



Taos County Backyard & Household Waste Management Guide



An Introduction To Recycling and
Repurposing Backyard & Household
Waste to Protect Our Soil, Waterways,
and Neighborhoods



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Taos County Backyard & Household Waste Management Guide

July 2022

Goal & Intended Audience:

The goal of this Guide is to create a comprehensive document for Rio Fernando de Taos watershed and other Taos County residents who need more information on how to recycle, reuse, and dispose of backyard waste. Connecting our community with available local resources and highlighting the need for collective action.

Acknowledgments:

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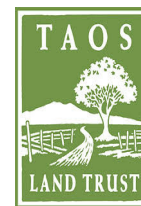
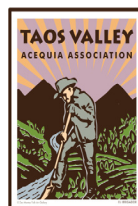


Chapter 1: Introduction to the Rio Fernando de Taos Revitalization Collaborative and Waste Streams

The Rio Fernando de Taos Revitalization Collaborative is a dynamic collective of individuals, elected leaders, organizations, and government entities working to revitalize the Rio Fernando watershed by improving water quality and ecological function, restoring acequia systems, strengthening working land capacity, and connecting people to the river and land they love.

Not only is the Rio Fernando Collaborative uniting agencies, elected leaders and individuals – it's attracting money and resources for these important projects that are often not available to one entity alone. Priority upcoming projects include forest management to mitigate fires, restoration and protection of key wetlands, reduce polluted runoff and E. coli pathways, and youth education on land & acequia management. Visit our website at www.riofernando.org for contact information and to learn how to get involved.

Collaborative Members



Waste streams are flows of specific waste, from its source of creation through to recovery, recycling, or disposal. Items that are single-use or have disposal challenges are the most problematic and have the potential to cause damage to our environment by collecting and eroding in our streams, ditches, and backyards. Depending on the source of waste, the degree of damage can vary from catastrophic to a mere eyesore.

Sources of waste can be broadly classified into four types:

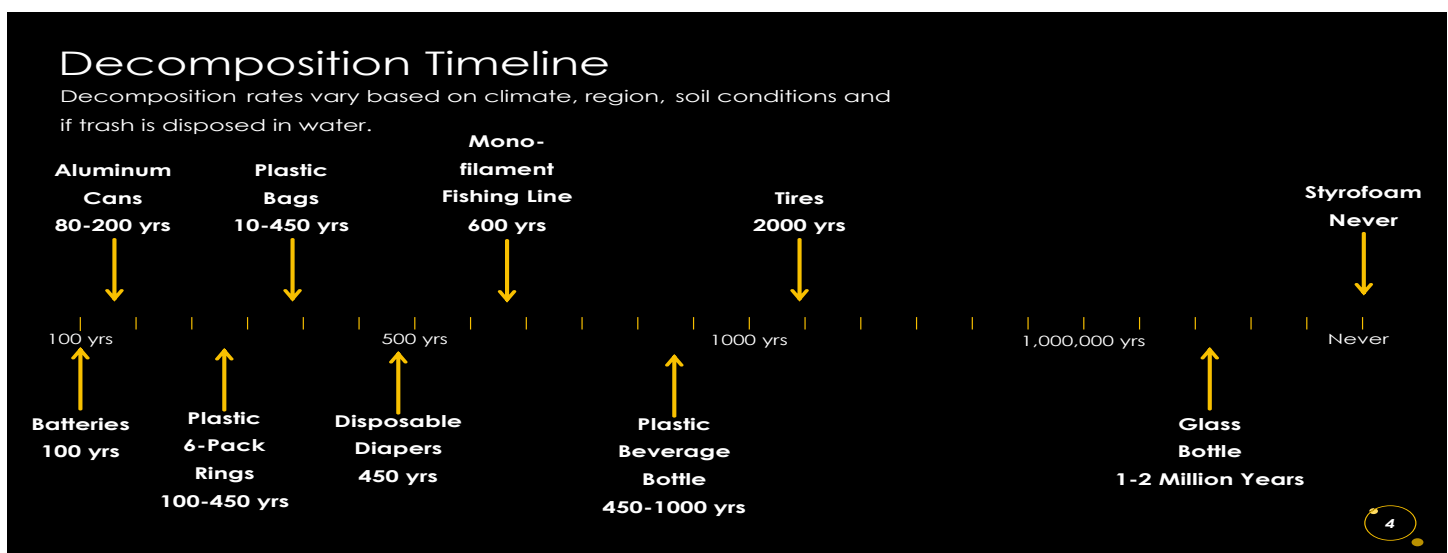
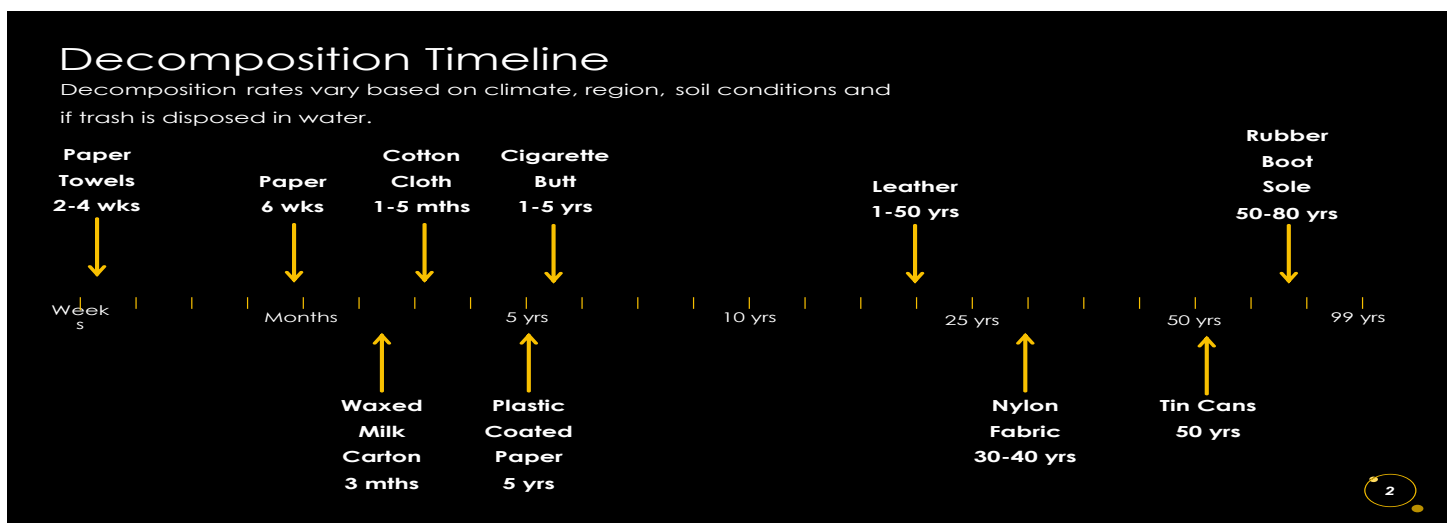
Industrial Waste	These are the wastes created in factories & heavy industries
Commercial Waste	Wastes produced by schools, restaurants, businesses, Town facilities, etc.
Domestic Waste	Waste collected during household activities like cooking, cleaning, and shopping, as well as yard clippings, pet waste, and used goods
Agricultural Waste	Waste produced through agricultural production such as cattle waste, weeds, husk, old equipment, and feed bags

