



# Sustainability and Recycling

## Let's Give 'Em Pumpkin to Talk About!

The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County certainly did just that during the Pumpkin Smash in Performance Square on November 7. This inaugural event was a huge success—turning post-Halloween pumpkins into compost and giving our community something fun to cheer about.

## A Smashing Collaboration

The event showcased true teamwork between City and County staff, local businesses, and enthusiastic residents. Special thanks to our generous donors:

- Super 1 Foods – donated an entire pallet of pumpkins
- Sleeping Giant Lanes – supplied bowling pins for Pumpkin Bowling
- Bob Tomaskie Mules – provided hay bales for the drop zone

Everyone involved truly worked their pumpkins off—serving hot drinks, managing the drop area, and celebrating every pumpkin that sailed off the ledge.

## Record-Breaking Community Turnout

Community outreach was strong, with help from social media buzz, local news features, and the City's Little Tykes Halloween Booth. Helena showed up in a big way.



## Final count:

2,920 pounds of pumpkins—joyfully donated and thoroughly smashed! Instead of heading to the landfill, all collected pumpkins were transported to the Lewis and Clark County Compost Processing Operation, where they'll be transformed into nutrient-rich compost. This diversion helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, supports soil health, and keeps organic material working for our community rather than taking up space in the landfill.



## See You Next Fall!

With nearly 1.5 tons of organic waste successfully diverted, the City and County are thrilled to announce that planning for next year's Pumpkin Smash is already underway. Stay tuned—and start growing those pumpkins now!





## 'Tis the Season of Giving

As we gather to celebrate this time of year, it's a perfect moment to remember that a sustainable community is built on taking care of one another. Whether you're donating food, volunteering your time, or organizing a coat drive, there are countless meaningful ways to support our neighbors. Your generosity—big or small—truly makes a difference.

### **YWCA Helena**

Restoring Hope for Women & Children

YWCA Helena offers safe, supportive housing and essential services for women and children experiencing homelessness, helping families rebuild stability and independence

**Donation Needs:** Food, funding, clothing, hygiene items, cleaning supplies

**Volunteer:** Host a donation drive, participate in the Holiday Helpers Program, or assist with renovations

**Consign for a Cause:** When consigning at Funky Trunk, you can request that proceeds go directly to the YWCA Helena account

**Contact:** 406-442-8774

**Location:** 501 North Park Ave, Helena, MT 59601

These are just a few of the incredible organizations that help make Helena a caring and resilient community. Let's make this a season of meaningful, impactful giving!

### **Helena Food Share**

Fighting Hunger with Dignity

Helena Food Share works to create a hunger-free Helena by providing nutritious food, fostering community, and reducing food waste. Their work brings dignity, comfort, and stability to households that need it most.

**Donation Needs:** Food, funds, volunteer time

**Volunteer:** Contact Helena Food Share for opportunities, including hosting a food drive

**Contact:** 406-443-3663

**Location:** 1280 Boulder Ave, Helena, MT 59601

### **Helena Holiday Helpers**

A Community Collaboration

Helena Holiday Helpers is a powerful shared effort right here in the Helena area.

Multiple entities come together to achieve a single, heartwarming goal: to ensure no family goes without food, and no child is without a gift during the holiday season.

Check out the [flyer](#) to find out how to get involved!



## **When Recycling Meets Habitat Restoration: Pines for Perch**

*Helena's collaborative effort transforms holiday trees into vital underwater habitat.*

A helicopter carrying Christmas trees over Canyon Ferry Reservoir might look strange at first glance, but it represents one of Montana's most unique sustainability partnerships. What you're witnessing is an incredible community-driven initiative between multiple entities, merging sustainability efforts, fish habitat restoration, community service projects, non-profit and private contributions and even wildland fire training.

Canyon Ferry Dam was completed in 1954, making this an "older" Montana reservoir. The habitat at the bottom of the lake, when first filled, decomposed over time, leaving a void of suitable perch habitat. Perch play a key role in the reservoir's food web, so restoring their habitat helps support many other species.

As Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Fisheries Biologist Troy Humphrey explains, "perch are unique in that they have a gelatinous mass for their eggs they need to drape over something. Laying them on a rock on the bottom (of the lake) doesn't work."

That's where the Pines for Perch program comes in with FWP at the helm. The project began on Canyon Ferry Reservoir in the mid-1990s and has been conducted annually since 1999.

At the end of each holiday season, Scout Troop 214, in coordination with the City of Helena, offers curbside pickup for residents who register in advance and provide a small donation. These collected trees are stockpiled along with trees that residents drop off at the Transfer Station. Once collected, the trees are hauled to a staging area at the lake with the help of Montana Materials and Construction.

When April arrives and it's time to place the bundled trees into Canyon Ferry, the Montana Department of Natural Resources Fire and Aviation program brings in helicopters. The event doubles as a wildland firefighter training opportunity, giving crews practice in sling-load operations. The Gallatin-Madison Walleye Unlimited Chapter also contributes both volunteer support and financial resources to help make the project possible.

Scout Troop 214 has become a vital part of the operation. The Troop began participating in 2020 after needing to replace \$5,000 worth of stolen camping gear and seeking a fundraiser that also provided meaningful service. Since then, the Scouts have collected 300–400 trees annually, in addition to helping bundle trees at the staging area. Their work ensures that both donated curbside trees and trees dropped at the Transfer Station make it into the project.

