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Volunteer Project at Martin Luther King Jr. Site to Mark National Public Lands Day
Event will join more than 2,100 volunteer projects nationwide this Saturday

ATLANTA— Volunteers from the Atlanta area will join more than 130,000 people around the country celebrating and improving the nation's public lands at a service project near the birth home of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

The event, held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site on Saturday, September 26, is one of more than 2,100 such projects taking place around the country to mark National Public Lands Day (NPLD), a project of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

National Public Lands Day is now in its 16th year. It annually draws tens of thousands of volunteers whose one-day efforts equate more than \$14 million in improvements to America's public lands. It is sponsored nationally by Toyota Motor Corp. USA Inc.

This year, with a renewed focus on service, NPLD is poised to have its largest year ever, drawing an expected 130,000 volunteers.

"More than just places of great beauty, public lands can also be of great historical importance," said Robb Hampton, director of National Public Lands Day. "We're thrilled to have the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site as one of our four signature sites around the country. The efforts of volunteers restore and beautify this site help preserve its legacy."

Volunteers at the site, which is a unit of the National Park Service, will undertake a number of projects, including helping to restore historic houses near the King Birth Home, as well as weeding, mulching and planting around the site.

"We are excited to participate in a National Public Lands Day event and welcome community volunteers and others to help preserve the legacy of Dr. King by undertaking these significant projects which ultimately benefit a greater good," said Judy Forte, superintendent of the site. "Their contribution of time, energy, and resources set a classic example of an applied principal used by Dr. King, whose life was defined by unselfish service to others."

The event coincides with the release of Ken Burns' new documentary, "America's Best Idea," a film celebrating national parks, which will be premiering on PBS on Sunday, Sept. 27, 2009.

Excerpts from the documentary will be shown throughout the day at the site's Visitor Center. Additionally, the event trails a week-long national conference held in the city, "Breaking the Color Barrier in the Great American Outdoors," designed to better engage people of color in public land stewardship and enjoyment. A number of conference attendees will participate in the National Public Lands Day service project Saturday.

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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, call (202) 833-2933 or visit www.neefusa.org.