

Gijsbert Tweehuysen

Born in 1953 near the Hague, close to the Dutch coast. In my younger years we sailed a lot in the canals and lakes in the Western part of the Netherlands and there I developed my love for sailing and watersports. I got my education at the Technical University in Delft and graduated in 1981 as an Industrial Designer. This got me interested in the interaction of products with their users and in the way society gets influenced by the use of these products. From 1988 I worked as a packaging end-market specialist for DSM, a chemical company in the South of the Netherlands and a producer of most of the commodity plastics we now have on the market. In those days the Dutch government invited the “packaging chain” to develop a program to decrease the volume of packaging waste ending up in landfills. I joined these discussions as a representative of the polymer producers and discussed prevention and recycling possibilities and their economical and ecological performance for all sorts of packaging concepts with representatives of all other material categories, packaging producers, manufacturers and end-users. This resulted in the first Dutch Packaging Covenant, signed in 1991.

In 2011 I discovered that we had forgotten something: the packaging chain was leaking! I was then a teacher at a Bachelor University in Heerlen and as a watersport lover and packaging specialist, I realized that “my” packaging floated right under my nose towards the sea and I found out that no research was ever done on that phenomenon. So, together with my students, I started to sample in the Meuse and got ever more deeply involved in this subject. In 2012 I ended my professional career and now I am founder and President of the Waste Free Waters foundation. Our motto is : “Waste free waters, a matter of facts!” and that is what we are working on.