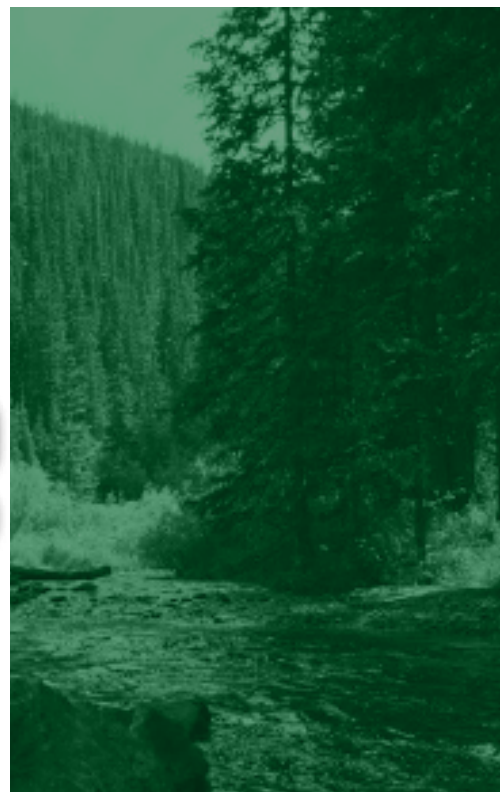




FORGING AHEAD

BOULDER COUNTY & BEYOND



2015 ANNUAL REPORT



eco-cycle[®]
Building Zero Waste Communities

Eco-Cycle is one of the oldest and largest nonprofit recyclers in the United States. We educate people in every sector of the community—schools, businesses, local governments, neighborhoods, and public events—about Zero Waste ethics and practices.

Working in partnership, we help communities achieve their Zero Waste goals, the benefits of which include conserving natural resources and wildlife, reducing pollution, combating climate change, and creating jobs and new business opportunities.

OUR MISSION

Identify, explore, and demonstrate the **EMERGING FRONTIERS** of sustainable resource management through the concepts and practices of **ZERO WASTE**.

We believe in personal & community action to **TRANSFORM** society's **THROW-AWAY ETHIC** into environmentally-responsible **STEWARDSHIP**.

ECO-CYCLE'S ROOTS RUN DEEP IN BOULDER COUNTY

On the eve of Eco-Cycle's 40th anniversary celebrations, Executive Director Suzanne Jones sat down for a chat with long-time board president Allyn Feinberg to take stock of the nonprofit recycler's successes and the challenges ahead.

Would Boulder be Boulder without Eco-Cycle or vice versa? Probably not was the conclusion we reached, and that's a good thing. Feinberg, who served on Boulder City Council and Boulder's Recycling Authority before joining Eco-Cycle's board in the late 1990s, describes the nonprofit recycler as "always pushing the boundaries of environmental sustainability."

Eco-Cycle is often credited with launching the "Zero Waste" movement, which is now part of the lexicon of sustainability. But long before the buzz words, Feinberg remembers the repurposed school buses jam-packed with newspapers and other recyclables rolling through her neighborhood, and the open-air transfer station, which was basically a big parking lot. "It was a real mess when it snowed," she said. "But locals were deeply committed, and that's how the Eco-Cycle volunteer network got started," she said. "Eco-Cycle's volunteers, called Eco-Leaders, do an amazing job educating their neighbors and communities."

Those visionary volunteers helped jumpstart the recycling revolution. Things took another quantum leap forward when voters approved a ballot measure to fund construction of a materials recovery facility in Boulder County. Eco-Cycle spearheaded the campaign in favor of the multi-million dollar publicly-owned facility, which prevailed. The Boulder County Recycling Center opened for business in 2001 and today processes close to 52,000 tons of recyclables annually. Eco-Cycle has the contract to operate the facility.



Eco-Cycle President Suzanne Jones, left, and Board President Allyn Feinberg, right, at the CHaRM.

