



# GORE FABRICS RESPONSIBILITY UPDATE



# 2015

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## EDITORIAL

As we strive towards a dialogue with our stakeholders, we are committed to regularly share information about the progress we have made on our journey to continuously improve the impact we have on both society and the environment. Our commitment to manage our business in a responsible way is deeply rooted in Gore's values and principles. For those of us in the Fabrics Division this means creating high-performing, long lasting products which are both, safe to wear and, socially and environmentally sound.

Our culture also guides us to set social, ethical and environmental standards to ensure fair, safe and healthy conditions for all our employees (we call them associates), no matter where in the world they work. It means looking after the well-being and development of our associates whilst making a positive contribution to the communities that we operate in. In the following pages you will get an insight into our plant in Shenzhen, China, which is part of our global production network, and into several of our social initiatives.

Durability is one of the cornerstones of our environmental approach. Lifecycle studies have revealed how to most effectively reduce the environmental footprint of functional apparel and footwear: the longer a typical pair of GORE-TEX® hiking boots, or a GORE-TEX® outdoor jacket lasts, the lower their annual impact is. We look at our products with a holistic “cradle to grave” approach. You can read more about our latest LCA study on GORE-TEX® footwear in this issue.

We have been working towards environmental improvements for at least 20 years. During this time we have recognized that the task ahead of us is not an easy one – it will take a while to achieve a truly sustainable way of making our products. Nevertheless, we have set ourselves targets that challenge us to regularly review our progress and set ourselves new goals. This is why we are proud that Oeko-Tex® named us “January 2015, Company of the Month” – in recognition of our environmental program and the fact that we have eliminated PFOA from our raw materials.



Bernhard Kiehl

Stefan Glowacz

## SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN CHINA: STEFAN GLOWACZ VISITS SHENZHEN



Stefan Glowacz was born in 1965 in Tittmoning, Bavaria, Germany, and grew up in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Even though he has spent 30 years competing in climbing events and taking part in expeditions, Stefan Glowacz is still considered one of the best climbers in the world. His achievements include spectacular first ascents in the Alps and expeditions to some of the most remote parts of the world. He is the epitome of the modern-day explorer and father of triplets.

[www.glowacz.de](http://www.glowacz.de)

» MY EXPEDITIONS TAKE PLACE UNDER THE MOTTO 'BY FAIR MEANS'. I TRY TO MINIMISE MY ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND TO PRESERVE NATURE BY REACHING MY DESTINATIONS WITHOUT USING TECHNICAL AIDS. I EXPECT THE SAME RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FROM MY PARTNERS, TOO. «

## INTERVIEW

**Stefan Glowacz, professional mountaineer, and Bernhard Kiehl, Leader Gore Fabrics Sustainability Program, visit Gore Fabrics' plant in Shenzhen**

**Why did you take up Gore's invitation to visit its manufacturing plant in Shenzhen?**

SG: In September 2014 – on my way back from Borneo where I had been involved in a climbing project – Bernhard and I visited the Shenzhen plant to see for ourselves how it compared with the German manufacturing site in Putzbrunn, which I had visited earlier. As I am very interested in preserving nature I wanted to see what Gore does to ensure that the similar environmental, social and ethical standards are applied worldwide.

**What was the program for your visit?**

BK: We wanted to get an impression of the local situation regarding textile production, working conditions and environmental programs in China. So we visited a Gore production facility as well as a manufacturing company that turns Gore fabrics into GORE-TEX® apparel on behalf of many customer brands. We also met with some representatives of the local environmental government body, the Shenzhen Futian Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB), to discuss the general environmental challenges in the Shenzhen area.

