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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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10 High School Students Win Wildlife Conservation Grants

Projects will focus on community education and preservation of local species

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Ten high school students with innovative ideas for protecting wildlife in their communities have been awarded \$1,000 to fund their projects and summer internships.

Planet Connect, a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) created in partnership with The Weather Channel, selected the 10 grantees from a pool of impressive student-submitted proposals to help protect wildlife and educate their classmates, schools and communities about conservation issues.

Grantees will spend the next two months completing their projects with \$500 in funds from the grant program. During the summer, Planet Connect will help them find internships in wildlife conservation with organizations in their communities and offer a \$500 stipend.

“The drive of these outstanding students to bring creativity and focus to solving challenges in their own backyards is inspiring to us as an organization and to their peers who can learn from their experience, said Diane Wood, NEEF president. “We are proud to partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to engage youth in hands-on environmental learning that we hope will help expand their awareness about careers in wildlife conservation and natural resources.”

“We are excited to give our support to these creative student initiatives that will not only impact specific wildlife and habitat issues in their communities,” said Georgia Jeppesen, Branch Chief for Education and Outreach Career Awareness at U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, “but will also help to sustain a new generation of conservationists.”

Planet Connect (www.planet-connect.org), created in partnership with The Weather Channel, offers environmentally minded teens job and volunteer opportunities, information on careers and universities and social networking capabilities allowing them to share success stories and environmental tips with peers around the country and the world.

Each student project will be highlighted later this spring.

Planet Connect 2011 grantees:

Alex Hall, Gastonia, N.C.

Tree, brush planting project to increase lake shoreline habitat

Kevin Heller, Leavittsburg, Ohio

Education campaign to conserve frog habitats

Madeline McAlister, Lincoln, Neb.

Community stray/wild dog education and management campaign

Devin Moss, Kent, Wash.

Honeybee habitat development and education campaign

Marlow Rumreich, Indianapolis, Ind.

"Honeybee kits" education campaign

Courtney Scott, Stone Mountain, Ga.

Tree planting campaign

Montana Sewell, Gainesville, Fla.

"Turtle Talk" education effort

Jessica Sosa, Los Angeles, Calif.

School native garden education and construction project

Cambria Wells, Westlake Village, Calif.

Pacific seahorse educational exhibit creation, education effort

Jacob Wiener, Goleta, Calif.

Shark conservation educational presentation

To learn more about the student projects, visit <http://planet-connect.org/2011grantwinners>. To contact individual grant winners, contact Jennifer Tabola, jtabola@neefusa.org.

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THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) provides knowledge to trusted professionals who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Together, we generate lasting positive change.

NEEF partners with professionals in health, education, media, business and public land management to promote daily actions for helping people protect and enjoy the environment. Through our primary programs -- Classroom Earth, National Public Lands Day, National Environmental Education Week, Business and Environment, Earth Gauge® and Health & Environment -- we offer Americans knowledge to live by. To learn more, visit www.neefusa.org.

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