"Eco-Cycle has always been about building community through Zero Waste. Whether it is businesses, schools, government, neighborhoods, or public events, our work touches everyone. If your community is behind you, then you can accomplish anything."

Allyn Feinberg
Board President
Eco-Cycle

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Allyn Feinberg

Vice President
Dan Benavidez

Secretary
Caron Schwartz

Treasurer
Joe McDonald

Members

Steve Bushong
Crystal Gray
Pat Shanks
Judith Wong

"Having a publicly-owned recycling center and adding single-stream collection were game changers," Feinberg said. "The whole community was now invested in recycling, and people who maybe hadn't taken recycling seriously before started to do so. Plus the new state-of-the-art facility paved the way for more curbside collection programs across the county."

Around the same time the facility was built, Eco-Cycle was working through the conundrum of what to do with the hard-to-recycle stuff — particularly electronics. That cogitating led Eco-Cycle, in partnership with the City of Boulder, to establish the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in 2001 — the first facility of its kind in the nation, which now collects roughly 3 million pounds of hard-to-recycle materials annually.

And then there was climate change.

Feinberg, recalling the report *Stop Trashing the Climate* that Eco-Cycle co-authored nearly a decade ago, said, "Eco-Cycle was one of the first to see the critical role that Zero Waste solutions can play in addressing global climate change." The report concluded that decreasing waste disposed in landfills and incinerators has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 406 megatons CO₂ per year by 2030 — the equivalent of closing 21 percent of U.S. coal-fired power plants.

At the Paris climate talks in December 2015, Zero Waste advocates had a seat at the table for the first time, and Zero Waste is gaining recognition as a top-tier climate solution strategy that is especially attractive at the city, county and state levels.

"Another exciting development on the climate front is new research showing the value of composting as a way to store huge amounts of carbon in soils," Feinberg said. As usual, Eco-Cycle is at the forefront of carbon sequestration efforts in Boulder County.

But the real story behind Eco-Cycle's successes lies with the people of Boulder County. "Eco-Cycle has a long tradition of working to change the world for the better, starting with the grassroots," she said. "Eco-Cycle has always been about building community through Zero Waste. Whether it is businesses, schools, government, neighborhoods, or public events, our work touches everyone. If your community is behind you, then you can accomplish anything."

Thanks to the enduring partnerships with communities throughout Boulder County, Eco-Cycle is now carrying Zero Waste solutions statewide (see pg. 6) and nationally and internationally (see pg. 10).



ZERO WASTE COLORADO, YES!

In 1976, Eco-Cycle began with a group of volunteers driving repurposed yellow school buses to collect recyclables at the curb. Today, Eco-Cycle is a driving force for Zero Waste, and has made big strides thanks to enormous love and support from our community.

This progress includes: 1) advocating successfully for the publicly-owned Boulder County Recycling Center and founding the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials, both of which Eco-Cycle has operated continuously since 2001 when the facilities opened; 2) getting curbside recycling, and in some cases composting, programs started in Lafayette, Louisville, Longmont, and Superior; 3) and championing Boulder's new ordinance requiring recycling and composting by all sectors citywide.

Leveraging these successes and our deep roots in Boulder County, we launched "Zero Waste Colorado" in 2015 to boost the state's abysmal 12 percent recycling rate.

Most Coloradans are appalled to learn that our state is one of the 20 most wasteful in the nation. We bury an estimated \$170 million worth

of valuable resources like cardboard, aluminum, and scrap metal in landfill each year. In so doing, we miss out on huge opportunities to create green jobs and businesses and to conserve natural resources and reduce our climate impacts.

Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Colorado campaign has gained momentum over the last year. More than 1,500 residents have signed our petition asking Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper to expand recycling infrastructure and help build markets statewide, and we're working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to modernize outdated regulations that hinder recycling and composting.

