

eco-cycle TIMES

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Eco-Cycle's Mission:

We believe in individual and community action to transform society's throw-away ethics into environmentally responsible stewardship.

Our mission is to provide publicly-accountable recycling, conservation and education services, and to identify, explore and demonstrate the emerging frontiers of sustainable resource management.

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle

Unveiling a New Eco-Cycle and a New Plan

Dear Reader,

This Eco-Cycle Times is unlike any we've written in the past. Eco-Cycle is excited to announce we are broadening our efforts—both locally and internationally—to go beyond recycling to “Zero Waste...Or Darn Near.” Zero Waste is a philosophy that includes maximum recycling, but adds the critical new element of re-designing the products of our world so that they can be easily and economically recovered for recycling.

This issue of the Eco-Cycle Times is our vision for moving our community toward becoming a model for Zero Waste. You will read about the on-the-ground plans for each Eco-Cycle department, why our community is uniquely qualified to become a model for Zero Waste, and why other communities across the globe are looking to us to do it. Best of all, you will learn how you can help get us there.

Eco-Cycle's new plan challenges big industry to do better. In keeping with our legacy of pioneering the creation of the recycling industry, we are now focusing on the next big step forward – bringing industry into the solution of preventing the destruction of our natural world by re-designing their products to be less toxic and resource consuming, and to be easily and cost-effectively recycled. The missing link is to make industry responsible – legally, financially and physically – for the end-of-life management of the products they sell. It's amazing how industries will change their ways when they're required to “eat their own smoke,” so to speak.

Finally, Eco-Cycle is announcing the creation of our new Eco-Cycle International program. We are responding to increasing requests from around the world to bring our brand of success and “lessons learned” out to them, and we are bringing home all the cutting-edge successes of other nations and communities. Our staff, working hard here at home, will be helping you live a waste-free life that will be a model not only for our children, but for the children of the world.

Eco-Cycle

Creating a Zero Waste Model for the World in Boulder and Broomfield Counties

A Vision for a Sustainable Future

The Root of the Problem: An Old System in a New World

In the late 19th Century, at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, natural resources in this country were abundant – seemingly inexhaustible – and our nation's population was relatively small. The U.S. government spent money buying land, building roads and rail, and establishing energy and water utilities to provide industry with incentives to fuel our economy with the unbridled use of natural resources. The systems for handling society's “waste” from all this activity were simple – material was either buried or burned.

Today, more than 100 years later, our world is a very different place. Natural resources are now scarce and our population has increased dramatically, yet we continue to use the destruction of the environment as the engine for economic growth, investing tax dollars in archaic policies that reward wasteful and polluting practices.

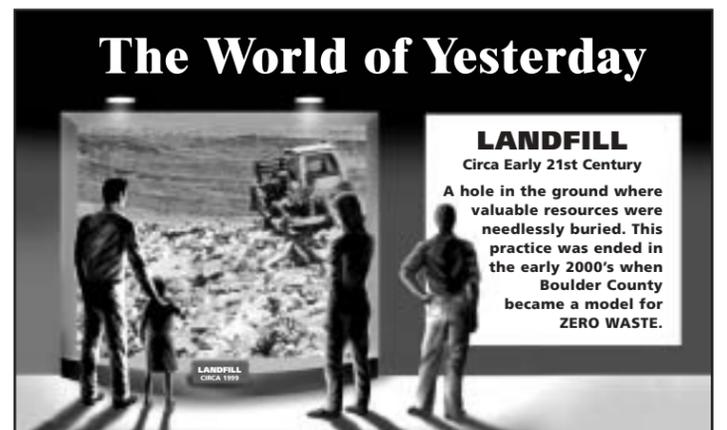
We see the consequences in the news every day. From increasing temperatures and dwindling resources to loss of species and habitats, nearly every significant indicator of ecological system health on our planet is in decline. Coupled with environmental decline is the rise of human health problems ranging from asthma to cancer.

We can no longer afford to plunder our natural resources for short-lived products that are then buried in a landfill or burned in an incinerator – especially in this era when the synthetic and toxic materials in our modern products are winding up in the waste stream, the environment and ultimately our own bodies.

The Solution: A New System

Waste and the destructive use of natural resources is not inevitable, they are the result of poor design and bad public policy decisions. In the system Eco-Cycle envisions, public policy is set to financially reward manufacturers for designing and offering products and services that are environmentally-friendly and that can be reused, recycled or composted. Manufacturers are required to take responsibility for the end-of-life management of their products, making them the key player in the infrastructure that makes it easy to collect and recirculate materials throughout the economy. The idea of designing waste out of our world is a fundamental shift in how we value and manage our natural resources, and we have a name for it: Zero Waste...Or Darn Near.

Zero Waste is happening in bits and pieces all around the world, but what is urgently needed is for one community to comprehensively model Zero Waste programs and principles so that Zero Waste can be more quickly and easily comprehended and adopted locally, nationally, and internationally. Our community and our organization are recognized internationally as being uniquely suited to play this role because of our distinctive successes over the past 28 years. In fact, those at the forefront of the



global Zero Waste movement have turned to Eco-Cycle and our community to provide the much-needed expertise and leadership to help develop and spread this new movement and to leverage our successes to encourage Zero Waste elsewhere.

Don't Just Recycle...Eco-Cycle

To meet this need, Eco-Cycle is excited to announce that we are broadening our efforts – both locally and internationally – to go beyond recycling towards Zero Waste. We are redefining our name to represent more than just “recycling,” but “Eco-Cycling”...the adoption of a full “eco” cycle production system that is sustainable – not only for the economy, but also for the ecology.

Eco-Cycle: (E-ko-si-ke)l n.

1. eco as in “ecology”: the totality of relations between organisms and their environment
2. eco as in “economical”: careful, efficient, and prudent use of resources; operating with little waste
3. eco as in “economic”: of, relating to, or based on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services
4. cycle: a circular arrangement

Locally, over the next six years, we will use each of our departments – Business Recycling, Schools, Composting, Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), Community Outreach, and Recycling Processing – to develop Zero Waste models. Each department will serve as an essential piece of the whole puzzle – a comprehensive, local approach to Zero Waste that can be duplicated anywhere in the world.

We are also launching our newest department, Eco-Cycle International (Eco-I), to respond to requests from outside our borders to bring our brand of success to the world, and to bring the successes of other nations and communities home to make our local programs even better.

This is the beginning of a new generation of Eco-Cycle, one that is prepared to lead the way to a more sustainable future. We'll need your help and participation to get there!



Director's Corner



Eric Lombardi
Executive Director

It is our goal to re-inspire the hope and imagination of a nation of concerned citizens by offering a sincere and exciting next step in true resource conservation that generations on the planet today will be proud to leave as a legacy for future generations. Please help us continue the legacy of our Eco-Cycle founders by joining as an Eco-Cycle member today.

A New Vision for Eco-Cycle Dedicated to the First Generation of Eco-Cyclers – THANK YOU

Eco-Cycle would not exist were it not for the efforts of some dedicated members of the community who volunteered back in 1976 to lend their different areas of expertise, financial support and labor to the creation of this organization. Many of these community supporters were savvy seniors who had years of experience in environmental activism, entrepreneurial business management, and community organizing. Having lived through the Great Depression and World War II, they knew the power of saving resources for a larger purpose. To them, reusing and recovering materials seemed common sense, and they were unwavering and undaunted in their efforts to create an organization that would launch a new system for handling our discards. It was called "recycling" and back then, that was a brand new and radical idea.

