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Charlestown Woman Singled Out for Environmental Leadership Honoree Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship

New York, NY, December 1, 2008— A Charlestown, Rhode Island woman is the recipient of a new national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding potential to help shape a brighter environmental future.

Ana Flores is one of only 40 people selected from competitors nationwide for the TogetherGreen Conservation Leadership Program, part of a new conservation initiative of the National Audubon Society with support from Toyota. Fellows receive specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow will also receive \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For her fellowship, Flores will work to create programming that involves the adolescent population at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center where she is artist in residence. Flores would like to increase their engagement by designing and nurturing a more inviting habitat. She will use components of a popular series she has created called the Green Cafe, an art and environment lecture and film series which draws monthly audiences of up to 100, to model programming for the youth. Flores will begin by training a core group of ten high school students who will then design monthly events for their own age group. The students' plans will include exploring the local refuges, as well as creating monthly public programs that combine art and nature.

For over a decade, Flores has been involved with environmental groups and taught environmental art. She has developed a reputation for creating outdoor sculptural installations that encourage the public to explore their natural environment and local history. These projects include Poetry of the Wild, a community project that has traveled to various sites in Rhode Island as well as Colorado, which includes "poetry boxes;" Punctuating Place, an installation along the trail of the refuge near Kettle Pond; and the design of Depot Square Park which will include "a talking wall" that records quotes from Hope Valley, Rhode Island citizens, and historians.

"Ana is the kind of person who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future," said Audubon President John Flicker. "Each of our TogetherGreen Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come."

"Beginning with cave paintings, the earliest records of art making, artists have always addressed our fragile and ever changing relationship with nature," said Flores. "Today, with the amount of destruction happening to our ecosystems, I feel artists can no longer just document and observe from the margins – they must pair up with scientists to help bring the voice of the planet to those who are not listening. I hope to inspire people of all ages: adults, teenagers and college students to use the combined disciplines of art and science, to better understand this beautiful planet, celebrate or lament it through the arts, and ultimately imagine new, more sustainable ways to live on it."

Flores has been affiliated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service since 2006. Half of the TogetherGreen fellows come from within Audubon's far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Flores received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. In addition to her current position, she has been the coordinator of the Gaia Dialogues, a forum for discussion and collaboration between environmentalists, artists and educators in Rhode Island. She has received many honors for her art, including the Outstanding Conservation Educator Award from the Southern Conservation District of Rhode Island, a New Works Grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to establish her residency with the USFW Service, a follow up Strategy grant for creating an "innovative, creative community model" at the USFW center, and multiple grants from the Rhode Island Council on the Arts.

"Toyota believes in the power of grassroots efforts to develop the environmental leaders of tomorrow," said Patricia Salas Pineda, Group Vice President, Toyota Motor North America. "These 40 TogetherGreen Fellows will receive invaluable training for the future while immediately making a difference today with on-the-ground community projects."

A complete list of TogetherGreen fellows can be found online at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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About TogetherGreen

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year TogetherGreen initiative in spring, 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer and individual action opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. As of October, volunteer days have begun in 40, tallying in excess of 11,000 volunteer hours. Funding totaling \$1.4 million was recently awarded to innovative conservation projects nationwide, while www.TogetherGreen.org helps users take individual conservation action and share and celebrate success stories. The TogetherGreen initiative and grants programs are funded by a \$20 million Toyota gift to Audubon, the largest 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.

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 to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit <http://www.toyota.com/community>.