

practical action

1. PLASTIKI

Around the World
in a Soda Bottle Catamaran



In May, David de Rothschild and a handpicked crew of experts will set sail 8,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean in a boat made out of recycled consumer plastic bottles. The Plastiki's mission is to capture the imagination of the global media and bring people around the world to rethink our human impact on the natural world and oceans. The voyage will sail through a number of exciting, challenging and environmentally sensitive regions, including the ominously named Eastern Garbage Patch, an area six times the size of England where plastic outweighs plankton by 6 to 1 – essentially the world's largest waste dump.

Supported by Adventure Ecology's network of global supporters and institutions, the Plastiki aims to use the expedition to heighten worldwide consciousness of the extreme challenges that our oceans and their inhabitants face due to excessive human debris, overfishing and a rapidly changing climate. Developed and built in association with world-leading institutions, engineers, designers, marine architects and sustainability experts, the 60-foot Plastiki catamaran exemplifies groundbreaking thinking and sustainable design solutions at every level.

www.adventureecology.com/theplastiki



2. CAPE COURIERS

A Courier Company Cuts its Footprint



Recognizing the critical role that the transport industry plays in global warming, Delia Claasen, the founder of South African delivery company Cape Couriers, decided it was time to put a cap on her company's carbon dioxide emissions. Currently, Cape Couriers employs an external consultant to measure the company's carbon footprint and Claasen and her employees are all striving to reduce their electricity, waste, vehicle and air travel impacts wherever possible.

Beyond this, Cape Couriers have commissioned Food & Trees for Africa, the 2007 UNEP Sasakawa Award winner, to help them voluntarily offset these emissions. Through the National Tree Distribution Programme, FTA receives numerous applications from disadvantaged schools and communities in barren, dusty environments which need trees to address environmental and sustainable development issues.

In order to offset a year's emissions, Cape Couriers is now in the process of donating more than 2,300 trees to schools and community projects around South Africa.

www.capecouriers.co.za/



3. CLEAN UP THE WORLD

Mobilizing Communities to Think Global, Act Local



'Communities uniting to combat climate change' is the proactive theme of this year's Clean Up the World Campaign, a worldwide drive to clean up the environment. The initiative,





which first started in 1989 with the Sydney Harbour Clean Up, is now a global campaign that inspires communities around the world to clean up, fix up and conserve their local environment.

With this year's campaign, Clean Up the World founder Ian Kiernan made a special call for communities to join together and play a part in helping create a better environment for the future. "Unity is of great importance when it comes to addressing the causes of climate change. I think we all — no matter where we live — have a responsibility to protect our planet and there's no better time to start than now", said Kiernan.

www.cleanup.com.au/au/



4. VELIB' Free Bikes in Paris

In a bid to encourage people to give up the motor in favour of pedal power, the city of Paris has launched a free bicycle scheme called Velib' — getting hundreds of Parisians to switch from four wheels to two, especially for short distances.

The system offers more than 10,000 bikes, allowing riders to pick up and drop off bicycles throughout the city at 750 locations. The bike does not have to be returned to the same pick-up point: you can take a bike from a rack near the Eiffel Tower, cycle to the Pantheon and leave it in the nearest Velib' stand there.

To access the bikes, riders can select a one-day card for 1 euro, a weekly card for 5 euros or an annual card for 29 euros — giving Parisians a real incentive to stick with the scheme for the long haul.

Paris is just one of a growing wave of cities offering free cycle schemes. Copenhagen, Montreal, Helsinki and Barcelona are some of the others, and more cities are considering similar systems.

www.velib.paris.fr/



5. BIOGAS IN KENYA Meru's sustainable prison

In prisons worldwide, sewage disposal from a large number of inmates is often a major health hazard for both the prison and the surrounding area. Meru GK prison in Kenya has found a sustainable solution, treating its sewage and turning it into fuel.

A 130 cubic-metre fixed dome digester built by the German development agency GTZ and funded by the EU is fed human waste, which it uses to produce between 50 and 90 per cent of the energy needed to cook for approximately 1,000 inmates. The system

is expected to provide the prison with cost savings of \$36,000 annually, all the while reducing the pressure on local wood supplies. And after the treatment, the bio-effluent is used as fertiliser for crop production.

In this case, the project pays for itself over time, and also allows for a drought-stricken region to make optimum use of the little water that is available. According to the project's Planning and Monitoring Adviser, Johannes Odhiambo, "the biodigester is an excellent way to put human waste to productive use, while also protecting the environment."

<http://www.gtz.de/en/themen/umwelt-infrastruktur/wasser/8524.htm>