**Why does Gore produce in China?**

BK: One of Gore's policies is to be close to its markets and China is an important market for us. To produce products that match the needs of our customers, we have to be close to the local markets and talk regularly

with our customers and consumers. In fact, many of our customers produce their garments and footwear in Asia and many of our raw materials are produced here as well. Producing in China means reducing transportation costs and related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**What is your impression of the Shenzhen plant?**

SG: I was surprised to see how disciplined Gore is about implementing a consistent set of standards. I was very impressed to see that Gore applies voluntary health, safety and environmental standards worldwide. What you see in Shenzhen is very similar to what you would see in a German plant, even though it is not a legal requirement, Gore has put state-of-the-art air filtration systems in place to control air emissions. Also they have taken appropriate precautions to protect the waterways around their sites. For example, process waste water is collected and taken off-site to a special treatment facility where the best available technology cleans it before it is discharged into the environment.

Gore is also concerned about the well-being of its employees: fair wages and working hours, well equipped and chemically safe workplaces as well as access to several work-life-balance activities such as a sports program are just a few examples. You can really see that the employees take the Gore culture seriously – they are not just paying lip service to these ideas.

Stefan Glowacz

**Are there any other environmental activities in Shenzhen?**

BK: Yes. One example is the recently completed certification according to the ISO 14001 standard. This certification basically confirms that our local manufacturing site is run according to sound practices which effectively manage the environmental impact. In order to achieve certification you have to monitor your existing processes and put plans in place to make them more effective. The certification basically says that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party has reviewed how we manage our business and confirmed that we do this according to the state of the art.

Furthermore, in 2010 we implemented the bluesign® system in all of our manufacturing sites. To drive better environmental performance and improve the safety of work places also in our supply chain we ask our suppliers to implement this standard as well. bluesign® then goes into the textile manufacturing plants of our suppliers to audit environmental performance. From an environmental perspective we have seen a high rate of return. The standard checks working conditions in terms of chemical usage, noise, waste, etc. A lot of the concerns in our industry are specifically addressed by bluesign®. Today, more than 60% of Gore’s laminate volume produced in Shenzhen are bluesign® certified.

**How do you choose your partners?**

BK: We have a corporate culture that tells us to trust in the individual. Our partners are a very important success factor for us. We treat them fairly and meet them at eye level. We expect them to conduct their business in alignment with our values. In return they can rely on a long-term relationship – we have already been working with some of our Asian suppliers for more than 15 years.

During our visit to an apparel manufacturer that produces jackets for some of our customers we got the impression that the workers were treated fairly and with respect. The working conditions were – as far we could tell – excellent, e.g.: good ventilation, good lighting, emergency



exits were marked and accessible. At the product level we could see that they produced high quality products, took care of their waste and handled the few chemicals they used in an exemplary way.

**Where do you see room for improvement when talking about social and environmental standards in China?**

BK: These are interesting times in China’s textile manufacturing sector. Manufacturers who are not willing to adhere to stricter environmental regulations will soon be facing serious problems.

Environmental protection is becoming an important issue in China – the government is aiming to develop the Shenzhen region as a model region for clean manufacturing. This is why environmental legislation has become tougher in recent years. During our talks with the representatives of the Environmental Protection Bureau we discovered that the current focus is on reducing particle matter emissions and controlling waste water effluents. Although Gore is well placed to meet new legislative requirements, there is still a lot of work to be done in the textile industry as a whole. Together with the authorities and our partners we will continue to push for a better environmental profile.

**How would you sum up your visit?**

SG: The visit has proven to me that if you choose the right people and work with the right partners you can produce high-quality products with good conditions in China. I could see for myself that Gore’s commitment to social and environmental responsibility is being applied worldwide. As far as I can tell, Gore acts as a role model for the textile industry in China.

**Gore Shenzhen plant**

- 2001: Plant opening with Gore Fabrics’ global standards in place.
- 2010: All Gore Fabrics plants implemented the bluesign® system.
- 2011: Plant switches from using long-chain to short-chain compounds in its DWR finishes for consumer fabrics as a more environmentally friendly alternative.
- 2013: Gore China ranked among the twelve “best companies to work for” in Greater China by the “Great Place to Work Institute”.
- 2013: Plant achieves ISO 14001 certification, which outlines how to implement an effective environmental management system.
- 2013: Plant receives an environmental award from the Chinese government.

More about Stefan’s and Bernhard’s visit to Shenzhen can be viewed on youtube [here](#).

