



*Reduce*  
**Re Use News**  
*Cycle*  
*Think*

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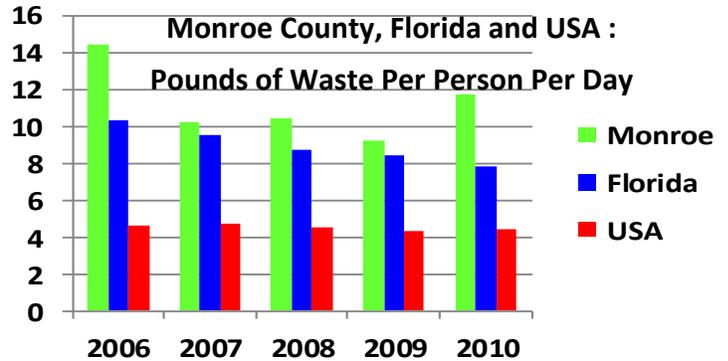
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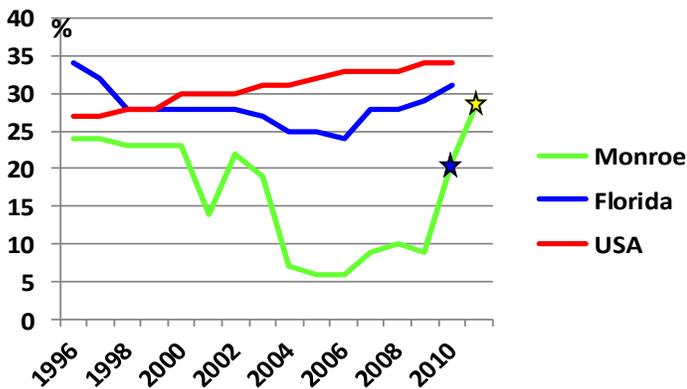
**Monroe Recycling Rates on the RISE !**



Data from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FL DEP) is providing dedicated recyclers with a cause for celebration. **Reports for 2010 confirmed a 21% recycling rate for Monroe County— an 11% increase from 2009!** Recycling statistics are not officially made public until over a year after the end of the collection cycle. Although preliminary and unofficial, 2011 data indicate that the Monroe County recycling rate will be close to 30%, possibly exceeding previous records.



**Recycling Rates for Monroe County, Florida, and USA**

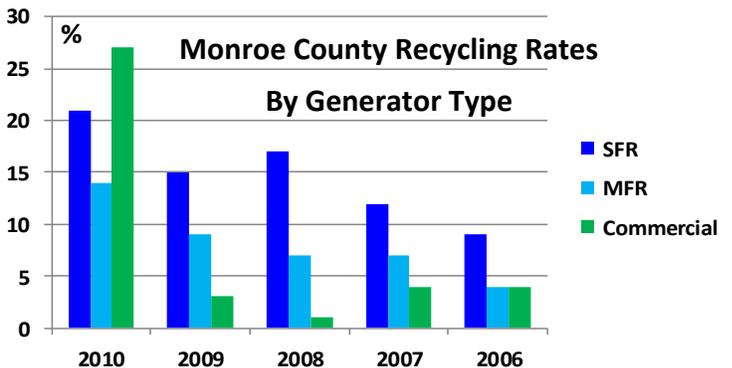


★ **21% Official 2010 recycling rate for Monroe County**  
 ☆ **29% Anticipated, unofficial rate for 2011**

**Local businesses also had big increases in recycling rates in 2010 with FL DEP crediting commercial generators with a 27% recycling rate!** Previously, single family residences (SFR) scored much higher than the commercial sector. This indicates that businesses, organizations, government agencies, and multi-family residences are truly embracing recycling as a part of their operations. Public demand is making it a regular part of doing business; some businesses are also realizing that sustainable practices can save money on disposal fees. **The Tourism Development Council found that over 40% of tourists do seek “green businesses” and they will pay up to 35% more to support them.** Better reporting of commercial recycling data also contributed to the huge increases that were reported .

Even though the 2010 recycling rate was a big improvement, the total volume of waste collected in the County also showed a substantial increase. **Monroe County generated over 11.7 pounds of trash per person per day (PPPD) in 2010, the third highest rate in the state of Florida and 2.7 times higher than the national average.**

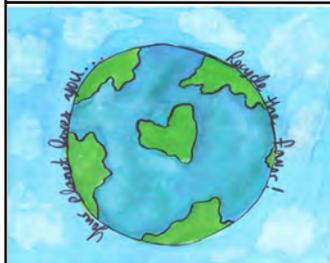
Peaks in PPPD rates also demonstrate how local conditions can cause a big spike in waste collection volumes; 2006 figures are a clear indication of how weather-related events like Hurricane Wilma can affect a County’s performance. Less obvious is the impact of tourism. **With over 3.3 million visitors per year, the Florida Keys are responsible for managing all of the additional waste generated by the tourism industry.**



