

## *Project Summary & Narrative*

### **Project Name: Learning About Zero Waste – Monthly Article Series**

#### ***Project Summary***

**Briefly summarize (2-3 sentences) the specific purpose for which you are requesting funds.** The need for additional education regarding zero waste would allow Boulder County to ‘achieve zero waste or darn near it by 2025’. This grant seeks funds for a ‘monthly zero waste article series’ to be published in *The Mountain Neighbor*; funds to increase commercial single-stream recycling in the Front Range mountain communities; and a construction and demolition (C&D) materials diversion activity at the 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup event.

#### ***Project Narrative***

##### **1. Agency or Business Overview**

The mission of Keep Magnolia Clean (KMC) is to divert waste from the landfill. Our geographic area is the Foothill mountains and as the only full-service (compost, all recyclables and trash collection) hauler based in unincorporated Boulder County, a total of 26.5 tons of materials have been diverted from our residential and commercial customers in one year. Our business plan is designed so customers pay more for trash and are incentivized to compost and recycle as much as possible.

##### **2. Statement of Need**

The 2010 Boulder County Waste Composition study revealed that organics comprise about 31% of the landfill [194 tons], compostable paper about 3.1% [20 tons] and construction/demolition materials (C&D) about 15.9% [99 tons]. The unincorporated Boulder County diversion rate, through the USDA program/grant, was 33% - compared to the City of Boulder’s residential diversion rate of 51%. If Boulder County is going to achieve ‘zero waste or darn near it by 2025’, a larger community-focused effort should be undertaken.

Background: Initially, community input was sought to gauge interest in establishing community compost stations along Magnolia Drive. In the end, 38 residents supported this idea, but 6 residents were strongly opposed. As I reflected on the input provided from the 6 long-term residents, it became clear that there is a need to do more education around zero waste in general, including the role communities and individuals can play and simple steps each can take each day to assist in achieving the Town of Nederland and Boulder County zero waste goals. Correcting misinformation about what is in the landfill and methane generated by food waste was another piece of information needing clarification. This community feedback was beneficial and informed this grant application. This project seeks to increase a greater understanding of zero waste among mountain residents *and* local businesses by publishing a monthly article (1/2 page in size) in *The Mountain Neighbor*, a mountain-based community publication read by about 95,000 people. For the past 12 years, a large number of readers in our mountain communities regularly advertise and read this 30-page color publication, including residents in Jamestown, Gold Hill, Ward, Nederland, Pinecliffe and Wondervu. Given the number of residents who regularly read this publication, the monthly article series will provide further education to those who do not have a full understanding of zero waste, and to say thanks to the many that support and are helping the County achieve its zero waste goals.

Another aspect of this grant application is to increase commercial single-stream recycling - a tangible outcome. KMC would advertise to Foothill mountain residents in The Mountain Neighbor. By being a full-service provider that accepts all recyclables (including glass); unlimited composting and cardboard for residential customers, having KMC advertise in The Mountain Neighbor would attract additional customers and have a direct, positive impact on increasing the unincorporated Boulder County diversion rate. As of October 31, 2012, KMC has diverted 27,560 pounds of compost; 21,355 pounds of single-stream recyclables and 4,380 pounds of cardboard from the landfill – about 26.5 tons from our 28 residential and commercial customers. Our per customer {residential} trash footprint averages 11.7 pounds each month. Needless to say, we are ecstatic that a small, reputable company can have such a positive impact on moving the County towards zero waste.

### **3. Project Description**

In an effort to assist Boulder County in achieving its zero waste goals as outlined in the 2010 Zero Waste Action Plan adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, Keep Magnolia Clean proposes to write and have published ten ½ page articles about zero waste. The proposed titles and timeline are:

- February 2013 – Defining Zero Waste
- March 2013 – Small Steps You Can Take Daily to Zero Waste
- April 2013 – Businesses: Signup for Your Free Waste Audit
- May 2013 – Town of Nederland Cleanup Day – Wood Recycling Station
- June 2013 – Organize and staff ReSource C&D Activity
- July 2013 – Composting 101 in Bear Country
- August 2013 – Paint and Electronics Recycling
- September 2013 – Helping Your Employer Achieve Zero Waste
- October 2013 – What Is Your Carbon Footprint?
- November 2013 – How Your Purchasing Patterns Contribute to Zero Waste