We're also working to add Zero Waste solutions to Colorado's Climate Action Plan. While recycling and composting every day may seem like a small step, the cumulative benefits to the climate are significant—keeping millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide, methane and other pollutants driving climate change out of our atmosphere. Experts now recognize that, along with curbing pollution from smokestacks



Leveraging these successes and our deep roots in Boulder County, we launched "Zero Waste Colorado" in 2015 to boost the state's abysmal 12 percent recycling rate.

and tailpipes, we can help protect the climate by practicing Zero Waste and reducing consumption.

And as a leader within the Colorado Association for Recycling, a statewide group of roughly 200 industry recyclers, we're developing innovative new policies and programs to ensure that whether you live in mountain towns, rural areas, or along the metropolitan Front Range, you have access to recycling and composting services.

HOW DOES COLORADO COMPARE?

34.5%

average recycling rate
in the U.S.

12%

average recycling rate
in Colorado (2014)

THE VALUE OF WASTED MATERIALS

\$170 MILLION

estimated value of recyclables
that were buried in Colorado
landfills in 2014

ZERO WASTE CREATES JOBS

9x

more jobs created by
recycling per ton compared
to landfilling

30x

more jobs created by reuse
and remanufacturing per ton
compared to landfilling

86,000

number of jobs in Colorado
supported by recycling
industry

CITY OF BOULDER UNIVERSAL ZERO WASTE ORDINANCE



BOULDER BECOMES THIRD CITY IN THE NATION TO REQUIRE RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING SERVICE

In June 2015, Boulder City Council approved a new ordinance that requires recycling and composting citywide in all residences, businesses, and institutions, making Boulder only the third city in the nation to do so. Once fully implemented, this bold step is expected to move the city significantly closer to meeting its Zero Waste goals.

Eco-Cycle played a leading role in getting the measure passed, working closely with local businesses, city officials, property owners, and organizing the amazing network of Eco-Cycle staff, volunteers, and supporters for nearly two years leading up to the vote. Eco-Cycle's partnerships with the Boulder Chamber and other business, as well as extensive public education and outreach, were crucial to getting the measure passed.

"Everyone should have access to recycling and

composting," said Randy Moorman, Eco-Cycle's Community Campaigns Director. "The best way to achieve Zero Waste is to involve the whole community and ensure that recycling and composting are convenient and accessible for all."

Although the city has pushed voluntary recycling for years, its overall recycling rate was stuck around 35 percent. While the recycling rate for single-family homes was fairly high at nearly 60 percent, the rates for businesses and multi-family housing units were below 30 percent.

The new Zero Waste ordinance requires that all businesses, restaurants, grocery stores, local government offices, along with apartments, condos, and single-family homes, have recycling, composting, and trash service by September 2016. Businesses must recycle and compost and provide access to on-site bins for their customers.



Lafayette is the third city in Colorado, along with Boulder and Louisville, to require curbside composting service for residents, and one of about 200 communities nationwide that have some type of residential composting program.

AFTER FIRST YEAR, LAFAYETTE'S CURBSIDE COMPOST PROGRAM A SUCCESS

City officials say households sent 21% less waste to the landfill since the program began in February 2015, saving money and protecting the environment.

Lafayette households are sending significantly less trash to the landfill thanks to a new residential curbside composting program. Lafayette is the third city in Colorado, along with Boulder and Louisville, to require curbside composting service for residents, and one of about 200 communities nationwide that have some type of residential composting program.

Since compost carts were first distributed in neighborhoods within the city's service area in February 2015, the amount of household waste going to the landfill has dropped 21 percent from 149 pounds per household per year to 117 pounds, a decrease the city attributes to increased composting. Nearly 40 percent of Lafayette's residential waste is made up of compostable organic materials, including food scraps, yard waste, and non-recyclable paper such as paper towels and tissues.

"These are very encouraging numbers," said Lafayette Mayor Christine Berg. "When people realize they can get a smaller, cheaper trash cart if they compost, they get on board," she added. "Knowing that composting is good for the environment is the icing on the cake."

Mayor Berg, along with the local citizens group "Lafayette Composts," led the effort in support of the curbside composting program. Several Eco-Cycle staff members who live in Lafayette helped start the group, and Eco-Cycle canvassed extensively in Latino and under-served neighborhoods in Lafayette to educate residents about the new curbside composting service.

