

eco-cycle times

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Working to Build Zero Waste Communities

1970s and 1980s



Recyclers were asked to separate their materials in as many as eight categories.

1990s



Recyclers sorted their materials into two bins.

2008



Single-stream begins in Boulder County. This year, your two recycling bins will at last become ONE!

**Your Recycling Bin is Evolving
for the 21st Century!** see story page 1

Inside

Recycling Guidelines Pull-Out

Single-Stream Recycling is Here!

by Marti Matsch

Boulder County recycling bins are evolving for the 21st century. Depending on where you live in Boulder County, sometime this year your two recycling bins will at last become ONE. Instead of diligently separating recyclables into two “streams” — mixed paper (newspaper, junk mail, etc.) and commingled containers (bottles, cans, etc.) — recyclers whose materials go to the Boulder County Recycling Center will be able to put these two streams together in one bin. The new program is called “single-stream” recycling. It’s the future for responsible resource conservation and an important step toward meeting our goal of building a Zero Waste community by 2020.

Single-stream recycling makes it almost as easy to use the recycling bin as it is to use the trash can, so for the previously unconverted, there’s no excuse for not recycling. It also creates a significant opportunity for communities to get a lot closer to their Zero Waste goals through a revolutionary new system called Three Bin Collection. With all your recyclables collected in one can, communities and recycling haulers can plan to use the second can for compostable materials like food scraps and yard waste, making it possible for you to recover up to 80% of your discards. That leaves little need for that third can, the trash.

Single-stream is new, it’s different from how we’ve collected recyclables in the county for the last 32 years, and there are a lot of questions associated with it.



Single-stream recycling creates an opportunity for communities to implement a revolutionary new system called Three Bin Collection, as San Francisco has done. Three bins make it possible to recover up to 80% of your waste by collecting compostables, recyclables and whatever’s left.

Q: Let’s start with the basics — What is single-stream recycling?
A. Single-stream isn’t anything fancy. It simply refers to a new system that takes the two recycling “streams” collected through the Boulder curbside program — mixed paper and commingled containers — and puts them together in one bin. Voila. Single-stream. Two bins, now one. It is still important to follow the same guidelines applied to the two-bin program, except you put the two streams together.

Q: Why are we moving to single-stream?
A. Using just one collection bin for all your recyclable items increases the ease and convenience of recycling so that more people participate and

more resources are saved. We’re making recycling easier for you — at home, at work and on the go.

It offers more efficient collections for the haulers who normally have to run two recycling routes to collect the two streams. It decreases the most costly part of recycling programs as well as the pollution from collection vehicles. And most importantly, as we mentioned, it opens a bin up for collecting compostable materials like food scraps and yard waste. Composting these materials prevents the release of methane, a greenhouse gas 72 times more potent than carbon dioxide in the short term. Read more about the importance of keeping organics out of landfills on page 4.

Q: But I don’t mind sorting my materials. Isn’t it better for recycling if we separate them like we’ve been doing?
A. We hear you. We’ve been addicted to sorting, too. But even those of us long-term recyclers who got to participate in Boulder’s pilot single-stream program in 2006 found we became hooked on the new single-stream system once we tried it.

It is always good for recycling when the materials are properly sorted at “the source,” a.k.a. your home, school or office. And, sorting is still critical in that you make absolutely sure you’re recycling only the items accepted. It is also good for recycling if ever-increasing amounts of material are kept out of the landfill and sold in good clean condition to the remanufacturing companies

that make new products from recycled material. Single-stream helps to increase this volume of materials.

Q: How are the materials separated?
A. The Boulder County Recycling Center has installed new sorting equipment to automatically sort many of the materials. With the new equipment, there are screens to separate “flats” (paper) from “rounds” (containers). For this reason, we ask that you do not flatten containers or the screen will sort them into the wrong bin. You can check out the new sorting equipment in person by taking a tour of the facility.

Q: Doesn’t this lower the value of the materials, and won’t there be a lot of contamination?
A. Not necessarily. One of the concerns associated with single-stream recycling is that one bin tends to encourage people to suddenly put EVERYTHING that seems recyclable in it. That’s why we need YOU to help demonstrate that a community full of educated, conscientious recyclers can make single-stream recycling a success. Please follow the guidelines carefully and check out our list of worst contaminants on this page to help us keep these problem items out.

Q: Are other communities using single-stream recycling?
A. Yes. Other communities diverting 50%, 60%, even 70% of their waste from the landfill have achieved these goals in part by switching to single-stream. Some of the communities currently using single-stream include San Francisco, Toronto, Denver, Tucson, San Jose, Philadelphia and Dallas.

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Single-Stream: Help Us Keep it Clean!

The Dirty Dozen: Worst Recycling Offenders

by Marti Matsch

One of the challenges to single-stream recycling is the increase in contamination. Folks tend to get a little recycling happy, tossing additional items into the bin. But, sending us non-recyclable materials jeopardizes the success of the whole program. Eco-Cycle and Boulder County are working to meet a high standard for single-stream processing — our goal is to sell our recyclables to the same markets we did in 2007 when we were all doing “two-stream” collections, and marketing some of the cleanest materials in the country.

Please help make single-stream recycling a success by carefully following the guidelines and

helping us keep non-recyclable contaminants out. (Please see guidelines on page C of the pull-out section.) Below is our Dirty Dozen hit list of the worst recycling contaminants at curbside collection and drop-off centers:

1. Plastic Bags. Plastic bags are far and away the WORST contaminant in the recycling bin. They are not recyclable through the curbside program. Plastic bag markets require that these materials be clean, dry and empty. Once they go in a commingled bin, they definitely do not meet the first two criteria. Wishful recyclers who know Eco-Cycle accepts #2 and #4 plastic bags at the CHaRM (see page D) may be think-

ing bags are recovered if tossed in the recycling bin, but they are not. Mountains of wet, soiled plastic bags are pulled out by hand each week and sent to the landfill. Please keep bags out of your curbside bin and recycle them at the CHaRM or participating grocery stores!

