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MONTH BY MONTH: TWELVE SIMPLE WAYS TO GO GREEN

--Resolutions for the New Year that go a long way in helping the environment--

TALLAHASSEE – As 2009 approaches many of us will make New Year’s resolutions that focus on personal goals. Everything from shedding a few pounds to saving more money makes the list of popular resolutions around this time of year.

“The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging Floridians to consider resolutions that have a positive impact not only on themselves but also on the state’s environment,” said DEP’s Director of Sustainable Initiatives Deas Bohn. “If every Floridian adopts a few of these ideas throughout the year, they can make a huge difference in our efforts to protect the environment.”

The following is a month-by-month list of simple “green” resolutions for 2009:

JANUARY: *Ecycle* – With the holidays came many new electronics under the tree but it is important not to dispose of the old gadgets in your garbage. Instead consider *ecycling* – recycling unwanted electronics to recover and reuse the product itself or materials like copper, steel, glass that the product contains. Some other tips include: keeping old televisions for games, videos or DVDs; donating working televisions to a charitable organization or giving them to a friend; or offering televisions through a local “freecycle” group at <http://www.freecycle.org>, Nearly two million tons of used electronics, including computers and televisions, are discarded each year, and an estimated 128 million cell phones are retired from use annually. For more tips on recycling electronics visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/electronics/default.htm>.

FEBRUARY: *Spend More Family Time Outdoors* – February is hiking and trails month. So why not plan an environmentally friendly outing, like a family bike ride on one of Florida’s award winning trails? DEP’s Office of Greenways & Trails (OGT) manages eight state trails, which were recently named Best State Trails by American Trails. OGT also maintains five rail-trails, which are railroad tracks restored and converted to recreational trails for hiking, biking and skating. To find a trail near you visit www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/.

MARCH: *Save on Water Usage* – With Spring approaching, March is a great time to make changes at home that conserve water. By replacing a typical 3.5-gallon toilet with a 1.6 gallon model, a family of four will save more than 11,000 gallons of water per year. Also, take shorter showers and replace showerheads with an ultra-low-flow version. Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers – one drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water per year. For more water conservation tips visit www.dep.state.fl.us/drought/tips.htm

APRIL: *Celebrate the Earth* – April 22nd is the 39th anniversary of Earth Day. This year take a moment to look at how to reduce waste at home by recycling.

- One recycled aluminum can saves enough energy to power a television or computer for three hours or a 100-watt light bulb for 20 hours.
- Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.
- Recycling a one-gallon plastic milk jug will save enough energy to keep a 100-watt bulb burning for 11 hours.
- Recycling a one-foot high stack of newspapers saves enough electricity to heat a home for 17 hours.

In 2008, Governor Charlie Crist signed the Energy, Climate Change, and Economic Security Act of 2008 that establishes new statewide recycling goals of 75 percent to be achieved by the year 2020. To learn more visit www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/recyclinggoal75.

MAY: *Add a Green Twist to Spring Cleaning* – May is Clean Air Awareness month, and it is a perfect time to switch to green cleaners that help the environment as well as the air we breathe. Consumers can create home-mixed cleaners that are equally as effective as traditional products, and safer for people and the environment. For those who don’t have time to make their own cleaners, there are now hundreds of environmentally friendly products widely available through stores and the Internet. Important safety and environmental features of these products include being non-toxic, biodegradable, made from renewable resources and petroleum-free. DEP offers a number of Green Cleaning tips and recipes at www.dep.state.fl.us/pollutionprevention/green_cleaning.htm

JUNE: *Implement Eco-Friendly Boating Practices* – National Boating and Fishing Week takes place every June. With more than a million registered boaters in Florida, this is a perfect time of the year to implement eco-friendly maritime practices such as: using phosphate-free, biodegradable and non-toxic cleaners; using oil absorbent material to

catch drips from the fuel intake and the vent overflow; and using marina pumpout stations and rinsing holding tanks regularly. Florida's *Clean Marina* Program provides boaters and marinas more tips on environmentally friendly practices at www.dep.state.fl.us/cleanmarina/.

JULY: *Travel Green* – Leaving home doesn't mean travelers should stop being environmentally conscientious. Florida has nearly 400 hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts that are designated members of DEP's Florida *Green Lodging* Program. The program was established in 2004 to recognize and reward environmentally conscientious lodging facilities in the state. Beyond staying at a designated property, travelers can also learn how to be a green guest by visiting <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/green/travel.htm>.

AUGUST: *Enjoy a Florida State Park Staycation* – With a downturn in the economy and families trying to save more money, the term “staycation” became a new addition to the American vocabulary. In addition to being affordable, the staycation can also reduce your carbon footprint. The perfect staycation can be found at any of Florida's 160 state parks. From mermaids at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park to manatees at Blue Springs State Park, from the lush gardens of Maclay State Park to the beaches of Caladesi Island State Park – Florida's state parks have something for everyone's interest, and the regular entrance fee for most state parks is \$4.00 per carload of two-to-eight people, \$3.00 for one person in a car and \$1.00 per pedestrian or bicyclist. To find a state park in your backyard visit www.dep.state.fl.us/parks

SEPTEMBER: *Participate In Coastal Cleanup* – Every September thousands of Floridians take part in International Coastal Cleanup Day. It is estimated that litter and debris harm more than one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals and turtles every year. Help by participating in a coastal cleanup effort near you. Some of the most dangerous items to sea life during the coastal cleanup include: monofilament fishing line, fishing nets, bags, balloons, traps (crab/lobster/fish) plastic sheeting/tarps, rope, six pack holders, strapping bands and syringes. For more information on coastal cleanup go to www.dep.state.fl.us/cmp

OCTOBER: *Make the Switch* – October is energy awareness month, a month where consumers are reminded to make wise energy choices. The easiest way to save energy is to switch from traditional incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs that reduce energy consumption, generate less air pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If every household in Florida changed just one light to an ENERGY STAR® product, savings would total more than \$37 million in energy costs annually. In addition, Florida could save up to 351 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, which is enough energy to light all the households in Tallahassee for nearly three years, and prevent almost 540 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions each year. For more energy tips visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/tips/tips.htm#home.

NOVEMBER: *Have a Green Thanksgiving* – Thanksgiving is a holiday steeped with tradition, but why not start a new tradition by having a green celebration? Reducing impact on the environment is something for which everyone can be thankful. Here are a

few tips on giving thanks to the environment: use homemade decorations; carry reusable bags when you go grocery shopping; at dinner, use cloth napkins that can be washed and used again; and shop online on Black Friday in the comfort of your home. You'll save on emissions as well as hassle.

DECEMBER: *Decorate Green*— Instead of buying plastic and glass holiday decorations, try making your own ornaments that can be reused or recycled. Create ornaments made from old greeting cards or cookie dough, garlands made from strung popcorn or cranberries, and potpourri made from kitchen spices such as cinnamon and cloves.

The DEP staff wishes the people of Florida a safe, happy and green New Year. For more “green” tips, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/tips/.