



The Society of High Prairie

Regional Environmental Action Committee

Media Release

“My Life as a Plastic Bottle” educational video turns 20 years old!

Produced in 2003 for Alberta’s Grade IV Science curriculum unit, ‘Waste and Our World’, our locally shot educational video is still accurate, still relevant, and still used in Alberta schools and beyond! REAC had a distribution agreement with an educational distributor in Quebec for a long time, and ‘My Life as a Plastic Bottle’ was distributed to schools around Canada, the US, and Australia. Now our video is free to view on YouTube or on website at <https://www.reacinfo.ca/>, where the Teachers’ and Students’ guides are also available.

“My Life as a Plastic Bottle” follows the story of ‘Grady’, a character representing ethane gas that becomes a polyethylene bottle. Grady recounts how it feels, as we show the story of them flowing out of the ground and through a pipeline, compressor stations and being made into polyethylene. The polyethylene pellets chat as they are shipped by train to the bottler; admiring their shiny new shape, they are filled with water, and trucked to a small town store. A group of thirsty kids buy and drink the water in Grady, then miss the recycling bin trying to ‘make a basket’. A concerned citizen picks up the ‘trash’ and Grady is taken to the Waste Transfer Station. Voice-overs representing an old newspaper, a diaper, and plastic bags bemoan their various fates but Grady is rescued and lands at the Bottle Depot where the bottles have a celebration, meeting their relations from all over. All the bottles are shipped to the shredder where we cut to post-consumer uses of plastic #1; carpet and a Polar fleece garment.

As Alberta moves toward Extended Producer Responsibility for all packaging materials, this video remains a significant educational resource for education around the important reasons to recycle – saving energy, landfill space, and resources.

REAC is developing our Plastics Remanufacture Project to enable independent plastics recycling in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities further than 250 km from available recycling

centres. Our current research project in partnership with the University of Alberta’s department of mechanical engineering looks at potential emissions from recycling equipment, and appropriate PPE. With sponsorship from the plastics and chemical industries, we hope to fund 4 pilot projects for independent plastics recycling around Alberta.

“My Life as a Plastic Bottle” was funded by the Alberta EcoTrust Foundation, Community Initiatives Program, Northern Cooperative Action for Recycling Enterprises, Big Lakes County, and the Town of High Prairie. “My Life as a Plastic Bottle received in-kind contributions from: Driftpile Cree Nation, Genesis Explorations, Sucker Creek First Nation, Nova Chemicals, Chevron Canada, Kinuso School, Westbridge Bottlers Inc., Faust General Store, Recycle Plus, Joussard Bottle Depot, Grimshaw Trucking, Alberta Beverage Container Recycling Corp., Merlin Plastics, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, Lesser Slave Regional Waste Management Services Commission and many more.

Quotes from the 2003 release:

“... I strongly endorse the “My Life”...video series. These videos will allow children to see the results of their recycling efforts. It will also illustrate the role children play in protecting and preserving the environment.”

Bill Smith,
Mayor of Edmonton

“I wish you every success in completing the first in the series of these recycling videos. It is a creative and ambitious project towards the development of much-needed visual information and resource materials on recycling.”

C.D. Radke,
Deputy Minister of the Environment

“Videos on recycling, particularly those applicable to Alberta, are quite limited. The production of a video series will be a welcome addition to school and library resources. Your concept to follow the life of a recyclable material is very creative and successfully depicts the importance of “closing the loop” and the wise management of our resources... I found the script to be accurate from a technical perspective.”

Licia Paddison,
Waste Reduction Specialist
Action on Waste, Alberta Environment

For current media quotes, you may contact the following: Producer (for REAC)
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See REAC Website at <https://www.reacinfo.ca/>



Thanks to Genesis Exploration



Thanks to O'Canada Beverage Company



Actor: Emma New is paying at the checkout of Faust General Store, buying 'Grady', our main character, the water bottle



Actor: Rose Sawan with her (now 20 year old) granddaughter Brianna. They have both recently watched “My Life as a Plastics Bottle” again.



Actors: Colin and Dominique Ross (both on the left) at Mountain Equipment Co-op, picking out a warm, recycled plastic (polar fleece) sweater.