



**For Release:** October 21, 2008

**Contacts:** Brenda Timm (Audubon)  
212-979-3198/ btimm@audubon.org

**AUDUBON/TOYOTA ANNOUNCE FIRST CONSERVATION GRANT WINNERS**

*Funding Helps Local Groups Jumpstart Success*

**New York, October 21, 2008** -Forty-one projects in 24 states will receive *TogetherGreen* Conservation Innovation Grants totaling \$1.4 million dollars. Winners were selected from applicants nationwide for their innovative approaches to inspiring, equipping and engaging people to tackle environmental problems and take advantage of opportunities in their communities. The projects are the first to be funded by the new *TogetherGreen* Initiative created by Audubon with support from Toyota. Sample projects that received funding include:

- Engaging low-income students in middle schools to devise and implement energy saving plans (Denver, CO);
- Constructing gardens to stem storm water overflows that carry pollutants and disease-laden sewage into homes and waterways (Pittsburgh, PA);
- Involving the public in hands-on strategies for restoring vanishing wetlands vital to flood control (coastal Louisiana); and
- Reducing bird fatalities caused by their attraction to the lights in high-rise buildings (Minneapolis, MN).

A complete list of all 41 grants is available at [www.togethergreen.org](http://www.togethergreen.org). Many projects target inner-city and non-English speaking audiences previously underserved by the environmental community.

“Our biggest environmental problems can’t be solved unless we engage people from every ethnic, racial and economic community that makes up America and help them realize their power to make a difference in their own communities,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “These *TogetherGreen* Innovation Grants help local groups to engage people and to start achieving tangible conservation results at the same time”

More than 120 applications were submitted in the grant categories of water, habitat and energy conservation. Each winning team combines a local Chapter or unit of Audubon’s large national network with one or more community organizations to better advance the twin objectives of public engagement and environmental enhancement.

- more -

“These grants are the cream of a very impressive crop,” said Brainerd Foundation Executive Director Ann Krumboltz, one of many leaders from the academic, environmental and non-profit communities who served on the grants selection committee. “They will no doubt get people informed, involved and helping to make a make a difference.”

Selected proposals receive grants ranging from \$68,000 to \$5,000, with lower amounts earmarked for further planning of promising initiatives. The grants leveraged an estimated \$4.5 million in additional matching and in-kind support.

The grants are proving especially important as non-profit groups brace for the impact of the troubled economy.

“We are so excited about an opportunity to partner with Audubon on the project in Denver. We have an incredibly effective process for engaging young people around environmental issues and with *TogetherGreen* funding and Audubon, we can bring students balanced information to inform their energy projects,” said Lisa Bardwell, Executive Director of Front Range Earth Force.

“Since the launch of *TogetherGreen*, we have been so pleased with the excitement surrounding the volunteer efforts and grant applications,” said Patricia Salas Pineda, Group Vice President, Toyota Motor North America. “Today’s announcement is an important step in the mission of *TogetherGreen* to show that we all can make a significant difference in improving our environment.”

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in the spring of 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer and individual action opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. Community volunteer days have already begun in over 40 cities across the country and [www.TogetherGreen.org](http://www.TogetherGreen.org) helps users take conservation action and share and celebrate conservation success stories. The *TogetherGreen* initiative and grants programs are funded by a \$20 million Toyota gift to Audubon, the largest grant in the conservation group’s long history.

###

#### **About Audubon**

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. Visit Audubon online at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

#### **About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants, with another under construction in Mississippi. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Through its corporate initiatives, manufacturing operations and philanthropy, Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. In 2007, Toyota contributed more than \$56 million in philanthropy in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit [www.toyota.com/community](http://www.toyota.com/community).