

WASTE COMPOSITION OF NEW RIVER LANDFILL

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Prepared for:
New River Solid Waste Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the week of November 17th-21st, 2025, students from the University of Florida, Florida Polytechnic University, and Florida Atlantic University performed a waste composition study at the New River Regional Landfill. This study was funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) through the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant¹. The goals of this project were to: 1) provide the New River Solid Waste Association with a current evaluation of their municipal solid waste (MSW) composition; and 2) update FDEP's *WasteCalc* tool, which relies on current waste composition studies to calculate the material composition of MSW for each of Florida's 67 counties.

Throughout the study week, 40 samples were sorted, with waste originating from residences and businesses in Baker, Bradford, Union, Levy, and Gilchrist counties. Incoming garbage trucks were randomly selected from each category of the sampling plan until the desired number of samples were acquired. An approximately 200-pound sample of MSW was obtained from each truck, and the waste was manually sorted into 42 different categories by undergraduate researchers from the SWIFR team. After the sample was sorted, the contents of each category were weighed and discarded. The mass-based composition of each sample was calculated, then averaged across the 40 samples to determine the overall composition of the waste stream. The results found "Other Papers" to be the largest component at 16.9%. Typical contents placed into this category include polycoated aseptic containers, food service containers, composite materials, boxboard, paper towels, and other mixed recyclable paper. The results of the New River Solid Waste Association composition study will be integrated into *WasteCalc* to provide more accurate and representative results for the member counties, as well as other similar counties in Florida.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

C&D Debris	Construction and Demolition Debris
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
MSW	Municipal Solid Waste
SWIFR	Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling

1. INTRODUCTION

The New River Solid Waste Association is comprised of Baker, Bradford, and Union Counties in North Central Florida. The Association owns and operates the New River Regional Landfill in Raiford, which accepts municipal solid waste (MSW) from the member counties, as well as neighboring Alachua, Gilchrist, and Levy Counties. The combined population of the six counties that utilize the New River Regional Landfill is 433,995 as of 2024, and all counties (except for Alachua) have a relatively low population density of less than 100 people per square mile each². Therefore, the New River Solid Waste Association services a mostly rural population, with some larger cities and towns throughout the service area shown in **Figure 1**.

The member counties of Baker, Bradford, and Union have curbside residential collection in the cities of Macclenny, Lake Butler, and Starke, respectively. Residents in unincorporated areas rely on county collection centers for disposal of their household waste. The neighboring counties of Alachua, Gilchrist, and Levy transport waste from transfer stations (located in Gainesville, Bell, and Williston, respectively) via walking floor trailers. Therefore, waste for the neighboring counties from curbside residential collection, county collection centers, and businesses is commingled before entering the landfill.



Figure 1 – Service Area of the New River Regional Landfill

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Preparation

Experience from previous waste composition studies conducted by the researchers suggested that 40 samples could reasonably be selected and sorted over the course of a weeklong waste composition study. Since recent composition data (2021) exists for Alachua County, waste originating in Alachua was excluded from this study. The 40 samples were allocated equally among the remaining counties, with 8 samples each coming from Baker, Bradford, Union, Levy, and Gilchrist. ASTM D5231-92: *Standard Test Method for Determination of the Composition of Unprocessed Municipal Solid Waste*³ was followed for development of the sampling plan and protocol.

Beyond county of origin, the sampling plan also accounted for waste originating from commercial and residential sources. For this study's purpose, commercial waste included businesses as well multifamily residences (e.g., apartment complexes, condominiums). Residential waste included curbside collection from single-family homes as well as waste from the county collection centers. It was assumed that the commercial and residential waste from Gilchrist and Levy Counties was adequately mixed at the transfer station prior to arrival at the New River Regional Landfill. Open-top roll-offs and "mom-and-pop" haulers disposing of C&D debris or other bulky wastes were excluded from this study due to the difficulty of manually sorting this material. The sampling plan is shown below in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Samples Selected for the Waste Composition Study

	Commercial	Curbside Residential	County Collection Center
Gilchrist	8		
Levy	8		
Baker	2	4	2
Bradford	3	2	3
Union	3	2	3

2.2 Sampling Method

During the composition study, scale house attendants identified samples of interest through inbound customer accounts and driver interviews. The attendants notified operators on the landfill when these vehicles were approaching the working face, and drivers were instructed to back into a designated area where the samples could be safely obtained. Once the trucks were emptied, an excavator was used to randomly select and load the waste samples into 96-gallon rolling carts, as seen in **Figure 2**. The rolling carts were weighed to ensure that the contents totaled approximately 200 pounds per sample and labeled based on the type of waste (i.e., commercial, curbside residential, or collection center residential) and county of origin.