2. Materials Bagged in Plastic Bags. The only thing worse than plastic bags are materials tied inside them. Workers need to slow the conveyor belts, rip the bags open to get recyclables out and then add the bag to the plastic pile bound for the landfill. These inefficiencies are very costly to the program.

3. Non-Recyclable Plastics. The single-stream recycling program accepts the following plastics: #1, #2 and #5 plastic bottles and jugs only and #1 plastic screw-top jars. NO: Plastic lids, #1 berry containers, etc., plastic kids’ toys,

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Plastic bags are by far the WORST contaminant in the recycling bin. Mountains of wet, soiled plastic bags are pulled out by hand each week and sent to the landfill.

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Eric Lombardi
Executive Director

“Once single-stream helps the recyclers of the world capture 80% of our discards, the ‘bury and burn’ industries that DEPEND upon mixed waste to survive will fall away as the archaic, expensive and polluting activities they truly are.”

Single-Stream and a Zero Waste Future

Single-stream recycling: It’s our big news and the next important step in building a Zero Waste community by 2020. Beginning sometime in 2008, depending on which community you live in, all recyclers sending their materials to the Boulder County Recycling Center can put all their recyclables — paper and commingled containers — in ONE BIN instead of two. The one bin system offers increased convenience, more efficient hauling and opens a bin up for collecting another important part of the waste stream — organics. In some places, single-stream has been controversial, but after years of research and industry experience, we believe the transition to single-stream and its environmental payoffs are crucial to our Zero Waste future, and Eco-Cycle and Boulder County are committed to showing how single-stream can be done correctly.

Why is single-stream important? Why is it controversial? Let’s see what past experiences and the vision for the future have taught us.

Moving Toward the Three-Bin Society

As we move toward a Zero Waste community and a serious commitment toward protecting our natural resources, we must abandon the notion and practice of tossing used resources into a garbage can that heads directly to a landfill or incinerator. The revolutionary foundation for a Zero Waste society is that we sort our discards three ways — for recycling, composting, and “whatever’s left” (i.e. garbage). That may not sound like a very fun or sexy revolution, but the day that our city, nation and world OUTLAWS the “mixed waste trash can” is the day we win a significant battle in resource conservation. The simple act of three-way sorting guarantees a flow of valuable and marketable resources (recyclables and compostables) that makes up more than 80% of what goes into the landfills and

incinerators! Sorted materials are essential for the economics of recycling and composting. Once the recyclers of the world capture 80% of our discards, the “bury and burn” industries that DEPEND upon mixed waste to survive will fall away as the archaic, expensive and polluting activities they truly are.

The single-stream recycling collection system will continue to keep “dry” recyclables out of the landfill. By consolidating these dry recyclables into one bin, we create an open bin for “wet” recyclables, or compostables.

These biodegradable materials not only create potent methane emissions when landfilled (see COOL article on p. 4), but they also contain valuable nutrients to help restore our depleted local and national soils. Compostables include obvious items such as food scraps, grass and leaves, and non-recyclable paper products like tissues and paper towels, as well as the growing number of bio-plastics made from 100% crop or plant starches rather than petroleum.

Redesigning Products for the Three Bins

After our communities convert to the Three-Bin Collection system, called “The Fantastic Three” in San Francisco, then the third bin, the “whatever’s left” garbage can, will become the focus of our attention. We will ask questions like, “What is in there?” and “Who made that product?,” “Why do I have to pay to throw it away?” and “Why can’t it be redesigned to be reusable, recyclable or compostable?” Once we focus on this last 20% of our discards, we will begin the discussions needed to solve the problem of poorly designed products by requiring industry to make non-toxic products that are 100% recyclable or compostable, as the European Union has already begun to do.

Single-Stream Controversies

So given the increased convenience and the vision of a 3-bin system, why is single-stream controversial? It’s a long story, but in a nutshell, I’ll just say that the early innovators of this approach made some mistakes that still haven’t been completely resolved. The problems are rooted in the fact that one of the largest trash companies in America launched single-stream collections as a way to reduce collection and fuel costs by up to 25%. That was a good thing, but in setting up the process, the company didn’t pay enough attention to producing a high quality material for its buyers. Broken glass pieces stuck onto recycled newspaper spelled trouble for the paper mills and their equipment, as well as the glass recyclers who lost part of their material.

The solution appears to be that the recycling processors, like Eco-Cycle and Boulder County, need to invest in the best available sorting technology, which we’re doing. We also need to operate that equipment as Eco-Cycle has for 32 years — with the aim of creating high quality recyclables for the markets to buy.

Eco-Cycle and Boulder County have set a high goal for our single-stream processing system — we are going to sell our recyclables to the same markets as we did in 2007 when we were all doing “two-stream” collections. This is setting the bar higher than anyone in the nation, but we think that the three-can collection system is so important to the world that we are going to prove that it works. We can’t do it without the help of our great recyclers throughout Boulder and Broomfield Counties, and once again we call upon you to continue to follow the guidelines and send us some of the cleanest, contaminant-free materials in the country. ♻️

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CHaRM's Earth Day Present to YOU: Bike Tire and Tube Recycling

by Dan Matsch

As you may already know, the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) adds at least one new material every year to its list of accepted “non-traditional” recyclables. There is now one more thing you won’t have to fit into your trash bag (well, two things actually) because the CHaRM’s latest addition is... bike tire and inner tube recycling!

From Bike Tires to Athletic Surfaces

To recycle bike tires, we will use the same model as the state’s automotive tire recycling system: A small fee is charged — in this case, 50 cents per bike tire — to cover the cost of collection and processing by a local tire recycler.

