org](http://www.mtdesert.org).