

July/August 2005

# Environmental Update



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## New RE3 program:

What is **RE3** (**reduce, reuse, recycle**)? It is the new recycling campaign initiated by the NC Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA). The fact that recycling helps the planet is true, but it is an old message. **RE3** aims to show other important aspects of recycling: the effect on the economy, jobs, energy use, air quality, and land usage.

### Did you know...? (facts from NC DPPEA)

**Recycling** in North Carolina is a net job creator and a growing part of the economy. Recycling employs over 10,000 North Carolinians, and recycling jobs have increased about 12% in the past five years.

**Without** recycling, the US timber harvest would have to increase 80% to meet fiber demand.

**Approximately** 30-50% of our waste stream is organic: backyard composting can help a household "recycle" its organic wastes. The compost can then be used in gardens, lawns, and flower beds.

**Recycling** steel reduces energy consumption by 74%, air pollution by 86%, water use by 40%, and mining wastes by 97%.

**Recycling** aluminum reduces water consumption by 95%, energy use by 95%, and air pollution by 95%.

**Using** a mixture of 50% recycled glass and 50% raw materials, water consumption is reduced by 50%, mining wastes by 79%, and air pollution by 14%.

**In 2001**, local recycling programs in North Carolina supplied industry with 445,000 tons of

scrap commodities like paper, glass, metals, plastics, wood and other materials. This saved a total of 2.5 trillion BTU's (British Thermal Units) of energy, or enough to provide the annual electricity needs of more than 50,000 homes.

**In North Carolina**, less than 20% of steel cans and 25% of plastic soda bottles were recovered in 2001.

## How is your community doing?

The following information is from NC DPPEA:

County or City	% Recovered				Lbs/person recovered*
	Pa	Gl	Pl	Al cans	
Beaufort	1.4	1.9	0.9	3.9	19.2
Brunswick	6.4	0	0	0	115.41
Carteret	2.0	4.3	1.0	2.6	28.24
Onslow	1.3	4.0	0.5	2.3	28.11
Jacksonville	2.4	8.5	1.1	4.9	21.92
<b>State Ave.</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>112.06</b>

Pa: paper, Gl: glass, Pl: plastic, Al: aluminum cans

\*recovery includes county municipalities

From the above table, it is clear that the counties listed are well below the state averages on recovering recyclable materials. If you have a program in your county or municipality **use it!** Another thing you can do is reduce the amount of junk mail that you receive. Two mail-in cards are included with this newsletter: one for you and one to share. You can also show your recycling spirit with the enclosed Recycle Guys bumper sticker.

## What would prompt you to recycle?

Do you recycle? If not, would you if it was more convenient? What influences your decision to recycle? Please answer the survey at the end of this newsletter and mail your results. You can also complete the survey online using the link from:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/onslow/staff/drashash/enved/>

## It's Sum...Sum...Sum...Sum...- Sum...Sum...Summertime!



Summertime in the south is a great time to get outside; however, there are also things to watch out for: heat, humidity, mosquitoes, and snakes. The Heat Index chart presented below is one way to gauge the danger from heat and humidity. It is good to plan activities for early in the morning or in the evening.

Of course, that is when the mosquitoes are also more active. Do yard inspections to make sure that you aren't giving the mosquitoes breeding areas. Empty rain water from pots and buckets. It only takes a small amount of still water to provide habitat for mosquito larvae! If you use a rain barrel, make sure it has a screen over the top. Change the water in birdbaths at least every three days. Check low spots and ditches.

Standing water doesn't automatically mean that you will get mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are more likely when:

**The water** is present long enough to breed mosquitoes (3-5 days), but not long enough to breed mosquito predators (frogs, dragonflies, mosquito fish).