These elders are warmly known to us as our Eco-Cycle grandmothers and grandfathers. Sadly, some of them have passed on – Ann Swift, Bob Alexander, Orval Johnson, Wally Collins, Kent Savage, and Dave Paddock, to name a few. Most recently, Kay Shapley, our dear friend and one of our most significant leading lights, also passed on. Kay's influence on Eco-Cycle cannot be overstated. Simply put, Eco-Cycle would not exist without her. Her years of activism in the community helped guide Eco-Cycle to become the community-based organization that it is today. In our early years, when idealism and commitment were in abundance but financial resources were not, Kay actually covered payroll for the staff out of her own pocket.

In 1979, she started the "Block Leader" program, training hundreds of volunteers to educate and encourage their neighbors to participate in this new recycling program. Thanks to her creativity, recycling rates soared. The program was such a success that communities across the nation duplicated it and the program became a model for community organizing. Now, in Boulder and Broomfield Counties, we have nearly 800 volunteer Block Leader volunteers (now called Eco-Leaders) spreading the ethic of recycling and resource conservation wherever they go - at home, at work, at their place of worship, and at their community group gatherings. Kay was such a volunteer all the way to the end, working to spread the word on recycling and resource conservation at Frasier Meadows Manor where she lived with her husband Alan. Kay was not only a profound influence on Eco-Cycle, but on the entire Boulder County community. We will forever be thankful for her lasting contributions, and inspired by her lifetime of service and dedication.

It is with deep sadness that we say goodbye to Kay, but with extreme gratitude that we dedicate this Eco-Cycle Times and the unveiling of our new vision to her and to the many community members responsible for founding Eco-Cycle. Happily, many of our founders are still working with us, and we are very fortunate to have their continuing support for the next stage of our evolving revolution. In tribute to Kay and to our other founders, we ask for the support of the next generation of Eco-Cyclers. It is our goal to re-inspire the hope and imagination of a nation of concerned citizens by offering a sincere and exciting next step in true resource conservation that generations on the planet today will be proud to leave for those of tomorrow. And it is our intention that this vision serve as the continuation of the effort Kay and our many founders began. Kay knew that one person could make a difference. Thanks to her efforts, our community remains changed forever. Please help us continue their legacy and make history right here in our own community by becoming an Eco-Cycle member today. Fill out the form at the back of this issue, or contribute online at www.ecocycle.org.



Thank you, Kay Shapley, for all your profound contributions to Eco-Cycle and to our community. Yours is truly a life well lived. We continue forward in your spirit.



NATIONAL
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COALITION
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Contact:

Eco-Cycle, Inc.
P.O. Box 19006
Boulder, CO 80308-9006
Phone: 303-444-6634
Fax: 303-444-6647

OR

Eco-Cycle / Broomfield
225 Commerce Street, Broomfield, CO 80020
Phone: 303-404-2839
Fax: 303-404-2583

OR

Eco-Cycle / Longmont
111 S. Martin, Longmont, CO 80501
Phone: 303-772-7300
Fax: 303-772-1688

E-mail: recycle@ecocycle.org
Web site: <http://www.ecocycle.org>

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Editors:

Marti Matsch and Linda Smith

Contributing Editors:

Eric Lombardi, Kate Mangione, Caroline Mitchell and Tom Weis

Contributing Writers:

Robin Burton, Eric Lombardi, Kate Mangione, Dan Matsch, Marti Matsch and Linda Smith

Eco-Cycle Board of Directors:

Allyn Feinberg (President), Mary Blue, Ralph Bozella (Vice President), Steve Bushong, Rob deKeiffer, Sandy Hume, Joe McDonald (Treasurer), David Miller, John Tayer, Mary Wolff (Secretary), Jim Zigarelli

MANY THANKS to the following communities, businesses and individuals who have helped support Eco-Cycle events and programs:

Roche Colorado, Boulder Community Hospital, the Daily Camera, and the Broomfield Enterprise, for sponsoring Eco-Cycle's Artful ReCreations art auction fundraiser, and to **Hunter Douglas, New Belgium Brewery, Eco-Products, Conscious Media, Lakeshore Athletic Club, Gaiam, ProSigns, and Tanya Haynes** for their contributions to the event;

The City and County of Broomfield for supporting the one day Hard-to-Recycle Materials Round-Up in Broomfield;

The University of Colorado Federal Credit Union, Boulder Community Hospital, Computer Renaissance, Unwanted Appliances, and Hunter Douglas for sponsoring the Fourth Edition of Eco-Cycle's Guide to Hard-to-Recycle Materials;

McStain Neighborhoods for sponsoring a special collection of block Styrofoam;

The Flagstaff House Restaurant, the Boulder Cork, Boulder Co-op Market, Mateo Restaurant, Third Street Chai, and Boulder Blooms for donating prizes for Eco-Cycle's Earth Day 2004 event; and

Liquor Mart and A Spice of Life Catering for in-kind donations for Eco-Cycle's party to honor the retiring Boulder City Council Members.

BECOME AN ECO-CYCLE MEMBER TODAY and help us build a legacy of hope, optimism and opportunity for our children—not a legacy of landfills.

The next generation of Eco-Cyclers is emerging to continue the efforts of Kay Shapley and our many other founders. With your membership, Eco-Cycle can help shape our community to become a model for Zero Waste. Your donation will go towards projects such as:

- Building local composting facilities to handle food and lawn waste;
- Creating model, cutting-edge recycling opportunities for our residents and businesses;
- Supporting market development for hard-to-recycle items such as Styrofoam and textiles;
- Funding pilot projects for Zero Waste programs in our public schools;
- Influencing public policy to financially reward manufacturers for designing their products for reuse, recycling or composting;
- Creating our newest program: Eco-Cycle International (Eco-I). Eco-I will bring the successes of our community to the rest of the world, while bringing home the best international Zero Waste practices.

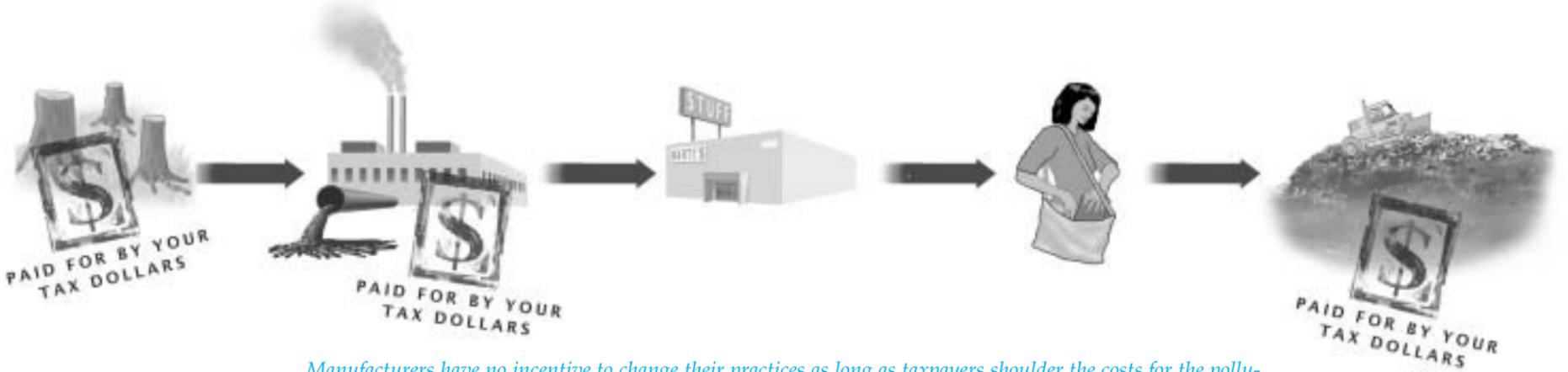
Join Eco-Cycle today !!!

