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2019-2020
ANNUAL
REPORT



eco·cycle



OUR MISSION

Eco-Cycle's mission is to innovate, implement, and advocate for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient future.

eco-cycle

FIRSTLY

THANK YOU

FOR SUPPORTING US!

Across the globe, 2020 has been a uniquely challenging year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic impacts felt in its wake, layered on top of political upheaval, the impacts of systemic inequality, and our burgeoning climate crisis.

But 2020 has also been a uniquely inspiring year, marked by the power of people like you and me working together toward a shared vision of a more sustainable and equitable future, and being the driving force behind change.

We have all faced unprecedented trials and hardships this year, yet our community of activists, volunteers, partners, and donors stood with Eco-Cycle during these tough times.

When we stand together, we are able to achieve great things! Thank you, from all of us at Eco-Cycle, for working toward a brighter future.



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2019–2020

SNAPSHOT

Despite a challenging year, Eco-Cycle advanced many priority goals, including passing groundbreaking Zero Waste legislation in Colorado, expanding our carbon farming climate solutions, and working toward local circular economies. Here are just a few highlights:



We helped pass HISTORIC LEGISLATION...

that created a new fund from landfill fees to help Front Range cities implement Zero Waste programs. We also successfully advocated for legislation to incentivize recycling end markets in Colorado.



We trialed CARBON FARMING...

to test the viability of using compost and other regenerative farm practices to enhance soil health and increase plants' ability to draw down carbon from the atmosphere, all of which helps reverse climate change.



We provided ZERO WASTE EDUCATION...

to more than 55,000 students, and helped make Boulder the first city in the U.S. to provide comprehensive Zero Waste education to all public school students, kindergarten through 12th grade.



We CHARMED more people in 2020 than ever before...

despite a temporary COVID closure in Spring 2020. The Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) is on track to serve more than 28,000 visitors in 2020 from across Boulder County and beyond!



We created JOBS...

for people with autism through our partnership with Blue Star Recyclers, and for people recovering from addiction in partnership with Spring Back Colorado.



We piloted NEW END MARKETS...

in partnership with local craft beer breweries to recycle plastic grain bags used throughout the industry that previously were landfilled.



2019-2020
PROGRAM
HIGHLIGHTS

LEGISLATION & CAMPAIGNS



According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 42% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the US are generated during the extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal of consumer goods, including food. Zero Waste practices reduce environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions. But for these practices to make a large-scale difference, we need system-wide infrastructure and programs in place to give all residents, businesses, and communities access to more affordable waste reduction, recycling, and compost services.

To advance this vision, in the past two legislative sessions, Eco-Cycle led efforts with our partners to educate Colorado legislators and help pass historic state legislation to provide funding to increase access to Zero Waste services and to develop end markets for recycled materials in Colorado.

LEGISLATION & CAMPAIGNS 2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Statewide Bills:

- **Front Range Waste Diversion Enterprise Fund**
- **Incentivize End Market Development**

Local Ordinances:

- **Denver Climate Tax**
- **Arvada Single Hauler Ordinance**
- **Louisville Bag Tax**

Eco-Cycle also worked at the community level with city councils and local residents to successfully advocate for the adoption of ordinances to expand recycling services in Arvada, reduce plastic bag use in Louisville, and create a fund to support sustainability initiatives in Denver.



FRONT RANGE WASTE DIVERSION ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (SENATE BILL 192)

This bill created a new state fund to support Zero Waste infrastructure and services along the Front Range, where 87% of Colorado's municipal waste is generated. Funded by user fees at Front Range landfills, this revenue will be allocated as grants to communities, businesses, and non-profits for projects to increase recycling, composting, and other means of reducing or diverting waste from landfills.

INCENTIVIZE DEVELOPMENT OF RECYCLING END MARKETS (SENATE BILL 55)

This bill will create a recycling market development center in Colorado to support new and expanded end-market businesses that make products out of recycled materials, which will create green jobs and support a more robust circular recycling economy. The bill also tasks the CO Dept. of Public Health & Environment to study and make recommendations about how "extended producer responsibility" could be used to require manufacturers to design products and packaging for end-of-life management.



CLIMATE TAX: DENVER



Ballot measure 2A, which Denver voters adopted by 63%, establishes a dedicated sales tax totaling an estimated \$40 million annually to be invested in city-wide climate and sustainability initiatives, including programs to increase recycling and composting and reduce food waste.



SINGLE HAULER ORDINANCE: ARVADA



This ordinance establishes a new program in which the city will partner with a single hauling company to provide expanded residential curbside waste and recycling collections. Contracting with a single hauler also reduces truck traffic in neighborhoods, air pollution, and costs to residents.