**Congratulations to all the residents, educators and “businesses” that helped raise our recycling rates!**  
**Monroe County Recycling thanks everyone for their efforts.**

4 R Competitions in Our Schools Exhibit Creativity and Commitment !

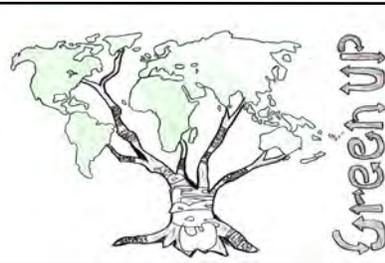
Although the judging is not yet completed at press time, we have received MANY fantastic entries this year! The artwork displayed here is just a small sample of all the entries that will be posted online in the near future. Featured selections were chosen for best viewing as "mini-snapshots." Hundreds of students signed the reusable bag pledge and submitted art that will be used to promote recycling and the 4Rs in the Florida Keys. All of the entries featured here were submitted by students in Alyssa Cerkleski's science classes at Key West High School. The County Recycling Department extends a huge "thank you" to all of the teachers and students that participated ! You are all making a real contribution to our community.



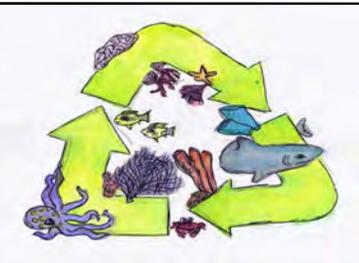
Tyler Smith



Lauren Schonek



Sydni Swanson



Jase Schilleci



Belle Vampol



Maria Kongos



Zachary Wilkerson



Megan Correa



Jasmine Ramos

Businesses and Organizations Rally for Mother Earth



Kids love making crafts from recycled and natural objects at John Pennecamp State Park, Key Largo.



Bahia Honda State Park always adds great music and lots of fun activities for everyone!



Mariner's Hospital in Tavernier holds an annual celebration attended by all employees and many local organizations that promote "green living" and sustainability in the Florida Keys.

Up and down the Keys, Earth Day gatherings reminded everyone to honor and protect our fragile environment at home and around the world. State Parks, local businesses, and community organizations gathered together to share the latest information on recycling, conservation of water and energy, wildlife and habitat conservation, and lots of art created from reusable materials. Adults and kids had a great time making crafts, sharing ideas, and taking home the latest information on "green living" in the Florida Keys.

Courtesy of Waste Management and Keys Sanitary Services, County Recycling distributed almost 300 recycling bins at Bahia Honda and John Pennecamp State Parks' 2012 Earth Day events!



Artist and crafters that use recycled materials have become regular exhibitors at Keys Earth Day events.



Keys Girl Scouts celebrated 100 years of scouting and Earth Day at a special event hosted by Sugarloaf School.



## To "Rot" or Not... Big Decisions on the Horizon for the Florida Keys

To many locals the 4<sup>th</sup> R has come to mean the recovery of organic waste, or letting it ROT as some would say! **Organic waste includes all discards derived from materials that were once alive- all plants, animals and their waste products:**

**food waste**

**soiled paper-napkins, paper towels**

**sewage sludge**

**landscape debris**

**shredded paper**

**manure**

As recently as 2004, all areas of the Keys collected yard waste separately so it could be chipped to produce mulch for distribution to residents. It seemed pretty simple until citrus canker was discovered in the Keys and trees were removed all over the State. Concerns about the spread of plant diseases and invasive exotic seeds, poor quality due to contamination, and over supply ultimately ended the mulching of yard waste. All organic waste is now transported along with other trash to the Wheelabrator Waste to Energy Plant. Incineration of trash produces electricity, but it also permanently destroys this important source of organic material. This has led to discussions about other possible options for the future.

**In 2010, the Florida Keys generated over 86 million pounds of food and yard waste (approximate figures):**

**52 million pounds yard waste**

**34 million pounds food waste**

**Organics = +/- 35% of total trash**

Choosing the best way to manage organic waste is a serious challenge! To determine possible options, Waste Management and the South Dade Soil and Water Conservation District have been asked to present alternative management options:

- Mulching- yard waste only, lowest quality, limited uses and demand, moderate space requirements.
- Windrow composting- more organic materials usable, higher space requirements, 45-60 days to finished product.
- In-vessel (enclosed cylinder) composters- all organics usable, less space needed, 3 weeks to finished product.

**Mulching of landscape/yard waste**



**Windrow composting operation**



**In-vessel composters**



Stay tuned for updates on County plans for organic waste and let your Commissioners hear your thoughts on the issue!

