



## NEWS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release:

#### **GIRL SCOUTS OF WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA KICKS OFF NEW MEMBERSHIP YEAR WITH AN ECO-FRIENDLY THEME**

TAMPA (Sept. 9, 2009) – Girl Scouts of West Central Florida (GSWCF) will kick off the 2009-10 Girl Scout year with an environmentally-themed event, Be an Eco-Hero: Serve to Preserve. The event will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (two sessions: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 1 – 4 p.m.) at Brooker Creek Preserve in Tarpon Springs. The event is open to members and non-members, as well as families. Cost is \$10 per person. To register, visit [www.gswcf.org](http://www.gswcf.org).

GSWCF invites girls, both members and non-members, and their families to celebrate National Public Lands Day through Be an Eco-Hero: Serve to Preserve. Throughout the day, they will have the chance to connect with Girl Scouts and volunteers while learning fun ways to make a difference in the world around them, including ways to recycle, green their lunches, reduce their carbon footprints, conserve water, eat smart, save energy and more. Radio Disney's Rockin' Road Crew will provide entertainment periodically throughout the day.

In addition, girls and adults will have the chance to become members of GSWCF during the event. Annual membership dues are just \$12 for both girls and adults; the membership year runs October through September. Adult volunteer opportunities include working directly with girls, serving on a special events committee, being a part of a service team and more.

Event partners include Brooker Creek Preserve, The Florida Aquarium, MOSI, Lowry Park Zoo and Radio Disney.

Be an Eco-Hero: Serve to Preserve follows the theme of the new Girl Scout Journey that debuted earlier this summer from Girl Scouts of the USA – *It's Your Planet – Love It!* Designed to encourage girls to be at the forefront of ecological stewardship, *It's Your Planet – Love It!*, focuses on the environment and was written for Girl Scouts and non-Girl Scouts alike. This journey is the second set of leadership development books in the "Journeys" series, launched in 2008.

The collection of six publications, or "Journeys," was developed for girls in grades kindergarten – 12. These books, which encourage girls to play an active part in planning and decision-making, center on a different theme each year.

This year's collection tackles issues like preserving the world's water supply, creating innovations in energy usage, and how our food network and food choices impact the environment. In every Journey, girls accept a challenge to take the lead in protecting their planet. *It's Your Planet – Love It!* promotes healthy living, collaborative learning and an interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers.

The books' activities include outdoor adventures, hands-on science investigations and opportunities to "meet" prominent women and girls who are at work around the world on behalf of the environment. As girls journey through the challenges in the books, they earn Girl Scouting's new leadership pins and badges.

"Girls have indicated that one of the issues most important to them is protecting the environment, and that it is a top priority for young people," said Jody Johnston, CEO, Girl Scouts of West Central Florida. "The new Journey, published by Girl Scouts of the USA, is an excellent opportunity to introduce girls to a broad range of environmental concerns, while empowering them to make an impact in their own communities."

The Journeys are part of the new Girl Scout Leadership Experience, a model that engages girls in discovering themselves, connecting with others, and taking action to make the world a better place.

For more information on Be an Eco-Hero: Serve to Preserve or *It's Your Planet – Love It!*, please visit [www.gswcf.org](http://www.gswcf.org) or call 800-881-4475.

### ***About Girl Scouts of West Central Florida***

*Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts of West Central Florida serves nearly 30,000 girls in Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Marion, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sumter counties. Did you know that more than 53% of all women business owners are Girl Scout alumnae? For more information on how to join, volunteer, reconnect or donate to Girl Scouts of West Central Florida, visit [www.gswcf.org](http://www.gswcf.org) or call (800) 881-4475.*

### ***About Girl Scouts of the USA***

*Founded in 1912, Girl Scouts of the USA is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls with 3.4 million girl and adult members worldwide. Girl Scouts is the leading authority on girls' healthy development, and builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. The organization serves girls from every corner of the United States and its territories. Girl Scouts of the USA also serves American girls and their classmates attending American or international schools overseas in 90 countries.*

### ***About National Public Lands Day***

*National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. In 2008, 120,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, removed trash and invasive plants, and planted over 1.6 million trees.*

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