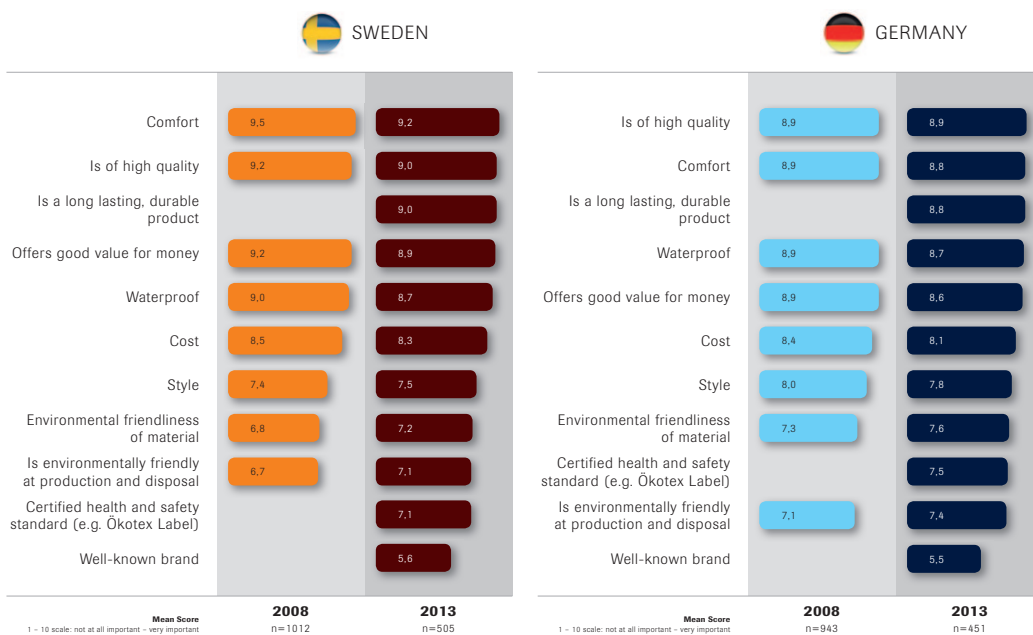


# CONSUMER SURVEY ABOUT GORE-TEX® PRODUCTS

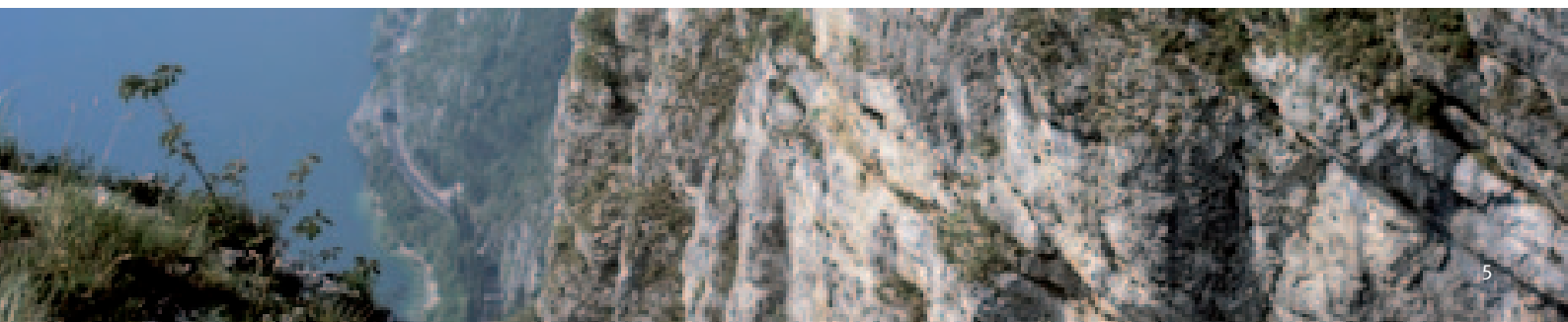
## Environmental factors are gaining significance when choosing outerwear

In winter 2013 GfK conducted on behalf of Gore Fabrics a consumer survey on the importance of factors when choosing outerwear in Europe. The results showed that quality, comfort and longevity remain the most important criteria. But environmental factors – the use of environmentally friendly materials and reduced impact production processes – are gaining importance with consumers. These findings support Gore’s view that environmental improvements must not come at the cost of compromising on durable performance and product quality.

