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48 ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS RECEIVE 2009 TOGETHERGREEN INNOVATION GRANTS

\$1.1 Million in Funding from Audubon/Toyota Initiative Supports Local, Solutions-based Approaches to Conservation

New York, October 7, 2009 - Forty eight projects in 23 states will receive a total of \$1.1 million in *TogetherGreen* Innovation Grants to facilitate people-powered conservation action. *TogetherGreen* Innovation Grants annually provide essential funding that enables environmental groups and their community partners to inspire, equip and engage people to tackle environmental problems and better their communities.

Now in the second year of the program, nearly 90 environmental projects have received Innovation Grants totaling more than \$2.5 million to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide.

Sample 2009 grantees and their projects include:

- Houston Audubon Society will partner with groups such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Texas Forest Service to engage residents in restoring native habitat on Texas's hurricane-ravaged Bolivar peninsula (TX);
- Audubon New York will partner with The Nature Conservancy, the Prospect Park Alliance and the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment High School to offer internships and nature-based experiences enabling inner city teens to learn critical life and workplace skills;
- Palouse Audubon Society will partner with the University of Idaho Women in Science, Idaho Fish and Game, and Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute to transform land neighboring a wastewater treatment plant into a wildlife park (Moscow, ID);
- Los Angeles Audubon Society will partner with Susan Miller Dorsey High School, Leo Politi Elementary School, and the environmental firm, Newfields, to put teens on the front line of coastal sage scrub restoration (Los Angeles, CA);
- Montana Audubon will work with the Western Sustainability Exchange, Yellowstone River Parks Association, and Billings West High School to help educate consumers about the importance of selecting environmentally friendly beef that has been produced by ranchers who protect habitat on their properties (Billings and Helena MT)

A complete list of all 48 grants is available at www.togethergreen.org/grants.

“TogetherGreen Innovation Grants offer tremendous opportunities for environmental groups to flex their creative muscles in tackling conservation issues and building a broader, more active constituency,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “We believe this second round of funding will continue to jump start

conservation success by broadening the ranks of those involved and providing support that will allow measurable results to take root.”

The 2009 Innovation Grant recipients were selected from scores of applicants across America. Funds were awarded to local Chapters or programs of Audubon’s large national network – each working in partnership with one or more outside groups. Recipients were chosen for innovation and effectiveness of projects designed to contribute to significant gains in habitat, water, and energy conservation. Many projects will work with inner-city audiences and those previously underserved or not engaged with the environmental community.

“It’s hard to inspire kids to get involved with natural resources just through the classroom, so our work with Audubon will help spark the flame so they can get their hands dirty and learn how to really tackle some real-life problems out in the field,” said Dr. Diana Doan-Crider, Research Associate, Texas A&M University, who is partnering with Audubon Texas to offer environmental internships to underrepresented ethnic groups throughout the state. “There’s nothing like a live animal or a beautiful landscape to trigger a young person’s imagination.”

Selected 2009 proposals will receive grants ranging from \$5,000 - \$80,000. The grants are proving especially important as non-profit groups weather the financial recession. The 2008 grant recipients leveraged an estimated \$4.5 million in additional matching and in-kind support that allowed them to broaden their scope and deliver tremendous conservation potential.

“Generating one green watt of energy where it is being used will save the emissions produced by coal generation of three watts,” said Bob Barnhill, President, Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum, who is partnering with Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch to reduce carbon emissions in rural communities. “We can educate our residents in conservation of resources as well as our connection to the earth “

Since launching *TogetherGreen* in March 2008, the five-year alliance between Audubon and Toyota has provided leadership training, conservation education and outreach, volunteer events, and grant funding to generate impressive new results. Success stories from 2008 Innovation Grants projects helped inspire a new state law requiring high-rises in Minnesota to turn off unnecessary lighting every year during spring and fall migrations; planted over 68,000 trees planted and restored more than 325 acres of land including grasslands in Missouri and Pennsylvania, wetlands in California, and forests in Vermont; reached over 6,000 people with one third of the projects targeting people of color and more than half reaching low-income communities. The progress represents crucial steps in addressing big problems – from habitat degradation to wasteful consumption – that can be solved only through concerted, long-term conservation action.

Audubon Chapters, programs, Centers, sanctuaries and even independent Audubon groups interested in receiving funding for creative, collaborative environmental projects are encouraged to apply for a 2010 TogetherGreen Innovation Grant. Applications will be available online beginning in winter 2010 at www.togethergreen.org/grants.

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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.

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. 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. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyota.com/community.