Complete the form on the back of this issue or contribute online at www.ecocycle.org.

On behalf of the board, staff and volunteers at Eco-Cycle, I thank you for your support.

What IS Zero Waste?

Our Current Industrial Production Systems Are a Costly One-Way Street



Manufacturers have no incentive to change their practices as long as taxpayers shoulder the costs for the pollution and waste created from resource extraction, manufacturing, and the disposal of products and packaging.

Our current production systems are linear, designed as if there are no limits to our natural resources. Products are born of environmentally-destructive activities such as clearcutting, strip mining and drilling, which result in soil erosion, habitat loss, and severe air, soil, and water contamination. We as taxpayers unwittingly encourage this wasteful and polluting behavior through governmental subsidies at three different stages: (1) When resources are extracted to make the product, financial incentives and tax breaks are given to industries that extract virgin resources.

(2) When toxins enter our air and water supplies during the manufacturing process, the taxpayer helps pay to clean up these messes through programs such as the federal Superfund program. (3) At the end of the products' lives, taxpayers pay again for the cleanup of toxins, which leak into the groundwater from landfills and billow into the air from incinerators. Since the closing of Boulder's Marshall Landfill in 1992, Boulder taxpayers have had to pay \$400,000 each year – nearly \$5 million to date – to clean up the groundwater under the landfill. There is no end in sight to this ongoing cost.

Beyond Recycling: ZERO WASTE

An Environmentally and Economically Sustainable System Where Resources Are Kept in the Production Cycle

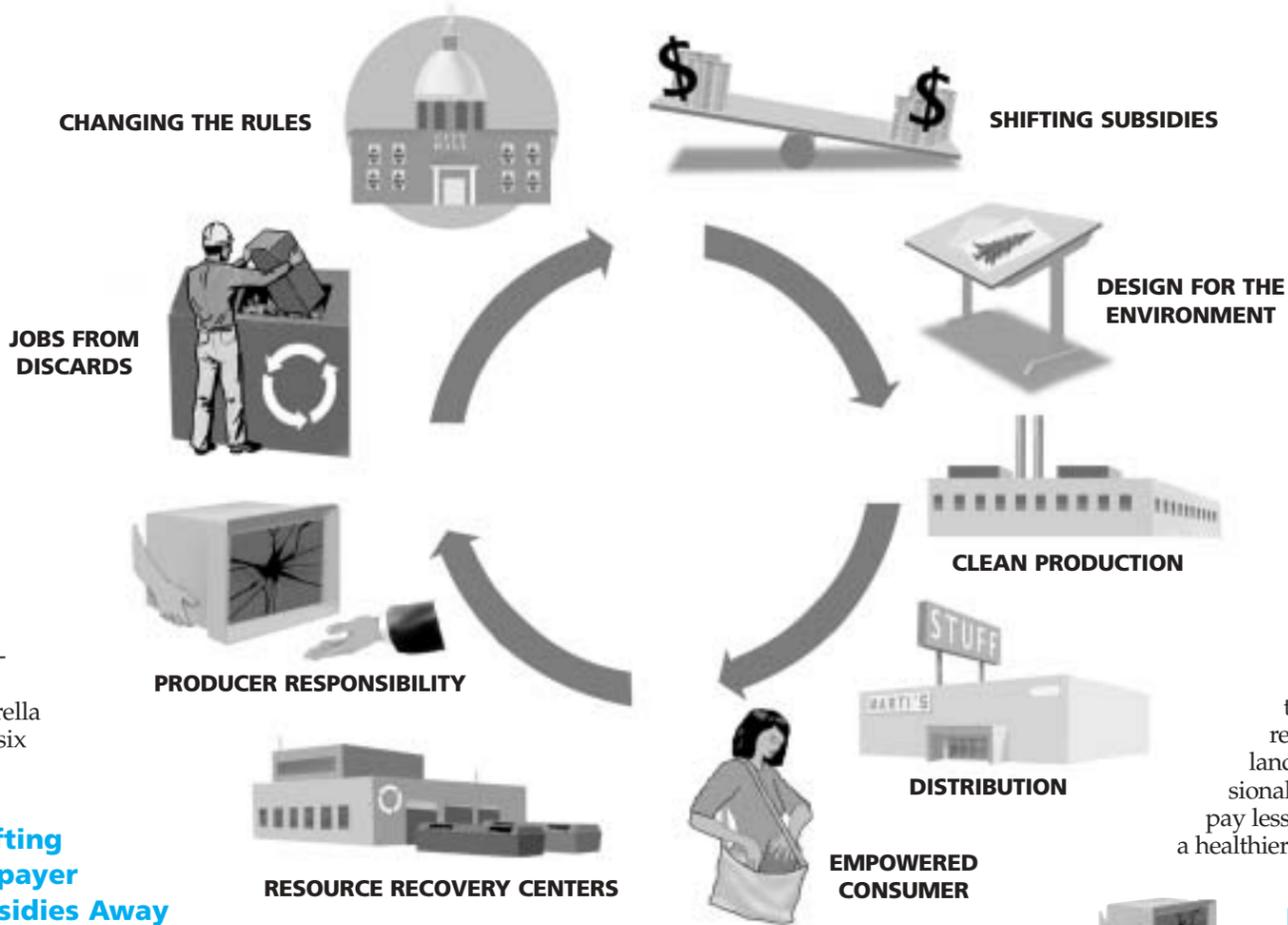
Rather than looking at our production systems as one way and linear, we can redesign them to be cyclical, as in nature, where there is no such thing as "waste" and materials are kept in the production cycle. Zero Waste is emerging as a paradigm shift, a new, comprehensive socio-technical system that addresses our resource use from product design to disposal. Zero Waste is an "umbrella concept" that employs six major principles:

Shifting Taxpayer Subsidies Away From Wasteful and Polluting Industries and Into Supporting Environmentally-Friendly Practices.

Federal tax subsidies created more than 100 years ago to spur our change from an agrarian society to an industrialized society still exist, giving a financial incentive to industries to make products from virgin materials. As long as these subsidies remain in place, the devastation of the environment will continue. The 21st Century will require a shift to clean and sustainable enterprises, and the taxpayer dollar should reward these enterprises.

Design for the Environment (DFE)
It's time to stop waste before it happens – at the designer's desk. Instead of designing products without regard for the amount or type of resources used, the product's toxicity, or the product's eventual recovery, under DFE, all products and packaging will be manufactured with the use of non-toxic materials, and designed for either reuse, recycling or composting.

Investing in Recovery Infrastructure, Not Landfills
Rather than using the tax base to build new landfills or incinerators and then to clean up the resulting contamination, communities working towards Zero Waste invest in recycling, composting, and reuse facilities called "Resource Recovery Centers." When the true costs of environmental pollution resulting from landfills or incinerators are accounted for, these cleaner



Resource Recovery Centers attract the public's enthusiasm, pride and market investments. To shift incentives towards resource conservation and away from wasting, many communities implement strategies like charging for trash service as we do for water – every unit (or bag) costs more (commonly known as Pay-As-You-Throw). These strategies encourage recycling and discourage wasting. The result is that maximum resource recovery becomes the norm, landfilling becomes the occasional exception, and taxpayers pay less in cleanup and benefit from a healthier community with more jobs.