Eco-Cycle's grassroots outreach paid off. More than 200 Lafayette households requested smaller trash carts within the program's first month—a trend that has continued. During the program's first year, the number of 32-gallon carts in use (the smallest size available) climbed 37 percent, while the number of large, 64-gallon and 96-gallon carts in use dropped 12 percent, according to the city's data.



Eco-Cycle's Eric Lombardi (right) travelled to the Al Minya landfill in the West Bank to meet with Yasser Dweik (left), director of the landfill, Mayor Sulieman (from Al Ubediya), and Nasser Al-Khatib, a project coordinator with a Palestinian environmental NGO.

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL: THE ZERO WASTE RIPPLE EFFECT

The ripple effects of Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste work in Boulder County are spreading across Colorado, the nation, and the globe.

In 2015, the *Eco-Cycle Solutions Hub* website (www.ecocyclesolutionshub.org) was launched, the first comprehensive platform for moving any community toward Zero Waste.

The Hub is built for local champions who make change happen on the ground — government staff, elected officials, citizens, businesses and organizations in every community — and is backed up by Eco-Cycle's 40 years of grassroots, hands-on experience in creating Zero Waste services for every sector of our Boulder County community. We're thankful for the support of WhiteWave Foods as our founding partner on the project.

The Hub is based on our Community Zero Waste Roadmap, the first-of-its-kind plan designed to help cities and towns achieve Zero Waste (defined as 90 percent or more waste diverted from landfills or incinerators) within 10 years. Communities wanting to take action don't need to reinvent the wheel — the Hub helps them plug into the incredible work that's already happening across the country (and the globe) and connect with peers and experts who have helped make that change happen.

The Hub also features our new video on the Zero Waste Climate Solution that showcases Zero Waste as one of the fastest, most cost-effective solutions to addressing climate change.

In addition to launching the Hub, staff for Eco-Cycle's international program supported advocates who passed the first ever Zero Waste resolution in Nebraska, delivered the plenary address at the Solid Waste Association of North America conference, and were flown to Israel and New Zealand to consult with communities working towards Zero Waste.



Click here to find out just how important Zero Waste can be to curb climate change.

GREEN STAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Of all of Eco-Cycle's programs, the most beloved may well be Green Star Schools. This nationally recognized and award-winning program celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2015 with special events at the four Boulder County elementary schools where the program began.

Our goal is to have every school and every grade level in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts enrolled in our Green Star Schools program.

Of the county's 82 public schools, 40 are now Green Star Schools with 27 more on a wait list to join the popular sustainability program, which is widely known as the most comprehensive Zero Waste schools project in the nation.

The first pilot Green Star Schools—Douglass Elementary, Horizons K-8, Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies, and High Peaks Elementary—marked

their 10-year anniversary with the program with assemblies featuring HawkQuest showcasing live birds of prey to help students connect recycling and composting with saving natural resources and reducing pollution, which benefits wildlife and habitats.

"Our goal is to have every school and every grade level in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts enrolled," said Cyndra Dietz, Director of Eco-Cycle's School Recycling and Environmental Education Programs. "We want to move each school as close as possible to Zero Waste, and we want students to be inspired to carry Zero Waste practices to their families and throughout their lives."



GREEN STAR SCHOOLS 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

**40
SCHOOLS
PARTICIPATE**



**16,297
STUDENTS
EDUCATED**



**1,949
SCHOOL STAFF TRAINED**



**150
TONS RECYCLED**



**200
TONS COMPOSTED**





MATTRESS RECYCLING HELPS REBUILD LIVES AND BUILD COMMUNITY

In Boulder County, as many as 30,000 mattresses are thrown away annually. Mattresses, box springs, and futons are especially problematic in landfills because they don't compact and won't stay buried. Nationwide, 20-40 million mattresses are discarded annually and nearly all of them end up in landfills.

