

Prince William's Earthshot Prize unveils NFW from Peoria, Illinois as Finalist

"Prize will help NFW tackle plastic health emergency. Microplastics may be the new asbestos, but worse," said Dr. Luke Haverhals, CEO NFW.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, [NFW, an innovative biomaterials company](#) based in Peoria, Illinois, was announced as a Finalist for Prince William's Earthshot Prize. As a Finalist, NFW is in the running to receive one of five £1 million prizes, which will be awarded at The Earthshot Prize Awards Ceremony in Cape Town, South Africa on Wednesday 6 November.

NFW is the only company worldwide that's replacing a range of petroleum-derived plastics with non-toxic biomaterials at scale in the fashion, footwear, and automotive industries with brands like BMW, H&M, Ralph Lauren, and Stella McCartney. NFW's innovative plant-based materials span textiles, leather alternatives, outsoles, and foams.

The Earthshot Prize unveiled NFW as a Finalist in its fourth cohort of 15 Prize Finalists at the third-annual Earthshot Innovation Summit held at New York Climate Week, which includes global innovators, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and advocates pioneering solutions to our most pressing climate and environmental challenges.

This year's Finalists were selected from nearly 2,500 nominees submitted by the Prize's network of more than 430 nominators from 75 countries. The 15 Finalists were chosen by The Earthshot Prize based on assessments done by its selection partners and [Expert Advisory Panel](#), a global group of more than 100 subject-matter experts with deep backgrounds in conservation, science, technology, business, finance, academia and policy.

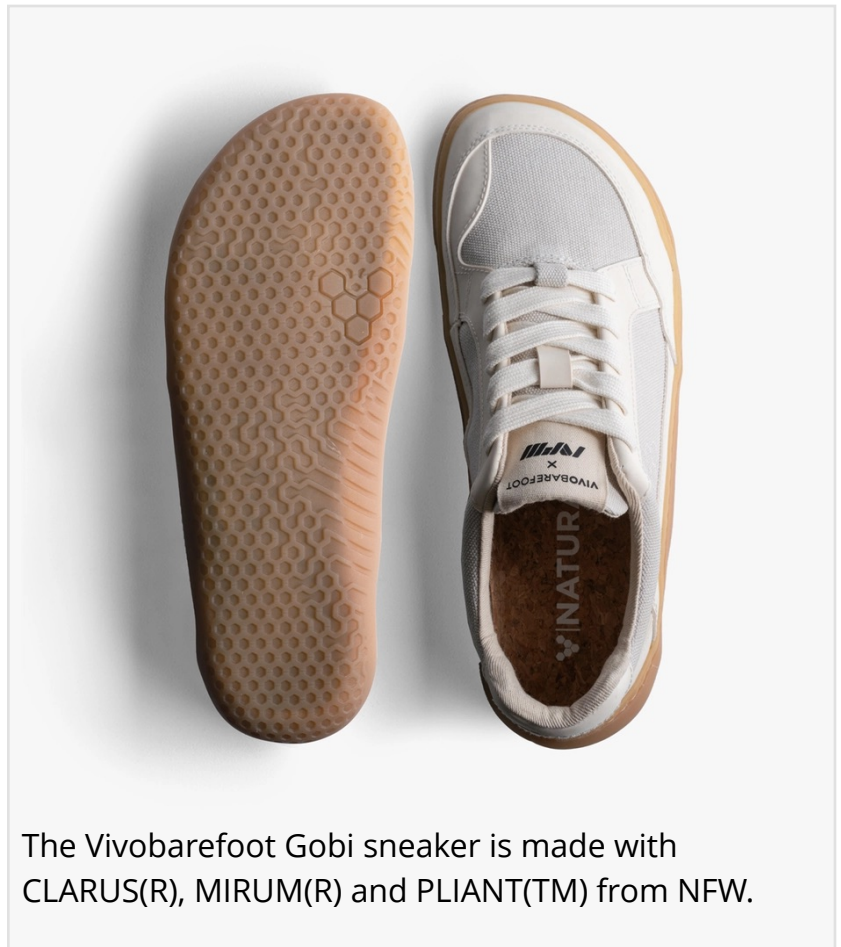
"Today, we celebrate the incredible achievement, unwavering dedication and urgent optimism



Karl Lagerfeld bag made with MIRUM(R) shown with Amber Valetta, Karl Lagerfeld's Sustainability Ambassador

that drives our fourth class of Earthshot innovators,” said Prince William, Founder and President of The Earthshot Prize. “The passion of these Finalists is a testament to what can be achieved when we tap into the enormous creativity, ingenuity, and optimism of communities around the world. Representing every corner of the globe, these Finalists are leading the way in solving some of the most urgent environmental challenges. Their groundbreaking work is inspiring hope and action as we work to create a sustainable future for generations to come.”