Industry is required to operate under a new set of industrial take-back rules that assigns to them the financial, legal and physical responsibility for the end-of-life management of the products they sell.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
EPR puts the legal, financial, and environmental responsibility for materials entering the waste stream with the manufacturer, not on the consumer at the end of the product's or packaging's life. The end result is a fundamental shift in responsibility and financing so that manufacturers redesign products to reduce material consumption and facilitate reuse, recycling and recovery.

Creating Jobs from Discards
Wasting materials in a landfill or incinerator also wastes jobs that could be created if those resources were preserved. According to the report *Wasting and Recycling in the United States 2000*, "On a per-ton basis, sorting and processing recyclables alone sustains ten times more jobs than landfilling or incineration." Rather than destroying the value of society's discards in incinerators and landfills, this value is protected and leveraged to create new local wealth.

Changing the Rules of the Game
We need to put policies and practices in place that favor environmentally and economically sustainable practices over wasteful, polluting, and ultimately costly practices. Such policies would include creating financial incentives for businesses and residents to recycle more and create less waste, banning toxic products from landfills or incinerators, prohibiting the sale of unnecessarily toxic or polluting products.

Eco-Cycle International (Eco-I)

Local and Global Thought Leadership for a Zero Waste Future

Zero Waste is emerging worldwide as an alternative to polluting landfills and incinerators and is providing solutions to economic and social problems as well.

Every community in the world is faced with the challenge of managing waste, protecting public health, and creating a sustainable economy. In the last six years, the world has been calling Eco-Cycle asking for solutions. Our staff, particularly Executive Director Eric Lombardi, has directly helped recycling and resource conservation efforts in Romania, New Zealand, Wales, Saipan, England, Samoa, France, and indirectly in many more nations. The nature of our help has included such activities as the creation of community recycling centers, the expansion of a trash company into paper recycling, the political strategizing for creating local social change, offering community organizing techniques to increase citizen participation, and developing business strategies for long-term survival in a turbulent industry.

Most recently, local officials from Guatemala City contacted Eco-Cycle asking for help in creating a new discard management system to replace their local dump, which is beyond capacity and creating an immense odor and health problem for the city's residents. But the dump is more than just an eyesore and odor problem. Hundreds of "guajeros," many of them children, literally live in the dump, which is their only source of income. There they dig for materials to be resold as recyclables. Instead of simply contracting to build a modern landfill or incinerator to take its waste, the city is considering the option of turning the issue of managing waste into an economic opportunity for the city's population, while at the same time solving health and environmental issues and increasing the quality of life and economic sustainability for the people whose livelihood has been dependent upon the dump.

All around the world, the Zero Waste approach is rapidly emerging into the public dialogue. The reasons for this are as varied as the diversity of cultures in the world, but the common thread is the growing concern with the toxic pollution associated with even the best landfills and incinerators. There is also an increasing awareness that "trash" is actually a random mix of various natural resources that if managed differently can become a source of significant local economic wealth.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAMA

Dumps like this one in the Philippines are common around the world where hundreds of people, many of them children, literally live in the dump and scavenge through it as their only source of income. Countries and communities around the world are calling on Eco-Cycle to help solve the environmental, social, economic, and health problems associated with dumps like these by implementing Zero Waste solutions.

Bringing Lessons Home, Sharing Our Success with Others

Eco-Cycle has decided to go global with the creation of our newest project, the Eco-Cycle International (Eco-I) Program. The purpose of Eco-I is to respond to requests from outside our borders to bring the successes from each of our internal departments to the world, and to bring the successes of other nations and communities home to make our local programs better. It is also our goal to integrate the global Zero Waste movement into the American culture, where the largest share of planetary resource consumption is occurring and where the potential for impact is the greatest.

As the Zero Waste movement grows, people are asking: How do you implement Zero Waste? Is it realistic? Is anyone else doing this? To concretely answer these questions, the Eco-I was created to research and develop the technologies and practices for a sustainable Zero Waste society as well as the systems, financial analysis and community organizing needed to prevent waste, pollution and natural resource destruction, and to build viable alternatives to burying or burning natural resources. Ultimately, it is our goal to create the Eco-Cycle Institute, a training program for university students, environmental professionals, elected officials and community leaders interested in replacing their local incinerators or landfills with alternative systems. We also envision working with local online universities to create an online training program, accessible from around the world.

Because of Eco-Cycle's successes in our hometown community, our role as one of the largest non-profit recyclers in the U.S., and our current connections and activity with the leading Zero Waste experts worldwide, we feel it is our unique responsibility to help spur the Zero Waste movement internationally and to bring this movement to the U.S. If we don't do it, we don't know who will. Never have we as an organization faced a greater challenge to make such an impact and we are excited to meet it.



Composting

Getting Organic Recyclables Out of the Landfill

Composting food waste creates new rich soil for growing healthy plants to grow healthy kids. Dumping food waste in a landfill results in groundwater pollution and greenhouse gases. Which would you choose?



The VCU, or "Vertical Composting Unit" out of New Zealand, is the type of technology Eco-Cycle is investigating for use in Boulder County. It suits our community's needs for several reasons, including its ability to virtually eliminate odors, the fact that it requires far less land, its modular design that allows for easy growth, and its unique system that allows for contaminants to be easily sorted out.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VCU TECHNOLOGY LTD.

Recent estimates show that in some Boulder County communities, nearly 50% of the residential waste stream is being diverted from the landfill. Of the other 50% that remains, the vast majority is compostable or "organic" material: food scraps, yard trimmings, leaves and grass, waxed cardboard, and soiled, un-recyclable paper. For our community to approach Zero Waste, there is one major piece of infrastructure missing from the puzzle: the capability for handling compostable, or "organic" waste.

It is important that organic materials be recovered for two significant reasons. The first is our local soils. Like agricultural soils worldwide, our lands have lost considerable topsoil due to modern agricultural techniques. Sending our organics to the landfill wastes a valuable resource that could be used locally to restore our topsoil. Secondly, landfilling organic material contributes to global warming. Organic material breaks down differently in a landfill compared to a compost pile. Because of the lack of oxygen in a landfill, as organic matter breaks down in a landfill it produces methane. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas 21 times more effective at trapping radiant heat than carbon dioxide. The biggest source of human-caused methane emissions to the atmosphere is buried waste. In fact, landfills contribute 10% of the gases that are warming the globe.

As a first step toward our vision, we have launched a commercial food waste collection program. The program is currently in its pilot stage with organic materials being collected from selected restaurants, grocers and florists, and hauled to a

Continued on page 7

What's Happening with Composting Around the World?

TOKYO, JAPAN: The Hotel New Otani composts food waste such as banquet hall leftovers and flowers from wedding ceremonies in a composting facility below the hotel. Local farmers buy the compost to grow vegetables, which are then purchased by the hotel. With the money saved from waste management costs, the hotel will recover its compost facility investment in just three years.

PHILIPPINES: Compost programs are creating much needed local jobs. Several communities employ locals as "eco-aides" or "biomen" to collect biodegradables from households. In Barangay Sun Valley, biomen use pedicabs to deliver compost to a central mixer. Revenues from the program are almost twice as high as expenses.