In December 2015, the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder's Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) added mattresses and box springs to the roster of two dozen different materials the facility collects for remanufacturing, reuse, and recycling.

"Mattresses are a huge waste problem, and by recycling them instead of landfilling them we save natural resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Dan Matsch, Eco-Cycle's CHaRM Operations Director.

Eco-Cycle is partnering with recycler Spring Back Colorado in Denver, which disassembles old mattresses. The soft materials are sold to businesses that make carpet pads, and the box springs are sold as scrap metal. Spring Back Colorado also houses two small start-ups, one of which makes dog beds from latex foam mattresses.

But Spring Back Colorado Mattress Recycling is really about lending a hand to people who have been shunned because of past mistakes. Owner Chris Conway employs former felons who may have suffered from drug or alcohol addiction and have a hard time finding work because they have been convicted of a felony.

By working with Spring Back Colorado, Eco-Cycle is helping people who are trying to transform their lives for the better and strengthening the community—giving both ex-felons, and mattresses, a second lease on life.



THE CLIMATE BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

Recycling, composting, and other Zero Waste practices are among the quickest and most effective ways for communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change. In fact, Zero Waste has emerged as a top-tier climate solution.

In 2015, Eco-Cycle collected and processed 52,000 tons of traditional recyclables – paper, aluminum, cardboard, and plastic containers – as operator of the Boulder County Recycling Center. We also collected another 3 million pounds of materials at the CHaRM (Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials), which Eco-Cycle founded and operates with support from the City of Boulder.

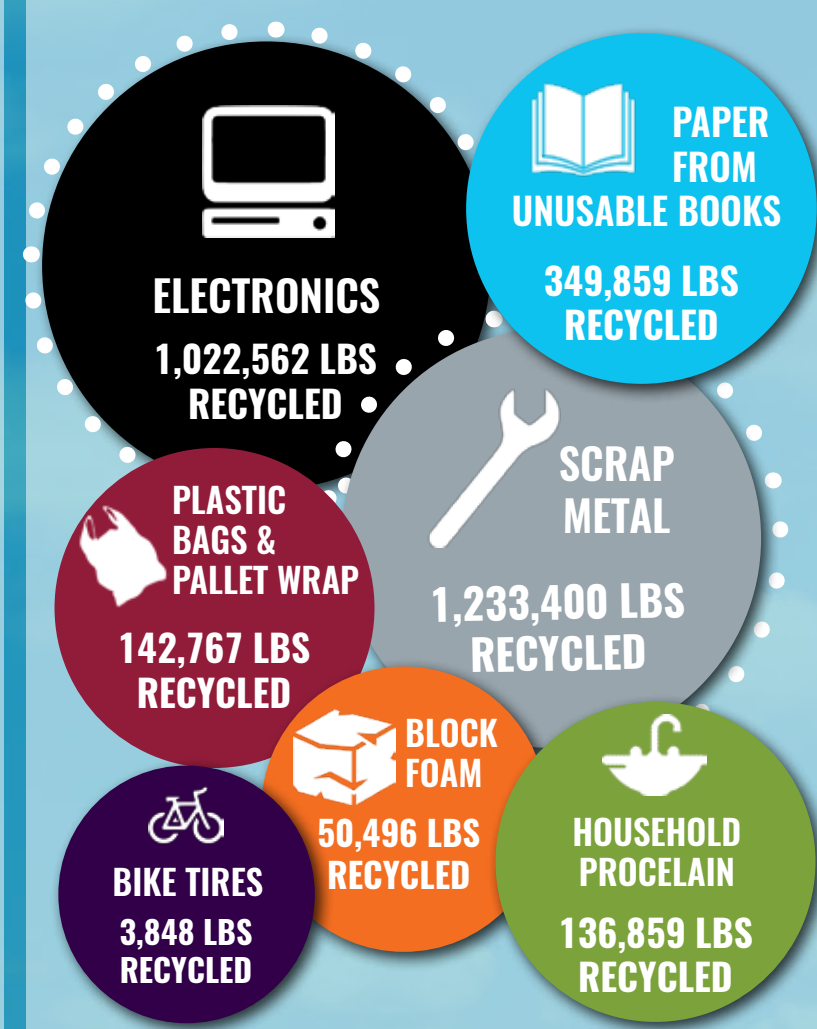
OUR RECYCLING EFFORTS HAVE KEPT NEARLY **56,852** METRIC TONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES OUT OF THE AIR,
THE EQUIVALENT OF TAKING NEARLY **36,000** CARS OFF THE ROAD FOR A YEAR...



