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### **ELC VOLUNTEERS HONORED**

**WABASSO ISLAND, FL** – 40 Environmental Learning Center Volunteers received President’s Volunteer Service awards at the annual breakfast, held at the Orchid Island Beach Club on March 20, to honor all those who donate their time and effort to the organization. The award is issued by the President’s Council on Service and Participation on behalf of the President of the United States to recognize the best in American spirit, and to encourage all Americans to improve their communities through volunteer service and civic participation. Aileen Pruitt, Representing the Governor’s Council on Volunteerism, and the wife of the former Florida State Senate President, Ken Pruitt, presented awards to individuals in four categories. Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards were given to 32 individuals with over 100, 250, and 500 hours of service respectively during 2009, and Lifetime awards to 8 volunteers who have given over 4,000 hours during their lifetime. During her opening remarks Ms. Pruitt thanked the award winners for “putting their passion into action in such a huge way. The number of volunteers and the number of hours given as volunteers speaks volumes about them and The Environmental Learning Center”, she said.

Following the presentation of the awards, Ms. Eileen Connelly, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, thanked all of the 75 volunteers who attended for their efforts on behalf of the ELC. She noted that few, if any, of the ELC education and environmental awareness programs would be possible without them.

Holly Dill, ELC Executive Director, closed the program by adding her thanks to the volunteers and updating them on both the new building construction, replacing the one destroyed by lightning over a year ago, and the anticipated delivery of a new, updated pontoon boat to be used for the various ELC cruises on the Indian River Lagoon and its tributaries.

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](http://www.DiscoverELC.org).

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