



RE NEWS

REDUCE
REUSE
RECYCLE
RETHINK

Monroe County Recycles

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TIPS FROM THE TOP RECYCLERS IN FLORIDA



Some folks recall great football teams when they think about the Gainesville area, but recycling fans know that one of Alachua

County's greatest success stories has to do with their 49% recycling rate - the highest in the State of Florida!

According to Sally Palmi, Solid Waste Director, the mandatory recycling ordinance for commercial accounts and strong recycling markets contribute to their success. FL DEP figures place their commercial recycling at 65% rate compared to a 37% rate for single



"Embrace Zero Waste" Guy

family residences. Businesses comply because mandatory recycling codes are enforced with strong education assistance; free enterprise commercial recycling collections keep the markets competitive. Waste disposal companies have non-exclusive commercial franchises.

Residential recycling in Gainesville and surrounding Alachua County, population 247,000, is continuing to grow because a "pay as you throw" system charges more for larger size trash bins that range from 20-96 gallon size. They require separation of trash, recyclables, and yard waste, collecting all three once per week on the same day. Recyclables are collected in bins similar to those currently used in Monroe County, but they use a two bin system - one for paper products and one for plastic, cans and glass ("Big Blue and Big Orange reps"). The items accepted vary depending on the area, but they all accept less types of recyclables to maintain a higher value for their materials. They do not export recyclables to a distant "single stream" facility as we do in Monroe County. Because they keep quality high and



"Big Blue and Big Orange"

process locally, they have managed to pay for their recycling program with revenue sharing from the sale of recyclables.

Alachua County built a transfer station, a Recovered Materials Processing Facility, and a pilot composting operation at their Environmental Park that started operation in 2000. Trash is transported to a landfill in Raiford, about 38 miles from Gainesville. They have yet to start municipal composting, but proposals are being reviewed. Mulch is currently free for residents who load their own. They don't charge for the curbside collection of residential yard waste or recyclables.

It's important to remember that you really can't compare solid waste and recycling services in Monroe County to Alachua County; population, geography, and availability of facilities are very different! Some things that might work here include a "pay as you throw" system for trash, mandatory provisions for business recycling, development of comprehensive composting of organic materials (food, yard waste, non-recyclable paper, and sludge) along with collaborative efforts among local municipalities.

FIFTEEN MORE REASONS TO RECYCLE YOUR ELECTRONICS

RARE EARTH METALS



Most everyone recognizes that materials like plastics, stainless steel, copper, gold, chromium, manganese and mercury (to name just a few) should be reclaimed in the electronics recycling process, but a whole category of elements known as rare earth metals has gained the spotlight because most are being imported. They are used in virtually every type of electronics and

related applications. Only one company, Molycorp, mines them in the US; 95% are imported from China. With a USA-China trade deficit hitting \$295.4 million in 2011, recovery of these valuable metals is very important.

Development of a new site for rare earth mines in our country is also getting attention. Local and federal government

agencies are exploring the Black Hills area near Sundance, Wyoming as a potential site for mining these essential elements. Once again we are learning another important lesson about consumer and producer responsibility!

This [video link about rare earth mining](#) in the USA provides some thought provoking insight to these important issues.

4 R NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS AND FOR THE SCHOOLS

TIME TO "LET IT ROT" AND START THE GARDENS !



Sigsbee Charter School Butterfly Garden before planting.

Although spring and summer are traditional gardening times elsewhere, we are fortunate to have a planting and composting season that can really work with school schedules in the Florida Keys. The idea is starting to catch on in our District as teachers start to realize how skills acquired in the garden can reinforce core subjects and even FCAT scores. If your school or class has a project, please share your experience with other teachers in our 4R newsletter. Start composting and planting now!

For tips on how to get started, contact Kim Gabel at the Coop-

erative Extension Service (305 292 4501), Heidi Seidel at Key West Botanical Gardens (305 849 8733), Patrick Garvey at Growing Hope Initiative (305 923 6663), as well as local community gardens and garden clubs. The County Recycling Department also has lots of resources to share about grants and other resources (305 289 6037).

These photos are a sample of the smiles you can grow at your school. The photos were submitted by Sigsbee Charter School Garden Club Coordinator Heather Hazard. They have lots of Green initiatives planned for this year!



Sigsbee Charter School Garden Club

IS YOUR SCHOOL UP FOR A CHALLENGE?

There are lots of ways to get your students thinking about how much waste we produce. You can try these challenges in one classroom, one grade level, or the whole school. Pick one day a week and ask students to try it for a while. You might even weigh the waste and chart it to compare traditional and zero waste lunches.

Ways for kids to go 'waste-free'

Some schools are encouraging students to pack lunches using less throw-away packaging to reduce trash and create good habits.

There are many different types of reusable boxes and bags to choose from...



Traditional lunchbox



Canvas bag



Soft plastic cooler

...and other choices to help cut down on lunchtime trash...



A drink refillable container



Silverware that can be washed and reused



A cloth napkin rather than a paper one

Other tips to reduce waste

- ▶ Pack extra dinner servings for the next day's lunch
- ▶ Buy from bulk bins and reuse your bags
- ▶ Don't throw away recyclable items—seek out recycle bins
- ▶ Start a compost pile at home
- ▶ Purchase fresh produce

SOURCE: wastefreelunches.org



Wasteful versus "waste-free" lunches.