We have partnered with a Denver recycler who makes a rather unique product in the tire recycling industry called crumb rubber. Crumb rubber is produced by grinding up tires considerably more than the typical “shred” rubber chunks to the point where the processor is able to remove the steel and nylon. The finished rubber product is the size of pea gravel or smaller and is used for walking and jogging paths or athletic surfaces, usually with a layer of partially-melted rubber on top to seal the surface and keep the crumbs from wandering. Crumb rubber can also be mixed with sand to produce an ideal surface for horse arenas.

From Inner Tubes to Fashion Accessories

There will be no charge for recycling bike inner tubes. We have discovered a wonderful local company called Green Guru (www.greenguru.com) that focuses entirely on making cool new products from used materials. Green



Green Guru, a Boulder-based company, will reuse bike inner tubes to create fashion accessories, like courier bags and satchels.

Guru will sew the tubes together to make courier bags, satchels and cases.

As with any new material accepted at the CHaRM, we ask for your help with quality control to assure that we can meet the often stringent requirements of our new market (that’s why we call it the Center for HARD-to-Recycle Materials). In this case, it’s pretty easy: Tires must be detached from the rim (which can be recycled separately as scrap metal) and must be separated so they can be placed in different containers. We can accept all rubber bike tires and all rubber bike inner tubes. Puncture-resistant tubes or tubes that have puncture-mending “slime” in them will be collected separately so we ask that you let our window staff know if that is what you have. We cannot accept any other type of tire or tube.

If your old bike tires and tubes usually end up with the bike mechanic at a local shop, ask the shop to call us to find out how to participate in the program. ♻️

Click it! 🔍 Check out the recycling of bike inner tubes at www.greenguru.com.

Have questions about other hard-to-recycle items not accepted at the CHaRM? Visit www.ecocycle.org and choose your item from the upper right-hand scroll menu for recycling, reuse or disposal options.

Single-Stream continued from page 1

Q: Won't the paper get wet if I recycle my commingled containers with the paper? Doesn't that make the paper non-recyclable?
A. The paper mills allow up to 5% moisture in the paper they buy from Eco-Cycle, so it's not a problem. As always, we do ask that you empty and rinse all your containers to keep food contamination out of your bin. But moisture will not ruin the paper. Part of the recycling process for remanufacturing paper includes water, so it is not a contaminant.

Q: Which towns will go to single-stream?
A. Whether single-stream will come to YOUR house will depend on whether your town is participating and when it plans to switch to single-stream. The Lafayette City Council decided last year that its residents should have single-stream, so they converted last October. Boulder is planning to make the switch, as is Longmont and unincorporated Boulder County. In the case of other areas where residents subscribe to collection service individually, it will

depend upon the individual haulers as to whether they will switch their customers to single-stream. It's important to ask your hauler if they take your recyclables to YOUR publicly-owned Boulder County Recycling Center.

Q: How will I know when single-stream comes to my home?
A. In the communities mentioned above, your bin will tell you. In most cases, single-stream will require new, larger recycling bins that will be delivered to your home by your hauler. In Longmont, residents already have larger bins that are divided, and the plan is to retrofit the bins with new lids and remove the divider. When the bins arrive, single-stream begins!

Q: Are there new materials with the program?
A. That depends on where you live. No new recyclable items will be added for Boulder residents — it will simply be that the materials currently collected in the commingled container bin can be mixed together with the paper bin materials.

Guideline handouts will be supplied by your hauler, in the newspaper and in many cases by volunteers in your neighborhood. Longmont's program will be expanded to include corrugated cardboard, phone books and paperboard materials like cereal boxes.

Q: I participated in the city of Boulder's pilot program where one bin was provided for single-stream and an additional bin was given to us for compostable materials like food scraps (including meat, fish, bones, dairy and fatty oils that cannot go in your typical backyard composting bin), yard waste and paper towels, tissues, etc. Are we getting that collection service again?
A. We've said it, but it's so important it bears repeating: One of the primary reasons to switch to a single-stream program is to enable a three-bin collection program — one for recyclables, one for compostables and one for "whatever's left" (garbage). Most communities already

intending to participate in single-stream also have the intention of adding compost collection service at some point in the near future. The city of Boulder is considering adding the service at the same time single-stream begins. Unincorporated Boulder County residents will get the benefits of a "pay-as-you throw" system as well as composting at the curb at the same time single-stream is implemented. Other communities are looking at adding composting service after single-stream is running smoothly, or soon there after. ♻️

Click it! 🔍

For more answers to single-stream recycling questions, visit www.ecocycle.org.

To find out how to tour the Boulder County Recycling Center and check out the new sorting equipment, visit www.bouldercountyclecycles.net.

The Dirty Dozen continued from page 1

Styrofoam cups or peanuts, plastic pots, plastic strapping or other plastics. We cannot recycle these materials.

4. Plastic Lids and Caps. Plastic caps are NOT recyclable and are a significant contaminant, both on and off the bottle. Tossed in separate from the bottle, they are not pulled out by our processing screens and contaminate both the glass and the plastic materials.

5. Caps and Lids Left on the Containers. Left on the bottle, caps and lids of all kinds are frequently keeping liquid inside the container (see hit list item #6). Please remove and recycle separately metal caps and lids. Please THROW AWAY plastic lids!

6. Liquids. Liquids trapped in containers with the lids on creates a mess at the recycling center when these materials are baled. It's difficult to compress the sealed containers and the liquid explodes all over the floor, creating a sticky stew with a stench. Please help avoid this mess and pour your liquids out before tossing the container in the bin, and please do a quick rinse of all containers to remove soda pop and other sticky leftovers.

7. Ceramics and Non-Recyclable Glass. Glass that isn't a bottle or jar should not go in the bin! Ceramic, china plates or cups, dishes, mirrors, laboratory glassware, light bulbs, Pyrex, porcelain and window glass have a different melting point and chemical composition from

container glass and ruin new glass containers. If our market sees just one contaminant like these on the top of a load of glass, the entire load will likely be rejected.