The focus of this guide will be on Agricultural and Domestic waste streams as those are the dominant forms found in the Rio Fernando Watershed and ones that are more easily addressed with DIY solutions. In the following chapters, you will find descriptions of the more common waste items, their potential impact on the environment, and solutions for their proper disposal.

Chapter 2: The Problem with Backyard Waste & General Solutions

Taos County experiences waste management challenges due to its rural location and population density. Municipal recycling and compost programs are limited, as not enough waste is generated to justify the cost and carbon emissions of transporting it. The Taos County Landfill Association used these justifications when temporarily closing the Taos Recycling center at the end of 2021 (due to re-open Summer of 2022), citing that only 7.6% of waste was being diverted from the Landfill.¹ Even when open, the recycling center does not accept a number of common items such as glass and plastics. This restricts options for residents to properly dispose of waste, especially streams that could be recycled and reused in our community, generating pollutants and trash that could be used for reused or repurposed for a new product or soil additions.

A large number of these items end up in the Taos Landfill or get disposed of illegally, posing a significant risk to our municipal resources and environment. If the Landfill were to reach capacity, Taos County would need to transport our trash, incurring heavy costs and carbon emission generation, or create new areas to be used as a Landfill. According to Francisco Espinoza, Director of Public Works for the town of Taos, each landfill cell has an estimated lifespan of 7 years before capacity is filled up and it costs \$2 million to build a new one.² Furthermore, a significant portion of our commonly used products have extremely long decomposition periods and release harmful chemicals as they decay. This has the potential to contaminate our soils and leach pollutants into our water systems.



The good news is the majority of domestic waste can be **reduced**, **reused**, and/or **recycled** for further use. The EPA has developed a [great resource](#) to help with reducing and reusing, and by being more conscious and intentional with our food waste, yard trimmings, paper and cardboard, plastics, metals, glass, rubber, and wood, we can eliminate an estimated 70% of our waste stream by repurposing it.³ Even better news is a lot of this waste is extremely valuable once the right processes are established.

