

## Organizational Highlights

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### MISSION

Eco-Cycle's mission is to identify, explore and demonstrate the emerging frontiers of sustainable resource management through the concepts and practices of Zero Waste. We believe in individual and community action to transform society's throw-away ethic into environmentally-responsible stewardship. We are partnering with businesses, municipalities, schools and individuals to create a Zero Waste community and to provide a Zero Waste model for the rest of the world.

### HISTORY

Eco-Cycle was founded in 1976 by local activists who were concerned with the amount of resources needlessly going to waste in landfills. They launched Eco-Cycle to create an opportunity for Boulder residents to preserve resources. Eco-Cycle school buses loaded with volunteers rumbled through neighborhoods to pick up recyclable materials, making Boulder one of the first communities in the nation to implement curbside recycling. Now one of the oldest and largest nonprofit recyclers in the United States, Eco-Cycle has broadened its efforts—both locally and internationally—to pioneer the next revolution in resource conservation: Zero Waste. Zero Waste is one of the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective steps a community can take to reduce its GHG emissions and protect the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink.

### AWARDS

Eco-Cycle has received many awards since 1976, and our model Zero Waste programs have received recognition locally and in the larger environmental community. In 2013, Eco-Cycle received the *Outstanding Outreach Award for a Municipality or Nonprofit* from the Colorado Association for Recycling (CAFR).

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Eco-Cycle is the largest community nonprofit social enterprise focused on recycling in the United States. Primary funding sources include the sale of recycled materials, fees for services and contracts with municipalities. The organization is also supported by individual contributions, corporate sponsorship and grants from private foundations and governmental agencies. All funds are used to advance recycling and Zero Waste programs in the schools, businesses and communities Eco-Cycle serves.

# Programs and Activities

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## BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER

Since its inception in 1976, Eco-Cycle has been Boulder County's recycling processor, and since 2001 Eco-Cycle has operated the Boulder County Recycling Center (BCRC). Eco-Cycle processes recyclables from the drop-off centers it services in Boulder County, as well as from residential curbside programs, businesses, government offices and schools. The BCRC's state-of-the-art single-stream sort system allows recyclers to mix paper and containers together in one bin. In 2013, Eco-Cycle processed 48,500 tons of traditional recyclable materials, including glass, aluminum, steel, newspaper, white and colored paper, junk mail, magazines, catalogs, envelopes, phone books, corrugated cardboard, milk cartons and drink boxes, paperboard boxes, plastic bottles, plastic tubs and scrap metal, which prevented 127,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>) and saved the greenhouse gas equivalent of taking 24,000 cars off the road for a year. By recycling instead of landfilling these materials, Eco-Cycle created 66 local jobs and helped our community avoid 467 tons of air pollution, nearly three tons of water pollution, 115 tons of toxic herbicides, and 48,735 tons of toxic substances that threaten human health such as carcinogens, particulate matter and volatile organic compounds.\*

*\*Calculations based on the EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) and environmental benefits calculator provided courtesy of Jeffrey Morris, PhD.*

## CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS

In November of 2001, Eco-Cycle opened the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), the first center of its kind in the nation. This model facility demonstrates that diversion from the landfill is possible for the dizzying number of products and packaging in our lives that do not have established recycling markets the way traditional recyclables do. Central to the CHaRM's success are community partners in the recycling and manufacturing sectors who create new ways to recover raw materials and begin to establish new markets for these materials, one product category at a time. Today, the CHaRM facility accepts dozens of hard-to-recycle materials, such as small appliances, computers, printers, TVs, cell phones, books, textiles, block foam packaging (a.k.a. Styrofoam®), durable #2 plastics, used cooking oil, porcelain sinks and toilets, fire extinguishers, plastic bags, plastic bubble wrap and yoga mats. Through the CHaRM, Eco-Cycle is ensuring that non-traditional recyclables are processed responsibly in the U.S. and that these valuable resources are staying in production.

