

**Subject: Happy Holidays, Recycle!**  
**Organization: Isabella County Recycling**

**By: Carey Pauquette-Schalm**  
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Once again the holidays are upon us. We enjoy family, friends, and loved ones. There is dinner, presents, games, and holiday cheer. Some of us get the holiday spirit so strongly at this time of year that we glow Christmas. It is a great thing, the holidays. In the environmental field we hear key words such as “over-consumerism” “Black Friday – Buy Nothing Day” “Waste not, want not.” And the list goes on. There is a drive in all of us that we must get our 14 year old baby girl exactly what she wanted to make up for the fact that we don’t have time to sit down and look through 17 Magazine with her. We must get our spouse that fishing poll he always wanted, oh and the bait, can’t forget the bobbers,...is his fishing license current? Or our mom that foot spa she would like to relax with. And our cute little four year old nephew all of the dinosaur toys we can find. All of these are legitimate things we want to provide that makes the statement, “I know you. I love you. This is my symbolic way of letting you know you are always in my thoughts.” In the process we don’t realize how much gas we are using, and how much trash we are creating. Over 25 million tons of extra waste is generated at Christmas time. Following are some tips to help you consume less, enjoy more, and be environmentally responsible. Be creative and you will begin new traditions at a glorious time of year. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

- Reuse your shopping bags or bring canvas shopping bags for holiday shopping.
- Consolidate trips to the store, it saves gas and time.
- Give a gift certificate. If you can't figure out what would be the perfect gift for someone.
- Give environmentally friendly gifts.
- Look for recycled products and holiday cards.
- Give tickets to a concert or sporting event.
- Give tickets to a ski area.
- Give a museum pass or membership.
- Provide a gift certificate for a lesson (tennis, swimming, drums).
- Provide a gift certificate - dinner for two.
- Donate to an organization in the name of a friend or relative, in a subject area of interest to them.
- Give a plant or a tree.
- Give rechargeable batteries.
- From Home Power magazine: The US Department of Energy reports that each year in the US, holiday lights consume 2.2 terawatt-hours (that's 2.2 billion kilowatt-hours) of electricity. At 10 cents per KWH, that's \$220 million annually to power our holiday displays. What you can do: switch your incandescent light strings to LEDs (light-emitting diodes), which use 90 percent less energy. LED strings are available in a variety of colors, and you can buy them at most stores that carry holiday lighting.
- Have guests bring containers to take home leftovers.
- Use washable plates, napkins, glasses and flatware whenever possible.
- Use alternative holiday wrap
  - Have kids decorate grocery bags and newspapers with markers.
  - Use Sunday Comics.
  - Wrap a holiday gift in a new kitchen or hand towel. The towel is part of the gift!
  - Trim your gifts with cuttings from evergreens, pine cones, non-poisonous berries and/or dried flowers.
  - Tie children's packages with shoelaces ... which can then be used to lace their sneakers.

Remember New Years is the time to tackle new projects like recycling. Take the recycling challenge visit our website to learn more [www.isabellacounty.org/recycles](http://www.isabellacounty.org/recycles) or call the Recycling Hotline (989)773-9631.