Typically, a single sample was selected per truck. However, to ensure that the sampling goal was met for the study, there were five trucks during the week where the researchers grabbed 2-3 samples per truck. The trucks with multiple samples were either commercial trucks that service many businesses along their collection route, or transfer trucks where commercial and residential waste is mixed at the transfer station. Therefore, it was assumed that the sampling plan was still representative of waste from the counties of interest.



Figure 2 - Example of Sample Collection and Weighing

2.3 Sorting Method

The sorting table was staged on the landfill near the working face to facilitate sample selection and acquisition. Once it was confirmed that the samples weighed approximately 200 pounds each, a team of researchers emptied the carts onto a sorting table with a two-inch square mesh top, as shown in **Figure 3**. Any material which passed through the mesh was classified as “residuals” and remained unsorted; material remaining on top of the mesh was manually sorted into 42 material categories using the list in the *Material Categories* section of the appendix. The residuals were captured on a tarp and weighed separately (as seen in **Figure 4**). A lined bin was reserved for each of the material categories, and once the entire sample was sorted, the bin liners were removed, weighed, and disposed of (**Figure 5**). The mass of each material category was recorded on the sampling sheet in the appendix so the overall mass-based composition could be determined.



Figure 3 – Unloading and Sorting Samples



Figure 4 – Unsorted “Residuals” Passed Through the 2-Inch Mesh



Figure 5 – Weighing of the 42 Material Categories

3. DATA AND RESULTS

3.1 Raw Data Collected

Raw data refers to the fact that this data is presented in the 42 categories decided upon by the SWIFR team and the New River Solid Waste Association. The next section organizes the data into broader categories to give a general breakdown of the MSW stream. Each table in this section is color-coded to match the general category it falls under in *Section 3.2 Processed Data*. The percentages were based on the averages of the mass fraction for each category. The equations used, as seen below, follow the ASTM D5231 method³.

Equation 1 was used to determine the individual mass fraction of each category in a sample.

Equation 1

$$mf_i = \frac{w_i}{\sum_{i=1}^j w_i}$$

Where:

mf_i = mass fraction of component i

w_i = weight of component i

j = number of components

Then, the category mass fraction for all 40 samples was averaged and multiplied by 100 to obtain a percentage, as seen in

Equation 2 and

Equation 3. Raw data from the waste sort is shown in **Table 2**. The mass fraction of the commercial samples, residential samples, and mixed waste samples (from Levy and Gilchrist) were calculated and recorded.

Equation 2

$$\bar{m}f_i = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^n mf_i$$

Equation 3

$$\text{Category Percentage} = \bar{m}f_i * 100$$

Where:

$\bar{m}f_i$ = mean mass fraction

Table 2 - Raw Data Collected from the New River Regional Landfill Waste Sort

WasteCalc Category	Material Category	Total	Mass Percent		
			Residential	Commercial	Mixed
Newspaper	Newspaper	0.8%	0.5%	1.075%	0.9%
Corrugated Cardboard	Corrugated Cardboard (OCC)	4.6%	3.0%	7.590%	4.8%
Office Paper	High Grade Paper (Office Type)	1.6%	1.4%	2.181%	1.7%
Other Papers	Polycoated Aseptic Containers	0.8%	0.5%	1.503%	0.9%
	Food Service Containers (Polycoated)	2.0%	2.3%	1.893%	1.7%
	Other Composite	0.8%	0.9%	0.547%	0.8%
	Boxboards	3.9%	4.7%	3.591%	3.4%
	Other Paper	9.3%	9.2%	10.727%	8.8%
Glass Packaging	Green	0.3%	0.2%	0.137%	0.4%
	Clear	2.1%	2.6%	1.909%	1.7%
	Brown	0.7%	0.6%	0.216%	1.0%
	Other Glass/Ceramics	1.0%	0.5%	1.495%	1.3%
Steel Cans	Steel/Tin Cans	1.5%	1.8%	1.778%	1.2%
Other Ferrous Metals	Other Ferrous Metals	1.4%	1.4%	0.232%	2.0%
Aluminum Cans	Aluminum Cans/Foil	1.8%	1.8%	1.765%	1.8%
Non-Ferrous Metals	Other Non-Ferrous	0.8%	0.6%	0.058%	1.5%
Textiles	Clothing, Footwear, Other Textiles	6.1%	6.0%	2.321%	8.1%
Yard Trash	Yard Waste	1.5%	1.3%	1.470%	1.7%
Food Waste	Food Waste	15.1%	17.0%	22.714%	9.3%
Plastic Containers	#1 PET Bottles	2.3%	2.9%	1.805%	2.1%
	#2 HDPE Bottles - Translucent	0.6%	0.6%	0.642%	0.6%
	#2 HDPE Bottles - Colored	0.6%	0.6%	0.689%	0.6%
Other Plastics	#3-7 (Other Plastic Bottles)	0.2%	0.3%	0.095%	0.1%
	Expanded Polystyrene (Food Service)	1.7%	1.5%	2.567%	1.5%
	Expanded Polystyrene	0.2%	0.2%	0.094%	0.4%
	Rigid Plastic (Tubs, Cups, Lids)	1.2%	1.4%	1.301%	1.1%
	Rigid Plastic (Food Service Plastics)	1.1%	1.1%	1.233%	0.9%
	Grocery Bags	1.1%	1.2%	1.048%	1.0%
	Other Flexible Plastics	7.4%	6.3%	8.828%	7.7%
Other Plastics	2.8%	3.1%	1.906%	3.0%	
C&D	Wood	1.7%	0.6%	1.092%	3.2%
	Ashphalt Shingles	0.1%	0.2%	0.000%	0.2%
	Gypsum Drywall	0.5%	0.4%	0.000%	0.9%
	Concrete/Bricks	0.4%	0.1%	0.074%	0.9%
Other Miscellaneous	Rubber and Leather	0.4%	0.4%	0.179%	0.5%
	Small Appliances/Electronics	2.0%	1.6%	0.627%	3.2%
	Hazardous Waste	0.4%	0.6%	0.256%	0.2%
	Lithium-Ion Battery Products	0.1%	0.1%	0.000%	0.0%
	Residuals	9.2%	9.0%	6.975%	10.4%
	Liquids	2.6%	2.9%	3.358%	2.0%
	Animal By-Product	2.4%	2.8%	0.819%	2.9%
Other Organics	4.5%	6.0%	3.209%	3.7%	