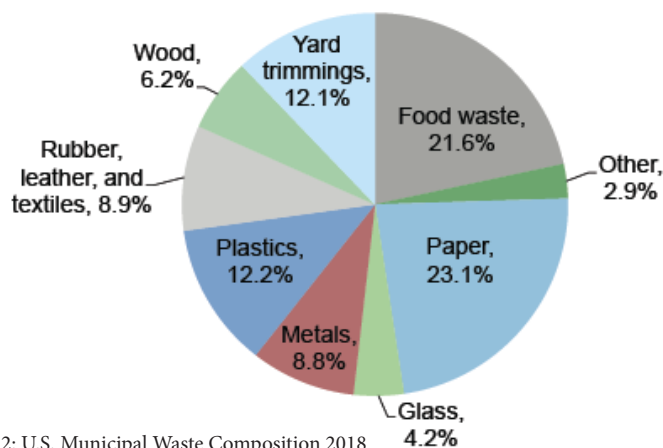


Figure 2: U.S. Municipal Waste Composition 2018

The following are resources and facilities in the Taos County area for recycling or reusing common residential and agricultural items. This guide will get into more detail on specific items in the following chapters and how recycling can create significant value for your soil and community.

Recycle

Taos Recycling Center

201 Bertha Street
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-7679

Hours of Operation: (closed as of publication)

Accept (subject to change)

- Aluminum Cans | • Steel Cans
- Newspaper | • Phone books
- White Paper & Shredded Paper
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Brown Paper Bags | • Glass
- E-Waste: Computers Only
- Clean & Dry Plastics #1 & #2

Conscious Taos Recycling

Curbside Recycling Service
Phone: 575-224-6209
Contact: info@conscioustaos.com
Hours: Curbside scheduling

Accepts (subject to change)

- Aluminum Cans | • Steel Cans
- Newspaper, magazines | • Phone books
- White Paper & Shredded Paper
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Brown Paper Bags
- Tetra Pak
- Rigid Plastics #1-7

TiLT - Repurposing Plastic Project

Phone: 575-737-8335
<https://www.repurposingplastictaos.com/>

Subscription service for plastic dropoff for individuals and commercial outfits.

Broken Arrow Glass

<https://www.brokenarrowglass.com>

One-time, monthly, and commercial glass collection service. Repurposed glass is made into different products for purchase at their studio in Santa Fe. Support local artsians while recycling!

Wholly Rags

1337 Gusdorf Rd #L
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-2271

Accepts

- Natural Fiber Fabrics & Textiles
-

Albertsons Market

710 A Paseo del Pueblo Sur
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-1250

Accepts

- Plastic Bags
-

Walmart

926 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-1136

Accepts

- Plastic Bags
-

Habitat for Humanity Restore

16 State Rd. 522
El Prado, NM 87529
Phone: 575-758-7827

Hours of Operation

Tue – Sat: 10:00am – 5:00pm

Donations (contributions are tax deductible)

- Bricks, Tile & Flooring Materials
- Doors & Windows
- Electrical Supplies & Lighting
- Plumbing Supplies (non-lead)
- Working Appliances (large & small)
- Furniture & Office Furniture
- Tools & Hardware
- Lumber, Building Supplies & Materials
- Cabinets, Counter Tops & Shelving
- Sinks, Toilets & Fixtures
- Housewares & Electronics
- Toys & Sporting Goods
- Books & Art

Smith's

224 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-758-3711

Accepts

- Plastic Bags
-

Taos County Police Departments

Accepts

- Expired & Unused Medications

Other options provided here:

<http://takebackday.dea.gov/>

Taos County Solid Waste Transfer Stations

Please see County Solid Waste [website](#) for directions, locations, and hours of each transfer station.

All locations accept household waste, cardboard, mixed paper, aluminum cans, white goods (washers, dryers, etc.), batteries, used oil, and tires.

Reuse

CAV Thrift Store

1103 Paseo del Pueblo Sur
Taos, NM 87571
Phone: 575-751-4824

Donation Hours (contributions are tax deductible)

Mon, Wed, Fri, & Sat: 10:00am – 6:00pm

Aguirre Salvage Yard

26 N Mesa Rd #ABC
El Prado, NM 87529
Phone: 575-776-7651

Hours: of Operation: Mon-Fri 10:00am - 4:00pm

Accepts and buys all scrap metal and items made predominantly from metal parts

Taos County Solid Waste Transfer Stations

Chamisal, Ojo Caliente, and Cerro locations have re-use sheds for free tools and material use.

