

## LOCAL JOBS

NEWS REPORT REPRINT

# The Dump

BAYSHORE NEIGHBORHOOD, SAN FRANCISCO



*Monofilio DeSantiago sorts recyclables at Recycle Central.*

*San Francisco's garbage dump, the Recology San Francisco Solid Waste Transfer and Recycling Center, does not throw out much trash. The majority of its rubbish gets productively recycled, at the transfer station at 501 Tunnel Avenue or the Pier 96 sorting facility. Recology, an employee-owned company, oversees the complex operation.*

HANK PELLISSIER

### HEAD OF THE CLASS

San Francisco diverts 77 percent of its waste, the best landfill-avoidance rate for any large city in the United States. The goal for 2020 is zero waste. The 3-Bin Recycling Program started in July 1997.

### TABLE SCRAPS

Compostable items from the green bins — including scraps and leftovers from 5,000 restaurants — is first taken to the Organics Annex Building, where it is transferred into long-haul trucks that deliver it to Vacaville. There it is transformed into dense compost <<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/c/compost/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier>>, nicknamed “black gold.”

### VALUABLE LEFTOVERS

San Francisco residents and businesses have composted more than 757,000 tons of material over 13-plus years by using the green bins. That means 18,400 metric tons of carbon dioxide have been put back into the soil, a benefit equivalent to keeping nearly 3,600 cars off the roads.

### NEIGHBORS HIRED

Contents of the blue recycle bins are taken to Pier 96, where they are separated into 16 categories of glass, metal, plastic or paper products.

### BURY ME YONDER

Black-bin garbage is compacted at the transfer station before it is hauled to Altamont Landfill. The 1,400 tons of landfill that San Francisco creates daily represent a 35 percent drop in the last decade.

### WINGED RETREAT

Hundreds of sea gulls throng near the garbage, trying to eat the rotting food. They vanish abruptly when Wade Neeley, Recology's in-house falconer, arrives with a Harris's hawk on his arm.

### BEAUTY IN THE RUBBLE

Recology's unique artist-in-residency program provides studio space and a stipend of \$1,000 a month to “scavenger artists” who create work out of discarded material they find on the premises.

### CAREFUL HANDLING

Two employees are trained to extract Freon from all discarded refrigerators. Fluorescent bulbs are shipped off the premises to specialists who remove the mercury.

### COMPOST OR PAY

With laws mandating composting, residents can be fined for not using green bins. Over the past year, compost collection increased by 100 tons per day.

Footnote: This article and photo appeared on page 33B of the New York Times. The report and additional photos are posted on NyTimes.com at this URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/26/us/26bcintel.html?src=twrhp>

# The New York Times

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