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For Immediate Release

“Anything with a Neck: Recycle Plastic in Lincoln County/Mescalero”

‘Anything with a neck’ plastic recycling by County and Mescalero residents continues to slowly rise according to Greentree Solid Waste [GSWA] officials. GSWA is among other New Mexico communities that can accept only Grade 1 and Grade 2 plastic – ‘anything with a neck’ plastic - for recycling. All other grades of plastic [3 – 7] will not be accepted by material manufacturers to whom the recycled plastic is sold, and should be discarded in the regular trash. Market observers note that plastic prices paid by industry are currently quite high. Millions of dollars of recyclable plastic finds their way into New Mexico landfills including the Otero/Greentree Regional landfill south of Alamogordo.

Over the past twenty years, plastic bottles have replaced glass bottles as the most visible beverage container roadside litter in the Sacramento Mountains. Clean, empty plastic bottles with or without a lid can easily be recycled in blue recycling dumpsters in Lincoln County, Mescalero and Ruidoso.



Identification of these items is easy! Turn the container over and look for the recycling triangle with a 1 or 2 molded or imprinted on the bottom of the container. Any other numbered plastic items should be discarded in the trash.

Grade 1 PETE plastic [polyethylene terephthalate] is **‘any plastic container with a neck’**, primarily beverage containers like water bottles, soft drinks, clear vegetable and fruit packaging, etc. Grade 2 HDPE [high density polyethylene] is used in colored plant

nursery containers, milk jugs, and other consumer products. The plastics industry trade association introduced the Resin Identification Code (RIC) system in 1988 at the urging of recyclers around the country. The code was developed to meet recyclers' needs while providing manufacturers a consistent, uniform system that could apply nationwide.

Availability of plastic recycling is driven by manufacturers who need raw materials and are willing to pickup and pay for recycled plastic bales. Soft drink bottlers remain the biggest user of PET resin. "Custom" bottles are used for other products, such as salad dressing, peanut butter and jellies. PET is also used for film, oven trays, sheeting for cups and food trays, oven trays, and other uses. Half of all polyester carpet made in the United States is made from recycled PET bottles.

Examples of plastic containers that are no longer recyclable include:

- Medicine bottles [grade 5]
- Yogurt, butter and other food containers
- Other food packaging[Grades 5-7]

Other types of plastic that **cannot** be recycled [no market for the material] includes:

- Styrofoam of any kind
- Plastic, shrink wrap and bubble wrap of any kind
- Plastic shopping bags [can be recycled at the Smokey's Country Market (Capitan) and at local thrift shops
- Plastic containers with oil, grease, or food products
- Restaurant cooking oil plastic containers

For more information, contact the Solid Waste Authority office at **378-4697**, extension 13; toll free at **1-877-548-8772**, via email at gswa@greentreeswa.org or at www.greentreeswa.org.

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