

## Are You a Member of Rainforest Relief?

If so, thank you so much for your membership. You can see we continue to do our best to spare rainforests, and hope we can count on your continued support.

If not, please consider joining! For a donation of \$25 or more you will receive our RAINDROPS seasonal newsletter.

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!

- ☐ \$1000 Jaguar (Lifetime)  
☐ \$500 River Dolphin (Donor)  
☐ \$100 Toucan (Sponsor)  
☐ \$25 Orchid (Subscriber)  
☐ \$15 Leaf Cutter Ant (Limited Income)

Mail to: Rainforest Relief • PO Box 150566 • Brooklyn, NY 11215 • (718) 398-3760

*There are two front lines in the battle to spare the rainforests: one is between the farmer or logger and the trees, the other is between the consumer and the store shelf.*

Rainforest Relief works to end the loss of the world's tropical and temperate rainforests and protect their human and non-human inhabitants by reducing demand for the products of rainforest logging, mining and agricultural conversion, through education, advocacy, research and action.



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Our NEW office • 122 W. 27th St. • 10th Floor • NY, NY 10001  
P.O. Box 150566 • Brooklyn, NY 11215 • (718) 398-3760  
Our NEW website • [www.rainforestrelief.org](http://www.rainforestrelief.org) • [relief@igc.org](mailto:relief@igc.org)



### East Lyme, CT Switches to Recycled Plastic Lumber

In another of a string of victories for Rainforest Relief, the Town Building Committee of East Lyme, Connecticut decided in early April to switch the design for the Nyantic Bay Overlook boardwalk to a recycled plastic composite product, rather than use the tropical hardwoods they had originally specified.

Rainforest Relief became aware in November 2002 of East Lyme's intention to use a tropical hardwood called ipê for decking the boardwalk of the Nyantic Bay Overlook project. The organization made contact in December with the Director of Planning in East Lyme, Meg Parulis, explaining the problems associated with the use of tropical hardwoods.

Fortunately for the rainforests, there was a delay in the project due to the bids having come in higher than expected. This gave Rainforest Relief a chance to highlight the rainforest destruction inherent in the use of ipê and connect the town with manufacturers of recycled plastic lumber.

Ultimately, the town decided to shift to a product that was more environmentally sound, made from a composite of recycled plastic and wood sawdust. This decision marks another in a string of recent victories which include Ventnor, NJ, Asbury Park, NJ and Urbain Design. ♪



One of the many recycled plastic benches offered by Urbain Designs.

### Urbain Designs Agrees to End Their Sales of Rainforest Wood Outdoor Furnishings

As of April 15, 2003, Urbain Designs, an outdoor furnishing and park amenities wholesaler, ended their sales of rainforest wood furniture. The company sells benches, tables and other amenities made from recycled plastic but they had also been offering the options of jatoba and ipê, two woods logged from the Amazon rainforests of Brazil.

We contacted Urbain on March 18 and within a week received notification of the company's decision to eliminate jatoba and ipê from their catalog, which has just gone to print without these products.

Urbain has become a company that we can support, offering outdoor furniture made entirely of alternatives to rainforest wood, especially recycled plastic. ♪

### First Annual NYC Rainforest Walk Raises Awareness and Raises Funds

The first annual NYC Rainforest Walk toured seven miles of New York City's waterfront last August. The walk highlighted the thousands of acres of rainforests that have been converted to benches, bridges and boardwalks that an estimated 8 million New Yorkers walk on and ride over every day. Rainforest Relief staff, volunteers and participants began the day at Hudson River Park and proceeded to Battery Park, then went past the Staten Island Ferry, South Street Seaport, City Hall Park and the Brooklyn Bridge subway station. The walk continued over the Brooklyn Bridge to the Fulton Ferry Terminal and finished at Brooklyn Bridge Park. Along

Rainforest Walk *continued on page 4*

## Asbury Park Victory!

### Asbury Park, New Jersey Passes Resolution Barring Future Use of Uncertified Rainforest Woods for Boardwalk Renovations

In January of 2003 Asbury Park, NJ Councilwoman Kate Mellina proposed that this historic boardwalk resort town — which gained national notoriety with Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run" album — end their use of uncertified tropical hardwoods for boardwalk renovations.

