

# Is Minnesota Seeing Green?

Christie Manning  
Elise L. Amel

A gravel path winds through a dense forest of tall, thin trees with vibrant green foliage. The path is made of dark grey gravel and is flanked by lush green undergrowth. The scene is bright and verdant, suggesting a healthy, thriving forest.

Minnesotans are *feeling* green

# Our findings

- “How green are you?”
  - Living Green: 95% consider themselves at least “light green”
  - State Fair: 86% consider themselves at least “light green”
- Belief that there are environmental problems
  - LGE: 96% believe, and are willing to make changes
  - State Fair: 90% believe, and are willing to make changes

# Our findings: worry

- LGE: 60% worried, 40% optimistic
- State Fair: 56% worried, 44% optimistic

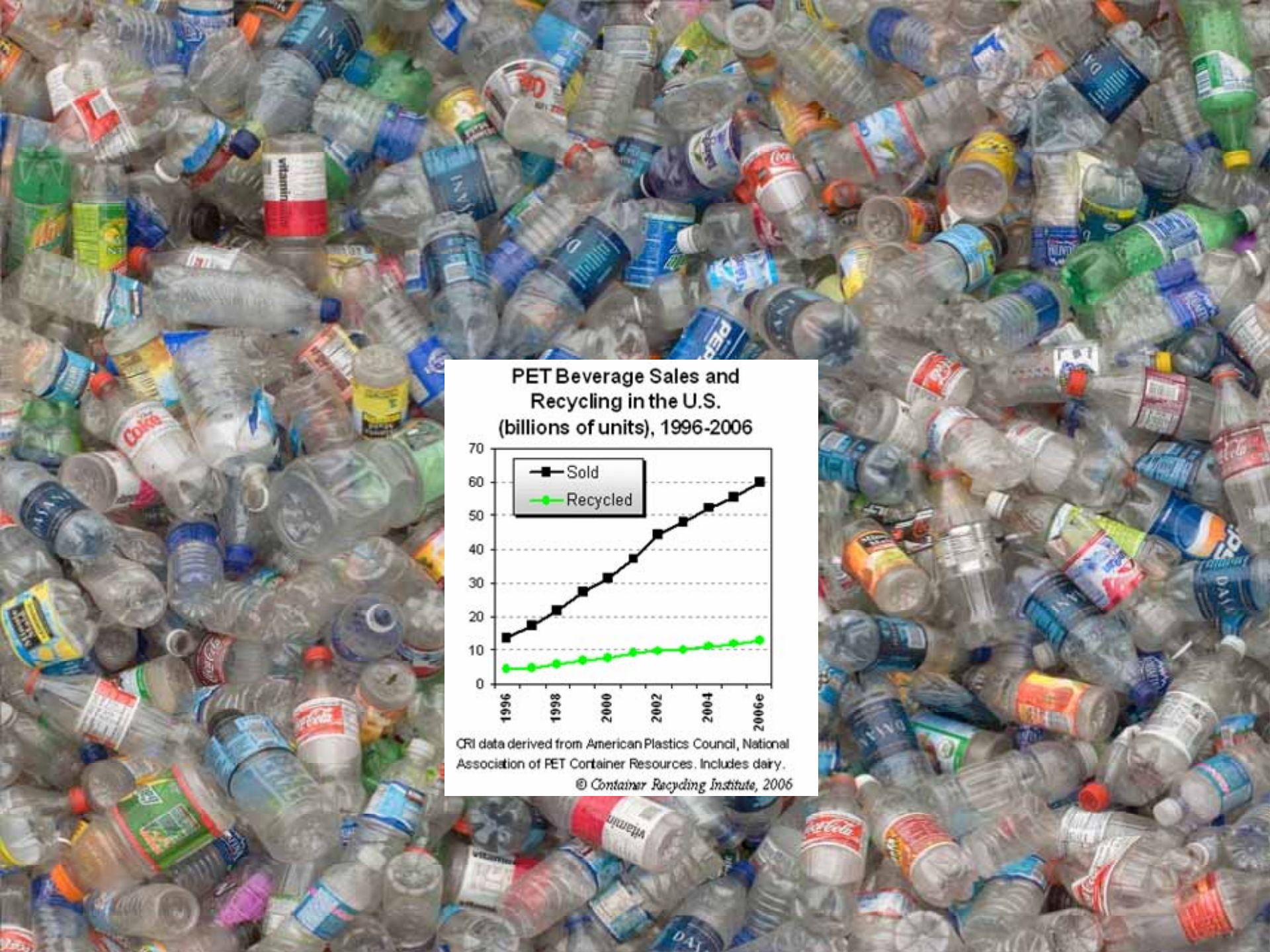
An aerial photograph of a large, flat, green field, likely a farm or agricultural area. The field is divided into a grid pattern of smaller sections, possibly by roads or irrigation channels. The overall color is a vibrant green, suggesting healthy vegetation. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

But are Minnesotans ***doing*** green?