TAX ON SINGLE-USE BAGS: LOUISVILLE, CO



Ballot measure 2A established a \$0.25 tax on single-use plastic and paper bags provided by retailers in Louisville to incentivize the use of reusable bags. Proceeds from the tax will be used to fund the city's sustainability efforts, with a small portion allocated to retailers for training and education about the tax.

ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS



Moving to a Zero Waste system takes a big cultural shift. There is no better way to change our society's culture of wasteful habits than by educating and engaging children—motivating them and their families to protect the environment.

Take a look behind most schools and you'll see dumpsters containing classroom supplies and discarded cafeteria food. Visit one of Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools, and the story is much different. Our Green Star Schools program addresses a variety of sustainability issues, engaging students and staff in Zero Waste practices such as waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.

Our goal of making Zero Waste an integral part of the daily school routine is accomplished by increasing environmental literacy, providing

ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS 2019–2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Provided environmental education to over 55,000 students.

Reached 100% enrollment of Boulder schools into our Green Star Schools Program.

Created virtual lessons for remote learning.

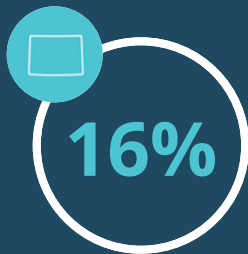
infrastructure, and changing behaviors. We help schools reduce their waste by up to 70% and empower students to become conservationists through the choices they and their families make every single day.

Eco-Cycle also provides environmental education on a wide variety of topics to more than 55,000 students a year. With schools moving to remote learning for much of 2020, our educators continue to make a difference by offering digitized video and live-virtual lessons.

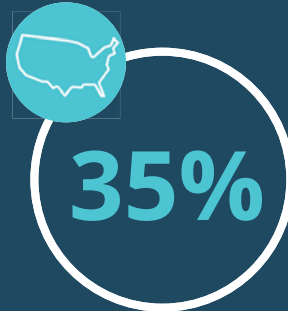
GREEN STAR SCHOOLS

Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program works with enrolled Boulder County schools to make an even deeper impact.

On average, Green Star Schools divert 4 times as much waste from the landfill as the Colorado statewide diversion rate, and almost twice as much as the national diversion rate.



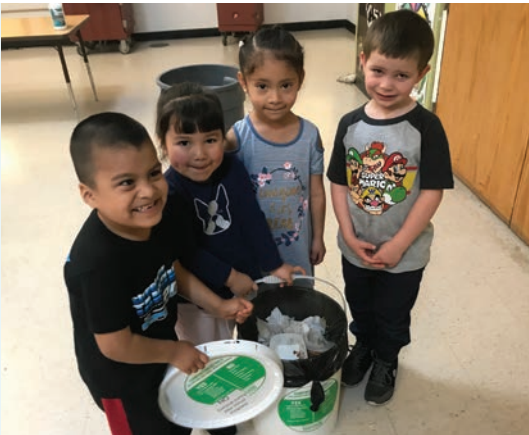
COLORADO
RECYCLING + COMPOSTING
RATE



NATIONAL
RECYCLING + COMPOSTING
RATE



GREEN STAR SCHOOLS
RECYCLING + COMPOSTING
RATE



FIRST IN THE NATION

In 2020, we enrolled the last Boulder public school into our Green Star Schools program, making the city the first in the nation to provide comprehensive Zero Waste education to all public school students, from kindergarten through 12th grade!

THANK YOU TO OUR GREEN STAR SCHOOLS SPONSORS!



ORACLE®



CARBON FARMING



In a year where climate impacts affected millions –from hurricanes and flooding to drought and wildfires–the fight against climate change has never been more important. To avoid the worst impacts, we must go beyond reducing emissions. We must also actively remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

That's where carbon farming comes in. Carbon farming uses regenerative farming practices that restore living ecosystems, increasing soil health and plants' ability to draw down atmospheric carbon and store it safely in the ground where it belongs. Compost is an essential piece of carbon farming; it drives the regeneration of soils with an infusion of beneficial soil microbes.

Unfortunately, most of Colorado's food and yard waste is not composted. Instead, it is landfilled, where organic matter decomposes without oxygen, resulting in the production of methane—a powerful greenhouse gas. However, when organic

CARBON FARMING 2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Completed Year 1 of our 3-year pilot to study the feasibility of carbon farming on urban lands.