NORWAY: The Norwegian Pollution Control Authority has proposed to ban the landfilling of all biodegradable materials by mid-2009. Despite landfill gas extraction systems, methane releases still account for 7% of Norway's greenhouse gas emissions. The proposal introduces stricter standards than the European Union's policy of a 65% reduction in landfilled biodegradables by 2016.

Come visit us at the Saturday Boulder County Farmers' Market where we will be selling worm castings and worm casting tea for use on your garden, lawn, or even houseplants. Worm castings have the highest levels of available nutrients of any compost because they contain rich populations of live micro-organisms.



Zero Waste Businesses

Getting Local Business On-Board the Zero Waste Revolution

Eco-Cycle has created new comprehensive services to bring more businesses into the "Zero Waste...Or Darn Near" world.

Over half the municipal solid waste produced in the U.S. comes from businesses, yet their recycling rate seriously lags behind the progress made in America's homes. Take for example the shining light of local recycling, the City of Boulder. In 2002, the residential recycling rate hit 50%, yet the business recycling rate was UNDER 20%. It's time for the commercial sector to be introduced to the recycling revolution, especially the exciting opportunities in Zero Waste planning. To bring more businesses into the "Zero Waste...Or Darn Near" world, Eco-Cycle's business recycling department has created new services that we hope will double, or even triple the recycling rates of the local business community, all while keeping their monthly discard management fees (trash and recycling bills) within 10% of current rates. It's going to be a challenge, but we think we can do it!

There are numerous examples of companies around the U.S. that are working toward Zero Waste and reaching 80-90% landfill diversion rates by implementing comprehensive recycling programs as well as composting for food and landscaping waste. Through Eco-Cycle's newly developed commercial programs, local businesses can do the same, and even better, practically eliminating their need for a trash can.

The first new program, designed to make recycling as convenient as possible, is a collection program that allows businesses to mix all their paper types together – including cardboard – instead of sorting them in separate containers. As we work toward developing the capacity for single stream collections at the Boulder County Recycling Center (see related article page 7), businesses will have the additional convenience of mixing their recyclable containers and papers together...all in one bin.

Another new Eco-Cycle program is the Commercial Composting Pilot Program where we collect compostable material, including food and yard waste and non-recyclable paper that is wet or soiled by food.

To provide collection for some of the larger, more unusual items businesses throw away, Eco-Cycle now offers our "CHaRM on the road" collection program for hard-to-recycle materials. Businesses can now recycle computers and other electronics, plastic bags, stretch wrap, books, office manuals, and more.

To minimize waste before it's created, Eco-Cycle provides consultations to assist businesses in adopting waste minimization practices, and defining and



Amanda Lieber from Flowerama collects flower and plant waste to be composted through Eco-Cycle's new Commercial Composting Pilot Program.

achieving environmental goals. These goals may include developing a strategic plan for minimizing environmental impact; creating an environmental purchasing policy; reducing energy and water consumption in the workplace; designing products and services with the environment in mind; and working with suppliers to take responsibility for the recovery of the products and packaging they create.

Several local companies are working with Eco-Cycle toward Zero Waste, including the Boulder Cork restaurant, where the recycling and compost programs are going so well, they may be able to eliminate their trash dumpster one day soon! Caplan & Earnest, a local law firm, is looking toward implementing a comprehensive Zero Waste program, while Wild Oats' local headquarters is working with Eco-Cycle to integrate an ethic of environmental stewardship throughout the organization with waste assessments, resource conservation goals, a compost system, and by working to improve employee awareness and participation. The Boulder Co-Op Market is quickly becoming the poster child for Zero Waste since they've implemented everything from the collection of their compostables and hard-to-recycle items (such as plastic bags and stretch wrap) to creating purchasing policies and sending packaging back to their suppliers.

The efforts of these companies are vital to spreading the Zero Waste movement in the commercial sector, as these model Zero Waste businesses will demonstrate both the environmental and economic advantages of reducing and diverting waste. Your business could be a model Zero Waste company, too! Call Eco-Cycle to sign your business up for Zero Waste services!



What's Happening with Businesses Around the World?

INTERFACE, INC.: This giant of the carpet industry diverts more than 90% of its waste in 4 of 16 facilities, with several of the others in the 80% range. Interface pioneered the "Evergreen Lease" which gives the company and its customers the economic incentive to take back and recycle old carpets while guaranteeing clean, attractive carpets. Interface has also introduced a first-of-its-kind biodegradable carpet tile made from corn fibers instead of the usual petroleum-based nylon. The company's ReEntry program will reclaim existing carpet and recycle or reuse the material, assuring that it will not be landfilled.

FETZER VINEYARDS, CALIFORNIA: Fetzer is on track to reach its goal of Zero Waste by 2009. The nation's sixth largest premium wine producer has reduced its garbage by 93% over the last seven years by recycling everything from glassware to antifreeze to wine barrels.

MERCEDES: Mercedes is paving the way for car manufacturers to comply with the European Union directive that requires all car manufacturers to take back their products with 85% being reused or recycled. Mercedes has engineered a process to dismantle a car for recycling in just 4 hours.

CHaRM: Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials

Pioneering the Recovery of New Materials

What do we do with our modern waste like Styrofoam, plastic bags, and electronics that threaten our health and environment if landfilled?

You know what to do with your bottles, cans, newspaper, etc., but what does a dedicated recycler do with items like electronics, textiles, plastic bags, and Styrofoam? Our modern waste stream is increasingly comprised of products for which there is no collection or recycling system in place. Without the infrastructure to handle these materials, they remain not only a barrier to recovering all waste, but many of them pose significant threats to our health and environment if landfilled or incinerated. In particular, electronic scrap such as computers, TV's, electronic

games, PDA's, etc. contain lead, mercury, and other heavy metals which can leak into the groundwater when landfilled or be emitted into the air when incinerated.

Seeking a solution to this problem, Eco-Cycle created the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in November, 2001. Just as we searched for and found markets in 1976 to buy the bottles, cans and paper we collected at the curb, the CHaRM has been searching for and even creating markets for the hard-to-recycle

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What's Happening with Recycling Unusual Items Around the World?

KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON: Along with all the traditional recyclables, this curbside program also collects electronics, usable clothing, and food scraps. Residents receive two-gallon kitchen waste buckets that are emptied into larger yard/food waste carts. Small electronics and usable clothing are placed out in plastic bags while larger electronics are set next to the recycling bin. Kirkland also collects uncontaminated used motor oil at the curb.

EUROPEAN WEEE DIRECTIVE: The EU embraced Extended Producer Responsibility in January 2003 with its adaptation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. This legislation sets targets for collection and recycling of WEEE and places the financial responsibility for treatment on the shoulders of the producers. The accompanying legislation, the Restriction on Hazardous Substances, bans the use of heavy metals and brominated fire retardants in electronic and electrical equipment by mid-2006.

CALIFORNIA: California has become the first state to pass a law requiring retailers to collect a fee on computer monitors and televisions. The fees range from \$6-\$10 and will be used to fund the collection and recycling of these materials. The legislation also holds manufacturers liable for phasing out the use of hazardous materials in their products.

JAPAN: A recycling law passed in October 2003 instructs computer manufacturers to place a recycling loop symbol on almost 98% of Japan's PC's. Consumers can take labeled PC's to their local post office to be recycled free of charge.