Chapter 3: Common Backyard Waste Items & Options to Recycle

1. Tires:

Tires are a commonly found debris item within the Rio Fernando. As noted by the the Santa Fe Solid Waste Management Agency, “due to the large volume produced and their durability, tires are among the largest and most problematic sources of waste. Yet, if recycled, they can also be one of the most reused waste materials, as the rubber is very resilient and can be reused in other products like basketball courts, asphalt, and new athletic shoes. Roughly one tire per person per year is generated in the United States. That’s over 308 million tires per year!”¹ While tires, when unattended to, can cause hazards through inadvertent heat retention and ignition (often emitting toxic fumes; very difficult to extinguish), they also offer many repurposing uses. These include using tires for erosion control, house construction, garden projects, bank stabilization, and much, much more!



In addition, the following recycling options exist for tires in the northern New Mexico region:

- When purchasing new tires, many businesses will offer options for taking back your old tires. Usually, the fee for the collection of these old tires is included in your new tire purchase price.
- Santa Fe offers a wide variety of tire recycling options, including free tire recycling on the first weekend (Saturday and Sunday) of every month at the Buckman Road Recycling & Transfer Station (BuRRT). During other times, residents are welcome to bring tires during normal business hours any day of the week, for a nominal fee of \$3 per tire.
- Additional information can be found in the New Mexico Environment Department’s [Tire Waste Site](#):

2. Glass:

Recyclable glass from bottles and other containers is a common household waste product and one that has traditionally been hard to recycle in Taos due to transportation weight. These everyday items take 1 million years to break down in our landfill when its actually more energy efficient to recast used glass than use virgin materials. A new organization called [Broken Arrow Glass](#) recently opened for business and is servicing the Santa Fe and Taos region. BAG offers one-time, monthly, and commercial subscriptions services for at-home pick-up here in Taos. The organization also features a glass blowing studio where they turn the recycled glass into products and and art pieces!

Glass recycling is available in Santa Fe, at either of the recycling drop-off locations located around the city: Lucia Lane Recycling Drop-Off Site • Agua Fria Drop-Off Site • Buckman Road Recycling & Transfer Station For more information, and up-to-date guidance, please visit [Santa Fe Glass Recycling](#).

Glass can also be used as a building material for EarthShips and other bio-infrastructure. The Taos area is home to pioneers and experts in this field which has attracted worldwide attention. To learn more, please visit: [Earthship Bioteecture](#).

Finally, glass containers can be repurposed directly at home as drinking glasses, vases for plants, storage devices, and many other creative ideas. There are lots of blogs and sites featuring creative at-home projects.



3. Plastics:

Plastic production, consumption, and disposal has increased exponentially in the past 50 years. Today, the United States produces more plastic waste than any other nation -- dialing in at about approximately 231 lbs (105KG) of plastic waste per person, per year.¹ Thus, plastic waste represents one of the most common, and insidious, waste products. At a glance, issues arising from plastic waste include:

- Chemicals added to plastics are absorbed by human bodies. Some of these compounds have been found to alter hormones or have other potential human health effects.
- Plastic debris, laced with chemicals and often ingested by marine animals, can injure or poison wildlife.
- Floating plastic waste, which can survive for thousands of years in water, serves as mini transportation devices for invasive species, disrupting habitats.
- Plastic buried deep in landfills can leach harmful chemicals that spread into groundwater.
- Around 4% of world oil production is used as a feedstock to make plastics, and a similar amount is consumed as energy in the process.

Conscious Taos Recycling is a local start-up service that provides a bin and weekly pick-up service for most plastics, aluminum & metal cans, and paper/cardboard materials. Check their [service map](#) to get more info and see if your location qualifies for this great Taos resource.

Repurposing Plastic Taos is a organization that offers low-cost plastic repurposing, using the materials in local construction! The organization has partnered with TiLT (Taos Initiative for Life Together) a local incubator and community organization to expand their services and options for repurposing.



4. Leaves, Sticks, Wood Chips, & Other Wood Products :

“Green waste” materials, such as leaves, sticks, wood chips, nutshells, christmas trees, and branch cuttings are frequent and sometimes bulky waste items to dispose of. Mulching and composting are great solutions for dealing with this waste, helping to save money on disposal fees, reducing green-waste buildup in landfills, and improving the quality of your soils! Leaves, sticks, woodchips and nutshells can easily be turned into mulch (see [here](#) for a handy “how-to” guide), however if you have larger items such as branches or christmas trees, you may need to the assistance of a wood chipper, use an axe to make firewood, or contact [Red Willow Farm](#) to see if you can contribute to their christmas tree firewood project, which uses discarded christmas trees to help heat their farming operations. There are also wood chipping services offered by several private companies, including [Tarzan's Tree Trimming](#), which can remove or help condense large pieces into manageable mulch or composting supplies. Keep in mind that when fighting invasive and noxious species, great care needs to be taken to minimize the spread of the seeds and they should not be composted in your yard. Bag and landfill whenever possible.

