



For Immediate Release
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National Public Lands Day Draws Record Numbers of Volunteers Coast to Coast; Improvements Top \$15 million for One-Day Effort

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Administration leaders, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, college students, conservation networks, neighbors and corporate groups made up a volunteer force of more than 170,000 this weekend who pitched in for the 17th annual National Public Lands Day.

A program of the National Environmental Education Foundation, NPLD brought together volunteers who contributed time and improvements worth more than \$15 million to America's public lands in just one day on Saturday.

They were joined by EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley, among others, as they took part in tree plantings, litter pick ups, trail improvements and other projects to improve America's public lands. In all, eight federal agencies were partners.

In a proclamation read first by Administrator Jackson at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens in Washington, D.C., President Barack Obama wrote, "taking care of public lands is and must continue to be a proud American tradition...I encourage all Americans to give their time and energy to care for – and to go out and enjoy – America's public lands."

Those who gave their time and energy were at the heart of NPLD, said Robb Hampton, the program's director.

"The volunteers who come out year after year make this event what it is," Hampton said. "And this year, with more helping hands than ever, I can say confidently that we had our best National Public Lands Day yet. We're grateful to Toyota Motor Sales USA for their sponsorship and participation. We are grateful to our volunteers, our special guests, our land managers at the 2,000 sites across the country and look forward to an even bigger NPLD in 2011."

Among the highlights from around the country:

- Administrator Jackson and Chair Sutley, flanked by Girl Scouts, who took turns reading a proclamation from President Barack Obama announcing September 25 as "National Public Lands Day" and planting trees at an event in Washington, D.C.
- Secretary Salazar planting marsh grass on mud flats at a site in Louisiana affected by the Gulf oil spill and Hurricane Katrina.
- A fee-free day in federally managed lands across the country that, in some sites, marked the highest park usage of the year.

- A record turnout of volunteers from youth groups, local universities and neighborhood coalitions in Atlanta helping to make improvements to the historical site that was the childhood home of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Hundreds of volunteers cutting brush and working seed beds with U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell at Illinois' Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.
- Employees of Toyota Motor Sales USA volunteering at 39 sites around the country.
- Families touring a newly completed ADA-accessible trail and learning about the impact of climate change at Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center in Alaska after helping with planting and other improvements at the site.

"An important feature this year was our focus on the importance of time in nature for children," said Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation. "We saw many more children and their families, not only volunteering, but learning about wildlife and recreational opportunities on our public lands so they'll come back throughout the year. We're proud of them and all of our volunteers and the difference they made for America's lands this weekend."

National Public Lands Day is sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales USA for the 12th consecutive year.

"Toyota has been proud to sponsor National Public Lands Day each year for the past 12 years and to see it grow into the largest one-day outdoor volunteer event in the United States," said Michael Rouse, Toyota's vice president of philanthropy and community affairs. "Our employees were thrilled to be part of this effort with so many thousands of volunteers. They made a lasting and positive impact on our public lands."

Videos, photos and quotes from participants will be available throughout the week. Contact Dan Seligson at dseligson@neefusa.org for more information on National Public Lands Day 2010.

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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.

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programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyota.com/about/philanthropy.