

What is this CAST 2009 Reusable Bag Challenge all about? CHECK OUT www.highcountryconservation.org UNDER SRP PROGRAMS FOR MORE INFO...

- Challenge runs from March 1st to September 1st, 2009
- HC3 and Summit County Towns will join forces to compete as a community
- CAST is the Colorado Association of Ski Towns
- 25 other CAST communities will also participate with more in the works (including ski towns in Idaho, Utah and possibly California)
- The purpose of the challenge is to raise awareness regarding the environmental and social costs of single-use plastic shopping bags and to promote the use of reusable shopping bags through a ‘friendly competition’ between members of the Colorado Association of Ski Towns.
- The “winner” of the challenge will be determined by which community tallies the most uses of reusable bags on a per capita basis.

Some Statistics about Plastic Bag Use:

- Plastic bags are made from petroleum. So a plastic bag's lifecycle begins at the same place you fill up your car.
- Currently, the United States uses 100 billion plastic bags per year at an estimated cost of 4 billion dollars and 12 million barrels of oil.
- The average American uses between 300 and 700 plastic bags in one year and most of these end up in the landfill.
- We have a huge problem in Summit County with plastic bags blowing out of landfills into nearby forests (see below for how much the County spends on these clean-ups)
- Plastic bags photodegrade or break down into small toxic pieces when exposed to sunlight. These small bits can seep into our water and soil.
- A plastic bag's useful life may be counted in minutes but it can take a plastic bag hundreds or even thousands of years to completely break down in a landfill environment. Every plastic polymer ever created still exists today.
- Plastic bags are recyclable, however, very few are actually recycled. Various estimates suggest that only 1% of plastic bags are being recycled.
- Plastic bag recycling condones and even encourages single use behavior. People often use more plastic bags when they know that they can recycle them later.
- We do have readily available alternatives and solutions to plastic bags - reusable bags that you can bring to the store every time.
- Each reusable bag has the potential to eliminate the use of an average of 1000 plastic bags in its lifetime.

Summit County Game Plan for the Challenge:

- The High Country Conservation Center (HC3) will facilitate participation in the challenge for the entire County with the Reduce Waste Committee taking on organization
- Town representatives will talk to Town stores to determine participation
- HC3 will create an internal system to keep a monthly tab on plastic bag reduction – to share with the community
- Towns and County plan on pitching in for advertising and outreach; CAST Challenge leaders will design uniform logo and posters for all participating communities

Why participate?

- County spends \$50,000 per year on plastic bag clean up around landfill
- HC3 already involved in BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) outreach – this is perfect for us to take on
- The potential for education and outreach is enormous
- **Bigger Picture Mission** – this challenge gets the community (government and citizens alike) about plastic bag waste and the potential to build relationships with participating businesses towards a common goal. Together we can start moving forward with ordinance banning or fees for plastic bags – policy change; education and outreach beyond 6 months; increasing incentives for reusable bag users...