Each ½ page article (approximately 200 words) will be written by myself and approved by the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division staff. Green Girl Recycling (Bridget Johnson) and Eco-Cycle (Eric Lombardi, Marti Matsch) are supportive of this proposal and will contribute their time, in the form of in-kind donations, to provide feedback on the articles in their expertise including suggested links, Boulder County resources, and other useful insights. Each article will end with: ‘what you can do in the next 30 days’ -- a few, easy suggestions will be offered.

Activity: When I volunteered at the 2011 Nederland Spring Cleanup event, I spoke with the Town of Nederland staff about the need for ReSource staff to be present. We all observed quite a bit of good wood being put in the dumpsters. The amount of time and effort needed to spearhead this effort is beyond the Town of Nederland staffing, but they are supportive. I contacted Shaun Labarre at ReSource and Jennifer Shriver at the Center for Resource Conservation – both like the idea of a C&D activity at the 2013 Ned Spring Cleanup event.

#### **Program Goals, Target Audience and Outcome Objectives**

Program Goals: 1) provide further education and information about County zero waste goals and objectives; 2) educate the 95,000 Mountain Neighbor readers about the Boulder County Zero Waste Action Plan; 3) inform readers about the contents of the Foothill Transfer Site Waste study; 4) In conjunction with the Nederland Spring Cleanup 2013, take the lead in coordinating a construction/demolition pickup with ReSource. Target Audience: Foothill mountain community residents, The Mountain Neighbor readers, Boulder County leaders, local/state politicians. This publication is widely distributed in local businesses, chamber of commerce offices, libraries, etc... Outcome Objectives: 1) To increase by 20% the number of residents who have visited the Zero

Waste Useful Links page at Keep Magnolia Clean by November 31, 2013. 2) To increase by 25% the number of residents who know at least 3 goals of the Boulder County Zero Waste Action Plan by November 31, 2013. 3) To increase by 20% the number of residents who possess appropriate knowledge about the 2010 Boulder County Waste Composition study by November 31, 2013. 4) To increase by 57% the number of new Keep Magnolia Clean customers by November 31, 2013. 5) To divert at least 3.5 tons – approximately 5% of the estimated waste -- of clean dimensional lumber and painted, stained or treated wood at the 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup.

There are no additional permits, licenses or insurance coverage needed for this project.

This project would not move forward if Boulder County does not fund it.

If partial funding is awarded, Keep Magnolia Clean would execute the project, but on a much smaller scale. The number of articles would be reduced from ten to three. Keep Magnolia Clean is very committed to assisting Boulder County in achieving its zero waste goals, yet the efforts outlined in this grant will consume time and resources. The logistics and coordination associated with the 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup new ReSource station is estimated to be 24 hours, including work on the day of the event. We strongly believe this application will further assist Boulder County in achieving the specific Zero Waste Action Plan goals noted below and feel full funding has many benefits.

- *Residential short-term goal:* residential volume-based garbage collection & embedded recycling

- *Residential short-term goal:* support capacity for construction and demolition transfer, sorting and possible processing

- *Residential short-term education & policy goal:* comprehensive education campaign

- *Commercial short-term education & policy goal:* provide free waste audits for businesses

#### **4. Project Timeline**

This project would officially begin February 1, 2013 with the first article being published and the project would end November 31, 2013. Significant milestones are listed below.

