



## **Programs and Activities**

### **Recycling Processing: Keeping Resources in the Production Cycle**

Since its inception, Eco-Cycle has been Boulder County's recycling processor, and, since 2001, Eco-Cycle has operated the Boulder County Recycling Center. Eco-Cycle processes recyclables from the 15 drop-off centers it manages in Boulder and Broomfield counties, as well as from residential curbside programs, businesses, government offices and schools. In 2007, Eco-Cycle processed and marketed more than 44,000 tons of material including glass bottles, aluminum and steel cans, newspaper, white and colored office paper, junk mail, magazines, catalogs, phone books, corrugated cardboard, milk cartons and drink boxes, paperboard boxes, plastic bottles, plastic tubs and scrap metal.

### **Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials: Pioneering the Recovery of New Materials**

In November 2001, Eco-Cycle opened the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), which is still the only facility of its kind in the nation. At the CHaRM, we accept materials such as computers, printers, TVs, cell phones, textiles, block foam packaging (Styrofoam), plastic bags, durable No. 2 plastics (crates, buckets and outdoor furniture), fire extinguishers and used cooking oil. We add at least one new material each year to this list, and, in 2007, Eco-Cycle added porcelain bathroom fixtures such as toilets, sinks and urinals. Through the CHaRM, Eco-Cycle is ensuring that non-traditional recyclables are recycled responsibly in the United States and that these valuable resources are staying in production. Last year, the facility recycled 874,720 pounds of electronics, 30 trailers full of block foam, 54,020 pounds of plastic bags, 145,000 pounds of paper from books not suitable for reuse, 21,000 pounds of durable No. 2 plastics and 400 gallons of cooking oil. By recycling electronics, plastic bags and paper from books, the CHaRM saved 1,500 metric tons of carbon equivalent, which is equal to eight railcars worth of coal or the energy used by 132 homes for one year.

### **Businesses: Involving Local Businesses in the Zero Waste Revolution**

Eco-Cycle provides recycling services to more than 800 Boulder and Broomfield County businesses and organizations, including offices, schools, florists, restaurants, hotels, printers and manufacturers. Eco-Cycle is collecting traditional recyclables from these businesses, as well as compostable materials such as food waste, non-recyclable paper and biodegradable foodservice products. We also provide the collection of hard-to-recycle materials including but not limited to electronics, books and plastic stretch wrap. In 2007, Eco-Cycle's work to help businesses recycle and compost materials rather than disposing of them in landfills resulted in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions equal to 5,454 metric tons of carbon equivalent—an impact equal to removing 4,329 passenger cars from the road for one year.

For the past four years, Eco-Cycle has offered our unique Zero Waste Services packages to businesses. This program is helping businesses keep 80 percent or more of the discards they produce out of landfills and offers them a new approach to resource management and environmental sustainability. Eco-Cycle is helping large local corporations, hotels, restaurants and others reduce the amount of trash they create and increase waste diversion from the landfill through Zero Waste purchasing decisions, recycling and composting. In 2007, 21 additional businesses signed up for this comprehensive, groundbreaking service.

### **Reuse: Promoting the Most Efficient Resource Use**

Reuse is a primary tenet of Zero Waste, and Eco-Cycle promotes the reuse of materials whenever possible. In 2006, Eco-Cycle launched a reuse program called Eco-Cycle Exchange. Through this free, online exchange service, 8,355 pounds of reusable goods, such as throw rugs, plants, swing sets and dishwashers, were diverted from the landfill in 2007.

For the last four years, Eco-Cycle has donated newer computers collected at the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) to the Jared Polis Foundation's Community Computer Connection (C3) program. Through the C3 program, the computers are refurbished and distributed to qualified non-profits and schools throughout Colorado; last year Eco-Cycle donated 240 computers to the C3 program to help bridge the information gap for those who have limited or no access to computers. At the CHaRM, Eco-Cycle also collected 61,250 pounds of textiles and shoes, which were either made into rags or sent to communities in Africa for reuse.

Every year, Eco-Cycle receives thousands of used books through the CHaRM, special collection events, the Boulder Valley School District and recycling drop-off centers. Many of these books are in good condition and can be reused. In 2007, Eco-Cycle distributed 7,800 used books to at-risk, low-income and underserved children through 16 charitable organizations, including free or low cost health clinics, social service agencies, education centers, homeless shelters and other non-profits throughout Boulder County and other Colorado communities.

### **Community Outreach: Educating and Energizing Our Community into Action**

Eco-Cycle provides a wide variety of community education services and activities to encourage recycling, promote waste reduction and advance our community's progress toward Zero Waste. In 2007, Eco-Cycle answered an average of 1,900 phone questions each month, published and distributed 61,000 copies of the *Eco-Cycle Times* newsletter, and gave 95 presentations and recycling facility tours to community groups. In addition, the organization's Web site provided useful information and tools to 694,644 visitors. We also sent 39 e-newsletters (58,318 messages) to supporters and customers about recycling events, educational workshops, volunteer opportunities and other ways to get involved with Eco-Cycle.

Eco-Cycle's Eco-Leader Network of volunteers plays a large role in our outreach and education efforts. This group of 812 dedicated recyclers donated 3,833 hours of their time in 2007 to help Eco-Cycle distribute the biannual *Eco-Cycle Times*, provide Zero Waste services at events, staff special hard-to-recycle collections, answer questions at recycling drop-off centers and promote political change in our community.