### Importance of factors when choosing outerwear



Source: GfK 2013 | GORE-TEX® Outerwear Study | December, 2013



# LCA UPDATE FOR GORE-TEX® FOOTWEAR

## Durability is a key factor in reducing the environmental footprint

To be able to do the right thing, “eco improvements” need to be measured objectively rather than just relying on gut feeling. For many years life cycle assessment (LCA) has been the globally accepted and standardized tool for measuring environmental impacts and comparing products from an environmental perspective. The tool was first adopted by Gore in 1992 (see also [last year’s responsibility update](#)).

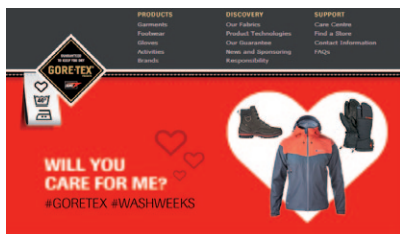
In 2013 Gore conducted a LCA for a functional outdoor jacket. It did the same for a pair of leather hiking boots in 2014. This study – also covering the entire value chain “from cradle to grave” – evaluated the environmental impact of a pair of waterproof and breathable GORE-TEX® hiking boots used over a period of 3.5 years. The study was carried out with critical guidance from the Oeko-Institute Freiburg e.V. and was peer reviewed by the Institute for Environmental Research, Washington, USA.

The results show parallels with the earlier LCA analyses. They indicate that the lifetime of a pair of shoes is the single most influential factor in reducing the product’s environmental impact. Because a long lifetime can reduce the environmental impact so significantly, product quality and durable performance are the cornerstones of the GORE-TEX® environmental product strategy. Its appeal to consumers is that they can buy products that function and last a long time, and buy fewer of them.

As Gore Fabrics strives to continually reduce the overall impact of its products, we also engage with our business partners and other players in industry to apply LCA learnings.

### Current initiatives are for example:

- Encouraging more and more suppliers to implement the bluesign® system which focuses on several important environmental parameters.
- Supporting the textile industry’s development of future product labelling methods like the Sustainable Apparel Coalition’s HIGG Index.
- Sharing the LCA results with key brand partners in order to raise awareness and initiate strategies to further reduce the environmental impact.
- Educating consumers on the proper care of their products as this has significant potential to enhance the product’s lifetime.



To explain the LCA approach and its results in a short, simple and engaging way and also to share the learnings with its community, Gore Fabrics has launched an [explainer video](#).



Kilian Hochrein

## PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP AT GORE FABRICS

### Interview with Kilian Hochrein, responsible for product stewardship at Gore Fabrics

#### Why do we need product stewardship?

KH: We need chemicals to produce our fabrics. Knowing all of them and understanding how they are used and how they should be managed along our value chain is a huge challenge.

We are committed to product integrity. This implies that our products are safe and manufactured by clean means. Our brand and institutional customers demand not just product safety but also safe and clean production. We recognize that there is a trend to more Restricted Substance Lists (RSL) for products, but Manufacturing Restricted Substance Lists (MRS�) as well.

Because of the fact that there is not an effective global harmonization of these requirements, we continue to work with two well-recognized third party certification programs to practice and demonstrate the safety, compliance, and responsibility our customers expect from us.

#### Which certification schemes does Gore Fabrics use?

KH: We work with the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100 which covers the relevant RSL provisions for our finished products. This means that we operate in full accordance of current regulations. One example: Since January 2015 the specifications for PFOA have become much stricter. In future, the limit of PFOA in textiles cannot exceed 1.0 µg/m<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, we use the bluesign® system. It covers RSL needs and is the most effective available tool to address MRS� requirements and broader environmental challenges. This applies to Gore as well as for our textile suppliers.