**December 2012:** learn if grant is funded

**January 2013:** develop evaluation survey tool and coordinate with The Mountain Neighbor to have it uploaded to their website

**February – November 2013:** write monthly article and seek feedback from in-kind donors; obtain approval of final articles from Boulder County Resource Conservation Division staff; coordinate with The Mountain Neighbor staff to meet publishing deadline

**April 2013:** work with the Town of Nederland staff, Town of Nederland Sustainability Advisory Board and ReSource regarding the 2013 Spring Cleanup event new activity – recover clean dimensional lumber and other useful C&D materials

**June 2013:** assist in coordinating and volunteer to handle the C&D collection area at 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup Event

**December 2013:** have post evaluation survey uploaded to The Mountain Neighbor website; evaluate effectiveness of program and prepare grant report

#### **5. Project Evaluation and Accountability**

Evaluating all new projects is crucial to measuring short-term change (program impact) and long-term change (outcome objectives). A survey (8-10 questions) will be developed and placed on The Mountain Neighbor website prior to the beginning of the grant to ascertain baseline knowledge regarding zero waste, recycling, composting, zero waste efforts by employers, etc... To measure knowledge gains gleaned from the articles and

county documents, this same survey will be administered in December 2013. Also, website traffic data vis-à-vis Google Analytics will be recorded pre/post grant to determine percentage of increase. Lastly, the number of new KMC customers and Facebook followers/comments will be measured pre/post grant cycle.

#### **6. Cost Effectiveness**

This project is an excellent use of public funds for unincorporated Boulder County, and will build on the success of the USDA funding that recently ended. As noted in a February 9, 2012 article by Dan Rowland, at the beginning of the USDA grant, “the previous estimate was that only one-eighth of mountain discards were collected for reuse, composting or recycling,” Sustainability Planner Lisa Friend said. “We doubled the rate and kept on going up to more than 30 percent. It’s a marked improvement over past diversion efforts.” We are confident this momentum will continue if we are awarded this grant. By providing full service collection, KMC is increasing the unincorporated Boulder County diversion rate. *In our first year of service, we have diverted 13.78 tons of compost; 10.68 tons of single-stream recyclables and 2.19 tons of corrugated cardboard. We also handled an estimated 4300 cubic feet of slash during the summer months.* Lastly, we will divert at least 3.5 tons of construction and demolition materials at the 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup event. It is very possible the article series will reduce the stockpile of compost noted in the Boulder County 2013 Compost Market Study. The public educational value of this application is significant and is a win-win for Boulder County and Keep Magnolia Clean.

#### **7. Cooperative Efforts**

**Alice Lemoine, Publisher, The Mountain Neighbor.** I have worked with Alice both as an advertiser and a long-term resident of Nederland. She owns and operates The Business Connection – the one-stop business that handles printing, banners, mailings, magnetic signs, and many other business needs. She is also the Publisher of The Mountain Neighbor, and has graciously extended a significant cost savings to Keep Magnolia Clean should this grant be awarded.

**Green Girl Recycling (Bridget Johnson)** was approached as I was receiving community input about the community compost stations idea. She supported that proposal and believes this opportunity will ‘bring people along in their understanding of zero waste’. Bridget’s letter of support is on page 11 of this application.

**Eco-Cycle (Eric Lombardi)** was also contacted regarding his expertise in zero waste; Marti Matsch, Communications Director, will be providing feedback on a few monthly articles.

**Bay Roberts**, a recipient of this award in 2012, is supportive of this proposal.

**Center for Resource Conservation (ReSource Yard):** I have spoken with Shaun Labarre, Jennifer Shriver and Rob Baer and all are supportive of our collaboration to divert significant amounts of wood and other C&D materials at the 2013 Nederland Spring Cleanup event.

#### **8. Long Term Self Sufficiency**

This project is an educational grant that will further increase the unincorporated Boulder County diversion rate, thereby assisting the County {and Town of Nederland} in achieving its zero waste goals. It is clear residents and businesses are ready to support a local hauler, yet some need a bit more education about zero waste, composting and single-stream recycling. I am thoroughly convinced that my customers believe this outreach endeavor will contribute to more zero waste advocates and a higher diversion rate for businesses in

the Town of Nederland, and for residences in unincorporated Boulder County. A greater understanding of composting will also be achieved {and the stockpile may decrease as residents purchase compost vs. bags of topsoil}. Compost is particularly useful in mountain communities given the tremendous winds that erode topsoil.

Assuming this grant is fully funded as proposed, future expenses will be assumed by Keep Magnolia Clean.