



# Sustainability Corner

## The Melting Point

Consider these four numbers: 350, 275, 390 and 450.

- 350 is the number (measured in parts per million, ppm) leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in our atmosphere.
- 275 is the ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere until about 200 years ago.
- 390 is where we are now.
- 450 is the likely ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> to be agreed at the Copenhagen talks in December. Many believe we will overshoot this number and aim to come back to it by 2050.

At 390, we are already getting acidification of seas, retreating glaciers, melting of polar ice, extreme storm events and warming temperatures. Current rates of sea level rise suggest that small, island archipelagos such as the Maldives (highest point 2.4 m above sea level) will disappear within 100 years.

What can you do?

- Check out [www.350.org](http://www.350.org); this site is the face of a global movement whose aim is to raise the sense of urgency among world leaders in relation to carbon accumulation in the atmosphere.
- Lobby our government to show environmental leadership at the meeting in Copenhagen.
- Come down to the Village Green Sept 11-13, where Kashi Leuchs, NZ Olympic mountain-biker, will be in town to promote 350 as part of the UCI Trials World Cup.



*Former RDC Events Manager, Emily Pritchard, contributed this Sustainability Corner item.*