#### Where does Gore Fabrics stand today?

At the moment – based on our recent bluesign® approval for several tricot backers for our 3-layer fabrics – approximately 60 percent of the volume of our consumer laminates is now bluesign® approved.

In our professional garments business, we are pleased to have the first four GORE-TEX® and WINDSTOPPER® laminates bluesign® approved, along with all 2- and 2,5-layer seam tapes.

#### How do you inform your customers, the makers of apparel and footwear, about your methods?

KH: For our customer communication, we have implemented a comprehensive Declaration of Product Compliance. It addresses relevant global regulations and documents certifications. The corresponding product-by-product information is maintained in our internal product information database.

These tools are readily available to our customer service teams. Thus we have improved responsiveness to our customers, streamlined our internal processes and harmonized our appearance e.g. our communications instruments.

#### How do you make sure that you can rely on your testing and verification methods?

KH: Certification, supplier contracts, proactive quality management, and internal traceability all play together to deliver the desired confidence in product safety and compliance. To confirm that this is effective, we test raw materials as well as finished products based on risk assessments. It considers factors such as product volume, supplier location, track record in terms of quality, effectiveness of management systems, plus the history of compliance testing. Consistent with the philosophy of the bluesign® system as well as the Oeko-Tex® Standard, we are testing for known potential chemical risks as well what is regulated. If needed, we initiate root-cause improvement measures.

### Safe to wear and environmentally sound

It is safe to wear garments made from Gore products, as Gore consumer fabrics fulfill all criteria of the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100.

All global manufacturing sites for Gore functional fabrics have successfully implemented the bluesign® standard.

For more information about our commitment to the environment visit [gore-tex.com/responsibility](http://gore-tex.com/responsibility)



## OEKO-TEX® UPDATE

**Gore recognized by Oeko-Tex® for its sustainability program and for eliminating PFOA**



» IN THE AREAS OF PRODUCT SAFETY AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION CONDITIONS GORE SETS THE STANDARDS FOR THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY. THE ELIMINATION OF PFOA IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE. WE HAVE NAMED GORE 'OEKO-TEX® JANUARY 2015, COMPANY OF THE MONTH' IN RECOGNITION OF ITS CONSTANT EFFORTS TO FIND NEW WAYS FORWARD THAT ULTIMATELY PROVIDE A ROLE MODEL FOR THE REST OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY. «

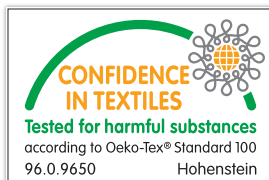
Dr. Jean-Pierre Haug, general secretary of Oeko-Tex®



### Oeko-Tex® Standard 100

The standard is a reliable product label for consumers and a uniform safety standard for the assessment of harmful substances for textile and clothing manufacturers. The responsibility for the independent tests lies with the International Oeko-Tex® Association, a union of 16 renowned institutes for textile research and testing in Europe and Japan, with representations and contact offices in over 60 countries worldwide.

Source: <http://www.oeko-tex.com/company-of-the-month>





# LIVINGSTON PLANT REDUCES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

## ISO 14001 for Livingston

In fall 2014, the Livingston Fabrics plant successfully achieved ISO14001 certification, an established and internationally recognized management process for minimizing environmental impact. The plant had applied for external review and certification of its existing environmental management system for the first time.

### What have we done in order to achieve ISO14001 certification?

- Identify significant environmental impacts such as gas or electrical energy usage and the waste from plants.
- Monitor energy usage to achieve sustainable energy reductions. For example, Livingston Fabrics has 48 energy meters to better understand consumption.
- Measure environmental impact through greenhouse gas emissions.
- Track projects to show progress.
- Comply with all legal requirements relating to the environmental performance of our people, processes, plant and products (4Ps); for example, meeting the requirements of our environmental permit.
- Follow operational controls, meaning that Gore follows proper procedures for chemicals handling/storage and has trained associates for emergencies.