**The water** is in a shaded area (not good for dragonflies).

**The water** remains very still (mosquitoes don't like waves or flowing water).

## Ssssnakes:

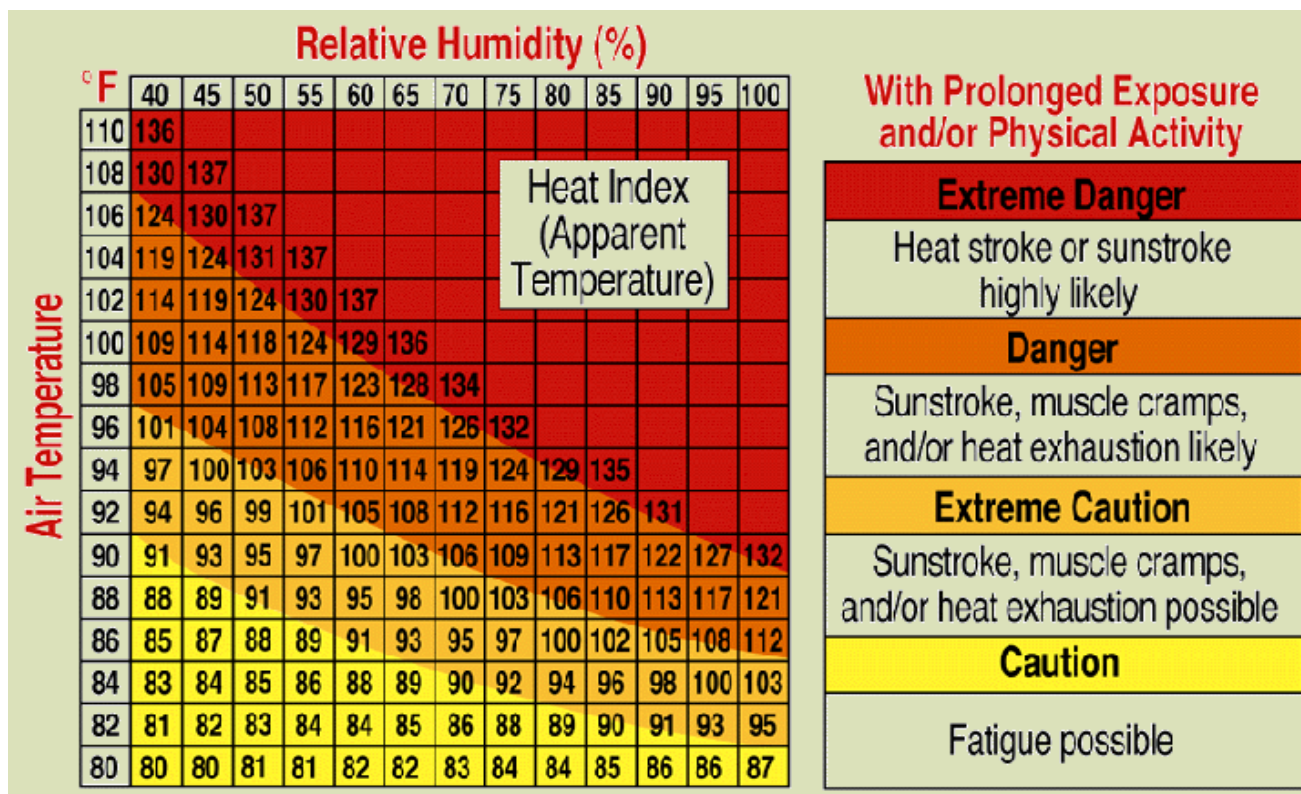
Top 10 snake questions:

### 1. Why shouldn't I kill any snake I find?

Most people are bitten when trying to kill or handle a snake. As a general rule, snakes are just as frightened of you as you are of them. Given a chance, they will move away from you. Don't corner a snake! Snakes--with their diet of rodents and insects--can actually help protect the plants in your yard and garden.

### 2. How many kinds of venomous snakes are in North Carolina?

Six of North Carolina's 37 snake species are



venomous. All six are found in southeastern North Carolina. They are: Copperheads, rattlesnakes (Canebrake, Eastern Diamond-back, and Pigmy), Cottonmouth (aka Water Moccasin) and Coral Snake.

3. **Aren't all the patterned snakes dangerous?**

Most patterned snakes are not venomous. In fact, several of our most beneficial snakes are killed when mistaken for venomous snakes. Many young snakes have patterns that they will lose as adults. The patterns help them hide from predators.