8. Diapers and Other Bio-Hazardous Waste. Diapers and other sanitary items are not recyclable, and, of course, neither are the biohazards that come with them.

9. Shredded Paper. Shredded paper is too small to sort — the pieces literally fall through the cracks of the sorting machines and end up all over the floor of the facility, or worse, in with the glass. Recyclers are encouraged to avoid shredding except when absolutely necessary, and to compost shredded materials when and if you have access to curbside composting.

10. Hazardous Waste. Hazardous waste should be taken to the Boulder County Household Hazardous Waste facility. See page D for more information.

11. Scrap Metal. Scrap metal items of all sizes cannot go in the curbside bin because they can damage sorting equipment. Please take these materials to either the Boulder or Longmont drop-off centers. See page B for locations.

12. Frozen Food Boxes. Paperboard boxes that were designed for freezer foods have a coat of a plastic polymer sprayed on them to protect against freezer burn. That same coating prevents the box from breaking up in the recycling process. These materials are not recyclable or compostable. ♻️

Nutrient-rich Microbe Brew Compost Tea is Back!

by Iris Sela



Depleted soils, dry heat, little rainwater, pests, weeds — Colorado summers don't exactly create ideal garden conditions. But don't fret: Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew is now on sale for its fourth season! Packed with live microbes from worm castings (a.k.a. worm "poop"), this Brew has been proven to retain moisture in your soil, save water and yield more plentiful and more pest-resistant plants.

Unlike conventional plant foods you'll find at the store, which act as an "IV" to transfer artificial nutrients directly to your plants, Microbe Brew infuses your soil with millions of live microbes, as well as minerals and nutrients naturally found in worm castings, giving your plants an ideal habitat. The Brew will convert your dirt into nutritious soil and will keep your plants happy and healthy.

The Brew is easy to use: Just sprinkle some on your lawn, garden beds and potted plants with a standard watering can. Then, thoroughly moisten the soil with water. Be sure to use the Brew within 24 hours of purchase. (Remember, the Brew is alive!) One gallon of Microbe Brew covers 200-400 square feet; five gallons cover an average city lot.

Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew is a great example of how food scraps that often end up in the trash can become a vital natural resource for improving local soils. Organic materials break down anaerobically (without oxygen) in the landfill and produce methane — a greenhouse gas 72 times more potent than CO₂ over a short period. (See "Are Your Food Scraps and Yard Waste Heating the Planet" article on page 4). When composted, these organic materials break down aerobically with light and water, avoiding methane and allowing for their eventual transformation into nutrient-rich soil.

Red worms (*Eisenia fetida*, or compost worms) aid in the composting process by eating the food scraps as they decompose and excreting stable little balls of nutrients, or castings, readily available for uptake by your plant roots. These castings are great soil amendments by themselves, but they also contain a wide cross-section of beneficial microbial life.

Eco-Cycle then "brews" these castings in highly-oxygenated water under conditions that are conducive to the rapid reproduction of the microbes. (This is why you may hear the Brew referred to as compost tea.) When applied, the finished Brew immediately gives a huge boost to the microbial

populations of your soil. For the best long-term results, incorporate compost or any kind of mulch (lawn clippings, leaves, wood chips, or bark) into all your growing spaces to provide a continuous source of organic matter for the microbes to eat.

Thanks to a grant from the Ludwick Family Foundation, Eco-Cycle keeps 100,000 red worms on-site in our state-of-the-art, solar powered, custom-made "Flow-Through Worm Digester," which separates the food and worms from the castings for easy brewing.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce city of Boulder water customers can cash in again this year on a 50% discount on Microbe Brew generously offered by the Boulder Water Conservation Office. Because of the Brew's ability to hold water in the soil and reduce evaporation, the Water Conservation Office is encouraging its use as a water-saving measure. Simply show a recent Boulder water bill, or a Boulder I.D., when you purchase the tea to receive your discount. If you are not a Boulder water customer, just clip the coupon on this page!

Where to Purchase Microbe Brew
Microbe Brew is available from April to late August at the following locations:

Boulder Farmers' Market
Look for the big yellow and blue Eco-Cycle banner on our tent near the middle of the market.
13th St. between Arapahoe and Canyon
Saturdays ONLY from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM)
5030 "old" Pearl St., Boulder (see map on page D)
Wednesdays ONLY from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Prices
\$25/5 gallons
\$6/gallon
\$2.50/quart

Interested in large quantities? Contact us for more information at 303-444-6634.

A refundable container deposit of \$.50 (\$5 for a 5-gallon container) will be charged at purchase. ♻️

COMPOST TEA COUPON

50% off Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew

Water your soil with life!

Please present this coupon when you visit us at the Boulder Farmers' Market or the CHaRM.

Click it! 🔍

For more information about composting and details on Microbe Brew applications for specific plant types, visit www.ecocycle.org and click on "Composting."

Zero Waste Around the World

by Kate Mangione

Brazil Negotiates on Zero Waste: Our Way or the Highway

In the southern Brazilian state of Paraná, officials took the first in what could be a series of actions against manufacturers whose products and packaging are not complying with the state’s Zero Waste goal. Tetra Pak, the manufacturer of aseptic packaging, or long-life packaging as it’s known in Brazil, was told to solve the recycling problems of its packaging or face drastic action, including a purported state ban on the sale of its foiled-lined, plastic-coated paper cartons. Tetra Pak chose to deal, proposing a series of incentives to increase the collection of aseptic packaging among waste pickers and its purchasing among regional cooperatives, launching an educational campaign and sponsoring 1,000 solar hot water heaters designed from discarded aseptic containers and plastic PET bottles. Paraná’s Zero Waste program head also expressed interest in cutting deals with other manufacturers to establish take-back programs for paper, plastic bags, tires, batteries, fluorescent lamps, glass, motor oil and civil construction materials. From the state’s perspective, manufacturers are on one side or the other of the state’s Zero Waste goals, and it’s time for everyone to show their colors.

