

**For Immediate Release**

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**VOLUNTEERS FROM COAST TO COAST WILL  
LEND A HAND TO AMERICA'S LANDS  
ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY**

**Thousands Expected at Hundreds of Sites in U.S.**

**Toyota Signs On as National Sponsor for Sixth Consecutive Year**

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 2, 2004 – Imagine a single day when Americans volunteer to spruce up the Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, one of the country's best known and most heavily visited urban parks; dedicate their free time to preserving the symbol of the New World's ideals, the National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth, MA; and work to enhance the beauty and message of the World Peace Rose Garden at the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site in Atlanta.

That day will be the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 18, 2004, when thousands of Americans will take part in those and hundreds of other activities coast to coast. In what has become the largest volunteer hands-on effort of its kind in the country, the participants will lend a hand to the very lands they use to hike, bike, climb, swim, explore, picnic, or just plain relax.

At Rocky Mountain National Park, volunteers will build a footbridge along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and construct two miles of new trails amid the park's 12,000-foot mountain peaks. Near Chicago at America's first federally designated tall grass prairie, 5,000 formerly restricted acres of the prairie will be opened for clean-up and trail work. Volunteers will gather seeds that will be cleaned and planted next spring to restore the prairie and enhance its native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Whether it's testing the water quality at Homestead National Monument in Nebraska, restoring dunes along the New River in Oregon, or cleaning up the shoreline of Beaver Lake in Arkansas, Americans will be doing work on their public lands that otherwise might never be accomplished. In the process, they'll be preserving and protecting their favorite public places for themselves and future generations. They'll also be gaining the physical exercise that comes from a day full of cleaning up, clearing, and construction activity.

Sponsored for the sixth consecutive year by Toyota Motor Sales USA, National Public Lands Day is just one of many ways in which Toyota has demonstrated an environmental record unmatched in the corporate world. The company created the world's first mass-produced, clean-running gas/electric hybrid car, the Prius, which has received numerous environmental awards, most notably from the Sierra Club and National Wildlife Federation. On last year's National Public Lands Day, nearly 2,200 Toyota employees pitched in to restore and revitalize public lands at 24 sites across America.

One of every three acres of land in the U.S. – 600 million acres in all – belongs to the American people. Since 1994, National Public Lands Day has dramatically and increasingly demonstrated Americans’ concern for their lands. The first event was sponsored by three federal agencies and attracted 700 volunteers to three sites. Last year, nearly 80,000 volunteers, their community partners, and numerous federal, state and local agencies contributed \$10 million in improvements at 550 public parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, forests and grasslands, marine sanctuaries, lakes and reservoirs. The workers built or refurbished 500 miles of trails, constructed 60 bridges and 100 other structures, planted 6,600 trees and 15,200 other plants, cleared nearly 60,000 pounds of invasive plants, and removed close to 2 million pounds of trash.

“From east to west, north to south, thousands of volunteers help preserve and protect America’s natural treasures on National Public Lands Day,” said Patti Pride, director of National Public Lands Day. “The increasing number of Americans joining this effort every year is impressive. It shows just how committed the American public is to caring for the lands they cherish and enjoy.”

Federal agency sponsors of NPLD are US Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, and USDA Forest Service. Others include numerous state and local agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations such as the National Parks Conservation Association, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Boy Scouts of America, and Girl Scouts of the USA.

By educating volunteers at work sites across the country, National Public Lands Day maintains the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps, an army of 3 million Americans who in the 1930’s countered the devastation of the Dust Bowl and the American chestnut blight by planting more than 3 billion trees, building bridges and state parks, and fighting forest fires.

For more information, including a list of National Public Lands Day sites, activities, contacts, and downloadable photos, go to [www.npld.com](http://www.npld.com), or call 800-VOL-TEER (800-865-8337).

National Public Lands Day is managed by the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation. Chartered by Congress in 1990, NEETF is a private nonprofit organization that develops and supports environmental learning programs to meet social goals and builds partnerships among government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.