



Working to Build Zero Waste Communities

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Eco-Cycle Schools Recycling Program Honored with EPA's Environmental Achievement Award**

Boulder, CO (April 9)—On April 11, Eco-Cycle will receive the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Achievement Award for its Green Star Schools program. The award will be presented at Eco-Cycle's Annual School Recycling and Environmental Education Program luncheon.

Eco-Cycle is currently working with 14 "Green Star Schools" in Boulder County who are taking measures to reduce waste, increase recycling, implement composting, purchase recyclable, reusable and compostable products, and expand environmental awareness. The award recognizes significant achievements in the protection of public health or the environment in the EPA's Region 8, which includes Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and sovereign tribal nations. Eco-Cycle received the Environmental Achievement Award last year for its Zero Waste Farmers' Market in Boulder.

#### **Jeff Mitton to Speak on the Effects of Climate Change in Colorado**

In addition to the awards presentation, Eco-Cycle's luncheon will also feature a presentation by Jeff Mitton entitled "Climate Change Comes to Colorado." Mitton, chair of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department at the University of Colorado and *Camera* columnist, will explain how climate change has influenced the plants, animals and weather in Colorado.

#### **About Green Star Schools**

The Green Star Schools program is the first of its kind in the nation. This Zero Waste program examines the entire waste stream of each school and helps students and staff implement Zero Waste practices. Perhaps the most noticeable change at the Green Star Schools is a new way of handling lunch leftovers. At the end of the lunch hour, food scraps, plastic utensils and excess packaging no longer spill over the trash cans. When kids are finished with their meal, rather than heading to the trash can, kids use a special station where they deposit reusable serviceware into hot, soapy water to be washed

and reused; milk and juice containers into a recycling bin; and sandwich crusts, banana peels, other food leftovers, and non-recyclable paper such as napkins or paper towels into a compost bin.

“It’s not just the reduction of lunchtime waste that’s impressive at these schools—it’s the commitment students, teachers, kitchen staff, custodial staff and administrators have made to reduce waste all day long,” said Eco-Cycle School Recycling Program and Environmental Education Coordinator Cyndra Dietz . “Throughout the halls and classrooms, discards are treated differently. Recycling and composting bins—not trash cans—are ubiquitous. Even in the washrooms, students are reminded they are part of a very special program: compost containers have replaced trash cans for used paper towels and tissues.”

Since 1987, Eco-Cycle has coordinated the Boulder/Broomfield County School Recycling and Environmental Education Program. Every year, Eco-Cycle staff give more than 1,000 presentations on a wide variety of environmental topics to 33,000 kindergarten through 12th grade students in Boulder and Broomfield Counties. In addition, 650 tons of recyclables are collected from 80 Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley public schools.

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### **Event Details:**

Date: Wednesday, April 11  
Time: 12:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.  
Location: Sombrero Marsh Classroom, 6500 E. Arapahoe (See directions below.)  
Schedule: 12:15 – 1:00 Lunch and announcements  
1:00 EPA award presentation  
1:15 – 2:45 Jeff Mitton presentation and discussion

**Directions to Sombrero Marsh/Thorne Ecological Institute:** From Boulder, go east on Arapahoe to the traffic light at 63<sup>rd</sup> St. At the light, turn right (south). Ignore the “No Outlet” sign. After about 200 yards, go through a gate. The marsh will be straight ahead, but the road makes a 90 degree turn to the left and goes east along the marsh. Go through a second gate. There will be gas pumps on the left, and the Sombrero Marsh building is on the right, behind the chain link fence. Please park at right angles to this fence and walk to the building.