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Eco-Cycle Announces Winner of First *I Choose to Reuse* Contest; Launches Three New Contests Encouraging Reuse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boulder County, CO (May 9, 2013) – Congratulations to Rosane Pires, the winner of a brand new specialized hybrid bicycle from University Bicycles! By taking Eco-Cycle's *I Choose to Reuse* 30-Day Challenge and getting a record 40 friends to do the same, Rosane is now pedaling off on her new bike. It's all part of Eco-Cycle's *I Choose to Reuse* campaign, aimed at getting residents and businesses to change the default in Boulder County from single-use disposables to reusables.

"I truly believe we can make a difference by making every day simple choices," said Pires. "I reuse my water bottle, grocery bag and Tupperware for take-out. I knew I could have a bigger impact by getting my friends to join the challenge."

Now there are three more chances for Boulder County residents to be reuse winners: Eco-Cycle is launching three new contests! See details below. Participants could win a 2-night stay at the St. Julien Hotel & Spa, a \$100 REI Gift Card and many other great prizes. Prizes were donated from these Eco-Cycle Zero Waste Business Partners: St. Julien Hotel & Spa, Ocean First Divers, Elevations Credit Union, Door to Door Organics and SparkFun.

The I Choose to Reuse 30-Day Challenge at www.ecocycle.org/ichoosetoreuse ask participants to avoid these four "Despicable Disposables" for the month of May: 1) paper and polystyrene coffee cups, 2) bottled water, 3) plastic and paper checkout bags, and 4) polystyrene take-out containers. See below for more about the environmental impacts of these products.

THE I CHOOSE TO REUSE CONTESTS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY:

1. The Twitter Contest

Between now and May 31, the person with the most tweets using the #ichoosetoreuse hashtag will be awarded a two-night stay and brunch for two at the St. Julien Hotel & Spa! To participate, customers who use their own reusable mugs or bags at local coffee shops and grocery stores should tweet "#ichoosetoreuse my mug/bag @[store_Twitter_handle]." At the end of the month, the person with the most tweets wins.

2. The Volunteer Contest

Eco-Cycle is offering a \$100 REI gift card, donated from Elevations Credit Union, to the person who volunteers the most hours tabling with us and recruiting people to take the 30-Day Challenge. To volunteer, contact Steve Cavanaugh, Eco-Cycle's Boulder Campaigns Coordinator, at steve@ecocycle.org.

3. The 30-Day Challenge Contest

Eco-Cycle will randomly select three lucky persons who signed up for the 30-Day Challenge and award them each one of the following fun prizes donated by Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Business Partners: a \$290 Ocean First Diver's Class/Pool Gift Card, a \$50 gift card from Door to Door Organics, and a SparkFun Inventor's Kit.

BY THE NUMBERS: THE IMPACT OF THE DESPICABLE DISPOSABLES

Eco-Cycle is targeting single-use disposable items because the material “stuff” we manufacture and consume – from the products we buy to the food systems we support—accounts for 42% of our greenhouse gas emissions (EPA).

Single-use paper coffee cups: Boulder County uses on average **1.3 million paper coffee cups per month**, which require **370 trees** to be cut down each month. Nearly all of these single-use cups are not recyclable or compostable. When they break down in the landfill, they release methane, a greenhouse gas that, in the short term, has 72 times the heat-trapping power of carbon dioxide.

Single-use bottled water: Americans buy more than **half a billion bottles** of water every week. Each bottle requires **one-fourth of a barrel of oil** to produce. In one year, it takes **17 million barrels of oil** to make those bottles, more than three times as much oil as was dumped in the Gulf of Mexico during the BP oil spill. The production, transportation and disposal of these bottles contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the fact that they’re recyclable, every year Boulder County buries **2 million pounds of plastic water bottles** and soda bottles in our landfills.

Single-use checkout bags: Boulder County throws away nearly **350,000 single-use plastic and paper bags** every day. The production of both plastic and paper bags contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and air and water pollution.

Single-use foam take-out containers: Americans trash more than **350,000 tons of polystyrene** every year. The plastic foam releases toxins as it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. Those pieces never going away. Polystyrene is made from hazardous chemicals and is among the nation’s top 25 toxic air pollutants and ozone destroying compounds. Some of these toxic chemicals can leach into our food and drink.

“These items such as paper coffee cups from virgin trees and polystyrene take-out containers don’t have to be made in the first place,” said Eric Lombardi, Executive Director of Eco-Cycle. “We can continue to eat, buy clothes and have fun *and* reduce global warming, but it is ultimately the choices we make as individuals, businesses and government that will have a tremendous impact on the future quality of life for our children.”

Eco-Cycle has calculated that if all Boulder County residents were to avoid single-use paper coffee cups for 30 days, we would collectively save enough paper to make a trail from Denver to Salt Lake City. Similarly, if all of Boulder County were to say “no” to bottled water for 30 days, we would save 2,662 barrels of oil, enough to drive a car around the world 44 times. If all Boulder County residents were to skip single-use plastic and paper bags for 30 days, we would save enough energy to heat 74 homes for a year. If, after 30 days of the challenge, Boulder County residents committed to making reuse a permanent part of their lifestyle, we could collectively save more than 4,500 trees, 32,000 barrels of oil and enough energy to heat nearly 900 homes a year.

In addition to the personal challenge to choose to reuse for 30 days, Eco-Cycle will be reaching out to businesses and government agencies to take their own reuse challenge. They will ask retail businesses like coffee shops, restaurants, and stores to offer reusable cups and containers first, to reward those bringing their own mugs, containers or bags, and to ask customers first before offering single-use items such as napkins, straws, cutlery and chopsticks. They will also work with local government offices to strengthen their reuse policies.

To learn more about Eco-Cycle’s *I Choose to Reuse* campaign and the 30-Day Challenge, please visit <http://www.ecocycle.org/ichoosetoreuse>.

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