Answers to Volo Bog State Natural Area's ***Waste Not Lunch Challen***

Don't Throw It All Away! Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Compost

Did you know the average student throws away 67 pounds of garbage, much of it food, every school year??? This chart will help you think of ways we can do better.

Next to each common school lunch item in the chart below, write an X in the column(s) to show the best option(s) one might choose. Now, whether at home or on a field trip, you'll be empowered to make the best choices to lighten your impact upon our planet!

Choices!	Use it Again	Take Home to Eat Later	Recycle it!	Compost it!	Landfill Bound
Aluminum Soda Can			X		
Apple Core				X	
Apple with one bite out of it		X			
Banana Peel				X	
Candy Wrapper					X
Chip Bag					X
Clean Aluminum Foil	X		X		
Dirty Paper Napkin					X
Drinking Straw					X
Empty Juice Box or Milk Carton					X
Empty Juice Bag					X
Empty Juice Bottle #4 or #5			X		
Grape Stems or Orange Peels				X	
Left-over Chips or Cookies		X			
Lunchable Cardboard Box			X		
Paper Lunch Bag (empty)	X		X		
Plastic #7 Lunchable Tray					X
Plastic Baggie	X		X		
Plastic Grocery Sack #2	X		X		
Plastic Spoon					X
Reusable Lunch Bag	X				
Un-eaten Fruit or Veggies		X			
Un-eaten Sandwich		X			X
Water Bottle #2			X		
Yogurt Squeeze Container					X

Volo Bog State Natural Area 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside, IL 60041 815-344-1294 dnr.volobog@illinois.gov

TEACHERS - SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE ABOUT OUR WASTE PRODUCTION & WASTE OPTIONS!

What's What in our Waste?

An in-depth look for teachers

By Stacy L. Iwanicki, Natural Resources Coordinator

Why *do we* throw so much stuff in the trash? Maybe it's our ancestors. Way back when, most of what we produced came directly from the earth – stone, bone, and wooden tools, wood for heating, an apple, banana, tomato, wheat or rice. We made few changes to our tools and household items, and they were mostly biodegradable. When we tossed them aside, they recycled naturally back into the soil.

Today most of our items are highly processed. From our clothes and toys to our cars and food - and the packaging we put it all in - the earth still gives us all our resources. But our manufacturing processes often turn these resources into something much different than what was originally taken. How can we can be more thoughtful when we are done using something?

Garbage is a big issue with lots of different options so for now, let's just consider what comes from our school and field trip lunches!

What is it?	Where is it from?	What we can do with it when we're done? And other thoughts to ponder…
Plastic	Petroleum	It depends – see below and here: http://www.earth911.com/eco-tech/the-ultimate-plastic-breakdown/
Plastics # 1, #2, #3, #4 & #5	Petroleum	# 1 – 5 (you can count them on one hand) are generally recyclable
Plastic #1 PET & PETE Water, Soda & Food Bottles	Petroleum	Recycle! PET & PETE = Polyethylene Terephthalate PET & PETE are made into clothing, carpet, new bottles and even lumber!
Plastic #2 HDPE Shopping Bags Water & Soda Bottles	Petroleum	Recycle! HDPE = High Density Polyethylene #2 plastics are among the most commonly used and commonly recycled of the plastics. Because they are lightweight and prone to blowing in the wind, it is best to take #2 shopping bags back to your store for recycling - rather than putting them out to the curb.
Plastic #3 PVC	Petroleum	Recycle??? PVC = Polyvinyl Chloride PVC is not commonly found in household products or lunch packaging. That's a good thing because it is not that easily recycled.
Plastic #4 LDPE	Petroleum	Recycle! LDPE = Low Density Polythylene Bread bags, squeezable bottles and container lids. #4 plastic bags should follow the same as #2 above.
Plastic #5 PP	Petroleum	Reuse & Recycle! PP = Polypropylene Yogurt & butter tubs are reusable as well as recyclable. Most reusable plastic containers are #5. PP can be recycled into its original form or into buckets, furniture, flower pots, and even car parts!

What is it?	Where is it from?	What we can do with it when we're done? And other thoughts to ponder…
Plastics #6 Polystyrene	Petroleum	Garbage to the Landfill #6 PS Polystyrene is not easily recycled and while it is being recycled in a few areas by some waste haulers, Volo Bog State Natural Area's service is not yet one of them. Large pieces of packaging PS is taken by the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. Visit their website to lean how: http://mcdef.org/ Learn more at http://www.earth911.com/earth-watch/360-recycling-plastic-6/
Plastics #7 Mystery/Mixed & Catch-all	Multi-layered plastics based on Petroleum and sometimes Bioproducts (plant based)	Garbage to the Landfill #7 Mixed Plastics not easily recycled Learn more at http://www.earth911.com/home-garden/recycling-mystery-plastic-7/
Plastic Lunchable Trays	Petroleum #7	Garbage to the Landfill
Plastic Bags and other plastic films	Petroleum	Reuse or Recycle. If recycling, take them to a participating grocery rather than putting them in with the curbside recycling. The thin film blows out of collection trucks & clogs up the recycling facilities' equipment.
Straw & Straw Wrapper	Petroleum	Garbage Paper straw wrappers can be recycled with paper
Paper Bag	Trees	Reuse or Recycle
Cardboard Lunchable Box	Trees	Recycle
Juice Box	Petroleum & Metals	Garbage for the Landfill (or take to school if your school participates in a recycling program).

Sources
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/focusing-on-food-waste-in-schools_us_579fcc6ce4b004301c51b8c0, a 2016 report states that $1.2 billion in food is wasted every year!

http://www.earthshare.org/2010/09/green-quiz-answer-school-lunch-waste-.html states an average of 67 pounds per student is thrown away every school year!

Here's some food for thought http://wastefreelunches.org/ showing how much money one can save by going waste-free!

Read about the power of parents and one committed principal here
http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7832287/ns/us_news-education/t/trash-piling-high-school-cafeterias/#.Ws5IsmeWxok

Why should we care about WASTE? That's a topic for an entire AP course but ought to be considered by everyone. In addition to landfill space, the waste we generate CAME from the earth to begin with. The environmental impact of continual extraction is huge. While important to consider, that is beyond my goal here.

This document is still in the works as of 10-20-2018. If you find something worth adding, please send me the link!

Ms. Stacy

Stacy L. Iwanicki, Natural Resources Coordinator