3.2 Processed Data

Data presented in this section has been compiled into more general groups, based on the 18 material categories in FDEP’s *WasteCalc* tool. For example, the categories of “Other Paper”, “Polycoated Aseptic Containers”, “Food Service Containers”, “Other Composite”, and “Boxboards” were compiled into the general category “Other Paper”. Presenting data in this manner provides a broad overview of the waste stream and allows for harmonization with the existing *WasteCalc* tool. Processed data from the New River Regional waste sort is shown in **Table 3** below. Graphical representations of each waste sort can be found in **Figure 6** **Figure 9**.

Table 3 - Processed Data from the New River Regional Landfill Waste Sort

WasteCalc Category	Mass Percent			
	Total	Residential	Commercial	Mixed
Newspaper	0.8%	0.5%	1.1%	0.9%
Corrugated Cardboard	4.6%	3.0%	7.6%	4.8%
Office Paper	1.6%	1.4%	2.2%	1.7%
Other Papers	16.9%	17.5%	18.3%	15.6%
Glass Packaging	4.1%	3.9%	3.8%	4.4%
Steel Cans	1.5%	1.8%	1.8%	1.2%
Other Ferrous Metals	1.4%	1.4%	0.2%	2.0%
Aluminum Cans	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Non-Ferrous Metals	0.8%	0.6%	0.1%	1.5%
Textiles	6.1%	6.0%	2.3%	8.1%
Yard Trash	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%	1.7%
Food Waste	15.1%	17.0%	22.7%	9.3%
Plastic Containers	3.6%	4.1%	3.1%	3.3%
Other Plastics	15.7%	15.1%	17.1%	15.8%
C&D	2.8%	1.3%	1.2%	5.1%
Other Miscellaneous	21.6%	23.3%	15.4%	22.9%