5. Food Waste & Compost

Food scraps currently make up more than 30% of domestic trash and could be composted, keeping these materials out of the landfills where they take up space and release methane gas. Using these materials is a great way to enrich your garden or yard soil, helping it to maintain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests. It will also reduce the need for chemical fertilizers while encouraging the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create a rich nutrient-filled material.

Composting is an easy and great way to repurpose these every-day green and organic wastes into valuable soil amendments. New Mexico Environment Department has created a [wonderful online brochure](#) that details how to easily create your own backyard compost regime. Furthermore, there are lots of products and techniques available for indoor composting. Several non-profits conduct composting workshops within the Taos community, including the Taos Land Trust, Quivira Coalition, Reunity Resources, Alianza Agri-Cultura de Taos, and the Taos Farm and Garden Facebook Group. All of these groups offer key insights and are happy to share their composting expertise.

What to Compost:

Fruits & Vegetables	House plants
Eggshells	Hay and straw
Coffee grounds and filters	Leaves
Tea bags	Sawdust
Nut Shells	Wood chips
Shredded newspaper	Cotton
Cardboard	Wool Rags
Paper	Hair and Fur
Grass & Yard trimmings	Fireplace Ashes

What Not to Compost:

Coal or charcoal ash
Diary Products
Invasive & Noxious Species
Diseases or insect-ridden plants
Fats, grease, lard, or oils
Meat or fish bone and scraps
Pet wastes
Yard trimmings treated with chemical products

Worms Make Good Roommates?

Utilizing worms is a great way to aid the decomposition process as many households do not produce enough food waste to build a functioning static pile. Vermicomposting is also very effective in small spaces, even under the sink!, which makes it a great tool when outdoor space isn't an option. Relax and enjoy their hardwork for a great soil addition to your houseplants, herbs and garden.

6. Construction Materials

Construction and demolition debris generated 569 million tons of waste in 2017, more than twice the amount of municipal solid waste.¹ Utilizing scraps and old construction parts can be an excellent way to save money on future projects and ensure replacement materials are nearby should damage occur to existing structures or machines. With proper storage and maintenance, these materials will not cause any environmental damage. However, if left unmaintained corrosion and rust will start to occur and can begin to leak harmful chemicals into your soil and waterways. These materials can also create safety hazards when they become obstructed or develop sharp edges over time.

The most common method for recycling or disposing of barbed wire, metal posts, and other metal materials is to contact your local scrap metal yard. Aguirre Salvage is the best option in the area and will pay you for the materials.

Aguirre Salvage LLC - 575-776-7651 - 26 N Mesa Rd. #ABC, El Prado, NM 87529

For other construction materials such as cement, gravel, and wooden posts, the Taos County Solid Waste Transfer stations can be utilized in some cases for recycling and proper disposal. There are eight locations throughout the County and more information can be found [here](#).

Keep in mind that some of these materials can be recycled for home improvement projects such as building raised beds, garden walkways, bird houses, etc. There are lots of blogs and websites dedicated to using recycled products for home projects to spur creativity.



7. Appliances

Appliances are important to recycle for two primary reasons. One, steel is the most recycled material in the U.S. and makes up 75% of the average appliance. In fact, home appliances account for 10% of all steel recycled in the U.S. each year!¹ Second, refrigerators and air conditioners use chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and/or Freon to chill the air which can be extremely detrimental to the environment when appliances leak or are discarded.

Additionally, old appliances are generally energy inefficient and some utility companies will provide a credit to buy a new appliance and recycle the old one. You will also save money on your monthly bill! Check out the incentives and rebates offered by New Mexico Gas [here](#) for new and upgraded appliances.

The best way to recycle your old appliance is to work with the retailer when purchasing a new one. Most businesses, such as Sears Hometown Store and Appliance Plus Sales & Service, will have a recycling program already in-place and be able to take care of the transportation. If you are trying to recycle on your own, the EPA's [Responsible Appliance Disposal](#) (RAD) program has developed a nationwide recycling program for appliances. You can also utilize a scrap metal recycler, like Aguirre Salvage in Taos, to sell the usable materials. Be advised you may have to pay for appliances with Freon due to the costs associated with its removal but these appliances started being phased out in 2003 and are rare. Check the identification plaque which will have other safety information as well. Finally, if the appliance is less than five years old, you can also donate to Habitat for Humanity or GoodWill in the area.

8. Car and Car Parts

The process of restoring cars or keeping vehicles for spare parts is a common practice throughout New Mexico. While these vehicles can be storing significant value, the proper care needs to be taken to ensure pollutants are not leaking into the ground. Batteries, coolant, oils, paint, and the tires can all leak or degrade to contaminate the soils if not checked. The good news is a lot of these parts are valuable and can be recycled or even bought back in our community.

