

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Michael Stout, 504-862-2554

September 2, 2003

## **Volunteers invited to participate in National Public Lands Day**

**NEW ORLEANS** – Volunteers are invited to participate in national Public Lands Day co-sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, and Toyota Motor Sales USA. The event will take place Saturday, September 20 at three locations within the New Orleans District: Bonnet Carré Spillway in Norco, Atchafalaya Basin at Bayou Fordoche, and the Old River Lock in Torras.

On Saturday, September 20, 2003, three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects along with 500 other sites throughout the U.S. the largest annual grassroots volunteer activity in the country will take place – National Public Lands Day. This, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual effort will once again give volunteers an opportunity to lend a hand to our special, one-of-a-kind natural resources – the national parks, monuments, wildlife refuges, forests, grasslands, marine sanctuaries, lakes and reservoirs belonging to and enjoyed by all of us.

Last year, 70,000 volunteers nationally took part. They planted 11,000 trees, shrubs, and flowers, collected 700 tons of trash, built or refurbished 78 miles of trail, and installed or painted 400 bird houses. In all, more than \$8 million in real work was finished.

The effort is directed by The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF). Chartered by Congress in 1990, NEETF is a private non-profit organization that develops and supports environmental learning programs to meet social goals and builds partnerships among the private sector, government and non-governmental organizations.

Hunters, fishers, cyclists, hikers, equestrians, Boy and Girl Scouts, students and other public land users are welcome to volunteer at one of the three work projects that the New Orleans District is hosting.

Within the Atchafalaya Basin, volunteers will assist with trash pickup in Bayou Fordoche and Lake Henderson. Volunteers should meet at the Courtableau Structure for 8 am to collect trash by boat from the waterways. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers vessels and vehicles will be on hand to transport the collected trash to collection dumpsters. For

more information, contact U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Park Ranger Dan Sammon at (337) 585-0853.

At the Bonnet Carré Spillway, volunteers will assist in trash cleanup along the recently constructed mountain bike and multi-use trail. Volunteers should meet at the trailhead near the Bonnet Carré boat launch and pavilion. For more information, contact U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Park Ranger Greg Malon at (985) 764-0126.

At the Old River Lock, volunteers will assist with the planting of fall wildlife food plots and the annual cleaning of wood duck boxes. Volunteers should meet at the camping and parking area on the north side of the lock on LA-15. For more information, contact Natural Resources Manager Michael Saucier at the New Orleans District office at (504) 862-2525.

Trash bags, gloves, and refreshments will be served at all locations. For **directions** and information on the Corps recreation program, visit [www.mvn.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil), click on Recreation, Recreation Sites. For more information on National Public Lands Day, activities, contacts, and downloadable photos from past events see [www.npld.com](http://www.npld.com).