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. 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.
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 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 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, Yoel. 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 helps us keep non-recyclable contaminants out. (Please see guidelines on page 6 of the pull-out section.) Below is our Dirty Dozen hit list of the worst recyclable contaminants at curbside collection and drop-off centers:

1. Plastic Bags. Plastic bags are far 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 5) may be thinking.

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.

Q: 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 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 every-increasing amounts of material are kept out of the landfill and sold in good clean condition to the remanufacturing companies. That makes 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.

Q: Doesn’t this lower the value of the materials, and won’t there be a lot of contamination?
A. Not necessarily. On the one hand, communities who get 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 every-increasing amounts of material are kept out of the landfill and sold in good clean condition to the remanufacturing companies. That makes new products from recycled material. Single-stream helps to increase this volume of materials.

Q: What’s the problem with the new system?
A. The single-stream recycling system accepts the following recyclables:

- Mixed paper (newspaper, junk mail, etc.)
- Commingled containers (bottles, cans, etc.)

The single-stream recycling system accepts these materials in one bin. 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.

Q: How can I keep my neighborhood Zero Waste?
A. By carefully following the guidelines and check our list of worst contaminants on this page to help us keep these problematic items out of the landfill.

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 recycling. Some of the communities currently using single-stream include San Francisco, Toronto, Denver, Tucson, San Jose, Philadelphia and Dallas.

Q: How do I make my own Zero Waste program?
A. By carefully following the guidelines and check our list of worst contaminants on this page to help us keep these problematic items out of the landfill.

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Single-Stream and a Zero Waste Future

Single-stream recycling: It’s our 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 for our neighbors, call us to become an Eco-Cycle Eco-Leader.

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 it 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 processes, 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 doing all “two-stream” collections. This is setting the bar higher than anyone in the nation, but we think that the three-bin 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 the some of the cleanest, most contaminant-free materials in the country.

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 metal. 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.

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.

Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) adds bike tires and tubes to its list of accepted recyclables. These items are now accepted at the Boulder County Recycling Center and will be used to create new products, like bike bags and satchels, by Green Guru, a Boulder-based company.

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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.”
**Nutrient-rich Microbe Brew Compost Tea is Back!**

by Iris Seia

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 microbics 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” (intravenous) drip of small amounts of nutrients, Microbe Brew infuses your soil with millions of live microbics, 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 soil with standard watering can. Then, thoroughly moisten the soil with water before applying 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 composting process. These materials are not recyclable or compostable.

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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.
  - Saturdays ONLY from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- **Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials**
  - 5030 “old” Pearl St., Boulder (see map on page D)
  - Wednesdays ONLY from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Prices**

- $25.50/gallons
- $6/gallon
- $2.50/square

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

A refundable container deposit of $3.50 ($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.”

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**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.bouldercountyrecycles.net.
**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. The cheapest first step they can take to immediately reduce their greenhouse gas emissions is to keep organic materials out of the landfill and avoid the potent greenhouse gas-generating fertilizers to produce crops on declining lands.

**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, tins, 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 infamous of Naples thanks to government inefficiency, corruption and the fierce opposition of local populations to stringing 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... 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.

**Are Your Food Scraps and Yard Waste Heating the Planet?**

Failure means our landfills emit the greenhouse gas equivalent of 26% 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 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 26% 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 measures to keep organic materials out of the landfill and avoid the 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 compostable organic materials not only contribute to global climate change — it also wastes the carbon and nutrients our soils so desperately need to sustain our society. Intensive farming has stripped our soils 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 2012,” we can prevent potent methane emissions and build healthier soils. Taking the COOL step replenishes carbon stocks and supports sustainable agriculture, yielding healthier food for our population. When 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.
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 disposable lunch items just once for about 20 minutes. The trash cans overflow with waste: Polyurethane 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 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-engage students' waste reduction habits and emphasize the importance of the 3Rs: 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.
You recycle and compost at home by the glow of your kitchen fluorescent. You do everything you can to support a Zero Waste community to share with the rest of the world. You're proud of all the good work of both your local companies and your neighbors. You recycle and compost at home by the glow of your kitchen fluorescent. You do everything you can to support a Zero Waste community to share with the rest of the world. You're proud of all the good work of both your local companies and your neighbors.

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

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The Friendship Fund
Nau
Temple Hoyne Bueh Foundation
$5,000 - $9,999
Weaver Family Foundation
$10,000 +
Anonymous Family
Foundation
Boulder County Resource Conservation
Foundation
In-kind Donors
1-800-Got-Junk!
Al Miles
Aeronautic Group
International Altitude Spirits
Amazing Recycled Products
Art Cleaners
Bay Window Catering
Bicycle Village
Boulder Boulder
Boulder Bookstore
Boulder County
Business Report
Boulder Creek Winery
Boulder Farmers’ Market
Boulder Boz</p>
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. 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.