

Forty-One Innovative Environmental Projects Win Over \$1 Million in Funding from Audubon and Toyota

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New York, August 2, 2012 – Toyota and the National Audubon Society today awarded over \$1 million in *TogetherGreen* Innovation Grants funding to 41 innovative environmental projects nationwide. This year's winning projects involve more than 150 conservation, environmental justice and community organizations working collaboratively on habitat, water and energy conservation. Many of the projects focus on engaging audiences that have traditionally been underrepresented in the conservation movement, from landowners to religious communities to inner-city students.

"Groups that won Innovation Grants this year have ingenuity and creativity on full display. And that's what it takes to tackle the environmental challenges we face today," said Audubon President and CEO David Yarnold. "I'm proud to partner with these innovators in creative approaches to achieve healthier communities and big conservation results."

Sample projects that will receive 2012 funding include:

- **Habitat:** In Connecticut, Audubon Connecticut and the Connecticut Student Conservation Association will create Audubon WildLife Guards, a Coastal Stewardship and Youth Conservation Training Program in Bridgeport, Conn. The program will provide green job training, mentoring and employment opportunities for high school students who will work to protect threatened beach nesting birds on Pleasure Beach, the largest intact barrier beach in the state.
- **Water:** In Kansas, Friends of the Kaw, Inc., along with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Topeka Audubon Society and Jayhawk Audubon Society will launch the "Save Soldier Creek" campaign to minimize stormwater runoff in the rural Soldier Creek watershed – reducing pollution and improving water quality and bird habitat).
- **Energy:** In Arizona, Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center and Arizona Interfaith Power & Light will broaden its Footprints of Faith campaign to African American and Latino churches in Phoenix and Tucson promoting steps congregations can take to reduce their carbon footprints.
- **Engaging diverse audiences in conservation:** In North Carolina, Wild South and its partners North Carolina Audubon Society, High Country Audubon Society, National Forests of NC and the Western North Carolina Alliance will reach out to military servicemen and women and nearby Asheville residents to involve them in controlling non-native invasive plants, monitoring bird populations, and educating the public on environmental issues. The goal of the project is to preserve the wilderness character and rare species habitat of the Linville Gorge Wilderness, one of the most rugged and scenic areas in the East.

"Toyota and Audubon really share in the belief that environmental change starts at the grassroots level," said Patricia Salas Pineda, group vice president of national philanthropy and the Toyota USA Foundation. "We're so proud to support this year's Innovation Grants, which embody *TogetherGreen*'s commitment to conservation, innovation and diversity."

For more details about the 2012 Audubon & Toyota TogetherGreen Innovation Grants projects, visit:
www.togethergreen.org/grants.