4. **How can I tell venomous & nonvenomous snakes apart?**

From a distance, you can make a generalized distinction about the snakes: Snakes that are a single color on top or have stripes that run the length of their body (tip to tail) are nonvenomous. There is no general rule for patterned snakes (see #3). The rattlesnakes, copperhead, and cottonmouth are pit vipers. They have a pit between and slightly below the eye and nostril, long movable fangs, a "cat's eye" pupil, and a large triangular-shaped head that has a small, smooth, shiny cap over the nose. Nonvenomous snakes

have **round pupils**, a large smooth cap over the top of the head past the eyes, no pits and no long fangs.

5. **Aren't all snake bites dangerous?**

Unlike venomous snakes, most non-venomous snakes cannot bite through clothing, because they have many tiny teeth. On bare skin, these small teeth will make superficial cuts similar to briar scratches. If you, a child or a pet is bitten by a nonvenomous snake, the bite will look like a horseshoe of tiny scratches. If you or your pet are bitten by any snake that you suspect is venomous, get medical attention immediately. Clean any snake bite area well with soap and water and wipe it with hydrogen peroxide. If only one or two puncture wounds are present, or if you are allergic to snakes, or if you are not sure the snake is nonvenomous, go to a doctor. Many more people die each year from bee stings than from snakebites.

6. **How far can a snake strike?**

A snake can only strike well within a distance of one-half its body length; therefore, a distance of four feet or more

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**Recycling Survey:** (Please return!)

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1) Do you currently recycle: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

1a) If yes, where? \_\_\_ home \_\_\_ office

1b) If no, why not? (check all that apply)  
\_\_\_ inconvenient \_\_\_ don't care  
\_\_\_ no local programs \_\_\_ low priority  
\_\_\_ other (\_\_\_\_\_)

2) Where do you live (name location):  
out in county: \_\_\_\_\_ or  
in a town/city: \_\_\_\_\_

3) What would get you to recycle bottles, cans, and newspapers?  
(rank 1-5: 1 most important, 5 least important)  
\_\_\_ curbside program  
\_\_\_ closer convenience center  
\_\_\_ better hours at convenience center  
\_\_\_ bottle and can deposit  
\_\_\_ collection bin at place of work  
\_\_\_ other (\_\_\_\_\_)

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4) Does your county or municipality have hazardous household waste collection events?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Don't know

If yes, did you participate? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

5) Do you consider cigarette butts thrown out of vehicles as littering? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

6) What is your biggest pet peeve about recycling?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) If there was **one thing** that you could say to your local elected officials about recycling, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

should keep you safe. Give the snake time to go on its way. Remember, most snakes would rather avoid a confrontation.

**7. How can I avoid snake bites in my yard or while hiking?**

Keep grass short. Eliminate weeds and brush. Do not place hands or feet into dark places. Stay out of dense vegetation. Watch where you step.

**8. Can snakes bite while swimming?**

Only if the snake and the human swim into each other. A snake can raise its body 1/4 to 1/3 of its length from the water surface using water tension, but water tension is insufficient for a coiling strike or for jumping into boats. Snakes usually flee humans, both in and out of the water.

**9. Will snake repellent keep snakes out of my yard?**

Mothballs and many other so-called snake repellents don't work. Snakes can be discouraged from staying in an area by cutting off their food supply and cover. Mow closely

around homes and outbuildings, and store firewood and lumber away from residences.

**10. How can I keep snakes out of my house?**

Snakes sometimes enter buildings looking for food. In spring and fall, young black rat snakes are the most frequent "visitors". Nonlethal control measures are the most commonly practiced forms of control. Close cracks and crevices in building exterior walls and floors and around pipes and utility connections with 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth, mortar or sheet metal. All doors and windows should have tightly fitting screens. Add weatherstripping around exterior door frames. Flooding from hurricanes brings more snakes out into the open. They too are looking for dry places.

(Adapted from: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/gaston/Pests/reptiles/snakefaq.htm>)

Sincerely,

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