Top Recyclable Parts:

Batteries • Oil & Oil Filters • Tires • Catalytic Converters • Glass • Starters & Alternators • Scrap Metal

Aguirre Salvage LLC is a local Taos metal salvage and recycling yard that can be utilized as well as local auto repair stores and tire stores such as AutoZone for oils, batteries, and tires.

Aguirre Salvage LLC - 575-776-7651 - 26 N Mesa Rd. #ABC, El Prado, NM 87529

AutoZone - 575-737-5400 - 525 Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, Taos, NM 87571



9. Chicken Fecal Waste

Chickens are a vital part of life for both the large rancher and common household. The relatively simple care and maintenance has increased the appeal of having fresh eggs available and when the right practices are set-up, all aspects of chicken raising can be beneficial. One major concern is the manure when left unattended because it carries pathogens like E.coli and salmonella that are harmful to both humans and our pets. The best way to dispose of chicken poop is actually straight in the compost pile! It's full of both the brown wood nutrients and the green food waste that are essential ingredients. Mixing it in with your existing pile or waste streams will help generate amazing black compost material to be added straight back into your soil.

If you are unable to utilize a compost pile or have too much coop litter, you can sell the chicken poop to other gardeners in the area who can use it for compost. As a last result, you can dispose of the waste in the garbage (feed bags work really well and you will already have a few on hand!)

10. Cow & Horse Fecal Waste

Cow and horse manure can be extremely detrimental to our local watersheds if allowed to runoff with stormwater. The nutrients it releases stimulate microorganism growth which decreases the dissolved oxygen in the water. Introducing too much manure will cause the oxygen levels to drop to critical levels and threaten aquatic species and overall water quality.

One of the best ways to help alleviate the manure intensity on the land is to properly manage the grazing patterns of the animals. Although it requires more time and resources to fence and move them, the effort will result in better use of manure nutrients than uncontrolled grazing. This [video](#) shows a simple technique for this using Polywire electric fence, a fence remote control, step-in posts, and handy reels. This will also help manage the growth of the pasture vegetation which aids in the control of manure spreading during rain events by absorbing the water.

Landowners should also be cognizant of waterways and wetlands on the property or directly adjacent. Establishing grass strips or buffers to help filter runoff is a great low-cost way to minimize wastestream impact and fencing off the waterways is also highly encouraged.

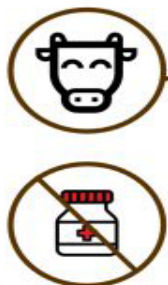
As with the chicken waste, the best way to get rid of the manure is composting on-site. With proper grazing management, a landowner can collect excess amounts for composting and leave residual amounts for natural fertilizer on the grazing area. If excess manure is still present, stockpiling for future use is encouraged although proper storage is necessary to ensure there is no leakage.

Lastly, there may be gardeners, farmers, or even mushroom growers in the community who will value the well-composted manure. Using old feed bags to package the compost is a great way to recycle both inputs on the property.

Establishing a manure management plan is the best way to ensure maximization of the valuable nutrients and minimize harmful environmental impacts. Landfills should be the last result for removal as the nutrients will be wasted and it helps fill already overcrowded landfill space.

What is Rotational Grazing?

Pastured animals are less susceptible to diseases like footrot, pinkeye and worms.



Healthier livestock means less dependence on expensive, potentially harmful antibiotics.

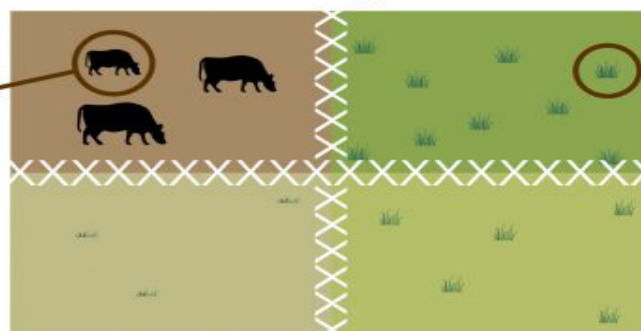
Large pastures are broken into sections called paddocks. Livestock are moved between paddocks when 50% to 70% of cover has been removed.

Paddocks not currently being grazed are left to rest for a period of 25 - 30 days. This allows plant life to come back to grazing height and develop deeper root systems.

Deeper root systems allow plants to draw more nutrients from the soil. They also help reduce field erosion which can lead to desertification.



Increasing the yield of pasture land helps reduce dependence on grains and feeds, which can be expensive and laborious to grow.



