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Two Alaskan Women Singled Out for Environmental Leadership *Honorees Receive Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowships*

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

Amanda Smith of Anchorage and Mary Walker of Fairbanks 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 her fellowship, Smith will bring youth involved Alaska Geographic and the U.S. Forest Service Chugach Children's Forest expeditions together for a leadership and action summit. The purpose of the gathering will be to support and inspire youth to directly involve their communities in conservation and protection of Prince William Sound and areas within the Chugach National Forest, specifically finding local solutions to climate change. The goal of the project is to encourage young people to put their experiences to work for conservation and build future stewards of Alaska's public lands!

Smith currently works in education and development for Alaska Geographic. In that capacity, she collaborates with the Chugach National Forest to drive volunteer and education initiatives, including teacher trainings, a youth managed forest, and youth media expeditions, as well as works to engage underserved youth with climate change research and management of public lands.

Walker will focus her fellowship project around creating a collaborative green collar job program between Alaska Interfaith Power and Light and the Christian-based Fairbanks Rescue Mission homeless shelter. The result will be the establishment of Fairbanks' one – and only – recycling center, as well as engaging communities of faith in environmental stewardship. Mission residents will operate the Recycling Center, providing both a desirable community service and a very important sense of accomplishment to those who are seeking a hand-up rather than a handout.

Walker is the project coordinator for Alaska Interfaith Power and Light, where she leads advocacy efforts, organizes outreach, and works to provide communities of faith with the tools

they need to implement environmental stewardship solutions.

“Amanda and Mary 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.”

“Alaska’s youth are seeing the effects of climate change first. Spread out across Prince William Sound, youth of the Chugach Children’s Forest programs are concerned and are leading local solutions to climate change. Funding and support from TogetherGreen will bring young ideas and perspectives and will inspire action to preserve Alaska’s wild places,” said Smith.

“The FRM Recycling Center is a win-win-win project, bridging both social and environmental causes. The Center provides a valuable stewardship service to the community, saves the Borough money by diverting trash from the landfill and provides a sense of accomplishment to vulnerable members of the Fairbanks community. *TogetherGreen* will help raise the community’s awareness about both the importance of recycling and about interacting with others who are less fortunate,” said Walker.

Smith has been affiliated with Alaska Geographic since 2008, and Walker has been affiliated with Alaska Interfaith Power and Light since 2007. Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon’s far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Smith received her Masters degree in business administration from Georgetown University. Walker received her Masters degree in conservation social science from the University of Idaho – Moscow. Dedicated conservationists, Smith previously worked for the US Forest Service and Walker for the Tucson Audubon Society.

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.