Garbage Crisis Shames Naples

Knee-deep piles of garbage on every street is not why people visit Italy’s third largest city, but it’s quickly becoming the infamy of Naples thanks to government inefficiency, corruption and the fierce opposition of local populations to siting landfills. Since May 2007, trash service has been intermittent at best, at times stopping for more than three weeks. Protests on the streets and a mounting public health crisis prompted Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi to twice call upon the army to clear the streets, calling the problem “a shame for the whole of Italy.” While temporary solutions to export garbage to Sardinia and Germany are now in place, Naples still has a long way to go to match the more than 600 communities in Italy now recovering more than 50% of their discards with door-to-door collection programs. Some Italian communities reached 75% recovery in as little as 18 months, which gives Naples hope. However, the mafia-dominated trash industry is proving a formidable obstacle.

One Can, Two Can, Red Can... New Can

The Coke vs. Pepsi debate is over. Well, at least among recyclers, now that Coca-Cola has committed to the long-term recycling or reusing 100% of its aluminum cans and #1 PET bottles. Although both aluminum and PET are highly valued recyclables, less than 50% of aluminum cans and only 30% of soft drink bottles were recycled in 2006, according to the EPA. Coke’s pledge includes building the world’s largest PET processing plant to manufacture new bottles from old bottles in closed-loop

fashion. Recyclers have battled the bottling giant for years, first to commit to 10% recycled content in its bottles and then to honor its commitment, so there’s a little skepticism surrounding the timeline of the goals. Nonetheless, the message to Pepsi is clear: Step up or get out of the fridge.

This is Your Brain on Drugs. These are our Fish on Drugs. Any Questions?

Antibiotics, acetaminophen, antidepressants... what sounds like a tour through your medicine cabinet is actually a partial list of 82 contaminants found in U.S. waterways. Since removing these fire retardants, steroids, plasticizers, reproductive hormones, painkillers, and antibiotics from the water is nearly impossible, the best thing to do is to look upstream to where these pollutants originate. One large source is expired meds flushed down the toilet. To offer residents a better disposal option, Washington state launched a pilot program in 2006 to test the feasibility of returning prescription drugs to retail pharmacies for proper disposal, modeled after a successful take-back program in British Columbia. Recent California legislation paved the way for the state to develop a similar collection system. Those of us in the Rocky Mountain region can stay tuned for pilot collections in our area or follow the recommended disposal guidelines on our website at www.ecocycle.org/htrg.

Industry Leaders Emerge among Tide of Green Efforts

Trees everywhere will stand a little taller and a little longer thanks to a commitment by office supply giant Staples. The company will use 50% post-consumer recycled content paper — certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) — for black and white copy and print jobs at all of its 1400 copy centers. Staples also cut ties with a Singapore-based paper supplier after accusations over illegal logging practices in China and Singapore.

Whole Foods captured the media spotlight for its decision to stop distributing single-use plastic bags at checkout, but the grocer was merely following the impetus of furniture retailer IKEA who pioneered charging customers 5 cents per plastic bag in March 2007. Ikea will also phase out plastic bags in 2008. IKEA is still the only retailer to take responsibility for recycling compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs at no charge, and has been humbly incorporating environmental standards such as phasing out polyvinyl chloride (PVC), simplifying packaging and aiming for 90% material recovery for nearly a decade. ♻️

Are Your Food Scraps and Yard Waste Heating the Planet?

Imagine how difficult it would be to shut down 20% of our coal-fired power plants in an effort to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions. Now imagine how much less difficult it would be to divert all biodegradable materials from our landfills and send the materials to compost facilities instead. Many of our community partners are already doing this, and according to new research by Eco-Cycle, the short-term climate impact is the same!



Methane is now understood to be 72 times more potent than CO₂ over a 20-year period. This means our landfills emit the greenhouse gas equivalent of 20% of U.S. coal-fired power plants every year!

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from vehicles and utilities have been identified as major culprits in global climate change. But recent re-evaluations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and their impacts reveal yet another source just as significant as tailpipes and smokestacks, and it’s hiding in the corner of every home, school and office in America—the trash can.

When biodegradable materials such as paper products, food scraps and yard trimming are tossed in the garbage and sent to the landfill, those lettuce heads, grass clippings and paper boxes don’t just break down as they would in nature or in a compost pile. They decompose anaerobically, without oxygen, and in the process become the number one source of human-caused methane and a major player in climate change. In fact, methane is now understood to be 72 times more potent than CO₂ over a 20-year period. This means our landfills emit the greenhouse gas equivalent of 20% of U.S. coal-fired power plants every year!

We face a rapidly closing window of opportunity before greenhouse gas emissions reach a tipping point and the effects of global climate change severely alter life on Earth. Groundbreaking research by Eco-Cycle, supported by a local National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) expert, has shown that the immediate focus of our climate efforts should be powerful gases with short atmospheric lifetimes, such as methane, which offer big, immediate GHG reductions. Based on data from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we believe keeping organic materials out of the landfill and avoiding potent methane emissions to be the quickest, easiest and cheapest first step for a community to immediately reduce its GHG emissions while working toward longer-term reduction strategies.

That’s why Eco-Cycle, in partnership with BioCycle, the leading national magazine for the composting industry, and the GrassRoots Recycling Network (GRRN), launched the Compostable Organics Out of Landfills by 2012 (COOL 2012) campaign in April 2008. The goal of the COOL 2012 campaign is to show communities they can achieve significant climate results RIGHT NOW by PREVENTING landfill-produced methane.