ECO-CYCLE RECYCLING THROUGH THE BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER



ECO-CYCLE RECYCLING THROUGH OUR CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS



ECO-CYCLE IN THE NEWS

THE DENVER POST

Colorado lawmakers and recyclers pushing for state funding for statewide plan
By Joey Bunch
December 3, 2015

In Colorado, the new coalition of recycling supporters think one option could be a tax credit for recycling equipment or incentives for businesses to use recycled materials.

“This can be a job creator, as well as the right thing to do,” [Eco-Cycle Executive Director Suzanne] Jones said. “The nice thing about this is it’s a win-win. There’s no reason you wouldn’t do it.”

The coalition pushing for more state involvement in recycling contends that recycling generates at least nine times more jobs than putting garbage in landfills; reuse and re-manufacturing create 30 times as many jobs....

“As both an economic driver and an environmental responsibility, recycling is something everybody can get behind,” [Colorado Gov.] Hickenlooper said.

CAN SCIENCE

Boulder Vows to Reuse 85 percent of its Trash with Zero Waste Ordinance
June 18, 2015

Following Seattle and San Francisco, Boulder has become the third city in the nation to require recycling and composting citywide.

The ordinance will provide three major benefits, says Harlin Savage, communications director for Eco-Cycle, a Boulder-based non-profit that supported the initiative. By doubling the city’s recycling rate, it will decrease greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 36,600 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually—that’s the equivalent of “taking 4,000 cars off the road a year,” Savage says.

Daily Camera

Eco-Cycle celebrating 10 years of Green Star Schools program
by Amy Bounds
November 7, 2015

Eco-Cycle’s Green Star Schools program started 10 years ago with four Boulder pilot schools.

Now, 40 of Boulder County’s public schools are part of the sustainability program, with another 27 on a wait list. The eventual goal is to include all the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley schools.

...The first four schools to sign up for the program were Douglass Elementary, Horizons K-8, High Peaks and Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies. High Peaks and Boulder Community share a building.

“Those four pilot schools were going out on a limb and trying a program that hadn’t been done before with schools anywhere in the nation,” [Cyn-dra] Dietz, [director of Eco-Cycle’s school recycling and environmental education programs] said.

To celebrate the 10-year anniversary at those four schools, Eco-Cycle recently organized school assemblies featuring live birds of prey from HawkQuest. The goal was to help students connect recycling and composting with saving natural resources and reducing pollution.