In 2013, 28,734 recyclers used Eco-Cycle's CHaRM facility—a 6% increase from the previous year. The facility processed 851,440 pounds of electronics, 1,046,021 pounds of scrap metal, 38 trailers full of block foam, 75,017 pounds of plastic bags and pallet wrap, 58,280 pounds of porcelain toilets and sinks, 9,325 bike tires and 362,615 pounds of paper from books not suitable for reuse. By recycling such vast volumes and variety of materials through the CHaRM last year, Eco-Cycle prevented 5129 metric tons of carbon dioxide (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>), the equivalent of conserving 575,000 gallons of gasoline. *(Calculations based on the EPA's Waste Reduction Model.)*

Eco-Cycle worked with the City of Boulder and Boulder County to allow victims of the devastating September 2013 flood to properly recycle their flood-damaged electronics for free at the CHaRM. We received a total of 57,155 pounds of electronics directly from flood victims, and many more tons from Boulder County's debris removal contractor that would have otherwise gone to a landfill with the rest of the flood debris.

In November 2013, the Eco-Cycle offices and the CHaRM facility moved to 6400 Arapahoe Road, co-located with the ReSource used building materials yard. The new site offers greatly improved customer convenience for residents of all communities in Boulder County and many new recycling and reuse opportunities to come. Eco-Cycle also provides hard-to-recycle collection events in eastern Boulder County communities. In 2013, 1,049 people participated in these events.

## REUSE

Reuse is a primary tenet of Zero Waste, and Eco-Cycle promotes and facilitates the reuse of materials whenever possible. For each type of material collected for recycling at the CHaRM, Eco-Cycle works to add a reuse component. For example, scrap metal is used by industrial design students to practice welding and metal construction. Programs are also in place to glean reusable bikes and bike parts, bike tires, books, cell phones, and printer cartridges from materials collected at the facility. In 2013, 146 bikes were refurbished by the Boulder nonprofit Community Cycles and given to new owners who otherwise would not have been able to afford them. Through the CHaRM, Eco-Cycle also collected 41,000 pounds of textiles and shoes, which were sent to African communities for reuse or made into “wiper” rags locally.

Every year, Eco-Cycle receives thousands of used books through special collection events, the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts, and the CHaRM. Many of these books are in good condition and can be reused. In 2013, Eco-Cycle sorted and distributed 8,427 used children’s books to at-risk, low-income and underserved children through six preschools and childcare centers and 14 nonprofit organizations throughout Boulder County and other communities, including free or low-cost health clinics, social service agencies, education centers, homeless shelters and other nonprofits. Used books were also distributed to Eco-Cycle’s Green Star Schools to facilitate book-related projects such as trash-free fundraisers (selling the books), building classroom libraries, supporting home reading, and student awards and incentives.

To encourage reuse, in 2013, Eco-Cycle launched the “I Choose to Reuse” Campaign where 594 constituents pledged to use reusable coffee mugs, water bottles, grocery bags and take out containers instead of single-use disposable items that will end up in the landfill. This campaign was focused on the City of Boulder, but we received pledges from all over Boulder County.

Eco-Cycle strongly believes “Repair” should be the fourth “R” in “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” Giving a product a second life after a simple fix is a primary goal of a Zero Waste strategy. Over the past few decades, even the most conscientious consumer has come to accept that it is easier to replace a broken possession with the latest and greatest updated product rather than to attempt to repair it, and many of today’s products last only a year or two and are not recyclable or are costly and difficult to recycle. In 2013, Eco-Cycle partnered with Solid State Depot to host two Fix-It clinics, assisting 62 consumers in repairing their broken products and appliances instead of having to purchase new ones. Not only did these events help these people feel more self-sufficient, but they also diverted resources from the landfill.

## ZERO WASTE SERVICES FOR BUSINESSES

For the past eight years, Eco-Cycle has offered a unique Zero Waste Services package to businesses. This program is helping businesses keep up to 90% of the discards they produce out of landfills and offers a new approach to resource management and environmental sustainability.

Large corporations, hotels, restaurants, offices and other businesses are working with Eco-Cycle to reduce the amount of trash they create and increase their diversion from the landfill through recycling, composting and Zero Waste purchasing decisions. In 2013, three new businesses signed up for the comprehensive, groundbreaking Zero Waste Services program. Many businesses also participated in Eco-Cycle’s customized education, trainings, marketing and promotions in order to increase their compost and recycling, decrease waste, promote employee participation and spread the word about their sustainability practices. Diversion reports, including resources saved, have given Eco-Cycle customers an added dimension to support their business both internally and externally.