Turning a Global Warming Problem into a Soil Solution

The landfilling of organic materials not only contributes to global climate change — it also wastes the carbon and nutrients our

soils so desperately need to sustain our society. Intensive farming and shortsighted land use management have been spewing GHGs into the atmosphere for more than 100 years. These practices have contributed one-third of the increase in atmospheric CO₂ while



stripping our soils of carbon and other essential nutrients. Rather than applying compost and other organic material to replenish the soil, modern industrial agriculture relies upon huge quantities of polluting petroleum-based, energy-intensive, greenhouse gas-generating fertilizers to produce crops on declining lands. Soils hold twice the carbon stocks of plants. Releasing this carbon through tilling means the soil now contributes to, rather than protects against, global warming. It also compromises the ability of soil to grow our food.

Simply by “getting COOL by 2012,” we can prevent potent methane emissions and build healthier soils. Taking the COOL step replenishes carbon stocks and supports sustainable agriculture, yielding healthier foods for our population. The technology exists, the need is certain and the time to act is NOW. ♻️

Join the COOL 2012 Campaign

Eco-Cycle has partnered with other national organizations to launch the COOL 2012 campaign (Compostable Organics Out of Landfills by 2012) to help communities understand that keeping organic materials out of landfills is the quickest, easiest and cheapest first step they can take to immediately reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

What can your community do? There are four COOL solutions:

1. **Seize the Paper.** Commit to recycling a minimum of 75% of all paper and composting low-grade paper products by 2012.
2. **Source Separate.** Require source separation of residential and business waste into three streams: compostables, recyclables and residuals.
3. **Feed Local Soils.** Support local farmers and sustainable food production with community composting infrastructure.
4. **Stop Creating Methane.** Public policy-makers need to first support the elimination of methane by requiring source separation of compostables and recyclables. Technology to capture methane releases should be used only at existing sources where organics have already been buried.

Click it! 🌐 Take action and join the COOL campaign by visiting www.cool2012.com.

Boulder Valley School District Middle Schools Cut Cafeteria Waste

by Mark Wesson

It's lunchtime. After Sarah finishes her pizza, fruit and milk, she walks over to the trash to throw out not just her leftovers, but the whole tray. Hundreds of her middle school classmates follow suit after using their disposables lunch items just once for about 20 minutes. The trash cans overflow with waste: Polystyrene foam that will produce pollutants and stay in a local landfill for thousands of years; plastic that will leach toxins into our environment; and food scraps, paperboard and napkins that will contribute to global warming by emitting methane as they break down. That's the scene in most schools across the country... but no longer in Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) middle schools.

Thanks to a grant from the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division, middle schools in BVSD are partnering with Eco-Cycle to reduce lunchroom waste by reintroducing reusable trays that were used in the lunchrooms until a few years ago, when they were replaced with disposables. Boulder County funded the grant for \$6,500 to purchase the new trays, while BVSD will cover the cost of washing them.

Both the Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts have for years been part of Eco-Cycle's award-winning Boulder County School Recycling and Environmental Education program, learning to reduce waste and resource consumption. And while these schools traditionally use fewer disposable items in their cafeterias



BVSD middle schools are switching from disposable lunch trays to reusable, washable trays. It is a simple change that is expected to reduce lunchroom waste by 60%.

than most schools in the nation, BVSD's switch from using disposable foam and paper products to reusable trays in the middle schools will significantly reduce even more of the waste generated by each school. Lunchroom waste has been reduced by 60% in schools that have already converted!

This is a real-life demonstration of how one simple change can transform a wasteful trash system into a reuse system, and have a significant impact on the environment by preventing pollution and saving natural resources.

Eco-Cycle staff will educate the school community on the environmental benefits of using the new trays and will work with a student sponsor group at each school to create banners, posters and announcements to alert the entire student body and faculty of each school to the new changes. The new program provides a great opportunity to re-invigorate students' waste reduction habits and emphasize the importance of the 3R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

By empowering our youth with knowledge and awareness of their actions, we ensure an environmentally-literate society for the future. As Boulder County takes initiatives toward becoming a Zero Waste community, every system modification we make along the way brings us closer to our goal of setting a standard for other communities across the nation. ♻️

Reducing Lunchtime Trash

Much of a school's waste is generated at lunch time. If your student brings lunch to school, try packing it to create as little trash as possible.

Here are some tips:

- Use a reusable lunch bag or lunch box
- Store food in reusable containers
- Bring drinks in refillable or recyclable containers
- Reuse plastic bags
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper
- Pack reusable utensils

Click it! 🔍

Find more litterless lunch tips online at www.ecocycle.org or buy a waste-free lunch kit at www.laptoplunches.com

The Longmont Farmers' Market Goes Zero Waste!

by Iris Sela



As you enter the Longmont Farmers' Market this year, along with the usual fresh produce and other goodies from your local farmers, you'll notice something quite new: You'll be entering a Zero Waste Zone! That means all the waste generated at the market will now be reusable, compostable or recyclable.

The market joins only a handful of other ongoing Zero Waste events in the country (The Boulder Farmers' Market was the first!) thanks to a County Outreach Program grant from the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division.

As you wander through the market, you won't find trash bins. They've been replaced with Zero Waste Stations for recycling and compost.

And you won't find a plastic cup or fork. Instead, you'll find special compostable table- and silverware that look and feel just like traditional plastics. These materials — plates, cups, straws, lids and utensils — are actually made from plant and crop starches! Eco-Cycle and the city of Longmont have required all of the market's vendors to step away from the non-recyclable plastic-ware used previously and to adhere to Zero Waste practices and use only these compostables items.

So, unlike the millions of disposable food service items that end up in the landfill and stay there for thousands of years polluting our land,

air and groundwater, these materials are composted along with your food scraps and napkins. Thus, they will return to the earth in the form of soil nutrients, turning a trash problem into a soil solution!

At each food vendor's booth, you will see signs assuring you that the vendor is on board with the market's mission, using only Zero Waste products. They've done their part, and you'll need to do yours by making sure your materials go in the right bins: Each Zero Waste Station has a detailed picture guide to help you decide what goes where.

