

## Shawnee National Forest "Green" Bags

### *The Forest takes another step in going green*

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The Shawnee National Forest's Green Team purchased recyclable shopping bags to sell to employees, family and friends as a green project to help reduce the amount of plastic used to bag purchases from grocery stores, discount stores or anywhere else they might shop.

The Shawnee's cloth bags are in several colors with the Forest logo and "Go Green, Shawnee National Forest" printed on them. Forest

employees support has been excellent and after only being available to purchase for a week, a re-order is already being discussed. The idea for using cloth bags for shopping is common, but other uses have been suggested. One or two employees are buying them to use as gift bags. Not only do you avoid using wrapping paper or paper gift bags that end up in land-fills, but you are also including a reusable shopping bag as part of the gift, and at little to no additional cost.

The commonly used plastic shopping bags are made from polyethylene, a petroleum product and can take as long as 500 years to degrade. Meantime the discarded plastic bags hang from trees, catch on power lines, float on oceans and lakes and clog storm drains, killing birds, fish, turtles and sea mammals unfortunate enough to ingest them or become entangled in them. According to the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental research and advocacy group in Washington, D. C., less than 1 percent of the 100 billion plastic bags Americans throw away each year are recycled.

This is just another step in the Shawnee's quest to support the Forest Service's "Green" mission by walking the talk for sustainability.