

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel offsets environmental impact of *Island Treasures Tour* *Donation to Go Zero[®] helps address climate change, restore habitat*

LEE COUNTY, FL – In keeping with its mission of preserving the destination for future visitors, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida has offset the carbon footprint of its energy use and travel for the third consecutive year of its *Island Treasures Tour* promotional road show by donating funds to Go Zero[®], a program launched by The Conservation Fund to slow climate change and restore wildlife habitat.

Go Zero has helped the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) measure its overall carbon dioxide emissions, including those for the road show; and The Conservation Fund will offset that impact by planting native trees that absorb carbon dioxide as they grow. In an effort to reduce its environmental impact, the crew of the recreational vehicle (RV) recycles as much as possible and promotes consumer recycling by providing bins at all stops on the tour. The crew also is using eco-friendly cleaning supplies and a solar charger for the RV's battery.

“Environmental stewardship is a cornerstone of The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel,” said Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director. “The main reason people visit us is to enjoy our pristine natural resources, so it’s absolutely critical that we do everything within our power to preserve and manage those resources to the best of our ability.”

Based on the data provided by the VCB, the Fund estimated that approximately 464 tons of CO₂ resulted from energy use, auto and air travel by the organization’s staff for the 2008/2009 fiscal year. The VCB is offsetting the environmental impact of these activities with a \$3,717.59 donation to The Conservation Fund, which is zeroing-out these emissions by restoring land and planting approximately 387 trees in national wildlife refuges and protected parks across the United States.

Environmental impact/Page 2

The Conservation Fund's newly restored habitats, which are made possible by donations from the VCB and other environmentally conscious organizations, do more than just address climate change. They leave a lasting legacy by restoring important wildlife habitat, improving air and water quality and enhancing outdoor recreational areas.

Since 2000, The Conservation Fund has restored nearly 23,000 acres and planted 7 million trees through its carbon sequestration program. Over the next 100 years, these new forests will capture an estimated 8.2 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from the atmosphere.

The Conversation Fund

The Conservation Fund is dedicated to advancing America's land and water legacy. With its partners, the organization conserves land, trains leaders and invests in conservation at home. Since 1985, it has helped protect more than 6 million acres, sustaining wild havens, working lands and vibrant communities.

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Editors' Note: *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel & Captiva islands, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. For details on the destination, access www.FortMyersSanibel.com and click on Media Central. Images available upon request.*