Many electronic "recyclers" use cheap Asian labor to disassemble electronic scrap. These programs create environmental havoc and expose workers to hazardous toxins. The CHaRM does not and will not use such methods.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BASAL ACTION NETWORK



Anthony Plumley (far left) and Griggs Wilson process materials for recycling at the CHaRM. The CHaRM provides local employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

Zero Waste Communities

New Rules for a Zero Waste World...Energizing Our Community to Action

Eco-Cycle is investigating the new Zero Waste rules in other cities around the world with the intent of bringing those ideas home.

In recent years, we've been witnesses to community members testifying by the hundreds at city council meetings to voice their support in favor of recycling systems over trash. When one speaker proclaimed, "WE are Eco-Cycle," she reminded us that this is indeed a community-based organization, and it is because of the community that we thrive. Together we have created one of the most amazing recycling success stories in the world. Now it is time to move our local towns onto the next path – toward becoming model Zero Waste Communities – and we'll need the passion and dedication of our citizens once again to help us establish public policies that make recycling the norm and wasting the exception. Eco-Cycle calls this strategy "changing the rules."



Unlike in the EU and New Zealand where the national governments are taking the lead to create Zero Waste systems, change in America and especially in Colorado is going to come from the grassroots.

Unlike in the EU and New Zealand where the national governments are taking the lead to create Zero Waste systems, change in America and especially in Colorado is going to come from the grassroots. A recent national survey reported that Colorado recycles a mere 3% of its waste stream, while the nation as a whole recycles 28%. The residential recycling rate in Boulder, however, is 50%, and this astonishing success is due to the progressive citizens and leaders of the community who were willing to create "new rules" for how trash is handled in Boulder.

By implementing convenient citywide curbside recycling and fee structures that reward recycling, we've been successful in changing some rules in Boulder and Longmont, and we are working in Louisville, Lafayette, and Broomfield to achieve similar results in those cities. By requiring new commercial buildings to include space for recycling bins, the cities of Superior, Broomfield and Boulder are changing the rules to make recycling an integral part of their infrastructure.

To help communities better understand what Zero Waste looks like in action, Eco-Cycle works with local event planners to create Zero Waste community fairs, festivals, and conferences. These events demonstrate what a society would look like if products sold were designed to be reused, recycled or composted. In this micro-economy, trash cans are replaced by Zero Waste composting and recycling stations; the reusable plates and utensils are then washed, recyclable bottles and cans are made into new products and compostable food scraps and cornstarch cutlery are used to replenish the soil. The Eco-Cycle plan envisions all community events becoming Zero Waste events, providing tens of thousands of individuals

the opportunity to participate in a model of a Zero Waste society.

To make the best Zero Waste decisions for our community, Eco-Cycle is investigating the new Zero Waste rules in other cities around the world with the intent of bringing those ideas home. These ideas include taxing the use of plastic bags, banning the landfilling of organics, setting environmental design requirements for new buildings and requiring construction companies to recycle "waste" materials during construction and demolition.

Eco-Cycle wants to demonstrate that all this is possible and more! This is where you come into the picture. Eco-Cycle's backbone is the nationally-known Eco-Leader Network (formerly known as Block Leaders), and is comprised of a volunteer force that is currently 750 members strong. These Eco-Leaders educate their neighbors, friends, family, colleagues, fellow worshippers and other individuals in the community about the vision of Zero Waste. But most importantly, these Eco-Leaders take action to change the rules at City Hall. So we invite you to join us in educating our community about Zero Waste and bringing Zero Waste policies to our city councils – with one Eco-Cycle volunteer in every business, school and neighborhood, there'd be no limit to the change that is possible.



What's Happening with Communities Around the World?

ONTARIO: Beginning this spring, the makers of packaged goods will ante up for half the costs of curbside recycling, relieving the financial pressures on local governments. Manufacturers will calculate fees based on the weight of the packaging, representing a first for North America. Quebec has similar legislation in place and is waiting for Ontario to iron out the kinks in their program.

PLASTIC BAG BANS: Numerous bans and taxes have sprung up around the world to eliminate the environmental hazards of plastic bags. Ireland's 15-cent per bag tax reduced consumption by 95%; Taiwan, Bangladesh, Bombay, and India have followed suit. Australia, Scotland, California, and Shanghai, China are investigating similar legislation. Outright bans of free plastic bag distribution can be found in three towns in Alaska and in Yankalilla, Australia.

PAY-AS-YOU-THROW (PAYT) FINANCIALLY REWARDS RECYCLERS: Over 5,000 communities in the US have implemented unit-based trash fees, commonly known as PAYT. Under this fee structure, you can recycle an unlimited amount of material without paying any extra, while each bag or can of trash does cost more (just like with the use of water or electricity). The incentive of a lower trash bill motivates residents to toss their recyclables in their recycle bins rather than in the garbage. According to Skumatz Economic Research Associates, PAYT is the single most effective incentive a community can apply to improving its recycling rates.

Zero Waste Schools

Teaching the Next Generation of Leaders

Building a vision for the future must include the involvement of those who will inherit it – our children – the next generation of citizens, consumers and leaders.

It is Eco-Cycle's vision to build upon the relationships with local schools developed by our School Recycling and Environmental Education Program over the last 17 years. Our goal is to encourage the implementation of more and more environmental practices and to work with interested schools to implement the elements of Zero Waste so that they can become model Zero Waste Schools. These model schools will serve to inspire other schools locally, around the country, and even across the globe.

Eco-Cycle's vision for schools is not, however, just about operational practices and policies. It places a high value on the education of the students themselves, both academic and hands-on. In a model Zero Waste School, students will experience and live in a Zero Waste system, develop habits supported by that system and internalize it as the norm. Just as children today grow up practicing recycling, children attending Zero Waste Schools will grow up in an atmosphere where cafeteria scraps are composted and put back into school yard soil, disposables are reduced to a minimum, all copies are double-sided, and the computers they use are eventually taken back by manufacturers for recycling. They will bring those habits and expectations with them into the workplace and community as active citizens and empowered consumers.

Eco-Cycle's vision for model Zero Waste Schools begins with providing motivation, tools, funding and frameworks for local schools to take their environmental concerns to a higher level, and ultimately to Zero Waste, by adding programs and policies as they are practicable. An important complement to Zero Waste Schools will be to offer individual schools the opportunity to participate in the Eco-Cycle Green Star Schools program.



The Sanborn Shoe Crew - Kids from Sanborn elementary school proudly show off the bins of athletic shoes collected by their schoolmates for recycling during Eco-Cycle's Sneakers for Schools contest. The athletic shoes were recycled at Eco-Cycle's Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM).

The Green Star Schools program would recognize both public and private schools for their current environmental projects and activities, as well as provide support and motivation for them to do more. It is a certification program to recognize schools that implement programs that accomplish the following: (1) increase participation in recycling; (2) increase source reduction; (3) increase student sponsorship and involvement in the recycling program; and (4) encourage general environmental awareness.

To receive Green Star certification, schools would need to accomplish a defined number of tasks in each of the four categories listed above. They would be provided with a list of ideas to choose from and could also create qualifying activities of their own that suit their particular school environment. For example, qualifying activities could range from ensuring that every room has a recycling bin, to a school-wide commitment to double-side all copies and use non-toxic cleaners, to planting a xeriscape garden or adopting a section of rainforest.

Successful Green Star Schools will be in a position to go one step further and become Zero Waste Schools when Eco-Cycle introduces single stream recycling and the collection of organics to schools and businesses. By working with Eco-Cycle to reduce and recover as much of the schools' waste as possible, these pioneers will demonstrate to other schools, locally and throughout the country, that Zero Waste Schools are not only possible, but desirable.