Over the years, Humphrey says they've seen the number of trees dropped in the lake decline. He notes this is likely tied to the growing popularity of artificial trees, which means fewer real trees are available for collection. While they once placed around 3,000-4,000 trees in the lake annually, by 2025, the number had decreased to about 1,500. However, he notes it is still a very worthwhile project providing benefits beyond the perch.

As Humphrey points out, perch are an important food source for many species—humans included. When perch are thriving, the entire ecosystem benefits. More perch means more fishing.







"These trees provide so much joy during the holidays, and then they help improve this recreational fishery by being put in the water and becoming habitat for perch."

While the City of Helena has a green waste pile at the Transfer Station that gets chipped and turned into compost, diverting this many trees in a different, sustainable way is a massive win for both Helena residents and all Montanans who recreate on Canyon Ferry Lake. A similar project is also undertaken at Tiber Reservoir, utilizing trees from Great Falls residents.

So, the next time you see a helicopter ferrying Christmas trees across the lake, you'll know it's part of a long-running effort to keep Canyon Ferry's fishery healthy for generations to come.



### **Register for Scouts curbside Christmas Tree pickup at**

<http://troop214helena.square.site>



Serving Helena, the Helena Valley  
and East Helena areas

**Trees will be picked up on**

**January 3, 10, & 17**

**Questions? Email**

[troop214helena@gmail.com](mailto:troop214helena@gmail.com)

## **Helena Water Usage: September-November 2025**

City of Helena water usage comparison in millions of gallons, Differences between treatment plant outputs are typically due to maintenance or the need to utilize additional water sources as natural water flow fluctuates throughout the year.		Ten Mile	Eureka	Missouri River	Monthly Total	Peak Day Demand	Average Day
	September	136	17.5	81.4	234.9	9.6	7.8
	October	89.3	18.1	11.4	118.8	5	3.8
	November	74.9	19.1	9	103.1	5	3.4



## Charge Into the New Year: Power Up Your Recycling Game!

Getting new electronics for Christmas is exciting, but don't let the old ones go to waste! With just a few simple steps, you can keep valuable materials in circulation and keep hazardous components out of the landfill.

### Reuse First

If your old gadget still works, give it a second life! Donate used but still viable electronics to:

- Local thrift stores
- Community nonprofits
- Friends, family, or neighbors who may need them

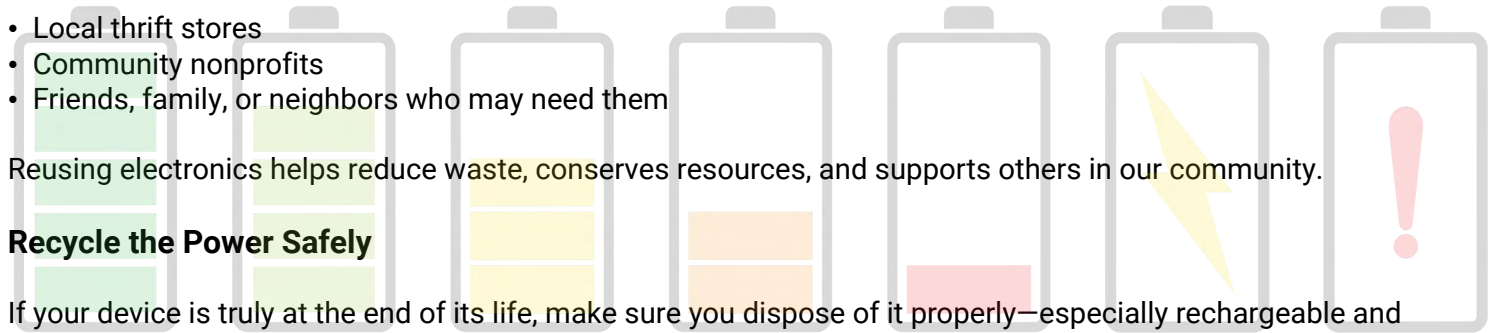
Reusing electronics helps reduce waste, conserves resources, and supports others in our community.

### Recycle the Power Safely

If your device is truly at the end of its life, make sure you dispose of it properly—especially rechargeable and lithium batteries. These batteries should never go in the trash, where they can cause fires in the landfill.

Instead, drop them off for safe recycling at the Helena Transfer Station Recycling area.

Recycling batteries is the essential final step to conserve valuable resources and prevent hazardous materials from entering the landfill.



### Recycling Numbers October 2024 vs. 2025

All numbers are in <b>tons</b>	October 2024	October 2025
Aluminum/Tin/Glass/Plastics	18.6	18.3
Paper	3.7	4.6
E-Waste	0	0
Scrap Metal	161.7	116.2
Cardboard	81.1	86.6
Auto Batteries	2.9	2.0
Lithium Batteries	0	0
Oil/Antifreeze	5.4	13.9
Grass/Leaves/Wood Chips/Bio-Solids/X-mas Trees/Food	1212.5	325

### Transfer Station Hours

**CLOSED December 25 for Christmas and January 1 for New Years Day**

Open daily, 8 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Vehicles must be unloaded and out of the facility by 4:30 p.m.