Late in 2001, Asbury Park went out to bid for tropical hardwoods to renovate a third of the six-block-long coastal boardwalk between the famed Convention Hall and the Paramount Theater — a well known and historic amusement area that was highly popular in the 1960's and the 70's but which underwent a major decline in the 1980's.

Rainforest Relief, along with the New Jersey chapter of Sierra Club, opposed the use of unsustainable tropical hardwoods for the renovations, which were being funded by a grant from the state of New Jersey.

A very public campaign ensued that involved many twists and turns and garnered a great deal of media coverage. It eventually ended up in court, as Rainforest Relief sued Asbury Park for failure to adhere to a New Jersey executive order mandating the use of recycled materials when state funds are used.

Even though the court case failed to stop the impending sale, in the eleventh hour, the hardwood supplier — none other than Timber Holdings of Wisconsin, the largest seller of tropical wood decking in the U.S. — made a deal with Aquatic Cellulose, a company contacted by Rainforest Relief, to purchase enough wood for the Asbury Park project. Aquatic Cellulose cuts

*Asbury Victory continued on page 5*



A lone pedestrian contemplates Asbury Park's rainforest wood boardwalk. After Rainforest Relief's long campaign, the city agreed to never again use uncertified tropical timber for boardwalk renovations.

### Office Supply Superstore Staples Inc. Agrees to Historic Endangered Forest and Recycling Standards

After feeling pressure from more than 600 protests at Staples stores nationwide, tens of thousands of letters and calls to the company's CEO, and news coverage across the country, office supply giant Staples announced last fall that it will meet the meet the Paper Campaign's demands to move towards forest-friendly paper sales. The Paper Campaign applauds Staples' move to set the standard in the office supply industry and is now looking to other paper retailers such as Office Max, Office Depot and Corporate Express to follow Staples' lead.

Under Staples' new guidelines, an industry first, the company will:

- Achieve an average of 30% post consumer recycled content across all paper products it sells.
- Phase out purchases of paper products from endangered forests, including the Canadian Boreal forests, key forests in the Southern US, and endangered National Forests.
- Create an environmental affairs division and report annually on its environmental results.

This agreement is the culmination of a two-year effort by the Paper Campaign, a coalition of dozens of citizen groups dedicated to moving the marketplace towards recycled paper. Rainforest Relief worked with other New York activists to protest and do street theatre at local Staples stores during national days of action.

"Staples new policy is the beginning of the end of the practice of destroying endangered forests to make disposable paper products," said Tim Keating of Rainforest Relief. "This is the result of efforts from concerned citizens across the country publicly demanding Staples stop selling our forests."

#### About the Paper Campaign

Since 2000, the Paper Campaign has taken its environmental message directly to the marketplace. By educating consumers, getting the attention of the media, and working directly with corporate decision makers the Campaign helps reduce the demand for paper from wood, especially from endangered forests, and increase the demand for affordable, high quality recycled paper. The largest grassroots, market-based forest protection campaign in the US, the Paper Campaign unites dozens of citizen groups nationwide with an interest in safeguarding America's forest heritage for future generations. ♪

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submerged tropical trees from beneath the flood waters of the Tucurui dam impound lake in Brazil.

Aquatic Cellulose, however, due to unforeseen circumstances, was unable to deliver the submerged wood in time and so conventional uncertified tropical ipê was used for the two-block-long renovation.

Rainforest Relief estimates that, for the 100,000 board feet delivered, 1,000 more acres of primary rainforests were logged.

After the tragic sale, Rainforest Relief continued to work behind the scenes in Asbury Park with a new City Council, towards ending further use of tropical hardwoods for the remaining boardwalk renovations.

A year ago, Councilwoman Mellina stated to the group that she would not allow uncertified tropical woods to be used again in Asbury Park.

In January of this year Councilwoman Mellina followed through on her promise and introduced a resolution calling for an end to the use of uncertified rainforest woods for all future boardwalk renovations and repairs.

The resolution passed unanimously.

With this Council resolution, Asbury Park became the ninth waterfront town to have responded to Rainforest Relief campaigns, ending the use of unsustainable tropical hardwoods for boardwalks. Others include Long Beach, California; Long Beach and Greenport in New York; and Ocean City, Wildwood and Ventnor in New Jersey. Verbal commitments have been made to Rainforest Relief by Philadelphia, Miami Beach, Belmar, NJ and Long Branch, NJ.