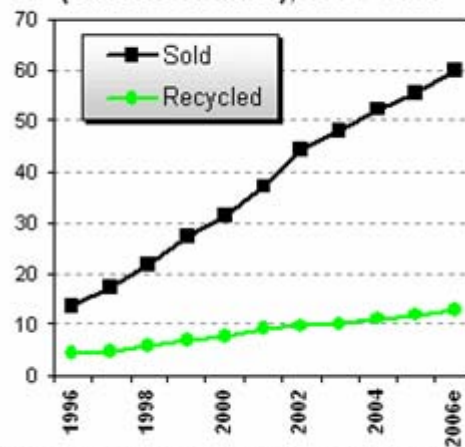


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- A large, dense pile of discarded plastic bottles and cans, illustrating waste production. The bottles are of various colors (clear, blue, green) and brands (Coca-Cola, Vitamin Water, etc.). The cans are also of various colors and brands. The pile is overflowing and covers the entire background of the image.
- **Minnesotans throw away more than 1 million tons of recyclable materials yearly**
  - **Recycling rates are increasing more slowly than waste production rates**

\* Source: [RecycleMoreMinnesota.org](http://RecycleMoreMinnesota.org)



**PET Beverage Sales and Recycling in the U.S.**  
(billions of units), 1996-2006



CRI data derived from American Plastics Council, National Association of PET Container Resources. Includes dairy.

© Container Recycling Institute, 2006

# U.S. Census Bureau 2006

Twin Cities metro commuters:

79% Drive Alone

9% Carpool

4% Public Transportation

2.4% Walk

.6% Bicycle

We still have a long way to go

Psychology can help bridge  
the gap between *talk* and  
*action*.

# What causes the gap ?

- Barriers
  - Infrastructure and physical barriers
  - Social factors
  - Psychological factors

# Psychological Research

- Factors that help overcome the gap

# Factor 1: Norms

- What do you see others doing?
- Do you feel social support for what you do?
- Do you have green friends and neighbors?



# Tip #1

## Demonstrate greenness and create green networks.



## Factor 2: Labels



People do not like to be associated with  
“environmentalists”

# Tip #2

- Be aware of framing

E.g. People respond positively to actions taken by “concerned citizens”

# Factor 3: Contact with nature



# Tip #3

## Encourage contact with nature



# Factor 4: Worldview

Do you feel there is an inherent balance to nature?

Do you think there are limits to economic growth?

Do you think humans should have domination over nature?

# Tip #4

## Know your audience's worldview

- Hooks



# Factor 5: Belief in personal risk

Americans don't think global warming is a *personal* risk

concern for nature and far-away people

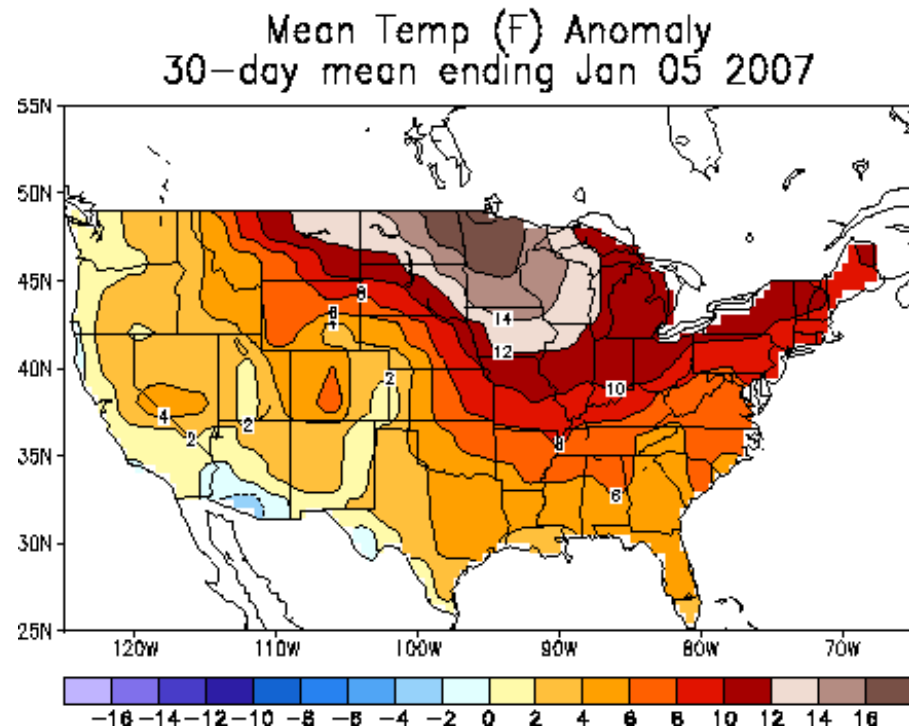
vs.