Eco-Cycle also provides recycling services to more than 500 Boulder and Broomfield County businesses and organizations, including offices, schools, florists, restaurants, hotels, printers and manufacturers. The program collects traditional recyclables, as well as compostable materials such as food waste, non-recyclable paper and biodegradable foodservice products. In addition, Eco-Cycle provides regular collection of hard-to-recycle materials including electronics, books, plastic stretch wrap and other materials through the CHaRM-on-the-Road program.

## **ECO-CYCLE® INTERNATIONAL**

Eco-Cycle International was created to spread the concept of Zero Waste to other communities, help them implement specific Zero Waste policies, build Zero Waste infrastructure, and create local Zero Waste economies. Eco-Cycle continued its partnership with the U.S. State Department through their Community Solutions Program, a professional development initiative that matches emerging community leaders from developing countries with pioneering U.S. organizations. Through that program, we hosted and trained Brinda Dewan, an experienced environmental educator from Kathmandu, Nepal. Ms. Dewan worked with Eco-Cycle staff to profile best practices from around the world on educating and engaging kids around Zero Waste, waste reduction and recycling activities. In 2013, Cyndra Dietz, Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools Program Director, traveled to Nepal to assist Ms. Dewan in starting the first Zero Waste schools program in that country and possibly all of Asia.

Nationally, Eco-Cycle International was the sole presenter for the first EPA webinar on Zero Waste Community Planning attended by over 100 local and state government, nonprofit and industry participants. Eco-Cycle International was also a featured speaker at the annual Zero Waste International Alliance conference attended by 100 activists and organizations leading the growing global movement toward Zero Waste. Locally, Eco-Cycle International continued its partnership with the University of Colorado's Sustainable Practices Program, teaching a full-day professional development workshop on Zero Waste attended by 15 local and regional sustainability professionals from business and government.

Eco-Cycle International also released a groundbreaking report [\*What is the best disposal option for the 'Leftovers' on the way to Zero Waste?\*](#) The report found waste incinerators cause more damage to public health and our environment than other leading disposal alternatives and helped frame Zero Waste as a full-scale environmentally preferable solution to managing every aspect of our waste stream.

## **SCHOOL RECYCLING AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Since 1987, Eco-Cycle has coordinated the Boulder/Broomfield County School Recycling and Environmental Education Program, which integrates environmental education with established school curriculum, ensuring that students in Boulder and Broomfield Counties learn about their environment and what they can do to care for it. The program provides for the collection of 1.1 million pounds of recyclables annually from all 55,000 students and staff in 82 Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley public schools—20 pounds of recyclables per student per school year! Annually, Eco-Cycle educators give more than 1,600 environmental education presentations on a wide variety of topics, such as waste reduction, recycling, litter prevention, composting, household hazardous waste, air quality, indoor air quality, forest ecology and energy conservation, to kindergarten through 12th grade students in Boulder and Broomfield County classrooms.

Eco-Cycle is pushing the boundaries of environmental education and training our future citizens with its Green Star Schools program. Through this comprehensive, first-in-the-nation Zero Waste program, Eco-Cycle works with schools to address every aspect of their waste stream, making Zero Waste principles like composting, recycling and waste reduction an integral part of their daily routine. In 2013, the program expanded to include two additional schools and impacted 15,017 students, ages 3-14, and 1,909 school staff in 34 Boulder County public schools. In recent years, the program has expanded to include areas and neighborhoods of

Boulder County, which were not previously served. This expansion has added to the economic and ethnic diversity of the target audience, integrating more Hispanic, English-as-a-second-language and lower-income students into the program and engaging traditionally underserved populations in working toward Zero Waste. Twelve schools in the program had high percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch (30% or more), and for the program overall that figure was 24%. Twenty-six percent (26%) of Green Star School students did not identify as Caucasian.

Last year, Green Star Schools reduced their trash by one-third to one-half by composting non-recyclable paper and food scraps from their kitchens, cafeterias and classrooms. These schools diverted another one-third of their waste from the landfill through recycling and other waste reduction projects, such as Composting with Worms workshops, a Holiday Recycling Guide, Zero Waste school events, and a reusable water bottle project. Approximately 132 tons of compost was diverted from the landfill during the 2012-13 school year.

Three Green Star Schools celebrated five-year anniversaries in the program in 2013: Community Montessori, Summit Middle School and Louisville Elementary.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Eco-Cycle provides a wide variety of community education services, publications and activities to promote waste reduction, encourage recycling and composting, and advance our community's progress toward Zero Waste.

