

GREEN HOLIDAY CHALLENGE

November 21, 2010 – January 3, 2011

Instructions: Complete as many challenge items on this sheet as possible and return checklist to the Niobrara Council office for a chance to win! Only one entry per household. Entries must be postmarked or e-mailed by **January 3, 2011.**

Prizes: All entries will receive a Leave No Trace decal. Entries with the most completed challenge items will be included in a drawing for an outdoor prize package including a 2011 Annual Park Entry Permit.



#1 NEW USES FOR OLD GREETING CARDS

Cut your favorite images and details from old greeting cards and recycle them into gift tags or ornaments.

#2 EXPLORE DIFFERENT WAYS TO WRAP

Stop for a minute and think about how much wrapping paper ends up in the landfill after the holidays... Try using brown grocery bags stamped with a cookie cutter, old maps, towels, fabric, scarves, the comic section from the newspaper or children's art work.



#3 RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Each year, 10 million Christmas trees end up in the landfill. Watch for information on where the City would like you to take your tree to be recycled.

#4 SEE HOW MANY LOCAL OR NATURAL FOODS YOU CAN INCLUDE IN YOUR HOLIDAY FEAST

Ask the grocery stores about local or Nebraska-grown options. Organic choices are also expanding. You can find many products by using the Nebraska Buy Fresh Buy Local producer directory at <http://buylocalnebraska.org/>.

#5 REDUCE WASTE AT YOUR HOLIDAY PARTY

There are many ways to cut down on the trash load following a big gathering. Buy ingredients in bulk or use only reusable napkins and dishes (invite guests to bring their own if you don't have enough).



#6 BUY ENERGY-SAVING HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Did you know that LED lights use 90 percent less energy than conventional holiday lights? LED lights are available at many major retailers.



#7 MAKE DECORATIONS FROM NATURAL OR RECYCLED MATERIALS

There are lots of great ideas out there! Visit the library, web, or use your own imagination for inspiration! Check out the Niobrara Council Facebook page for examples.

#8 GREEN UP YOUR GIFT LIST

There are many options for donating to national parks or nature organizations in lieu of giving material gifts. Or consider purchasing park passes, summer camp scholarships, or hunting and fishing permits to encourage your loved ones to spend plenty of time in the outdoors this year. See the back of this sheet for more gift ideas that are friendly to the environment. Or maybe you want to be creative and make a gift from natural materials such as a twig wreath or a basket of pine cone fire starters!

#9 DON'T FORGET THE WILDLIFE!

Many of us near the Niobrara Valley are able to enjoy a variety of birds and wildlife in our backyards. One of the best ways to care for these creatures is to incorporate Native plants into our yards. The National Wildlife Federation can help you create a "Certified Wildlife Habitat" near your home (www.nwf.org). Need to wait until spring to work on this? In the meantime, consider providing supplemental feeders so wildlife can also enjoy a holiday feast! Kids can even get in on the action with the traditional pinecone peanut butter bird feeder!



#10 MAKE A GREEN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Some ideas to get you started...

- Use only cloth cleaning towels.
- Install water-saving devices in your toilet and shower.
- Walk or bicycle at least one car errand weekly.
- Use reusable cloth shopping bags (keep reusable shopping bags in your car so they will always be handy).
- Use a reusable coffee cup at work.
- Switch to compact fluorescent lights to save energy.
- Turn down the thermostat at night.
- Recycle bottles, cans, newspaper, office paper, plastic and cardboard – at home and office!
- Buy recycled products.
- Compost.
- Plant at least one tree.
- Turn off the shower while you soap to save water.
- Use biodegradable laundry soap rather than petroleum-based detergents.
- Reduce use of pesticides and other hazardous household chemicals. Use safer substitutes instead.



MORE GREEN GIFT IDEAS...

- Season tickets to a sporting event.
- Membership to a museum or nonprofit organization.
- Theater tickets.
- Free baby-sitting service.
- Reusable lunch bag.
- 100% cotton dish towels or sheets; look for unbleached cotton.
- Reusable coffee cup.
- Gift basket filled with non-toxic household cleaners (try local co-ops or environmental stores for gift ideas).
- An old tricycle, bicycle, rocking chair, etc., fixed up to pass along as an heirloom.
- Automatic thermostat control device (automatically turns down heat at night).
- Compost bin.
- Reusable food storage containers.
- Cloth shopping bag.
- Cloth napkins and rings.
- House plant.
- Solar watch or calculator.
- Reusable razor.
- Durable hand tools.
- Durable wooden toys.
- Quilts and comforters.
- Water-saving showerhead.
- Personalized "coupons," such as a night off from dish duty, a foot massage, etc.
- Bat roosting box – bats keep insect populations down.
- Gourmet dinner for a busy couple.
- Bird feeder and seed.
- A subscription to a favorite environmental magazine.
- Stationery – made from recycled paper, of course – and stamps.
- Reusable bags, bows and gift wrapping.
- Car safety kit packed into a coffee can (e.g. candles, orange hazard triangle, etc.).
- Shutoff-timer for watering the lawn.



Entries must be postmarked or e-mailed on January 3, 2011.

Niobrara Council, PO Box 206, Valentine, NE 69201.

garwood@niobraraCouncil.org

Or drop off at 280 N Main St.

Questions? Call (402) 376-2793

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Place a check by each completed activity:

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___ #1 Reuse Greeting Cards

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___ #2 Green Wrapping Option

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___ #3 Recycle Christmas Tree

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___ #4 Local/Natural Foods

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___ #5 Reduce Party Waste

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___ #6 Energy Saving Lights

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___ #7 Recycled/Natural Decorations

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___ #8 Green Gifts

___ #8 Green Gifts

___ #9 Wildlife Food

___ #9 Wildlife Food

___ #10 Green Resolution

___ #10 Green Resolution

Briefly describe your experience with one of the activities above: _____

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Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

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