Because the market is now a Zero Waste Zone, we kindly ask that you "pack in and pack out" any trash you may have. And, to reduce waste even further, we suggest bringing a sturdy reusable shopping bag if you plan on bringing home any goodies. When you visit a Zero Waste Station, look for Eco-Cycle staffers in bright turquoise shirts. They will be happy to answer any questions you may have about Zero Waste at the market, in the community and beyond! ♻️

Click it! 🔍

For more information about how to make any event Zero Waste, visit www.ecocycle.org and click on the 'Zero Waste Event Kit' link.

Eco-Cycle Welcomes New Zero Waste Businesses

If you choose to support stores, hotels, restaurants and companies that are committed to environmental stewardship, then you'll be happy to know that a growing number of businesses in Boulder and Broomfield Counties are engaging in green business practices by signing up for Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Services program! In 2007, the efforts of businesses partnering with Eco-Cycle resulted in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions equal to 5,454 metric tons of carbon equivalent through recycling and composting. The new year brought an influx of businesses declaring their Zero Waste intent and commitment to sustainability in 2008.

Join Eco-Cycle in welcoming aboard the latest wave of businesses that are working with us to help our community achieve its goal of becoming a model for Zero Waste.

Zero Waste Businesses — Using 100% Collection Services and Waste Reduction Strategies
Alem International
Backpacker Magazine
Boulder Valley Credit Union

Kehilatah Aish Kodesh
Living Design Studios
National Wildlife Federation
Rocky Mountain Insitute
Studio Mews
Webroot Software

Working Toward Zero Waste — Composting & Recycling
Architectural Energy Corp.
Gaiaam
HVS
Kelty Pack, Inc.
Sierra Designs
Slumberjack

Working Toward Zero Waste — Composting Only
Hillel Council of Colorado
Organica Café & Espresso Bar ♻️



Zero Waste Business Profiles

by Erin Makowsky

You recycle and compost at home by the glow of CFLs, shop with canvas bags, host Zero Waste parties and pedal your way around town. You do everything you can to support a Zero Waste community, so you expect the businesses you support to do the same. But how can you tell who's doing their part? Look for Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Community Partner stickers in the windows of participating businesses to know which local companies are trashing their wasteful ways and moving beyond recycling with Zero Waste. Our business partners are environmental leaders and Zero Waste pioneers who recycle traditional and hard-to-recycle materials, compost, purchase Zero Waste products and set ambitious waste minimization and resource conservation goals. We're proud of all our partners, and here we highlight four local businesses making remarkable headway in sustainability.

Amadeus Consulting

Location: Boulder
Number of employees: 50
www.amadeusconsulting.com

Program: Imagine a local business with 50 employees in a 10,000-square-foot building, sharing a single printer and generating one bag of trash each week. At Amadeus Consulting,



John Basso, Chief Operations Officer at Amadeus Consulting, recycles a small box in the company break room where compost, recycling and trash share equal space. Thanks to comprehensive Zero Waste Services for businesses, "Eco-Cycle makes this easy," Basso says.

"trash" talk is common, solutions to further waste reduction are encouraged, and the proof is in the can. This computer consulting firm composts and goes beyond basic recycling by collecting hard-to-recycle materials like #2 and #4 plastic bags, #6 white block foam and electronics. John Basso, Amadeus Consulting's Chief Operations Officer, says the company removes waste at the source. According to

Basso, by replacing disposable products with reusables, reducing paper use and utilizing Eco-Cycle's comprehensive Zero Waste Services, greening-up has become a point of pride. "Everybody could do this," Basso says.

With a year and a half of Zero Waste success behind them, the energetic and committed staff at Amadeus Consulting pushes the envelope for sustainability initiatives, taking them closer to zero.

Boulder Valley Credit Union

Location: Boulder
Number of employees: 45
www.wecarecolorado.com

Program: The Boulder Valley Credit Union (BVCU) helps members put their money where their mouths are by allowing them to partner with a bank using and promoting sustainable business practices.



Executive Assistant Jamie Pohlman, left, and Business Development Coordinator LeAnn Faulkner exhibit the Boulder Valley Credit Union's recycling station in the Arapahoe Avenue branch.

When the BVCU began Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Services program in November 2007, all levels of operation were analyzed to identify areas for waste reduction and energy and water conservation. The result: BVCU's main branch on Arapahoe Avenue is a leading model for Zero Waste in Boulder County. The building is outfitted with solar panels, energy-efficient windows and 100% collection of recyclables, compostables and "whatever's left." In addition, BVCU uses its purchasing power to facilitate its Zero Waste goals by printing all marketing materials on uncoated, 30% post-consumer office paper and offering an energy-efficient light bulb to new members.

BVCU is certified by Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE) and was awarded a silver medal by the Colorado CleanTech Initiative at the 2008 Sustainable Opportunities Summit.



WhiteWave employees use a Zero Waste station to sort their leftovers and reusable dinnerware in a café at the company's corporate headquarters in Broomfield.

WhiteWave Foods Company

Location: Broomfield
Number of employees: More than 400
www.whitewave.com

Program: Broomfield-based WhiteWave Foods Company not only encourages employees to minimize their environmental footprint at and outside of work, it rewards them for doing so! Values In Action (VIA), an employee-driven program promoting volunteerism, community engagement and environmental initiatives, uses a point system to provide incentives and rewards for employees who participate in activities that support the company's mission. "WhiteWave's commitment to Zero Waste at work has inspired me to strive toward Zero Waste at home," says employee Jill Apter. "I have become increasingly aware of decisions that I make regarding packaging of the food I buy in my personal life and have even looked into a home composting system."

In addition, WhiteWave's café supplies reusable dishware, compostable to-go containers and free reusable bags. The kitchen crew uses non-toxic cleaning solutions, and Zero Waste stations are conveniently located and enthusiastically utilized.