For schools looking for a REAL challenge, you might try the [Bag It Plastic Free Schools Contest](#), for grades 4-12. The contest encourage teachers and students to come up with creative and effective action projects to reduce disposable plastic use in their communities.

The prizes are great and the potential to make a positive impact on our community is very significant.

For something easier and strictly local, get your students to take the County reusable bag pledge or join residents on Big Pine Key who are starting the "Got Your Bag? Florida Key campaign" (see page 4).



Bagman



Don't Pollute the Planet!

MARATHON: October 13

County Public Works Yard, Marathon
10600 Aviation Boulevard

KEY LARGO: October 20

Key Largo Recycling Center
300 Magnolia Street at MM 100.3

Electronics (E-Waste)
Recycling &
Household
Hazardous Waste
(HHW) Disposal

Saturdays
9 am to 1 pm



Sponsored by Monroe County
and the City of Marathon

**WHAT CAN
I BRING??**



Hazardous Household Waste (HHW)

Paints, stains, preservatives
Pesticides & Fertilizers
Roofing compounds
Waste oil—5 Gal. Max
Resins & Solvents
Adhesives / Caulks
Corrosives / Acids
Cleaning Products
Automotive fluids
Sorry, No Gasoline
at these events



E-Waste (Electronics)

Monitors & Computers
Batteries
Televisions
All Telephones
& FAX Machines
Printers / Copiers
DVD / VCR Players
Radios & Speakers
Discs & Cassettes



Fluorescent/CFL bulbs
50¢ each

FREE for Unincorporated Monroe County, Key West, Marathon, Key Colony Beach, Layton and Key Largo Residents. Call 305 289-6037 for information about: acceptable items, regular collection hours/ locations for e-waste and HHW disposal, commercial fees and limitations.

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IS THE CHANCE TO VOICE YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES IN MONROE COUNTY. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY RESPONDED, [TAKE OUR ONE MINUTE SURVEY](#). THE LINK WILL BE OPEN UNTIL AMERICA RECYCLES DAY ON NOVEMBER 15TH WITH RESULTS POSTED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF ReNews.

LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE A 4 R DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



MONROE COUNTY MASTER RECYCLERS TRAINING STARTS IN FEBRUARY

Monroe County is planning to train a team of local residents who are interested in joining other 4R activists committed to help educate the public about recycling, reuse, waste reduction and composting. Complete details and applications will be available in January with training sessions starting in February, 2013.

The program will include four training sessions in each area

of the Keys plus a field trip to the Reuters Materials Recovery Facility in Pembroke Pines and the Wheelabrator Waste to Energy plant in Pompano.

The initial classes will be limited to a total of 45 volunteers and selection will be a competitive process. Visit the [ReNews link](#) for more information and contact: murphy-colleen@monroecounty-fl.gov to receive course details and an application in January.

GOT YOUR BAGS ? FLORIDA KEYS



Several months ago, a group of residents from Big Pine Key decided to tackle the problem of single use plastic bags and they have been meeting on a regular basis to launch a retail and residential campaign in the coming months. Headed by Ken Chopcinski, the group includes representatives from many local organizations; Monroe County Recycling is also a partner in their efforts.

Since local "bag bans" are prohibited in the State of

Florida, the group will focus on voluntary participation and education to encourage retailers to promote reusable, reused, and eco-friendly alternatives. Proliferous and problematic, single use plastic bags too often end up littering our landscape and polluting our seas.

Volunteers are still needed so email the group at: gotyourbags.floridakeys@gmail.com for more details.

NEW WAYS TO REDUCE WASTE AND HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

When people doubt the resilience of entrepreneurship, you have to wonder if they are keeping track of the latest innovations in the realm of recycling, waste reduction, and reuse? The following repackaging ideas should dispel any thoughts that creativity and innovation have taken a back seat to status quo and profit margins!



The edible coffee cup, designed by Enrique Luis Sardi for Italian coffee company Lavazza, is an idea we are all waiting to taste!

Bye-bye Styrofoam! [Ecovative Design LLC](#) has found a way to grow custom packing products made from crop waste and mushroom mycelium. They sell a variety of packing, such as the Wine Shipper. Dell and Steelcase are also starting to use EcoCradle to ship computer equipment and furniture.



Patrick Sung devised a foldable box that's always the right size. His Universal Packaging System uses perforated cardboard that can pack objects of any shape



Sacramento-based Micromidas feeds sewage to a variety of bacteria (recipe depends on wastewater source), setting off a fermentation process that produces resin (left). The resin can then be processed into a versatile plastic that's similar to petroleum-based materials such as polypropylene, polyethylene, and polystyrene. But this plastic biodegrades in 6-12 months



[Andrew Kim](#) devised a square Coke bottle that would be 100 percent plant-based, stackable, and collapsible. With the slimmer, blockier foot-print, 3,949 more bottles can be shipped in a standard shipping container, shrinking the carbon footprint of every drink.