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Solar-powered trash and recycling receptacles installed on the Halifax boardwalk as part of a pilot project.

SCOTT SIMPSON, NEWS95.7

Waterfront invasion of solar-powered, trash-eating robots declared successful

Scott Simpson » Feb 03, 2011 13:09:32 PM

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Unfinished burgers and Beaver Tails are ending up in the right place more often, thanks to a new kind of trash bin on the Halifax waterfront boardwalk.

The Waterfront Development Corporation installed 15 receptacles last fall in a pilot project. The bins have four compartments, including a solar-powered compactor for the garbage section.

Corporation President Colin MacLean tells News95.7 the study shows 95% of beverage containers made it into the right hole, and people like the bins.

"People are going over, they're locating the right spot, people are using them," says MacLean. "People are finding them intriguing. People are getting their photos taken in front of them. So, in a way, we've been able to work with human behaviour: make it curious, make it interesting, and people are using them."

The bins cost \$5000 each. They take organic waste, paper, garbage and drink containers, and they're also said to reduce the nuisance from vermin and wasps.

"They're actually driven by solar power, and the reason they have power is that the waste component actually gets compacted," says MacLean. "These things are designed in a manner that they can e-mail our staff to tell them that they are full. It's something I never would've in my lifetime thought a garbage can would do."

For more details, see the full study report: Halifax Harbourwalk Public Spaces Recycling Pilot Project Report (PDF)

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