Moving forward, the Livingston Fabrics plant has a number of projects identified for continuous improvement. For example, the production space will be equipped with intelligent lighting systems that will detect and react to motion. The plant also plans to invest in real-time energy monitoring to get instantaneous feedback on Gore's energy use and track data to make smarter decisions for the future. *"These new projects build upon some of our past successes,"* says Environmental Health & Safety associate Bill Braes, Livingston Heather Park. *"In the last few years we've reduced our waste stream and gas-powered energy consumption by more than 70 percent."*

With ISO14001 certification, Livingston Fabrics joins the ranks of Nihon Gore's Production and Technical Center and the Shenzhen facility. In fall 2014, Shenzhen's certification was expanded to include Fabrics operations. *"Specifically in Fabrics, our customers place a high value on our environmental performance and obtaining ISO14001 is one of our divisional objectives,"* Bill says.



## SOCIAL INITIATIVES 2014

At Gore, sustainability includes acting responsibly. We want to enhance the quality of life not only with our products but want to contribute to the communities we do business in. Our community giving programs are built on the premise that our associates should have the strongest voice in determining where corporate philanthropy dollars are spent.

We support volunteer efforts with several programs. In 2014, U.S. associates alone used more than 12,500 hours of Volunteer Day time in their communities. Beneficiaries have ranged from youth sports, academic teams and animal shelters to locals search and rescue teams. Some more examples:

### **Shenzhen, China: Support for a state-funded school in the Guizhou province**

When it comes to social responsibility the Shenzhen associates play an active role. To show their commitment they have installed a “charity committee” which drives several long term initiatives such as tree planting, mountain cleaning and a “used clothes collection” for donations to poor people.

The focus of the charity program is on supporting schools in poor areas. Since 2013 the Shenzhen plant has been cooperating with a school in a remote area that is a four-hour drive from the next city. Vivian Yang, associate in Shenzhen, explains: *“With urbanization, thousands of young people are flocking to cities, leaving their small kids staying with their grandparents in the villages. It is estimated that there are nearly 20 million children left behind in China. It has become a social issue.”* The pupils were thrilled to receive donations such as school bags, stationery, pencil boxes, maps, books and sports materials. Gore is now planning to intensify the cooperation by organizing interactive activities such as music, sports or language teaching.

Associate Simon Liao comments: *“By visiting the schools, we are able to gain perspective from the kids and teachers, which benefit from our continued support. And through these interactions, the students are able to gain lot of new information, which broadly opens their eyes to the world.”*



## Social initiatives

### **Green and environmentally friendly hiking trip in China: “Make Heavenly Lake Clean” campaign**

In September 2014 philanthropist Shiyilang led customers of GORE-TEX® products and nature photographer Geng Dong to Nam Co to take part in a “Make Heavenly Lake Clean” campaign and to contribute to the environmental protection and conservation of the Damxung area by undertaking a green and environmentally friendly hiking trip.

During the 6-day tour, the team experienced hiking in the primeval forests, explored a religious site, picked up garbage in the Heavenly Lake area and brought environmentally friendly heating supplies and stationery to Nam Co Township Center Primary School. The team also distributed bilingual environmental protection leaflets in Chinese and Tibetan to tourists and local residents with the goal of delivering the environmental responsibility concept to a wider range of tourists as well as letting Tibetans gain a better understanding of the concept. Their actions were highly praised by the local government and the team was awarded the title of “Pioneer in Environmental Protection” by the Damxung County Environmental Protection Bureau.



## Social initiatives

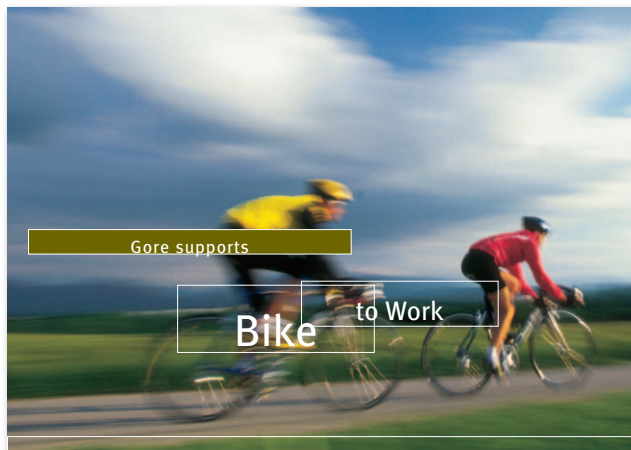
### United Way: Improving lives in the US