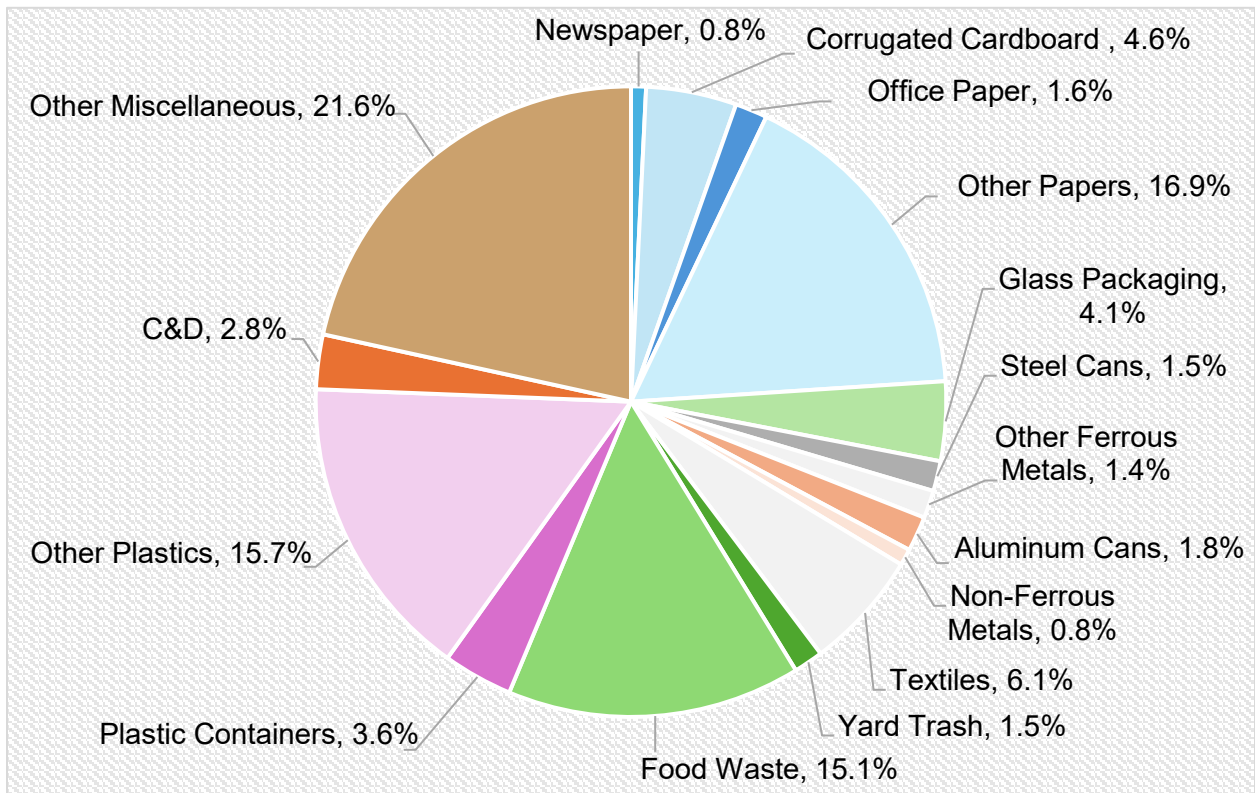


Figure 6 – Total Waste Composition

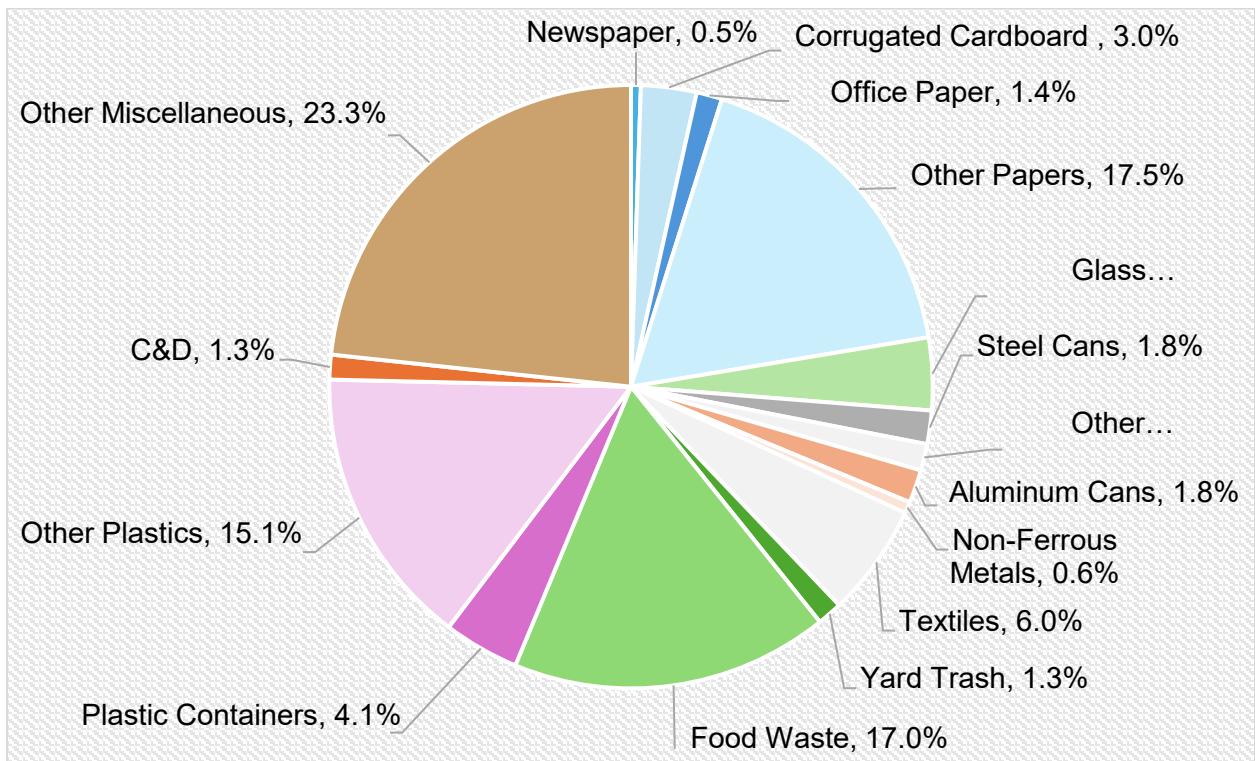


Figure 7 - Residential Waste Composition

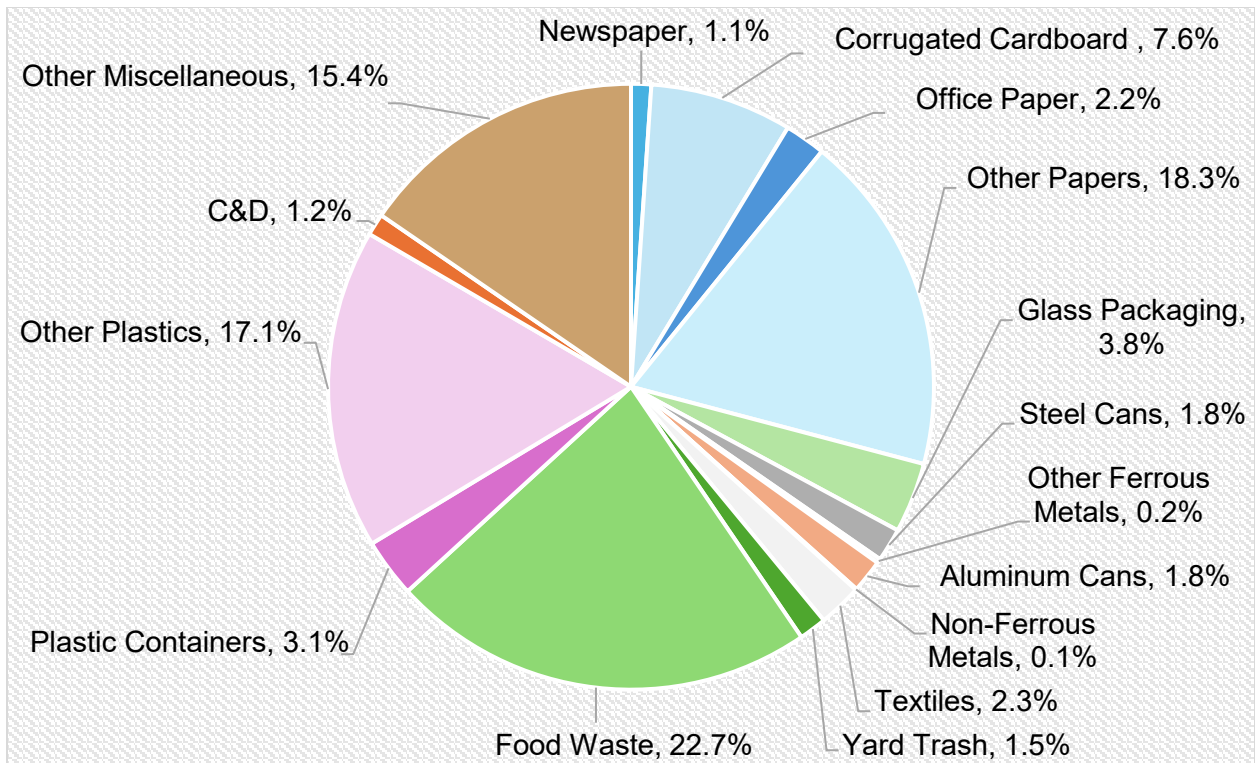


Figure 8 – Commercial Waste Composition

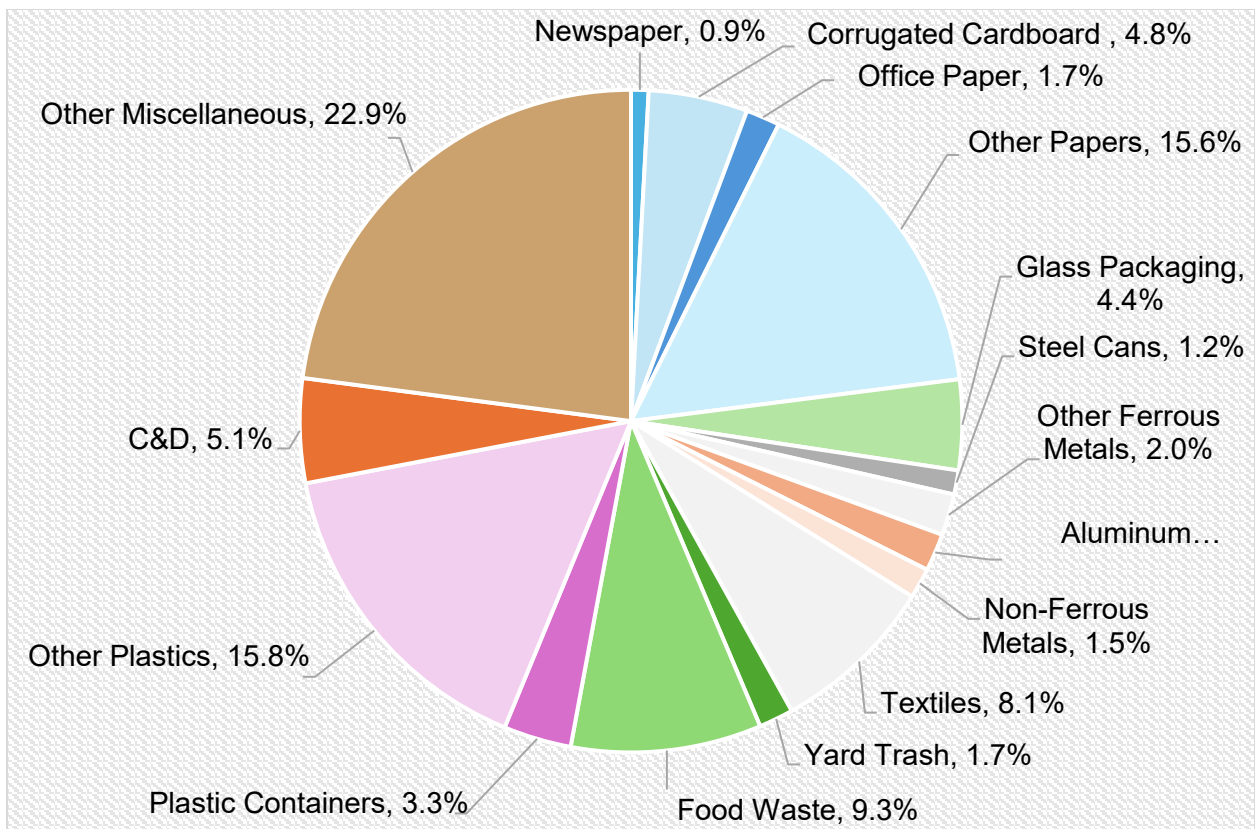


Figure 9 - Mixed Waste Composition (from Levy and Gilchrist Counties)

Besides “Other Miscellaneous” materials, the largest component of the overall waste stream from the study “Other Papers” at 16.9%. This includes polycoated aseptic containers, food service containers, composite materials, boxboard, paper towels, or other mixed recyclable paper. In the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Advancing Sustainable Material Management: 2018 Fact Sheet, the highest component of US MSW landfilled in 2018 was “Food” at 24.1%, followed by “Plastics”, and then “Paper & Paperboard” at 11.8%⁴. The results