

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood with houses, trees, and a parking lot. A large, semi-transparent blue recycling symbol is overlaid on the image, centered on the left side. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Loop It Forward

Closing the Loop on #2 Plastics in
Kosciusko County: A Local Pilot
Program for Recycling & Reuse

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The Problem

- Recycling access in Kosciusko County does not align with its largely rural population.
- Many residents lack curbside options, leading to recyclable #2 plastics entering landfills.
- This results in long-term environmental impact and lost material value.

The Opportunity

- Polywood relies on recycled #2 plastics for production.
- Currently, most materials are sourced from outside the county.
- This presents an opportunity to connect local waste with local manufacturing.

The Solution

- Establish a pilot program centered at the Recycling Depot.



- This creates a simple, local recycling loop.

Why This Matters

- Kosciusko County's lakes and natural resources are vital to its economy and identity.
- Residents care about sustainability but lack accessible options.
- This program creates a direct connection between action and local impact.

Why This Works

- Builds on existing infrastructure and partnerships.
- Utilizes Recycling Depot, JCAP program for sorting, and Stafford's for compaction and transport.
- Most importantly, Polywood provides a local end-use for materials.

The Numbers

- 1 bale \approx 25,000 lbs \approx 125,000 milk jugs.
- Kosciusko County \approx 31,000 households.

Participation Rates:

- 10% \gg 40 jugs/year (\sim 0.77/week)
- 20% \gg 20 jugs/year (\sim 0.38/week)
- 30% \gg 13 jugs/year (\sim 0.25/week)

Financial Overview

- Estimated annual cost: \$26,400.
- Equivalent to cost of ~1 bale of HDPE material.
- Program can offset material purchases and reduce market dependency.

Risks & Considerations

- Contamination managed through education and sorting.
- Limited access hours reduce misuse.
- JCAP supports labor; if unavailable, compaction provider handles sorting with increased cost.
- Pilot approach allows adjustment over time.

Community Impact

- Residents see direct impact of recycling.
- Supports local business (Polywood).
- Creates a visible, local sustainability effort.
- Builds long-term community engagement.

Conclusion

- Transforms waste into a local resource.
- Reduces landfill impact and supports industry.
- Scalable model for future expansion.
- Opportunity to lead in community-driven recycling.

Northernor Award

- Support initial pilot program launch
- Allocate funds where impact is greatest with partners
- Potential uses: site setup (fencing), marketing, or operations



Thank You!

Questions?