United Way envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives. The organization improves lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities to advance the common good. Gore is an active member in the United Way program. In 2014 our employees contributed around \$650,000 to the nonprofit organization in the United States. As it has for more than 15 years, Gore matched all contributions between \$25 and \$10,000, which brought the 2014 grand total to more than \$1.3 million. *“Through the campaign, Gore is able to support causes that are near and dear to associates and help address the underlying causes behind some of our communities’ biggest challenges,”* noted Kent Smith, who championed the 2014 eastern cluster campaign with Cindy George and Dave Holsten. The United Way movement touches both of Gore’s major U.S. plant clusters: Gore ranks as the top organizational donor in Flagstaff, Arizona, while we were recognized last year by United Way of Delaware for our 94 percent increase in pledges in our eastern U.S. plants over a four-year period.



### „Bike to work” project donates to local charity organizations

2015 is the 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary of “Bike to Work”. Since the beginning in 2005 Gore donates 10 Cents for every kilometer cycled to work by an associate in Germany. Between 2006 and 2014 our associates cycled more than 410,000 km, donating more than 41,000 Euros to local charity projects such as the Salberghaus in Putzbrunn or the Caritas children’s village in Irschenberg, both in Germany. The goal for 2015 is 90,000 km to get to a grand total for 50,000 Euros in donations.



## Social initiatives

### Supporting Environmental Education in the US:

#### Friends of Camp Colton (FCC)

The Friends of Camp Colton (FCC) is a non-profit, fundraising organization which was established to support Camp Colton’s environmental programs and educational initiatives. Camp Colton is Flagstaff (Arizona) Unified School District’s experiential environmental education program. In 2014 Gore became a primary sponsor of Flagstaff’s annual Agassiz Uphill race. Participants compete to raise funds for the FCC organization. In true “all in same boat” fashion, employees from several divisions helped to organize the race. The race achieved a goal of a 40% increase in fundraising, for a total of \$30,000.



#### The Chesapeake Wilderness Institute (CWI)

The Chesapeake Wilderness Institute (CWI) program is a completely outdoor, residential wilderness educational program designed to immerse students in nature. Gore is a sponsor of CWI at NorthBay, US, a 5 day/4 night intensive experience combining wilderness skills and character education. NorthBay challenges students to look at their own world and the larger world that surrounds them. Using the rustic wilderness as a teaching medium, students are guided to think critically about how their attitudes and actions affect their “outdoor” community and their future. During their week at NorthBay, students engage in inquiry-based investigative studies of Chesapeake Bay ecosystems which in turn empower them to make choices about what they see and experience in the environment. This gives them a new perspective into their daily lives and teaches them the importance of making positive choices.





## ABOUT W. L. GORE & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Gore is a technology-driven company focused on discovery and product innovation. Well known for waterproof, breathable GORE-TEX® fabric, the company's portfolio includes everything from high-performance fabrics and implantable medical devices to industrial manufacturing components and aerospace electronics. Headquartered in the United States, Gore posts annual sales of more than \$3 billion and employs more than 10,000 associates with manufacturing facilities in the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan and China, and sales offices around the world. In Europe, Gore started its first business operations only a few years after the Enterprise's founding in 1958. Gore now has locations – sales offices as well as production facilities – in the key European countries dedicated to serving the markets of all of Gore's product divisions. Gore is one of a select few companies to appear on all of the U.S. "100 Best Companies to Work For" lists since the rankings debuted in 1984. For several years now, Gore has also been voted one of the best workplaces in Europe and has been ranked on top workplace lists in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and Sweden. Learn more at [gore.com](http://gore.com).

## CONTACT

Call us on freephone **1800-GORE-TEX (467-3839)**  
[www.gore-tex.com/contact](http://www.gore-tex.com/contact)

