



**255 Live Oak Drive
Vero Beach, FL 32963
(772) 589-5050
www.DiscoverELC.org**

Contact: Holly Dill, Executive Director
holly@DiscoverELC.org

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Grand Re-Opening at the Environmental Learning Center

Wabasso Island, Fl – Where can you see four aquariums, including one that is 13 feet long, the largest brackish water aquarium in Indian River County? Where can you learn about green building technologies and solar power production? The answer is at the Grand Re-Opening Celebration of the new Discovery Station at the Environmental Learning Center from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM on Saturday, May 1, 2010.

As many may remember, on June 30, 2008, the ELC's largest building was hit by lightning during a horrific evening thunderstorm, causing a fire which destroyed it and a nearby public bathroom facility; 4,500 sq. ft. of buildings and all their contents were destroyed. With generous support from ELC members, private individuals, foundations, school groups, and the local business community, funds were raised, and a new Discovery Station and "Green" buildings have been built to replace those that were lost. The buildings are designed by Clemens Bruns Schaub Architect & Associates. Lead contractor is The Hill Group. Coastal Technology provided on site engineering and utility engineer is John Robbins, PA.

ELC Board Chairperson, Eileen Connelly, states "It has been a wonderful experience to watch our beautiful new buildings rise from the ashes. We are all eagerly anticipating the Grand Reopening on May 1st. It marks a very special day in the history of the ELC and we are all looking forward to sharing it with the community we serve."

The Grand Re-Opening Celebration of the new buildings and exhibits is free and open to everyone in the community. Food and drinks will be available for sale.

Festivities include many interesting exhibits and activities for the whole family. In addition to the 4 aquariums noted above, there will be a Touch Tank to explore marine critters, dioramas with lift panels, touchable exhibits, and a life-sized replica of a manatee's head. Environmental Ambassadors, who are 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students, will explain the many green aspects of the construction, including the state-of-the-art photovoltaic and thermal solar powered systems.

Additional activities available at the Celebration are: dip netting in the pond, a native plant sale, activity booths, storytelling, face painting, and painting en plein air. Author Debra Frasier is making a guest appearance to sign her award winning "On the Day You Were Born" children's picture book from 11a – 12p.

Free parking is available on the ELC Campus or in the Wabasso Causeway parking areas. Free shuttles will run from the Wabasso Causeway parking lots to and from the ELC from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Co-Chairs of the Grand Re-Opening Committee are Lisa Becker and Emily Tremml. Their committee members are Mary Arden, Pat Casselberry, Marcia Littlejohn, Art Meyer, Jennifer Taylor, and Paige Visser.

The Environmental Learning Center is located north of Vero Beach off County road 510 at the end of the Wabasso Bridge. Its 64-acre campus includes exhibit areas, native plant gardens, picnic facilities, gift shop, and visitor center. A list of its many field excursions, including hikes, boat excursions, nature walks, and bird watching can be found at www.DiscoverELC.org.

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