“I am honored and grateful that Prince William and his leading partners and advisors have recognized our work and selected NFW as a Finalist for the Earthshot Prize, because we urgently need to solve the plastics waste and health emergency,” said Dr Luke Haverhals, Founder and CEO of NFW.



The Vivobarefoot Gobi sneaker is made with CLARUS(R), MIRUM(R) and PLIANT(TM) from NFW.

Microplastics may be the new asbestos, but worse. Microplastic pollution is much more ubiquitous than asbestos. It is literally everywhere—it's in the soil, the air, the water. We're eating it, drinking it, and we are breathing it in. It's no surprise researchers are therefore finding microplastics in nearly every part of the human body including our brain. We're increasingly understanding the links to serious health problems like cancer, infertility, hormone disruption, and cognitive decline. Plastic is quite literally poisoning us and the planet.

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NFW's solution to this seemingly wicked problem is to create useful, beautiful materials that come from the Earth and can safely return to the Earth.”

Dr. Luke Haverhals, Founder and CEO, NFW

NFW's solution to this seemingly wicked problem is to

create useful, beautiful materials that come from the Earth and can safely return to the Earth when they're done being used, staying within nature's own circular economy. We've developed biomaterials to replace plastic in fashion, footwear, and interiors. Instead of using crude oil to create synthetic plastics, we start with natural materials to create high-performance yarns, fabrics, foams, and outsoles—all from plants, not plastic.

Our system of materials makes it possible to replace not just a single plastic in a shoe made of a dozen different types of plastic, but to design the whole shoe – from outsole to midsole to upper – entirely without plastic. We are empowering consumer brands and designers to create plastic-free products and set new standards for their industry. Plastic-free design is critical to stop the deluge of toxic plastic waste from flooding the biosphere and our bodies.”

Said JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois: “Since day one of my administration, we’ve taken bold steps to position Illinois as a national leader in the fight against climate change. From our nation-leading Climate and Equitable Jobs Act to our investments in environmental protections across the board, the global recognition of Peoria-based NFW is proof that Illinois is at the forefront of building a greener, more sustainable world.”

NFW was selected as a Finalist in the Earthshot Prize ‘Build A Waste Free World’ category for their unique solution to displacing plastics in fashion, footwear, and automotive. There are five categories in total that include: Protect and Restore Nature, Clean Our Air, Revive Our Oceans, Build A Waste-Free World and Fix Our Climate. The Illinois based company joins Finalists from six continents including the first Finalists from France, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Nepal in a cohort the 2024 Earthshot Prize celebrates as its most competitive cohort to date.

As The Earthshot Prize continues its journey to repair and regenerate the planet, it has become a powerful global search engine unearthing the best environmental solutions and a platform for impact to catalyze critical investment and resources towards these solutions. [Today’s announcement](#) brings the number of global solutions honored as Prize Finalists to 60, a major milestone in The Prize’s efforts to uncover and elevate the most promising climate solutions around the world. The Prize has also helped unlock more than £75 million in direct and in-kind support for Finalists since its founding in 2020.

About NFW

Founded in 2015 by chemist Dr. Luke Haverhals, NFW is a biomaterials company on a mission to address the plastics crisis. NFW is the only next-gen materials startup replacing plastic with a range of non-toxic, plastic-free materials at scale in fashion, footwear, and automotive, working with brands like BMW, H&M, Ralph Lauren, Camper, and Stella McCartney. NFW’s materials range from textiles and leather alternatives to outsoles and foams. Using patented technology, they transform plant ingredients like natural rubber and recycled cotton into high-performance, non-toxic alternatives to toxic petroleum-derived materials like pleather (polyurethane and PVC), petro-coated leather, polyester and synthetic rubber.

NFW is proud to work with a host of leading brands around the world that include: AllBirds, Baabuk, Anita Dongre, AreanaMend, Bellroy, BMW, Brave GentleMan, Camper, Chaco, Deckers, H&M, Karl Lagerfeld, IWC, Melina Bucher, Modher, New Balance, Nooch, Stella McCartney, Reformation, Richemont/IWC, Patagonia, Pangaia, Purified, Unless Collective, RLX, Veshin,

Vivobarefoot, and Woolly.

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