WhiteWave also offers educational sessions for all staff members on topics including sustainability and the 6R's: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair and Rebuy.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder

Location: Boulder
Number of employees: 5
www.uucboulder.org

Program: For more than a year, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder has partnered with Eco-Cycle and set the pace for Zero Waste, creating a sustainability model for religious institutions everywhere. Waste reduction and resource conservation are tied to the church's mission for actively promoting its values in Boulder and beyond. The church shows its environmental commitment by hosting Zero Waste social hours, religious education and other organized events.

In 2007, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder saved 19 cubic yards of landfill space



Bob Ford, board member for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, stands next to his custom-made compostables sign during social time after a Sunday service.

by recycling and composting, thus preventing the release of 121 cubic feet of methane. Furthermore, the composting efforts of church staff and congregation members have resulted in the diversion of 1.56 tons of organic waste from the landfill. ♻️

Photos by David Reindel

Eco-Cycle's 2008 Zero Waste Community & Business Award Nominees and Winners

Eco-Cycle's mission is to build a model Zero Waste community to share with the rest of the world. We're working in all sectors of the community to change our throw-away society into one we can hand down to the next generation. We're proud of all our Zero Waste community partners, but this year on Earth Day we recognized some of the best efforts being made toward Zero Waste.

Eco-Cycle Zero Waste Community & Business Award nominees and winners are:



Businesses. Our Zero Waste business partners are working to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost all their discards, and make environmentally-sustainable purchasing decisions through Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Services for businesses. A

panel of community judges selected a winner in the two categories listed below. The winners were not announced when we went to print, so here are the finalists in each of our two categories:

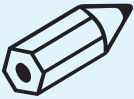
Going for Zero Waste... or Darn Near!

REI, St. Julien Hotel & Spa, Door to Door Organics, A Spice of Life, Amadeus Consulting, Friends of Jared Polis, La Sportiva

Outstanding Composting and Recycling Program

Naropa University, Gaiam, WhiteWave Foods Co., V.G. Burgers, The Stone Cup, Cheba Hut, Phil's Fresh Foods, GoLite, Boulder County Courthouse

Schools. Essential to our success is teaching the next generation through Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program. This year, we recognized



10 of our newer Green Star Schools that have completed at least three semesters in the program:

Niwot Elementary, Foothill Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Creekside Elementary, Heatherwood Elementary, Nederland Elementary, Mesa Elementary, Columbine Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary and Lyons Elementary

Eco-Cycle Volunteers. More than 800 volunteers bring Zero Waste information to their communities. Here are our volunteer winners in



their respective communities: **Boulder** - Pete Palmer; **Broomfield** - Sallie Bolich; **Lafayette** - Lisa Bailey; **Louisville** - Annie Hughes; **Longmont** - Shari Malloy; **Superior** - Kathy Carty-Mullen

Zero Waste Community Event. 5430 Sports Triathlon Series



In 2007, 5430 Sports made a commitment to Zero Waste at each event in their triathlon series. Their three events recycled or composted an average of 93% of discards by weight!

Local Governments. The planning decisions made by our local government leaders are essential to our mission. Many of our local governments made great strides with new policies and practices that will help their populations get closer to Zero Waste. The local government Zero Waste award went to the **City of Lafayette** and its Public Works Director **Doug Short** for creating the city's first universal curbside recycling program. The new program started right off



with single-stream recycling, making theirs the first community in the county to do so.



Mary Wolff Zero Waste Community Leader Award. In honor of Mary Wolff, our longest-standing board member and one of our founders, we presented the Mary Wolff Zero Waste Community Leader Award. This award went to **Will Toor, Boulder County Commissioner**, for his leadership in making Boulder County one of the first communities in the nation to adopt a Zero Waste resolution. Through his tenure on the Boulder City Council and as a County Commissioner, Will has been a true visionary Zero Waste champion. ♻️

Click it! 🔍

Read more about our winners and community partners online! Visit us at www.ecocycle.org.

Thank you to the following donors who contributed to Eco-Cycle from October 4, 2007 - April 14, 2008.

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Founders’ Society In 1976, Eco-Cycle rolled out a fleet of old school buses onto Boulder streets to collect recyclables. The vision of our founders made us part of the dawning of recycling in America. Today, Eco-Cycle is a leader in the new revolution in resource conservation: Zero Waste. The following individuals are part of the Eco-Cycle Founders’ Society, a group of loyal supporters who have committed to annual gifts of \$1,000 or more. Cindy Carlisle Lee Ann Cast Deborah Crowell Steve Demos & Sheryl Lamb Bradley Feld & Amy Batchelor Richard Matsch	Sally Parsons David & Janet Robertson Edwin L. Wolff Mary Wolff Eriks Ziemelis
Zero Waste Champions The following individuals have chosen to make an automatic, monthly contribution to Eco-Cycle. Their continual commitment and generosity help sustain our mission to build Zero Waste communities. Christina & Jeremy Haley Jabe Hickey Janet & William Kuepper Linda Silverthorn	

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Take Action for Zero Waste!

In this issue of the *Eco-Cycle Times*, you'll find many ways to strive for Zero Waste at home, at work, at school and in your community:

- Educate yourself about the new single-stream program and learn the most important materials we need you to keep OUT of the bin to make single-stream a success. (p. 1)
- Recycle your bike tires and bike tubes at the CHaRM. (p. 3)
- Are your food scraps and grass clippings heating the planet? Join the national COOL 2012 campaign: Compostable Organics Out of Landfills by 2012. (p. 4)
- Support BVSD's new program to replace all disposable cafeteria trays with reusable trays, cutting lunchroom waste by at least 60%! (p. 5)
- Patronize one of the many businesses working toward Zero Waste with Eco-Cycle. (p. 5, 6)
- Find out the winners of this year's Zero Waste Community & Business Awards. (p. 6)

You can also make a personal, tax-deductible contribution to Eco-Cycle. Your gift will support Eco-Cycle's work to build a model Zero Waste community for the world.

To donate, please clip the coupon below or visit www.ecocycle.org.

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