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PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR NATION'S LARGEST PUBLIC LANDS VOLUNTEER EVENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Where are there public trails in disrepair? Where should signs be installed, non-native invasive plants removed? Across the country, volunteer groups are taking a look at public parks, trails and historic sites, to determine what they can contribute on National Public Lands Day. On September 29, 2001, tens of thousands of people in all 50 states will join the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) and National sponsor Toyota to pitch in for one of the largest one-day volunteer restoration events for public lands ever held.

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) 2001 will focus on “Keeping the Promise” by asking Americans to join together to improve the nation’s largest resource, and to honor the work and sacrifice of the members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the unsung heroes who built over 800 of America’s national and state parks. The 3.5 million CCC members planted almost 4 billion trees, built parks, roads, hiking trails, and laid the interstate telephone lines that became the basis for the internet.

“National Public Lands Day volunteers are carrying on the great tradition of the men and women who were part of ‘Roosevelt’s Tree Army,’” said Colette Silvestri, a spokesperson for the National Association of Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni. “National Public Lands Day reminds the nation of what they accomplished, and allows us to pass to torch to a new generation.”

National Public Lands Day, now in its eighth year, is coordinated by the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF).

Partners for National Public Lands Day include The Garden Club of America; the Boys and Girls Clubs of America; the League of Women Voters; The Boy Scouts of America; The Girl Scouts of America; the American Hiking Society; Chicago Wilderness; Public Lands Foundation; Keep America Beautiful; nine federal agencies, and many more. For the third consecutive year, Toyota is the National sponsor of National Public Lands Day.

“It has grown significantly,” said Kevin Coyle, president of NEETF. “Last year, nearly 50,000 volunteers and community partners contributed almost \$8 million of improvements to 277 public land sites across the country. Because of their efforts, public lands visitors can enjoy trails, bridges, wildlife habitats and other amenities that would not have been put in place without the volunteers who turned out last year for National Public Lands Day.” This year, NPLD volunteers will conduct restoration projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Those interested in volunteering for NPLD can log onto www.npld.com and click on the map of their state for information on local restoration sites. You can also call 1-800-VOL-TEER (865-8337) for more information.

The National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, chartered by Congress in 1990, focuses on environmental learning as a solution to critical challenges in natural resource management, business, health care and education. NEETF initiates public/private partnerships in its mission to support environmental learning programs that will result in an environmentally knowledgeable public, environmentally competent professionals nationwide and environmentally capable leaders and policy-makers.

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