Recruited more than 500 participants into our community carbon farming study.

material is composted and applied to soils instead of being sent to the landfill, it transforms from being a major source of greenhouse gases to one of our best tools for fighting climate change.

To pursue this local climate solution, Eco-Cycle piloted carbon farming projects on both agricultural and urban lands in Boulder County, with the goal of scaling up carbon farming in Colorado and beyond.



CARBON FARMING ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Eco-Cycle is supporting research and trials on local farms to demonstrate cutting-edge regenerative farming practices, such as using compost, no tilling, and planting cover crops. These practices have the potential to greatly improve soil health and thereby increase plants' ability to sequester carbon at higher rates, and our research will help determine which practices are most effective for our soils, climate, and farming culture.

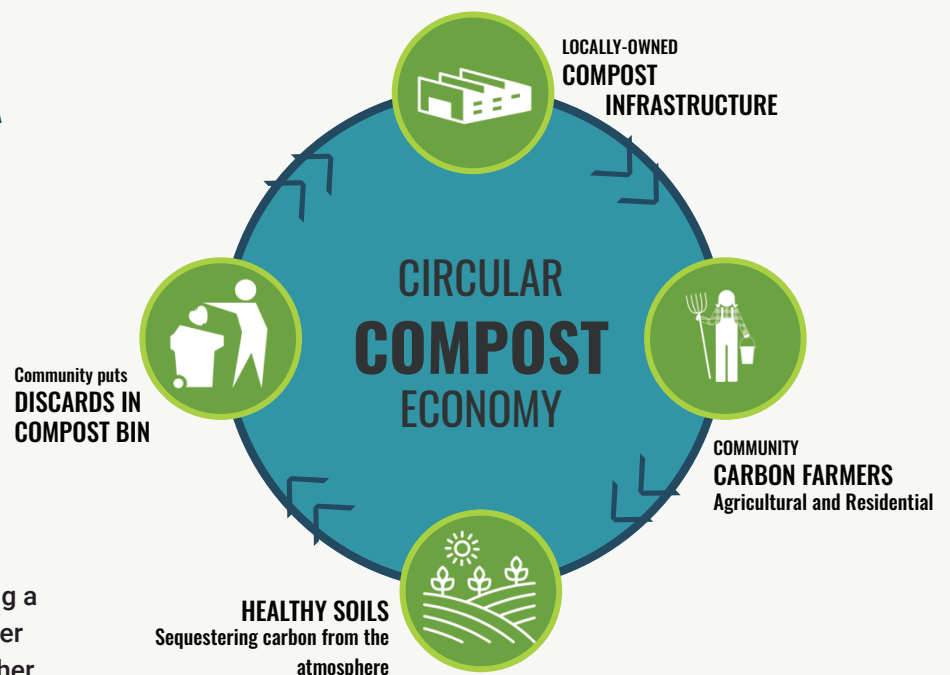
CARBON FARMING ON URBAN LANDSCAPES

In 2019, Eco-Cycle launched a three-year pilot to explore the feasibility of also using non-farm land to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. In the first two years of this first-of-its-kind study, we engaged hundreds of Coloradans in conducting carbon farming trials on their lawns and gardens to help us learn about the potential for sequestering carbon on urban lands.

CARBON FARMING PLAYS A
MAJOR ROLE IN BUILDING A

CIRCULAR COMPOST ECONOMY

Eco-Cycle is working toward building a circular compost economy in Boulder County, and is sharing tools with other US cities to replicate this model.



2019–2020 UPDATES



GOV. POLIS DECLARES COLORADO RECYCLES WEEK

Governor Jared Polis declared the third week of November “Colorado Recycles Week” to help make Colorado a true leader in recycling and reuse.



NEW CRAFT-BEER INDUSTRY RECYCLING PROGRAM

Eco-Cycle, Avery Brewing Co., and local craft breweries worked together to pilot a new recycling program that tackles a common waste problem in the craft-beer industry.



RECORD-BREAKING VISITS TO THE CHaRM

The Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder’s Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials had a record-breaking year, serving almost 29,000 visitors!



ZERO WASTE EVENTS

In the last pre-COVID events season, our Zero Waste Events program helped over 60 Colorado events and 500,000 attendees recycle and compost an average of 81% of event waste.



ECO-LEADERS

Numbering over 1,000, our Eco-Leader volunteers championed local campaigns, distributing more than 25,000 Zero Waste Guides, becoming urban carbon farmers, and advocating for plastic pollution policies and ordinances.



SERVING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Eco-Cycle’s hauling services worked with more than 600 local businesses to recycle or compost their waste, including electronics and other hard-to-recycle materials.



