

## SCIENCE &amp; ENVIRONMENT

# Recycling your sole

## Nike gives back to the environment

It's easy not to think of the ecological consequences of tossing a pair of old sneakers, but when you imagine the number of shoes each person goes through in a lifetime, and how many people there are, it gains a little more significance. In the last few years the US has produced over 350 million pairs of shoes per year for domestic use only. That amounts to some serious pollution, with most shoes being manufactured using toxic glues, chemicals, dyes, synthetic materials, plastics, synthetic petroleum-based rubber, and lots of animal skin.

Now if all these shoes made in this manner are merely thrown out when they become a little worse for wear, not only is the material of the shoe wasted and contributes to landfill, but new shoes must be made in their place, creating more pollution.

But this cycle can be broken in two ways. First, you can actually recycle your old shoes into new

shoes, or even innovative athletic equipment, as with the 'Reuse a Shoe Program' Nike initiative. This project takes all brands of running shoes and grinds up parts of them to remanufacture into things like floor mats, basketball courts, playgrounds, and donates the final products to 'worthy causes.' As far as I can tell this program isn't available in Canada, and Nike may not be a company people are willing to promote due to their notoriously poor track record. However, similar programs no doubt exist here in Canada, and are probably just an internet search away. However, the best way to recycle is to reuse — that is, if your shoes are still maintaining their integrity. By donating shoes to second hand stores, someone else can reuse rather than waste them.

Another approach to this issue is to support ecologically sound shoe companies which use recycled fibers (including old shoes, hemp, rubber, etc) in their shoes. Try se-

lecting companies which don't use chemicals which are harmful to the environment, or non-renewable. Check out the [www.greenculture.com](http://www.greenculture.com) website for information on eco-sound manufacturers, and try visiting stores such as P'Lovers, which sell such products right here in town. It just takes a little searching to green your soles!



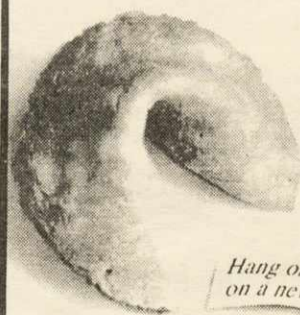
photo by WR

## WANTED:

The whereabouts of these environmental activists I have heard so much about. Where are they when an editor desperately needs writers? Is this not the perfect forum to put out your environment message?

If you see anyone who seems to care about the earth, humans and animals, please send them to SUB 312, preferably during *Gazette* meetings on Monday afternoons at 4:30. (Although anytime is acceptable as beggars cannot be choosers!)

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— ITP LABS, D'AVRAY HALL, UNB, FREDERICTON.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2000 7:00 PM

— HILTON HOTEL, DOWNTOWN SAINT JOHN.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2000 7:00 PM

— ITP LABS, D'AVRAY HALL, UNB, FREDERICTON.

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