of the waste sort at the New River Regional Landfill are consistent with these findings, as “Other Paper”, “Food Waste” and “Other Plastics” were the three largest components. The two smallest components in this study were “Newspaper” and “Non-Ferrous Metals” at 0.8% each. Recyclable materials, including glass, aluminum cans, steel cans, plastic bottles, corrugated boxes, newspaper, and office paper sum to approximately 18.0% of the overall MSW stream.

4. CONCLUSION

Results of the waste composition study at the New River Regional Landfill can now be incorporated into the *WasteCalc* program that’s used in the statewide annual solid waste and recycling reports. *WasteCalc* is an online tool created by FDEP and outside contractors that allow any county in Florida to input information about the amount of waste landfilled, recycled, and combusted⁵. Currently, many counties in Florida have not had recent or any waste composition studies conducted. When this occurs, *WasteCalc* generates material composition percentages based on counties that are similar in population density to that specific county. However, it is important to conduct waste composition studies in various locations throughout Florida so *WasteCalc* can provide the counties with more accurate and representative information. The data obtained in this study will provide more accurate results for counties like Baker, Bradford, Union, Gilchrist, and Levy. The information provided may also help to make decisions about sustainable materials management in the future for the New River Solid Waste Association.

5. REFERENCES

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- (5) Florida Department of Environmental Protection. *Waste Calc Introduction*. <https://prodapps.dep.state.fl.us/wastecalc/> (accessed 2025-12-16).