What's Happening with Schools Around the World?

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA: The Public School Resource Conservation Program helps over 26 K-12 schools advance towards waste-free schools. The program assists students with campus recycling, composting, and reducing/reusing while building a sense of environmental stewardship. Over six years of successful resource conservation has saved the school district over \$100,000 in reduced garbage hauling costs and kept over 1200 tons out of the landfill.

NORTH SHORE, NEW ZEALAND: Five local schools were honored as "WasteWise" schools last summer. Among them, Vauxhall Primary School stands out with a serious, long-term commitment to Zero Waste. Vauxhall removed the school incinerator to prevent air pollution and now uses the space as a recycling depot; they recycle their paper, cans, glass and plastic for curbside collection; they compost and maintain worm farms and they have written a Zero Waste policy.

Boulder County Recycling Center (BCRC)

New Systems That Make Recycling the Rule

The new recycling facility on 63rd Street is a beautiful community-owned facility that is one of the cornerstones for all future Zero Waste programs.

A key to the Zero Waste future is the development of recycling collection systems that are as convenient as the current waste system with its "one-can mixed waste approach." We're off to a good start with our beautiful new recycling facility that is a successful community-owned, Eco-Cycle-operated facility we can all be proud of. Officially named the Boulder County Recycling Center (BCRC), this project is one of the most cost-efficient operations of its kind and is producing a revenue surplus for the County to support the growing recycling needs of the public. To make recycling as convenient and cost-effective as possible, Eco-Cycle is preparing the BCRC for the new, cutting-edge curbside programs of the future.

The first new collection program proposed for the facility is called "single stream," where all paper and containers are commingled in one container. Single stream collections make it so easy to recycle that participation rates increase, as does the amount of material recycled per participant. The cost savings to the hauler are so large, and the environmental benefits of reducing vehicles on the road so great, that a rush of single stream collection programs is popping up across the nation. Even the City of Denver is going to switch to single stream collections!

To efficiently handle this new mix of recyclables, new processing equipment will be needed. Eco-Cycle staff is currently working with County staff to develop a proposal to enhance the sorting system at the BCRC so we can mix more materials and sort them more easily and efficiently. One key new piece is a screen which automatically separates paper from containers. We are also investigating a new generation of optical sorters that use lasers and air jets to mechanically sort different grades of paper, various plastics and glass types from each other. The technological advances in the field of recyclables processing are happening rapidly across the world, and Eco-Cycle has been traveling the globe to stay abreast of these



The city's innovative three cart curbside collection program completely redesigned San Francisco's trash and recycling service. The program combines all commingled containers and paper recycling into one cart; a second cart holds compostable materials; and finally, a third cart is for whatever trash is left over. The percent of waste diverted from the landfill through this program now averages over 60%. Eco-Cycle's plan for "single stream" recycling at the Boulder County Recycling Center will allow for the same convenient system to be implemented in our community.

At right, Recycle Central Norcal operates the premier recycling facility in the U.S.

exciting new developments.

The BCRC is currently running at half its capacity, processing about 43,000 tons of material each year. At full capacity, economies of scale kick in that will increase cost-effectiveness, resulting in higher payments to our suppliers (the haulers), thereby creating an incentive for the expansion of more collection programs. Single stream collections will bring us closer to capacity at the BCRC. Add to this the future success of ongoing efforts to create universal curbside recycling programs in Louisville, Lafayette and Broomfield, and it's feasible to forecast a 100% increase in tons delivered to the BCRC. However, private sector haulers will also need to do their part in supporting the commu-

nity by bringing their recyclables to the BCRC rather than withholding the most profitable materials and sending them to Denver as some of them are currently doing.

The BCRC is essential to our community's Zero Waste future. The constant upgrading and improvement of this new facility will support every other effort to increase local recycling, be it the creation of a new community drop-off center in Lafayette,



or the wildly ambitious Zero Waste Business program being piloted today by Eco-Cycle (see related article page 5). The BCRC must keep up with the times, and in partnership with the County, we'll all keep growing one of the best recycling programs in the world.

What's Happening with Recycling Facilities Around the World?

NEW ZEALAND: Xtreme Waste, based in Raglan, NZ, has worked in partnership with Waikato District Council for three years and operates a fully functional Resource Recovery Center and curbside collection that currently diverts 70% of waste from the landfill. New Zealand is the first country in the world to have formally adopted Zero Waste.

SAN FRANCISCO: Last summer, the City completed construction of an integrated materials recovery facility. The facility processes 400 tons/day of construction and demolition debris with an average recovery rate of over 85 percent. Workers pull out paper, clean wood, metals, unpainted sheetrock, cement, cans and bottles, brick, and green waste. This facility represents an integral step in helping San Francisco reach its target of 75% diversion by 2010.

Composting, continued from page 4

facility in Golden for composting. The pilot program will give us critical information about the economics and logistics of collection before we launch into a full-scale program (see "Zero Waste Businesses" on page 5 for more information).

In preparation for the full-scale program, Eco-Cycle has also started working with local governments to develop an organics recycling infrastructure in our own community. If we can build a local composting facility, we can one day recover, recycle, and re-apply organics to our own soils without the material ever leaving the county and thus avoiding high transportation costs and the environmental impacts of hauling.

We are also developing new compost products. We have recently purchased a compost tea brewer, and we are developing a vermiculture (worm composting) project to create products for sale at the Boulder County Farmers' Market on Saturdays. The first product is "worm castings," which are made when worms in a worm compost digester food or other organic waste. Worm castings have the highest levels of available nutrients of any compost because they contain rich populations of micro-organisms. These castings can then be used to make a second product, "worm casting tea" (for your soil to drink, not for you). The tea is made by putting some of the castings into a porous container and then steeping them in the new compost tea brewer for 24 hours in highly oxygenated water inside the brewer tank. A catalyst is added which encourages the micro-organisms to swim out into the water and reproduce. When the finished product is sprayed onto your lawn, garden, or even house plants, the microbes give a jump-start to your soil and plants by eating minerals and organic matter and making them available to plant roots. Every person who uses the tea or castings will be contributing toward building much-needed, healthy soil. Rather than going to the landfill where they contribute to global warming, food scraps return to the soil they came from and produce new food crops. It's cyclical, it's natural, it's Zero Waste.



Learn more about Eco-Cycle's vision for making our community a Zero Waste model for the world at www.ecocycle.org.

CHaRM, continued from page 5

materials in our waste stream. As the CHaRM is the only facility of its kind in the state and one of only a very small handful in the country, we truly are starting at the very beginning with brand new markets. We have been successful in meeting this challenge by finding markets for athletic shoes, books, plastic bags, and a number of electronic products. It is our goal to add one new material each year.

Also uniquely challenging to this category of materials is that in many cases there may never be a profitable market based solely on supply and demand. Despite the high price that you paid for your computer, for instance, the fact is that once it is more than a few years old there will be a cost to recycle it responsibly. Currently, you, the City of Boulder, and Eco-Cycle are paying that cost when you bring us an electronic item. But Eco-Cycle is joining other environmental groups in raising the question: shouldn't manufacturers and retailers take some of the responsibility for disposing of the products they produce and distribute? In the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), manufacturers are given responsibility for the waste because only they have the ability to reduce that waste by planning for ease of recycling and greater longevity right on the design table.

