

Letter from MRFY December 2022

Ice Wizards and Frozen Tales

"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold." – Aristotle
"Aristotle never baled cardboard in -10 weather on an island in Northern Wisconsin. Togas are not recommended." - Curry

It's started. The romantic notions that the first snowfall is "so beautiful" and "winter is my favorite time of the year" and the ever popular "we will be thinking of you while we are in Florida".

It's a different kind of "hurried" approach to recycling here at the MRF. In the summer, it is hurried to move traffic along and streamline the drive-thru all the while avoiding the faint smell of bleach, yesterday's smoked fish and curdled milk. In the winter, it is hurried to prevent frostbite – very basic; very simple. Don't freeze. Stay Warm. In both instances, presorting can save a LOT of time and unnecessary discomfort.

We had a couple from Texas come up for a visit in the last week. They were amazed at the beauty of our island community, and the conversation led to the eventual "What happens when the boats shut down?" Now most of you who know me, know that I do have a penchant for exaggeration and fanciful description ... and that led me to tell of the Ice Wizards: a generational collective of old and young alike who know the ice in ways that mere mortals do not. Stories of Elder Ice Wizards who can tell you about ice conditions for the past 40 years and live by a very simple rule of thumb: when the sign says "Ice Unsafe - Road Closed", take it as law.

Some don't, and there is the inevitable call at around 2:30 a.m. to get picked up; or worse yet, the shame of seeing a vehicle nose down in the ice, another victim of bravado. Legends live on about houses that go through as well as the odd truck that went through the ice loaded with feed and bourbon. They found it several years later when the currents carried it out to Isle Royale, where it washed up on shore around Wendigo, much to the joy of hikers and boaters who had a "rip snortin" good time with some nicely chilled and aged whiskey. But alas, it was only a tall tale. It passes the time and brings a smile to some faces. People are like ice -- What's on the surface will only get you so far, but it's the depth and strength of what's underneath that endures.

MRF routine has led to reorganizing refrigerators and moving our external items to "Winter Phase," also known as Plowing Season. I have been working on consolidation of the summer's collection and we are in full preparation for the last hauls of the season. Busy work for the coming weeks will include crunching numbers for our inevitable reports in the spring to the DNR, as well as posting the Recycling Specialist position in February for a March/April hire. In other news, we did score a modest victory by negotiating a new solid waste hauling contract that will reduce our 2023 costs by 1/3. It's a good start.

As always,
Have a MRF-Tastic Day!!

Martin A. Curry
Recycling Supervisor

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