APPENDIX

Material Categories

Category		Detailed Description
1	Newspaper	High cellulose content, high photo degradation paper
2	Corrugated Cardboard (OCC)	Corrugated cardboard packaging (e.g., Amazon boxes)
3	High Grade Paper (Office Type)	Manila envelopes, note cards, printer paper, tablets with binding, mail envelopes without a plastic window
4	Polycoated Aseptic Containers	Bleached and unbleached paperboard coated with HDPE used as food/beverage containers (e.g., ice cream cartons, milk cartons, juice boxes)
5	Food Service Container (Polycoated)	Takeout containers and cups with a waxy coating; does NOT include pizza boxes.
6	Other Composite	Any other containers composed mostly of paper with other materials attached (e.g., pringles cans, gum wrappers, tissue boxes, mail envelopes with a plastic window)
7	Boxboards	Cereal boxes, egg cartons (not coated with wax, plastic or metal).
8	Other Paper	Paper towels, paper plates, waxed paper, tissues, and other papers that are soiled with food during use (e.g., pizza boxes); brown paper bags and kraft paper; junk mail, carbonless paper, envelopes with and without windows, toilet paper cores and other mixed recyclable papers; Magazines, phone books, glossy paper; anything that does not fall into the above categories.
9	#1 PET Bottles	Clear and colored bottles with necks
10	#2 HDPE Bottles- Translucent	Milk, beverages, water bottles and other products with necks
11	#2 HDPE Bottles- Colored	Liquid detergent bottles, some hair care bottles and cleaning products bottles with necks
12	#3-#7 (Other Plastic Bottles)	#3-#7 plastic bottles with necks
13	Expanded Polystyrene (Food Service)	Polystyrene drink cups and food containers
14	Expanded Polystyrene	Styrofoam products such as packaging peanuts and blocks
15	Rigid Plastic (Tubs, Cups, Lids)	Wide mouth cups and tubs (without a neck) and lids (e.g., solo cups; yogurt or sour cream containers; fruit clamshells)
16	Rigid Plastic (Food Service Plastics)	Plates, bowls, takeout clamshells, salad trays, microwave trays, utensils, takeout cups and lids, straws and stirrers
17	Grocery Bags	Shopping bags used to transport merchandise from the place of purchase, given out by the store.; does not include produce bags

18	Other Flexible Plastic	Bags intended to contain produce, bread, newspapers and sandwiches (e.g., Ziploc bags); films that contain multiple layers of film or other materials that have been fused together (e.g. potato chip bags, food wrappers such as candy-bar wrappers, metalized film); photographic negatives, shower curtains, mailing pouches, bank bags, x-ray film
19	Other Plastics	Plastic such as toys, toothbrushes, vinyl hose, and lawn furniture; items are predominately plastic with other materials attached such as disposable razors, pens, lighters, toys, and binders; anything that does not fall into the above categories. Includes flexible packaging contaminated such that it cannot be sorted
20	Green	Green glass bottles, containers, and green cullet (broken glass pieces)
21	Clear	Clear glass bottles, containers, and clear cullet (glass pieces); mirrors, glassware, crystal, Pyrex and corning ware, laminated curved glass such as windshields, flat auto, clear or tinted window, door, shelf, tabletops
22	Brown	Brown glass bottles, containers, and brown cullet (broken glass pieces)
23	Other Glass/Ceramics	Glass not otherwise classified, ceramics, structural ceramics like pottery and porcelain, and engineered ceramics such as refractory and abrasive materials.
24	Aluminum Cans/ Foil	Cans and bi metal cans (nonmagnetic); food containers, trays, pie tins, and foil pieces
25	Steel/Tin cans	Tin and steel food, pet food, and other containers, including bi-metal cans mostly of steel; does NOT include aluminum
26	Other Ferrous Metals	Ferrous and alloyed ferrous scrap metals that a magnet will adhere to
27	Other Non-Ferrous	Non-ferrous metal scrap such a brass, copper, or other non-magnetic metal; includes aluminum products such as window frames and cookware
28	Yard Waste	Grass clippings, twigs, branches, leaves, etc.
29	Food Waste	Food preparation wastes, food scraps, spoiled food
30	Animal By-Product	Animal carcasses not resulting from food storage or preparation, animal wastes, and kitty litter
31	Other Organics	Combustible materials including wax, bar soap, cigarette butts, feminine hygiene products, disposable diapers, vacuum cleaner bag contents, leather, briquettes, and fireplace, burn barrel, and fire-pit ash, and other organic material not classified elsewhere
32	Wood	Clean wood (e.g., 2 x 4's and 2 x 6's and sheets of plywood, strand board, and particleboard)
33	Asphalt Shingles	Asphalt roofing shingles
34	Gypsum Drywall	Gypsum wallboard
35	Concrete/bricks	Rocks, concrete and bricks
36	Rubber and Leather	Rubber gloves; finished products and scrap materials made of natural and synthetic rubber, such as bathmats, inner tubes, rubber hoses, and foam rubber and leather items

