

Date: June 20, 2010

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Reduce the Use of Hazardous Household Products

Here in the Lakes Region, we have much to be thankful for in terms of a healthy environment. Maintaining environmental quality requires personal and community responsibility. Products that we use in our homes and yards can have significant impacts on our local environment. Most homes contain several common household goods that are considered a hazard to the environment if disposed of improperly. Look under the sink, in the garage, or in the basement; you will likely see products such as oven cleaner, drain opener, hair spray, paint thinner, pesticides, or pool chemicals. These products and others are considered hazardous because they contain chemicals that are corrosive, explosive, flammable, or toxic.

If improperly stored or discarded, these products can damage our local environment. Pouring them on the ground or washing them down the sink does not make them go away. Municipal treatment plants and leach fields are incapable of processing certain chemicals. Landfill disposal poses many risks to people and the environment. In each case, the chemicals can leach out and contaminate our groundwater, upon which everyone is dependent.

There are several steps that the homeowner can take to reduce the threat to the Lakes Region environment from hazardous household products: seek alternative products, use up what you have, and properly dispose of the unused product.

Using alternative products is the first step to reducing your “environmental impact”; if hazardous products are not purchased, then there is less toxic waste in the region. Examples of such alternatives can be found at <http://www.lakesrpc.org/hhw/flipbook.pdf> or <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/p2au/pps/hhwp/alternative.htm>.

All Lakes Region residents are urged to use alternatives to hazardous household products. If, however, you do have some toxic materials in your home or garage that you need to discard, a

solution does exist. By pooling state, regional, and local resources, two dozen Lakes Region communities are offering safe, efficient, and effective household hazardous waste (HHW) collections through the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC). This year's HHW collections will occur on Saturday, July 30 and Saturday, August 6. More information on these collections can be found at http://www.lakesrpc.org/services_hhw.asp.