concern about direct effects on self and family

# Tip #5

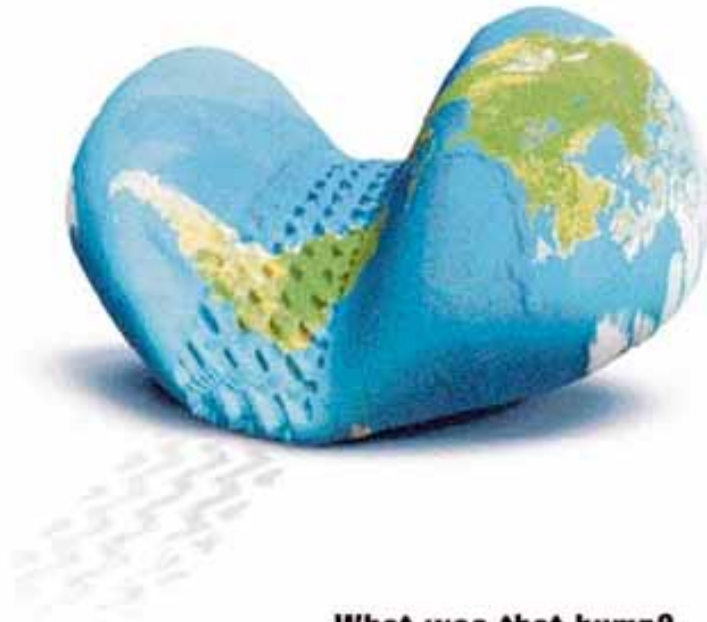
## Make it personal

- Focus on local issues, local effects
- Use images
- Use stories



# Factor 6: Understanding

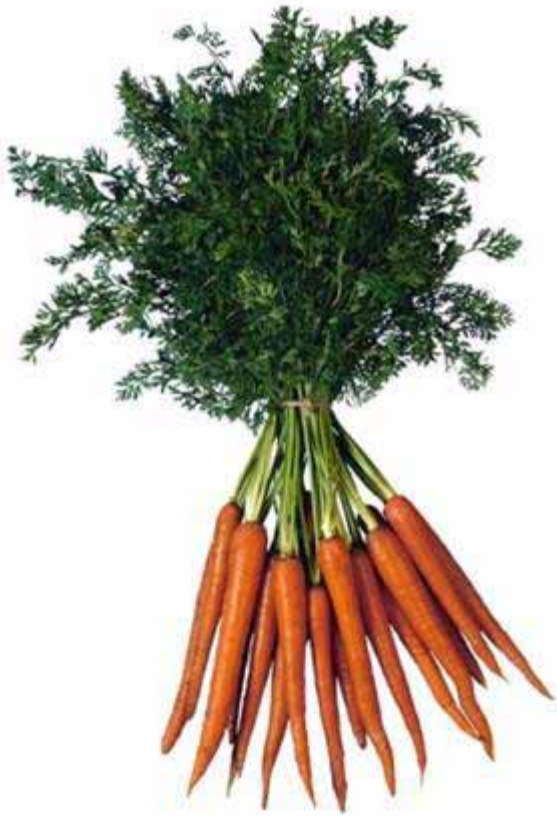
People are confused about how their actions impact the environment



**What was that bump?**

# Tip #6

## Familiarize people with effective actions



**vs.**



# Factor 7: Perceived efficacy

Do my attempts make a difference?



# Tip #7

## Show people they are not alone



- Factor 8: Feedback



# Tip #8

## Provide Normative and Informational Feedback



# Factor 9: Habits

- We do lots of things on autopilot
- What is readily available is not typically sustainable
- Attentiveness is a necessary precursor to sustainable behavior

# Tip #9

## Foster mindfulness



# Tip #10

Grab 'em when they're in flux



# Acknowledgments

- Philipp Muessing and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
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