These decisions have curtailed the impending or proposed use of over 11 million board feet of unsustainable tropical wood. ♪

#### Rainforest Relief Featured on Local Cable Show

Rainforest Relief's director Tim Keating was featured on the local cable talk show, *The Listening Place*, hosted by Nancy Rosanoff. Nancy says of her show: "The proliferation of 'fear-inciting' media was very disturbing. I wanted another view of how life can be lived to be seen.... We need role models to remind us of who we are and why we are here...." Rainforest Relief used this great opportunity to outreach to a wider audience about the important work we do to spare the world's rainforest. ♪



The A.J. MEERWALD, New Jersey's official tall ship, is about to receive a brand new recycled plastic lumber dock.

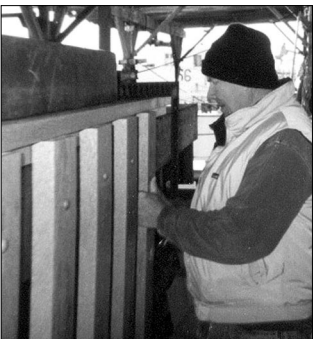
## A New Recycled Plastic Dock is Built for New Jersey's Tall Ship

The Bayshore Discovery Project (BDP) is building a new recycled plastic lumber floating dock that is attached to one of the three shipping shed docks owned by BDP on the Maurice River in Bivalve. This new floating dock will provide a safe and more accessible berth for New Jersey's official tall ship, the authentically-restored oyster schooner A. J. MEERWALD.

The MEERWALD, a living artifact and sailing classroom, delivers educational programs to thousands of students, teachers and adults annually. The Bayshore Discovery Project's mission is to motivate people to take care of the environment, the history and the culture of New Jersey's Bayshore region through education, preservation and example.

This 96-foot-long floating dock and the picnic tables on the dock are made of recycled plastic lumber manufactured by Ecoboard Inc., and paid for by a grant from the Cumberland County Improvement Authority. This use of recycled plastic lumber will remove over 240,000 one-gallon milk jugs from the waste stream. The dock was built by volunteers with supervision from BDP staff. For more information on the Bayshore Discovery Project visit [www.ajmeerwald.org](http://www.ajmeerwald.org).

Rainforest Relief is thrilled with BDP's decision to construct with this ecological alternative to rainforest timber, and is happy to have another nearby example of recycled plastic lumber waterfront construction to show to those considering the use of alternatives. ♪



Volunteers hard at work constructing the new dock.



## Long Branch Installs Test Section of Recycled Plastic Lumber Boardwalk

Last year it was decided by Rainforest Relief staff and board to become more proactive in our campaigning to compel cities and towns to end their use of unsustainable rainforest woods. One of the first towns we targeted with this new approach was Long Branch, NJ. A town with an extensive boardwalk that used to host a large amusement are, we knew Long Branch would eventually have to redo their aging boardwalk.

We had been calling the Long Branch mayor for a couple of years to keep ourselves aware of any plans to renovate their boardwalk with tropical wood. But we were always told that nothing was in the works. After the Asbury Park debacle (see *Asbury Park Victory* on page 2), we decided to step up efforts in Long Branch.

After numerous calls and upon hearing that repairs were needed, we arranged a meeting with Long Branch officials and staff and leaders of the Rutgers center that innovated and tests recycled plastic lumber. At the meeting, we were told by the City Administrator that tropical hardwoods had been recommended for repairs but Long Branch officials had rejected that suggestion due



Construction of Long Branch, NJ's recycled plastic lumber boardwalk.

Photo by Rick Lehman

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## News from the Northwest Campaign Update and Call for Action Against Cost Plus World Market

by Jeff Lockwood, Director, Portland Chapter

The Portland Chapter and our contact in San Diego, Erin Wilkins, are continuing to campaign against the Cost Plus World Market chain for its sales of lawn furniture made of nyatoh and balau wood from highly endangered Indonesian and Malaysian rainforests. Three-fourths of the logging in Indonesia is being done illegally. Indigenous people and wildlife, particularly the highly endangered orangutan, are being decimated by this logging.