A critical element of Eco-Cycle's outreach and education efforts is our work to make community events Zero Waste. At a Zero Waste event, the discards produced are either compostable or recyclable, eliminating (or at least reducing) the need for trash bins. Last year, Eco-Cycle educated 220,800 people at 34 Zero Waste events and helped our community save 155 trees, 30,327 gallons of water and 32,904 kWh of energy. We also continued our Zero Waste efforts at the Boulder Farmers' Market—the first regularly scheduled Zero Waste event in the country. Over the course of its seven-month season, nearly half a million market shoppers participated in Zero Waste in action.

### **Schools: Teaching the Next Generation**

Since 1987, Eco-Cycle has coordinated the Boulder/Broomfield County School Recycling and Environmental Education Program, which integrates environmental education with established school curriculum, ensuring that students in Boulder and Broomfield Counties learn about their environment and what their generation can do to care for it. In 2007, Eco-Cycle staff gave 1,300 presentations on a wide variety of environmental topics—such as recycling, air quality and pollution, household hazardous waste, forest ecology, energy conservation, waste reduction and composting—to more than 36,000 kindergarten through 12th grade students in Boulder and Broomfield Counties. In addition, 800 tons of recyclables were collected from 80 Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley public schools last year.

Eco-Cycle is taking the next step in environmental education with its Green Star Schools program. Through this first-in-the-nation Zero Waste program, Eco-Cycle works with schools to address every aspect of their waste stream and make Zero Waste an integral part of their daily routine. In 2007, students and staff at 14 Green Star Schools composted non-recyclable paper and food scraps from their cafeterias and classrooms, which cut their trash by one third. These schools diverted another one third of their waste from the landfill through recycling and other waste reduction practices.

### **Eco-Cycle International: Leading Our Community and the World Toward Zero Waste**

Eco-International (Eco-I) was created to research and bring home the Zero Waste successes of other nations and communities and to spread the word about our unique local programs to the world. Through the Eco-I program, Eco-Cycle staff serve as consultants for Zero Waste infrastructure, technology, policies, education and community organizing for national campaigns, conferences, municipalities in Colorado and other states, and local and national environmental groups. In 2007, Eco-I helped launch a national campaign to prevent garbage generators from receiving "green energy" tax subsidies through the "Garbage is Not Renewable Energy" (GINRE) campaign. The campaign was launched at an Eco-Cycle event held in conjunction with the National Recycling Conference in September.

Eco-Cycle also sold or donated our Zero Waste graphics to communities in the United States, distributed 26 copies of Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Systems video across the country and the globe, attracted more than 100,000 visitors to the Eco-Cycle Web Site from outside North America and consulted at a community planning workshop in Oakland, California.

Locally, Eco-Cycle continued to work with Boulder County Commissioners and staff to create a Zero Waste policy for

Local Producer Responsibility in order to hold local producers of hazardous materials like paints and solvents responsible for the product once its useful life is over. In addition, Eco-Cycle organized community members in the City of Lafayette to urge the municipality to create the first city-sponsored collection contract in Colorado for a universal curbside recycling program.

Eco-Cycle’s environmental education programs have won numerous awards in past years, and this year was no exception. Our efforts were recognized with four different statewide and local awards:

- Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Boulder/Broomfield County School Recycling and Environmental Education Program was honored with the Boulder Rotary Club’s Our World award on January 19. Each year, the award is presented to an individual or organization from the Boulder community making a significant contribution to the conservation and preservation of the environment.
- On April 11, Eco-Cycle received the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Achievement Award for its Green Star Schools program. The award recognizes significant achievements in the protection of public health or the environment in the EPA’s Region 8. Eco-Cycle received the Environmental Achievement Award in 2006 for its Zero Waste Farmers’ Market in Boulder.
- The 2007 NOVA Environment award was presented to Eco-Cycle for the Green Star Schools program in early September. The NOVA awards honor outstanding non-profit organizations in Boulder County in the categories of Arts, Civic, Education, Environment and Health and Human Services, and particularly focus on innovation in programming and operational excellence.
- On February 29, 2008, Eco-Cycle’s Green Star Schools program will be receiving an award for Best New program from the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE). The award recognizes organizations with effective, cooperative, cross-sector environmental education programs in Colorado. Winners must demonstrate success in developing and implementing environmental education programs and partnerships that reach out in meaningful ways to audiences to increase environmental awareness and conservation.

**Awards:**

Over the last three decades, Eco-Cycle has received many awards in recognition of its work. Below are recent awards:

2008	EPA Environmental Achievement Award for Zero Waste Event Kit
2008	Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) Best New program award for Green Star Schools Program
2007	NOVA Environment Award for Green Star Schools program
2007	EPA Environmental Achievement Award for Green Star Schools program
2007	Boulder Rotary Club <i>Our World</i> Award for School Recycling and Environmental Education program
2006	Colorado Association for Recycling (CAFR) Recycling Industry Award – Outstanding Organics Program for Zero Waste Services program for businesses
2005	EPA Environmental Achievement Award for Zero Waste at the Boulder Farmers’ Market
2005	The Community Foundation serving Boulder County NOVA Environment Award for Zero Waste at the Boulder Farmers Market
2005	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Environmental Leadership Program Award acknowledging Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste efforts
2005	Center for ReSource Conservation Waste Reduction ReWard for Eco-Cycle’s programs keeping resources out of landfills
2004	Colorado Recycler of the Year Award for Most Unique Program honoring Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Event Program
2004	CAFR Outstanding Colorado Recycling Program recognizing the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM)