

Beginning on February 24<sup>th</sup> residents of Lopez Island will have access to the same commingled recycling system at their solid waste facility that serves other residents of the County.

Currently, recycled materials are brought to our Lopez facility and are separated into several different commodities. These separated commodities are stored at the solid waste facility in boxes called totes until there is enough material available to allow for baling. After the material is baled and wrapped it continues to be stored until there are enough bales to fill the county flat-bed truck. Then the bales are loaded and hauled by county employees and equipment to a recycling broker on the mainland.

With the commingled system, materials are placed in one large bin and transported to Orcas Island where they are loaded into long haul trailers along with the commingled material collected on Orcas. All this material is transported to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Woodinville. The MRF then does the separation, baling and brokers the material.

For Lopez residents the most noticeable change is that their recycle materials only need to be separate from garbage and not other recyclables. The recyclables are separated from each other at the MRF using various types of equipment as well as hand sorting.

The advantage of this system is the lower cost. The old system cost the County \$83,000 per year and earned \$11,000 in revenue resulting in a net cost of \$72,000. The new system will reduce both equipment and labor costs so the same material can be recycled at a cost of \$42,000 – a savings of over 40%.

Over the past year solid waste revenues have fallen requiring a reduction in services in communities throughout Washington State as well as at the transfer stations on San Juan and Orcas Islands. Thankfully, at the Lopez facility commingling recyclables will allow us to maintain the same level of service while reducing the cost of operation.