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Contact:
Brenda Timm (212) 979-3198 / btimm@audubon.org
Karen LaFrance 602-809-0947 / klaf@cox.net

**Phoenix Woman Recognized for Leadership in Conservation:
*Honoree Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship***

New York, NY, November 19, 2009-A Phoenix, Arizona woman is the recipient of a national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential in conservation fields.

Karen LaFrance is one of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellow. The *TogetherGreen* Fellowship, sponsored by National Audubon Society with Toyota, offers specialized training in conservation planning, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 to facilitate a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy.

LaFrance is the Vice President of the Sonoran Audubon Society in Glendale, Arizona where she has been active since 2004 and is responsible for strategic conservation planning, grant writing and contracts.

For her fellowship, Karen will organize and hold a Leadership Development Summit with Arizona's nine Audubon groups which are based in the Phoenix Metro Area, Tucson, Sierra Vista, Prescott, Flagstaff, the White Mountains and Yuma. This meeting will help other chapters improve their conservation efforts through collaborative community involvement methods and nonprofit strategic planning, operational and management best practices.

Over the long term, the project will support a network of Audubon leaders in Arizona who are concerned for the staying power of their Audubon groups to engage new and diverse audiences and to help protect key wildlife or bird habitat and water resources.

"The Audubon Chapters in our state, with their long history of enthusiasm for birds and their interest in preserving natural habitat, are a backbone of conservation efforts here. Their volunteer leaders have said that they want to prepare their organizations to carry on into the future and to engage actively in conservation efforts that make a difference," said LaFrance.

LaFrance has degrees from Mount Holyoke College and the University of Nebraska, and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Pittsburgh. She has had a career in private sector neighborhood economic development with an emphasis on nonprofit start up and management.

“Karen 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 conservation understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership communities will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come.”

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 education or policy 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.

Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon’s far-reaching national network of State offices and local Audubon chapters and half channel their conservation efforts through other organizations.

"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.