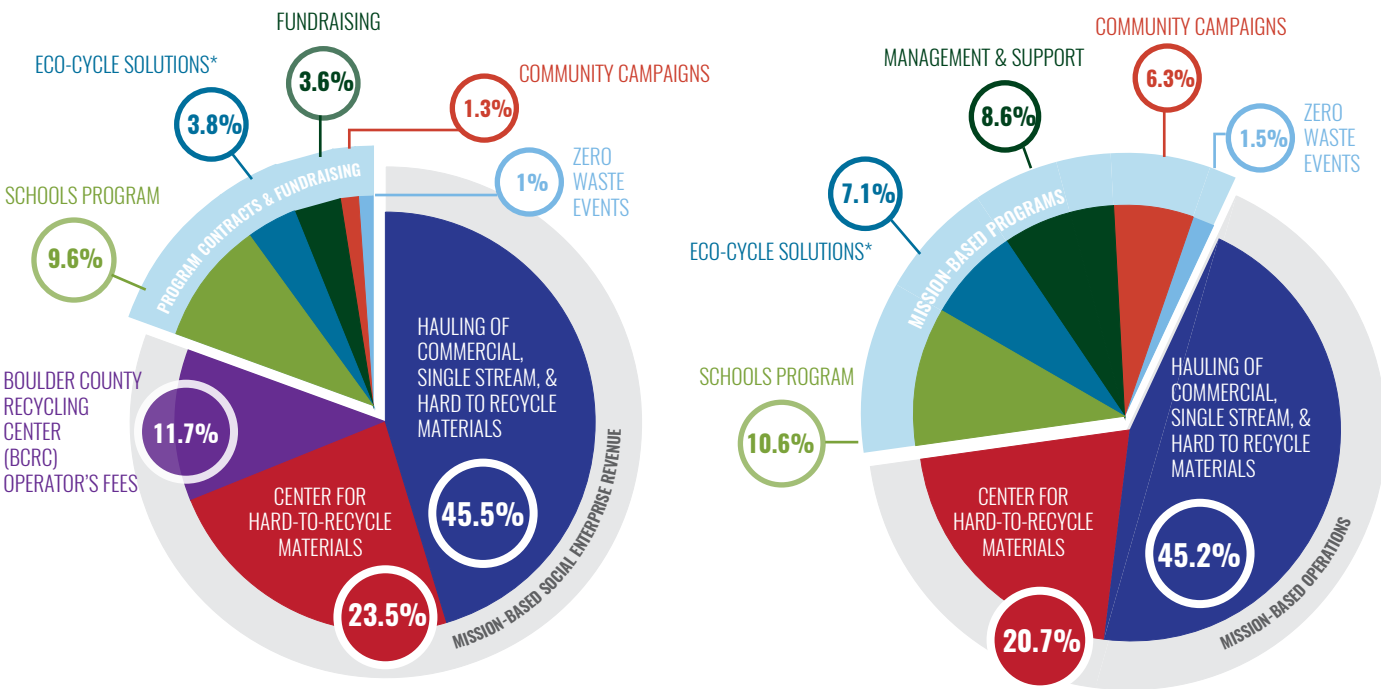
BizWest

Recycling is our future – and good business
by Suzanne Jones
October 16, 2015

With one of the lowest recycling rates in the nation at 11 percent, Colorado is way behind the curve. This abysmal rate costs us a lot of jobs and money. Instead of continuing to bury recyclables worth as much as \$170 million in landfills each year, it’s time to invest in building our “New Recycling Economy.”

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2015

Eco-Cycle is a non-profit social enterprise, which means we conduct mission-based business activities (such as hauling and operation of the Boulder County Recycling Center and CHaRM), and use the revenue to fund our Zero Waste operations, education, outreach and advocacy work.



*Eco-Cycle Solutions supports Zero Waste activities throughout Colorado, in other states, nationally and internationally.

REVENUES

Hauling of Commercial, Single Stream, & Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$ 1,457,518
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$ 753,929
BCRC Operator's Fee	\$ 373,998
Zero Waste Schools Program	\$ 307,531
Eco-Cycle Solutions	\$ 121,286
Fundraising & Administration	\$ 116,876
Community Campaigns	\$ 41,452
Zero Waste Events	\$ 32,713

ECO-CYCLE TOTAL \$ 3,205,303

BCRC revenues* \$3,393,678

EXPENSES

Hauling of Commercial, Single Stream, & Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$ 1,558,530
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$ 714,688
Zero Waste Schools Program	\$ 365,701
Eco-Cycle Solutions	\$ 245,302
Management & Support Services	\$ 294,348
Community Campaigns	\$ 216,604
Zero Waste Events	\$ 51,402

ECO-CYCLE TOTAL \$ 3,433,517

BCRC expenses* \$3,393,678

* Eco-Cycle is contracted to operate the BCRC for Boulder County. All BCRC revenues and expenses are passed through to Boulder County.