Graphic by Alexandra Kanik

11. Pet Waste

One of the catalysts for the creation of this guide and associated workshops is a high concentration of E.coli in the Rio Fernando. These concentration levels have risen above the threshold for human safety and while the causes for this rise are diverse and numerous, a key source of non-point source pollution is pet fecal waste associated with our community's recreation in the watershed. As the Rio Fernando acts as a sanctuary for us all, especially during the hot summer months, this leads to a significant amount of fecal waste collecting along the riverbank where monsoon rains quickly wash it into the stream. As the water levels are lowest during the summer, the waste has a larger impact on water quality and causes degradation. In fact, some studies have found that 20-30% of bacteria in water samples from urban watersheds is associated with dog waste.¹

Thanks in large part to the work of Amigos Bravos (ongoing water quality monitoring, creation of a watershed-based plan, and scoop-the-poop campaigns), we now have pet waste collection stations located throughout the watershed and more are scheduled to be installed in the coming years. However, we need active participation by all community members if we are going to help keep our river clean, and this requires pet owners to be aware of the degradation their furry friends are causing and the steps they can take to help combat it. Most owners believe that the waste will quickly decompose and serve as a natural part of the landscape, but in reality it can take up to 3-months in good conditions and these excess nutrients can produce algal blooms in waterways which in turn causes oxygen depletion and aquatic species mortality.

The easiest and most effective response is to carry waste bags when walking the pet, allowing for quick capture and disposal. This is especially true in public areas where a mass pick-up strategy is not possible for owners like in their own backyard. Owners should also be aware of the public waste collection sites and grab extra bags for their walk if currently out of their own supply.

Composting is also another great option for owners but care needs to be taken to ensure the bacteria doesn't contaminate soil, waterways, and/or get in contact with humans. A static-aerated pile is the best way to compost the waste as the high temperatures generated will kill the bacteria. Vermicomposting can also be utilized but owners should be aware the carnivore waste will attract more neighborhood critters so some fencing or other method for enclosure should be used.

Lastly, owners can choose to flush their pet waste which will lead to the waste being treated at the wastewater treatment facility and not in the landfill. However, caution should be used again for this option as most compostable bags require heat to decompose and could potentially clog your drains or city sewers



12. Liquid Waste

The rural nature and low population density of Northern New Mexico means the use of septic systems are prevalent and a convenient way to manage household liquid waste. In fact, one-third of New Mexicans rely on septic tanks, cesspools, or an outside system which is not problematic when there is adequate lot size, proper soil, and setbacks or clearances.¹ However, these on-site septic systems were never intended for closely built-up areas, and “the development of fringe areas and subdivisions that do not have access to municipal water and sewage facilities is creating a continuously growing problem in proper protection of the public health in these areas.”² Septic systems are the leading threat to public wells, having contaminated over 1,300 in New Mexico, and there are over 400 miles of streams that have been impacted by these systems.³

To minimize these risks, proper construction and ongoing maintenance is required. Amigos Bravos has put together a [factsheet](#) detailing regulations and requirements and the New Mexico Environmental Public Health Tracking program has a [website](#) detailing maintenance based on size and use and resources available for contamination occurrences or emergencies.

Key tips for Septic Systems

- The sludge and scum should be periodically pumped out of the tank.
- Conserve water to avoid overloading the system.
- Do not treat it like a trash can, this will decrease the effectiveness of your septic system.
- Avoid dumping grease down the drain, it solidifies and can clog your septic system.
- Do not dump hazardous chemicals as they can destroy biologic digestion and ruin the system.

There are several local Septic System Service companies to help maintain your system:

S&R Septic – 575-770-2510 : Ray’s Septic – 575-770-2510 : [Bond Plumbing and Heating](#) - 575-751-0060

