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Two Philadelphia-area Residents singled Out for Environmental Leadership *Honorees Receive Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowships*

New York, NY, November 19, 2009—Two Philadelphia environmental advocates are the recipients of a national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential to help shape a brighter environmental future.

Brian Byrnes of Media and Valerie Peckham of East Norriton are two of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellow. The *TogetherGreen* Fellowship offers 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 receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For his fellowship, Byrnes will lead a strategic planning process with a group of stakeholders at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. Middle Creek provides important habitat for the Tundra Swan during its migration, offering protected lakes for roosting and surrounding agricultural fields for feeding. In some years up to a quarter of the eastern population of Tundra Swans will stop at Middle Creek on their way from wintering grounds in North Carolina to breeding grounds in the Arctic. If privately held agricultural lands surrounding the refuge are lost to development, the site will likely no longer support the needs of the Tundra Swan population and this critical link in the migration pathway will be lost.

Brian is an Important Bird Area coordinator for Audubon Pennsylvania, in charge of conserving birds and bird habitat at many of southeastern Pennsylvania's natural treasures. His fellowship project will result in a strategic conservation plan that covers the full range of possible conservation actions on the site and a proposed action plan for the Middle Creek Initiative over the next two years. The plan will not only make habitat and wildlife protection at Middle Creek a priority, but will also help to invest the community in Tundra Swan conservation and lead to landscape-level success.

Peckham will use her fellowship to partner with Audubon Pennsylvania in a pilot project to help small- and medium-sized businesses curb global warming and protect wildlife. The project will combine the Philadelphia Zoo's "Footprints" sustainability platform and Audubon Pennsylvania's "Audubon at Home" program, to provide ways for individuals and businesses to reduce their impact on the planet and enhance wildlife habitat. Through sustainable gardening,

tree plantings, carbon offsets, and other green actions, Peckham will help local businesses reduce their carbon and environmental footprints.

Peckham is currently the conservation program manager of the Philadelphia Zoo. In that capacity, she oversees the Zoo's sustainability initiative and regional conservation programs, and manages a regional coalition of 12 zoos and aquariums.

“Brian and Valerie are the kind of people 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.”

“Every Pennsylvanian should experience migration at Middle Creek. The importance of protecting the site and nearby feeding grounds becomes clear after one has spent a day taking in the sights and sounds of Middle Creek during migration,” said Byrnes. “I am grateful for the support of *TogetherGreen*, which will allow me to work with a diverse group of partners to address issues that may threaten the long-term viability of Middle Creek as a premier site for migrant waterfowl.”

“Long-term protection of the planet isn't possible without a strong commitment from the business world to 'go green,' yet many companies are still grappling with sustainability and questioning the return on investment into greener practices. *TogetherGreen* is providing me with critical support needed to open a dialogue with businesses and create a program that will be a catalyst for change,” said Peckham.

Byrnes has been affiliated with Audubon Pennsylvania since 2007, and Peckham has been affiliated with the Philadelphia Zoo since 1996. Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon's far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Byrnes received a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Swarthmore College and a Master's degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Peckham received her Bachelor's degree in communications from Temple University.

A distinguished advisory committee- composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning-selected the fellowship beneficiaries from a competitive pool of scores of highly qualified individuals. Qualified applicants must have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy, or environmental issues, as demonstrated through current and past work experience, academic studies related to conservation, and/or volunteer work. Candidates must have a passion for conservation, the desire to learn and grow, and demonstrate a proven ability in reaching previously unengaged audiences.

"We must engage the best and brightest leaders representing the broadest and most diverse communities in this country to solve our ever more complex conservation challenges," said Diane Wood, President, National Environmental Education Foundation. "*TogetherGreen* is a creative program that uncovers such leaders, nurtures their talents, supports their dedication to conservation and holds them up to inspire others to follow."

A complete list of the 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellows can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. To date, 80 environmental leaders-half from within Audubon and half from outside organizations-have received *TogetherGreen* Fellowships to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

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.