### ***Recycling in Multifamily Housing***

Our pilot project to increase waste diversion in multifamily housing communities in Boulder saw great success in 2013. Eco-Cycle provided Zero Waste educational services to a low-income housing community. The 204 residents of this community have incomes 5-40% of the Area Medium Income, and most of the families are Spanish speaking. As a result of Eco-Cycle's outreach and education, the residents increased the amount of material being recycled by 27%, decreased the amount of recyclable material found in the trash by 37%, and, by adding composting of organic materials, increased the total amount of materials recycled and composted by 6%.

### ***Zero Waste Events***

A critical element of Eco-Cycle's outreach and education is our work to make community and private events Zero Waste. At a Zero Waste event, Eco-Cycle staffers work with vendors and event planners to minimize overall waste production while ensuring that all discards produced are either compostable or recyclable, thus eliminating (or substantially reducing) the need for trash bins. In 2013, we educated 650,000 people at 43 large Zero Waste events throughout the community, such as large marathon races, art festivals, weekend yoga retreats, County Hard-to-Recycle collections, and more, keeping 86 – 98% of event discards out of the landfill. By composting organic material from events, such as food scraps and biodegradable tableware, event participants helped prevent methane, a greenhouse gas 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over the short term, and they felt a sense of satisfaction—and pride—in being part of a sustainable event. Eco-Cycle also continued its Zero Waste efforts at the Boulder Farmers' Market (the first ongoing Zero Waste event in the nation) and Longmont Farmers' Market. Over the course of the market season, nearly 500,000 farmers' market shoppers experienced Zero Waste in action while supporting local farmers and vendors.

### ***Campaigns***

In addition to making events waste-free, Eco-Cycle provided community members with the resources and tools to live more sustainably. In 2013, Eco-Cycle's Stop Junk Mail for GOOD Campaign engaged 1,424 additional Boulder County constituents in reducing their unwanted mail and phone books in 2013. Eco-Cycle, in partnership with Catalog Choice, offered this service free of

charge to all Boulder County residents and businesses. New subscribers opted out of 26,826 unwanted mailings, preventing 138,622 pounds of solid waste, and saving 948 trees and 941,710 gallons of water and 391,026 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Eco-Cycle's door-to-door education campaigns providing recycling guidelines to residents and answering recycling questions. The *Recycle It Right!* Program served 15,000 residents of Longmont, including approximately 3,500 Spanish-speaking residents, and the Lafayette Recycles Program served 5,500 Lafayette residents, many of them Spanish speaking.

In 2013, Eco-Cycle also launched a campaign to double the Boulder business recycling rate over the next five years.

# Financial Statement

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## Statement of Income Fiscal Year 2013

### Revenues, gains and other support

Recyclable materials	\$248,503
Hard-to-recycle materials	\$275,109
Services	\$1,564,814
Government and commercial contracts	\$800,107
Grants	\$92,374
Labor and benefits reimbursement from Boulder County	\$4,292,353
Donations	\$64,515
Other revenue	\$17,192
Interest income	\$26,272
Net realized and unrealized loss on investments	56,206
Gain on disposal of assets	\$2,750
Total revenues, gains and other support	\$7,440,195

### Expenses and Losses

Direct labor and benefits	\$4,719,904
Materials	\$85,398
Freight	\$305,729
Facilities cost and repair	\$215,589
Equipment cost and expense	\$389,506
Depreciation	\$191,894
Vehicle expense	\$377,774
Insurance	\$97,364
Other recycling costs	\$531,733
Management and administrative	\$565,821
Fundraising	\$58,752
Total expenses	\$7,539,464
Decrease in Net Assets	(\$99,269)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$3,655,908
Net Assets, End of Year	\$3,556,639

\*Net income excluding depreciation \$92,625

# Staff and Board

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## ECO-CYCLE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Eric Lombardi, Executive Director  
Marti Matsch, Communications Director  
Cyndra Dietz, Schools Manager  
Dale Ekart, Business Recycling Manager  
Dan Matsch, CHaRM Manager  
Randy Moorman, Campaigns Manager  
Lou Perez, Operations Manager  
Suree Ponrattanasiri, HR & Accounting Manager

## ECO-CYCLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Allyn Feinberg, President  
Daniel Benavidez, Vice President  
David Miller, Treasurer  
Steve Bushong  
Crystal Gray  
Thomas R. McCoy  
Pat Shanks  
Caron Schwartz

## Organization Information

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