After the company, which has 186 stores in 23 states, failed to address the concerns we raised in two letters, we began a postcard campaign demanding that they immediately stop selling the Indonesian products and to make a commitment to stop selling any other products containing woods from endangered rainforests. The company responded to the first round of postcards with a letter pointing to their policy to only buy wood from forests designated for commercial logging. This position ignores the fact that commercial logging and associated roads are the leading cause of rainforest destruction and degradation in Indonesia, Malaysia and many other areas.

To date we have sent at least 500 postcards to the company, and we know they are feeling the need to respond to the tide of public pressure due to a new entry on their web site under "Is your outdoor furniture collection environmentally responsible?" in their

Cost Plus continued on page 4

## Rainforest Relief Launches Exciting New Website at [www.rainforestrelief.org](http://www.rainforestrelief.org)

It's been a long time coming but thanks to the efforts of two volunteers, Ed Mullen and Robb Smylie, of ExpectMore, we have a new webpage that we hope you'll take some time to explore. You can see some of the fine design work from the website below. We'll continue to build the site over the next year so check back often. We intend this site to be a major resource for activists looking to stop the destruction of rainforests; for people specifying, ordering, retailing, using or shopping for wood or alternatives; as well as students and others needing information for reports. ☺



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to the black eye Asbury Park had received and the costs they incurred over their renovation plans.

Long Branch staff were considering a number of options. The meeting led to their assessing the use of Polywood, a durable and structural recycled plastic lumber (RPL) manufactured in New Jersey by Plywood, Inc., under license from Rutgers University.

In June of this year, Long Branch installed an over-100-foot test section of what became the first Polywood coastal boardwalk in the world. This national and global first will make it much easier for Rainforest Relief to convince other towns to make the switch to RPL, since Long Branch has just become a model for others to inspect and follow. ☺



A portion of the finished Long Branch boardwalk.

Photo by Rick Lehman

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the way Rainforest Relief director Tim Keating discussed the rainforest woods that were unsustainably and most often illegally logged for the construction at each site, and highlighted the rainforests that had been affected.

In addition to raising awareness the walk raised much needed funds that will be used to further our programs designed to stop the use of destructively logged rainforest wood in New York City and beyond.



The Brooklyn Bridge decking was one NYC's many uses of rainforest wood that was highlighted on the walk.

Photo by Tim Keating

Rainforest Relief wants to thank its walk sponsors: Patagonia, Polywood Recycled Plastic Lumber, Endangered Species Chocolate company, E Magazine, Sambazon, Nature's Best Bottled Water and Bicycle Station. ☺

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"Commonly Asked Questions" section, which states:

"Cost Plus World Market's outdoor furniture is made from farmed Nyatoh and Balau tropical woods. The Company purchases furniture from those businesses that certify the wood used to make their products has been legally harvested in compliance with all applicable local laws and regulations. This policy ensures that lumber remains a renewable resource and provides an ecologically sound base for their local economy."

Of course, this is timber industry hogwash furthered by Cost Plus. The forests being logged in Indonesia and Malaysia for these woods are not "farms", at least not until after they are logged, and there is nothing "ecologically sound" about logging in these countries. Also, self-certification of timber companies cannot ensure that wood is from legal sources, particularly when the vast majority of wood from a given area is obtained through illegal logging, and no legitimate paper trail is available. Only third party certification under Forest Stewardship Council accreditation offers a means to independently verify the source and chain of custody for lumber products, and none of Cost Plus' product are certified in this manner. ☺

### Take Action for Southeast Asia's Rainforests!

Please contact Cost Plus and request that they:

- Cease sales of woods from illegal sources (particularly nyatoh and balau)
- Phase out sales of woods from endangered forests, and
- Phase in woods that are certified under Forest Stewardship Council guidelines.

Mr. Murray Dashe, CEO  
Cost Plus World Market  
200 4th Street, Oakland, CA 94607  
Email: [murray.dashe@cpwm.com](mailto:murray.dashe@cpwm.com)  
Phone: (510) 893-7300, Fax: (510) 893-6418

Rainforest Relief will be organizing demonstrations in the Portland and San Diego areas, so please get in touch if you'd like to help organize or carry out these highly effective events! Also, we can send you the template for postcards or help you plan a demonstration at a Cost Plus store in other states. The more widespread the public pressure, the sooner we can turn the company around. To get involved in the campaign against Cost Plus please contact the Northwest Chapter at [j.lockwood@rainforestrelief.org](mailto:j.lockwood@rainforestrelief.org) or (503) 236-3031. ☺