At the CHaRM, we have created a simple example of how EPR can work locally. The Daily Camera wanted to support a recycling system to recover the thousands of plastic newspaper sleeves they distribute to their subscribers each year and so became a funder for the CHaRM, financially supporting the infrastructure to enable their customers to recycle their product. It is our goal to take that concept to other industries such as the manufacturers and retailers of electronics.

Another necessary component of Zero Waste that Eco-Cycle addresses with the CHaRM is assuring that these new markets we are creating don't just become a waste or unfair labor problem somewhere else in the world. A coalition of environmental and social justice groups organized the Computer Take Back Campaign two years ago because of the suddenly huge problem of "recycled" computers ending up in China where the precious metals are crudely smelted out, while the rest of the computer is burned in open fires or dumped in rivers. Eco-Cycle has aligned itself with the Campaign's "Pledge of True Stewardship," which asks recyclers to pledge not to ship whole electronic components overseas.

The new CHaRM facility has also meant new local jobs. Since launching this program, Eco-Cycle has hired three new staff members, as well as a crew of developmentally-disabled adults to shear book bindings.

Finally, the CHaRM allows other businesses to move toward Zero Waste by giving them an outlet for recovering more materials out of their waste stream. Organizations like Boulder Community Hospital and the Boulder Valley School District have utilized the CHaRM extensively to reduce their waste volume.

The CHaRM is the first of its kind, but it will likely soon be one of many, serving as a model for diverting a significant part of the waste stream, engaging producer responsibility, and keeping toxic materials out of our environment.



eco-cycle TIMMES

SPRING-SUMMER, 2004

COMMUNITY-BASED RECYCLING SINCE 1976



Allyn Feinberg



Ralph Bozella



Mary Wolf



Joe McDonald



Sandy Hume



Mary Blue



Steve Bushong



John Tayer



Jim Zigaralli



Rob deKleffer



David Miller

Join the Eco-Cycle volunteer board in making our community a model for Zero Waste!

Yes! I want to help our community move beyond recycling toward Zero Waste.

Enclosed is my contribution for:

- \$15 (includes Eco-Cycle bumper sticker)
- \$25 (includes Eco-Cycle bumper sticker)
- \$50 (includes Eco-Cycle bumper sticker)
- \$100 (includes Eco-Cycle T-shirt and bumper sticker—specify T-shirt size: sm __ med __ lg __ xl __)
- \$500 (includes Eco-Cycle T-shirt, tote bag, and bumper sticker—specify T-shirt size: sm __ med __ lg __ xl __)
- Other: \$ _____ *

All memberships include a subscription to the **Eco-Cycle Times**.

- I would like my entire membership contribution to go to Eco-Cycle's programs. Please don't send me a thank you gift.
- Please accept my donation in honor/memory of _____

Payment Method: Visa Mastercard Check enclosed (made payable to Eco-Cycle)

Card no. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please send me more information about:

- Becoming an Eco-Cycle volunteer at the Drop-off Center or an Eco-Leader for my neighborhood.
- Eco-Cycle's Business Recycling Program.
- Including Eco-Cycle in my will. Please call/email me.
- Giving a gift of appreciated stock to Eco-Cycle.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____
 Email _____

Thank you for your support. All contributions are tax-deductible, less the value of thank you gifts received.

Eco-Cycle does not sell, rent or trade member's names, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses to other organizations. Mail completed form to: Eco-Cycle, P.O. Box 19006, Boulder, CO 80308. Or save an envelope and postage by faxing your completed membership with charge information to: Eco-Cycle, Attn: Eric Hozempa, 303-444-6647.

eco-cycle

Community-Based Recycling
 P.O. Box 19006 (5030 Pearl Street)
 Boulder, CO 80308

change service requested

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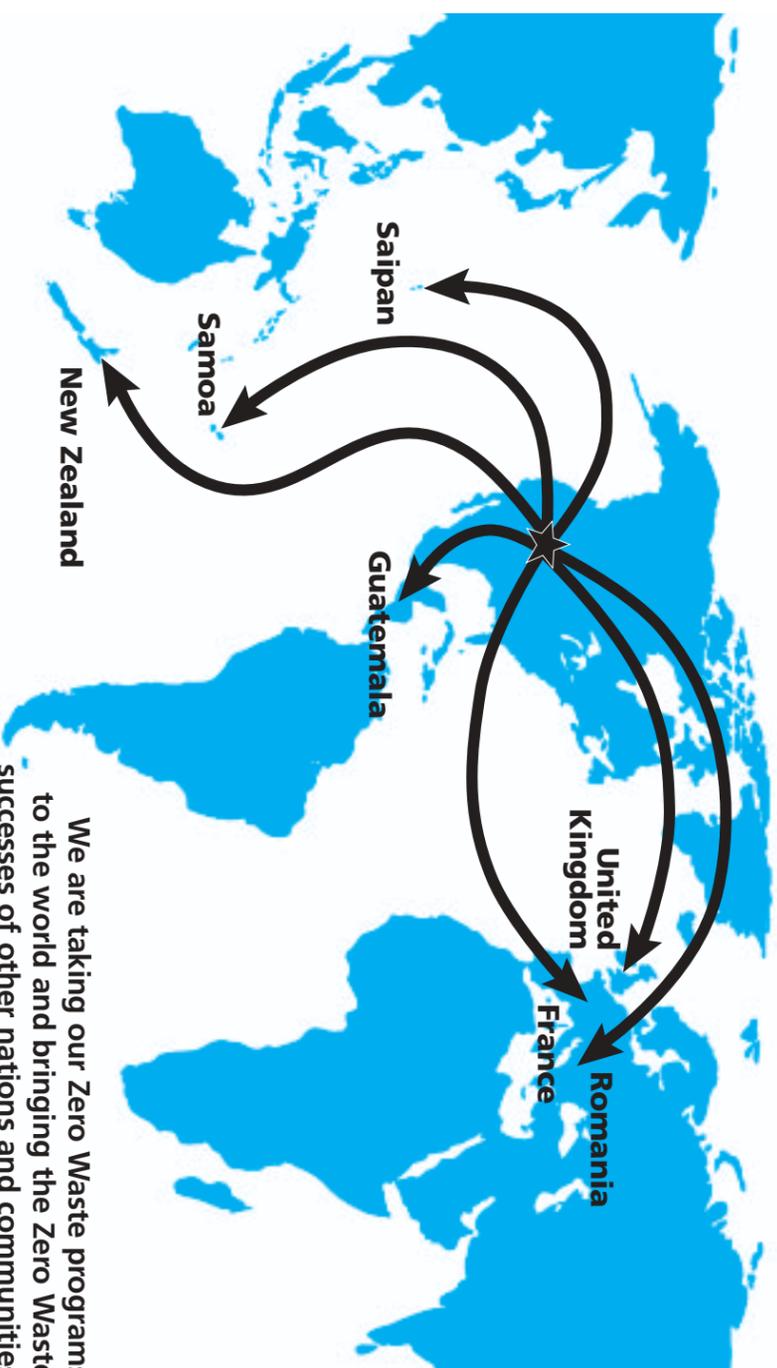
Introducing

Eco-Cycle's VISION

for Making Our

Community a Zero Waste

Model for the World



We are taking our Zero Waste programs to the world and bringing the Zero Waste successes of other nations and communities home, making our local programs even better.



See Center Pull-Out for
RECYCLING GUIDELINES