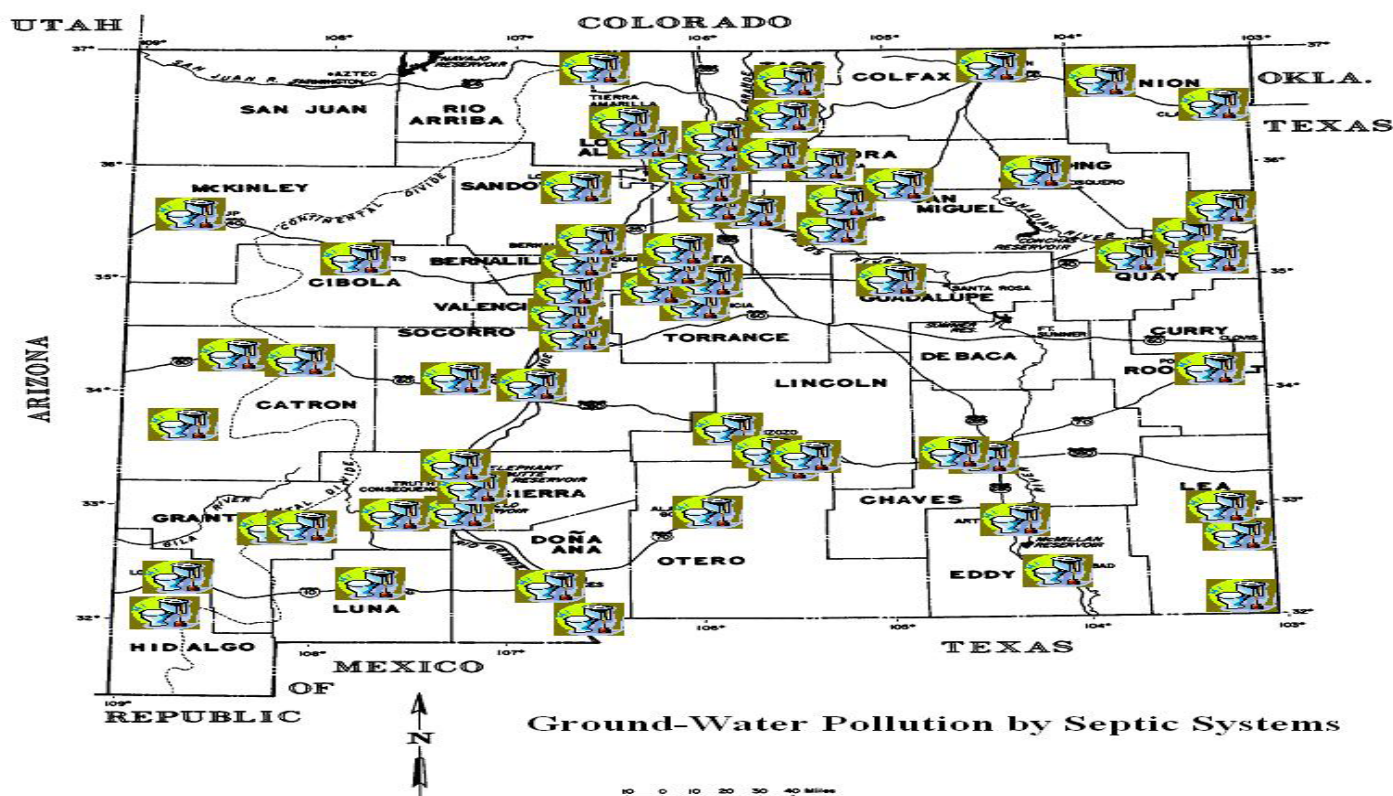


Figure 1: Dennis McQuillian, October 2006

13. Electronic Waste (E-Waste)

Electronic waste is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the world as population growth and economic development continue to spread the use of technology. According to a UN report in 2021, each person will produce on average 16.8 lbs of e-waste annually, for a global total of 57.4 million tons.¹ Developments also occur at a very rapid pace which leads to shorter product lifespans and exponentially more discarded old versions. This waste contains toxic and hazardous chemicals such as mercury, which poses risk to human and environmental health, and are left to rot in landfills or be shipped overseas where scrapyard thrifters sort through trash and other recyclables to retrieve the metal and/or electronic chips.

As these electronics have valuable parts and materials which can be recycled into new products, most of these items will be accepted by retailers when purchasing a new one, such as cell phones and appliances, or can be donated through your local reuse stores.

For e-waste items that cannot be donated or returned to a retailer, the Taos County Solid Waste Transfer stations will accept most items, including batteries, for free. More information can be found [here](#).



14. Household Oils

The proper management of oils and grease around the house will help to protect your plumbing and sewage systems as well as your soil and water. Oils used in vehicles and household machines are insoluble, persistent, and contain toxic chemicals and heavy metals. They do not wear out or break down, but rather become dirty and unusable so recycling saves a valuable resource. Additionally, it's more energy efficient to re-refine a base stock than create new ones with crude oil and it achieves the same level of performance.

A great local option is either AutoZone and O'Reilly Autopart stores, who will both help residents recycle up to 5 gallons per visit and send the collected oils off for re-refinement. Most Taos County Solid Waste Transfer Stations will also accept oil at their designated locations (not available at Pilar, Ojo Caliente, or Tres Piedras locations).

While not as toxic as machine oils, cooking oils and grease can wreak havoc on plumbing systems and sewage pipes. One of the easiest ways to mitigate this impact is collecting used oils in a jar or old container and storing under the sink before disposing in the trash. Additionally, if using high-heat oils such as peanut, canola, or vegetable, you can reuse the oil several times before it degrades and starts smoking. Be sure to filter out any particulates before storing in a cold, dry place as they will cause the oil to break down.

Used cooking oils can also be repurposed into biodiesel fuel. This refinement process is not very popular in northern New Mexico but ReUnity Resources in Santa Fe offers services to local restaurants on a weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly schedule. They will also take residential oil if residents are willing to make the journey.

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Appendix: Hyperlinks

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Chapter 2:

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Section 1: Tires

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