

# LAKE PLACID NEWS

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## Composting machine to be installed at Lake Placid school



Special ed teacher Margaret McCandlish, left, and ninth-grader Chris Hathaway, right, explain the Environmental Club's existing composting process to the Lake Placid Board of Education Tuesday, May 14. (News photo — Elizabeth Izzo)

LAKE PLACID – A new composting machine is set to be installed at the Lake Placid Middle-High School this summer.

The \$35,000 composter was recently purchased with grant funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, North Country School and the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling. The machine will be installed behind the middle-high school near the Shipman Youth Center within the next few months.

“This is our baby. It’s being built right now,” Environmental Club adviser and science teacher Tammy Morgan said on Tuesday, May 14 while showing the Lake Placid Central School District Board of Education a photo of a large black tube in a workshop.

The school’s new composting machine is a nearly 40-foot-long tube reinforced with rebar steel, set atop a motorized platform designed to spin the material. It will have the ability to process anywhere from 100 to 150 pounds of waste per day, according to Morgan.

The Environmental Club’s ultimate goal is to process all of the district’s food waste on site while also opening up the utility to local families. Students are currently working on a business plan that will allow them to provide a composting service to 37 local families at \$15 per month.

As part of the service, residents would be provided five-gallon buckets with a specially sealed, lockable lid, which they would be able to drop off and exchange for a clean bucket each week.

With revenue generated through this service, the club hopes to offset any operational expenses and begin offering students that facilitate the composting process a salary, according to Morgan.

Meanwhile, the club is also in the process of becoming a certified nonprofit student organization. That status will allow them to apply for more grant funding, which could potentially open the door to providing residents with compost material free of charge. To help with the certification process, Morgan asked the Board of Education to vote on a letter in support of the club.

This won't be the first composting machine built in the area and is unlikely to be the last.

A Saranac Lake village resident, Bill Domenico, is planning to build and install a composting machine in the area and open up a compost co-op for residents.

And for the last two years, students at Lake Placid Central have been collecting refuse in buckets outside of the high school cafeteria, loading those buckets onto the undercarriage of a school bus and transporting the waste to North Country School once a week, where a composting machine has been in operation since 2016.

Once there, students weigh the buckets, calculate how many pounds of wood pellets will be needed to feed bacteria in the tube to encourage the breakdown process, and dump the refuse into the machine, according to Chris Hathaway, a ninth-grade student. Teachers help the students pick out any plastic that may have fallen into the mix.

“We clean the buckets, and we do it all over again,” Hathaway said.

Students are seeking members from the community to help with the upkeep of the composting system, which will need to be run year-round, according to Morgan.

The club is also seeking input from the community on the name of their potential composting service. The choices so far: AdkCompost, Lake Placid Rots, Olympic Compost, Bomber Composting Service, Blueline Composting or Placid Peat.

Anyone interested in weighing in or lending a hand with the service is encouraged to contact Morgan by email at [tmorgan@lpcsd.org](mailto:tmorgan@lpcsd.org).