### Coming Soon: Monroe County Master Recycler Program !

Monroe County Recycling and Solid Waste Department is pleased to announce the creation of a Master Recycler program for local residents who would like to help others in our community learn more about waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting. The program will be launched this fall with the first training program for volunteers. The initial classes will be limited to a total of 45 volunteers with training for 15 in each area- Lower, Middle, and Upper Keys. The program will include four sessions plus a field trip to the Reuters Materials Recovery Facility and Wheelabrator Waste to Energy plant. Volunteers will participate in activities to educate the public about the 4Rs.

Master Recyclers will:

- ◆ Help create educational resources and displays.
- ◆ Speak to local groups about recycling and solid waste issues.
- ◆ Design and implement waste reduction plans at residences, schools, and businesses.
- ◆ Staff booths at local gatherings, clean-ups, special collections, and educational events.
- ◆ Stay current on solid waste trends through webinars and on-going training opportunities.



If you would like to see how this concept has worked in other areas, visit the [Portland Master Recycler website](#) to see how local volunteers have had a big impact on recycling in their communities. Monroe County's program will be smaller and limited in scope when we start, but you will definitely be inspired by the many great projects that these areas have initiated through the use of Master Recycler volunteers.

Application guidelines and training dates will be announced in September. If you would like to be placed on our Master Recycler notification list, please contact County Recycling Coordinator Colleen Murphy at 305 289 6037.

## 4R News from Our Neighborhood and Beyond



### Share Your Views : Easy On-line Recycling and Solid Waste Survey for Florida Keys Residents

If you have not already filled out the survey published in the last edition of the ReNews, [please take a minute \(that's really all it takes!\) to provide important input for County staff and Commissioners.](#) Let us know what you like and how you would improve our program! The electronic survey results will be posted in our next newsletter. Some of these issues are currently being discussed by the BOCC so your opinions are important. Your input is appreciated !

### Visit Waste Management's Facilities



Reuters Recycling Facility



Wheelabrator WTE Plant

Although some residents in Monroe County have their trash and recycling collected by local firms like Marathon Garbage Service and Keys Sanitary Services, ultimately both "commodities" end up at Waste Management facilities. As part of their community outreach program, this industry leader has been offering field trips for residents, business owners, representatives from local governments and agencies. It is hard to envision the scale of these facilities from photos or even videos! Their high-tech approach surprises most visitors and the tour guides answer many questions that people have about these relatively new methods of dealing with our trash.

The all day excursion starts **early** and doesn't end until supper time! It includes transportation by large van to the Reuters Materials Recycling Facility, lunch at the central "call center," a visit to the Wheelabrator Waste-To-Energy Plant and the adjacent landfill with its methane collection system. There is no charge for the trip, but we hope that participants will use the experience to let others know how the system works. Space is limited, so call 305 289 6037 if you would like to visit. The next field trip is scheduled for Monday, May 14th.

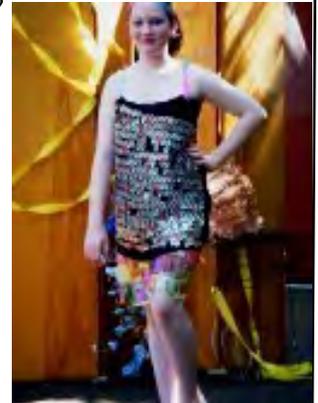
If you can't find time for such a long trip, you can [take a virtual tour of the recycling facility](#) by watching their on-line video. You can also [read more about the recycling facility](#) (page 3) and the [waste to energy plant](#) (page 4); just follow these links to our archived newsletter articles. Although Wheelabrator has yet to produce a video, you can [learn how the plant operates online](#) too.

We guarantee that you will have many of your questions answered and have a new perspective after the tour!

### Recycling Turns to Designing 4 Creative Fun!

Recycling is serious business, but that doesn't mean it can't be fun or creative. More and more artists and designers are finding unusual ways to "repurpose" some of the discards that typically consider to be TRASH. Some entrepreneurial spirits are creating new businesses and others are having lots of fun combining recycling with art and entertainment.

The Portland based "Junk to Funk" takes a unique and hip approach to Trashion by combining visual and performance art, sustainability education, events, public Installations, interactive activities and entertainment. They focus on using fashions created with recyclables to provide people with an opportunity to connect, conceptualize and receive art in a creatively re-used form.



[Check out their amazing creations in their online videos!](#)

Even for people in the Keys who are used to ultra creativity, these reuse experts really know how to repurpose unusual materials!



Some artists are even reusing materials for interior design. Coverings ETC, a business based in Miami, uses bits of broken vodka, beer and wine bottles to create a product called Bio-Glass to create countertops, desks and tables. Other firms are creating decorator-quality picture frames, lighting, furniture, and interior furnishings.

There's really no limit to what a creative mind can do once we start to view trash as valued treasure. We are fortunate to have numerous creative recyclers in the Keys and hope the future will inspire many new business ventures that explore the endless possibilities that can be found in our recycling bins and trash cans.