37	Clothing, Footwear, other textiles	Shoes, tennis shoes, fabric materials and clothing including natural and synthetic textiles such as cotton, wool, silk, woven nylon, rayon, and polyester; includes non-rag stock grade textiles such as heavy linens and draperies (e.g., pillows, blankets, towels, sheets)
38	Small appliances/ Electronics	Toasters, stereos, other small appliances and electronic equipment (non-refrigerant); computer related electronics (e.g., Laptops, monitors, printers, mouse, stereos) and personal portable products (e.g., cell phones, chargers, camcorders, gaming devices, cameras)
39	Hazardous Waste	Automotive products and fluids (e.g., oil filter, motor oil/diesel oil, and containers contaminated with oil), paints and solvents, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, household cleaners, lead acid batteries and other types of batteries (excluding lithium-ion), mercury containing products (e.g., fluorescent bulbs, barometers, thermostat switches, thermometers, car switches, blood pressure cuffs), cathode ray tubes (large monitors), pharmaceuticals, hypodermic needles, needle covers, medical tubing, articles contaminated with red (blood) colored substances, and medical device packaging
40	Lithium-Ion Battery Products	Products which contain lithium-ion batteries, such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, electric scooters and hoverboards, e-cigarettes, handheld power tools, rechargeable power banks, and rechargeable headphones
41	Residuals	Unsorted materials which pass through the 2" x 2" mesh table
42	Liquids	Bottled liquids

Example Sampling Sheet

Sample #	S
Date and Time Pulled:	11/17 11:12 AM
Date Sorted:	11/17 2:19 PM
Hauler:	Levy County
Hauler Truck #:	LF 95
Truck Weight (inbound):	
Truck Weight (outbound):	
Total Sample Weight (lbs):	86.2 + 144.4 + 184.4 + 182.6
Description of Sample:	
Waste Stream (commercial or residential):	mixed
Origin of Waste (County):	Levy

Notes
<p>have - 38.2 + 39.2 + 39.6 + 41.0</p> <p>Any bulky items or white goods?</p> <p>Approximate area of collection:</p> <p>Notes/observations from driver about load:</p>

Example Data Collection Sheet

Category	Material		Weight (lbs)	Category	Material		Weight (lbs)
Newspaper	1	Newspaper	0.4	Other Plastics	23	#3-7 (Other Plastic Bottles)	
Corrugated Cardboard	2	Corrugated Cardboard (OCC)	16.8 - large gray		24	Expanded Polystyrene (Food Service)	1.8
Office Paper	3	High Grade Paper (Office Type)	4.6		25	Expanded Polystyrene	0.6
Other Papers	4	Polycoated Aseptic Containers	1.4		26	Rigid Plastic (Tubs, Cups, Lids)	3.0
	5	Food Service Containers (Polycoated)	3.2		27	Rigid Plastic (Food Service Plastics)	1.6
	6	Other Composite	3.2		28	Grocery Bags	2.8
	7	Boxboards	5.2		29	Other Flexible Plastics	9.6 + 5.0
	8	Other Paper	7.8 + 12.6		30	Other Plastics	11.4
Glass Packaging	9	Green	0.6	C&D	31	Wood	21.8
	10	Clear	3.0		32	Asphalt Shingles	-
	11	Brown	0.4		33	Gypsum Drywall	-
	12	Other Glass/Ceramics	13.4		34	Concrete/Bricks	3.0
Steel Cans	13	Steel/Tin Cans	2.8	Other Miscellaneous	35	Rubber and Leather	-
Other Ferrous Metals	14	Other Ferrous Metals	-		36	Small Appliances / Electronics	17.6
Aluminum Cans	15	Aluminum Cans/Foil	4.0		37	Hazardous Waste	0.0
Non-Ferrous Metals	16	Other Non-Ferrous	2.0		38	Lithium-Ion Battery Products	-
Textiles	17	Clothing, Footwear, Other Textiles	19.2		39	Residuals	27.2
Yard Trash	18	Yard Waste	6.0		40	Liquids	7.0
Food Waste	19	Food Waste	12.8		41	Animal By-Product	5.4
Plastic Containers	20	#1 PET Bottles	0.6 + 2.6		42	Other Organics	14.6 - large gray
	21	#2 HDPE Bottles - Translucent	0.6		43	Other Miscellaneous	-
	22	#2 HDPE Bottles - Colored	2.2				