



For Immediate Release
September 28, 2009

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National Public Lands Day Draws Over 150,000 Volunteers Coast to Coast
President Obama praises 'collective effort to conserve our nation's unique landscapes'

WASHINGTON, D.C. – America's largest one-day outdoor volunteer service event enjoyed a record-breaking day on Saturday, with more than 150,000 volunteers working coast to coast to improve America's public lands.

National Public Lands Day, a project of the National Environmental Education Foundation, drew volunteers to sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories for projects that included tree planting and weeding, garbage removal, trail renovation and mulching. Sites ranged from iconic national parks including Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon to neighborhood parks in New York City.

The record turnout for the event – now in its 16th year – can be attributed in part to the Administration's emphasis on service and a growing recognition of the importance of public lands for recreation, travel, rejuvenation and health.

President Barack Obama issued a proclamation, calling National Public Lands Day a time to "affirm our resolve to conserve...cherished spaces for our enjoyment and for that of future generations."

"Committed individuals, including participants from schools and universities, private businesses, nonprofit organizations and government agencies, are continuing the American tradition of stewardship through their service," Obama wrote.

While final tallies are still coming in, more than 2,000 sites hosted nearly 2,600 projects. The value of the volunteer labor force is estimated at \$16.5 million.

"Our volunteers made a significant contribution to the nation," said Robb Hampton, director of National Public Lands Day. "They made a huge positive difference on Saturday, beautifying, cleaning and restoring public lands all across the country and beyond and came out in record numbers, exceeding our expectations. They should be proud of their efforts. Their communities will benefit from their service."

Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. sponsored the event nationally for the 11th consecutive year. Employees from the company also volunteered, helping to rebuild trails, remove debris and plant trees.

Administration and other government officials participating in National Public Lands Day included U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, US Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Nancy Sutley, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and David Hayes, deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Some highlights from around the country:

- More than 200 volunteers, including high school and college students donned hip waders and boarded rowboats to clear lotus plants at Washington, D.C.'s Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens.
- Volunteers at Angeles National Forest in California cleaned trash along a creek bed near an area ravaged by the Station Fire just weeks ago.
- Atlanta-area Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, participants in the national Earth Wise "Breaking the Color

Barrier” conference along with local residents helped rehabilitate and landscape houses adjacent to the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.’s birth home.

- A hundred volunteers helped maintain trails and plant trees at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument in Cougar, Wash. [Click here](#) for coverage from *The Oregonian*.
- In Florida, volunteers spent more than four hours removing non-native invasive plant species at Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. [Click here](#) for a *Palm Beach Post* photo spread.
- Sparing trees damage from beavers was one volunteer project at the Great Falls, Mont. Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Protective fences installed around trees should stave off more damage, volunteers told *KFBB-TV*.
- Boy Scouts from Virginia cleaned 50 pounds of trash in less than an hour at a road running adjacent to the Antietam Battlefield in Maryland.

President Obama’s full proclamation is available at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-National-Public-Lands-Recognition-Day/

Videos, photos and a selection of national media coverage are now available at: www.publiclandsday.org. Results of a photo and video contest for the day will be announced on November xx.

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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.