THE CLIMATE BENEFITS OF RECYCLING

Recycling, composting, and other Zero Waste practices are among the quickest and most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are driving climate change. Eco-Cycle's recycling efforts this year kept 177,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide out of the air through our operation of the Boulder County Recycling Center and the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials, equivalent to taking more than 53,000 cars off the road for a year!*

THE BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER

In FY 2019–2020, Eco-Cycle collected and processed over 60,000 tons of traditional recyclables—paper, aluminum, cardboard, and plastic containers—as operator of the Boulder County Recycling Center.



CARDBOARD
22,678 tons



PAPER
17,625 tons



GLASS
11,226 tons



PLASTIC
3,501 tons



ALUMINUM
938 tons



STEEL
1,193 tons

THE CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS (CHaRM)

Eco-Cycle collected 4.4 million pounds of materials at the CHaRM, which Eco-Cycle founded and continues to operate with support from the City of Boulder.



ELECTRONICS
797,738 lbs.



SCRAP METAL
2,045,962 lbs.



BOOKS
425,465 lbs.



PORCELAIN
58,500 lbs.



PLASTIC FILM
99,200 lbs.



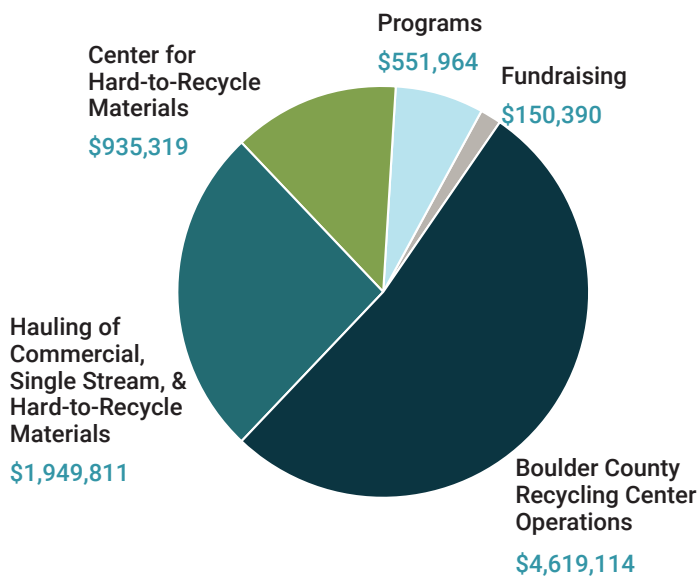
BLOCK FOAM
62,254 lbs.

*Calculated using the Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Reduction Model (WARM).

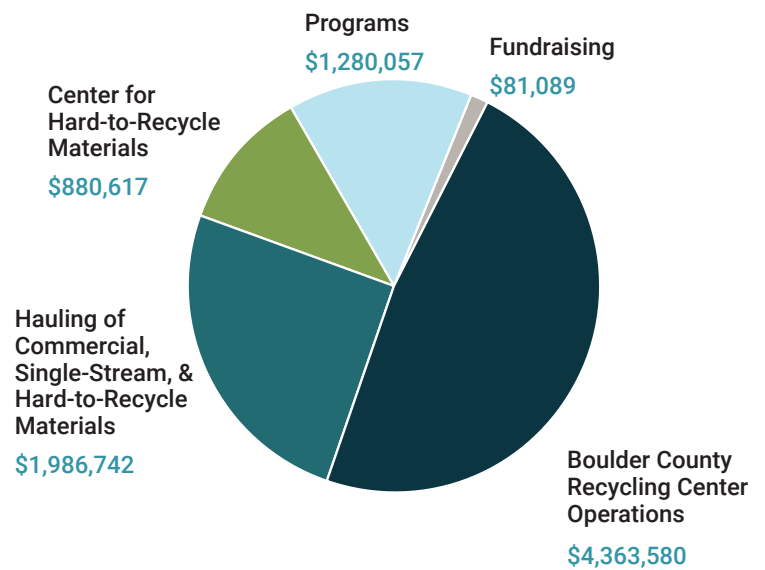
FY 2019–2020 FINANCIALS

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

REVENUES



EXPENSES



REVENUES

BCRC Operations	\$4,619,114
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, & Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,949,811
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$935,319
Programs	\$551,964
Fundraising	\$150,390

TOTAL **\$8,206,598**

EXPENSES

BCRC Operations	\$4,363,580
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, & Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,986,742
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$880,617
Programs	\$1,280,057
Fundraising	\$81,089

TOTAL **\$8,592,085**



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