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Contacts: Claudia Kessel, 202-261-6478
Sarah Goldberg, 301-887-1060
npldmedia@kelleycampaigns.com

This fall, Volunteers will make a splash for National Public Lands Day

On September at locations across the country over 130,000 volunteers will celebrate National Public Lands Day

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 8, 2009 – Americans of all ages will roll up their pant legs, slip into swimsuits, pull on their waders and climb into boats to help clean up and improve waterways, lakes and ponds, recreation areas, and wildlife refuges this September 26 as part of National Public Lands Day.

Healthy water resources are vital to public lands, and this year opportunities abound to help protect and preserve America's outdoors. Volunteers will walk along the shoreline of their favorite beach or wade the shallows removing unwanted items that clutter the beauty of our favorite areas. National Public Lands Day is an opportunity to become a scientist for a day, testing for water quality, or planting native vegetation along a river or stream to boost wildlife habitat and prevent soil erosion.

Families will gather, communities will rally, and people will eagerly participate in one of this nation's most popular and enjoyable outdoor volunteer events. National Public Lands Day 2009 will continue the event's proud 16-year tradition of encouraging and organizing volunteers to preserve, protect and enhance our nation's public lands.

With the new administration's compelling call for Americans to participate in meaningful public service, this event will be a premier opportunity for volunteers to actively improve the nation's public resources.

"National Public Lands Day has grown dramatically since beginning in 1994," said Robb Hampton, program director of the annual event. "That first year we had 700 volunteers at a handful of public land sites. This year we're expecting more than 130,000 volunteers at about 2,000 locations in all fifty states. We want all of our volunteers to have fun in the outdoors while performing important service to their country and community."

National Public Lands Day is now the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to enhance the public lands that all Americans enjoy. In 2008, 120,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, removed trash and planted over 1.6 million trees at sites throughout the country. This year's celebration will bring together more volunteers at a larger number of sites to make the 16th National Public Lands Day the most successful yet.

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National Public Lands Day is a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation. The primary sponsor for National Public Lands Days is Toyota Motor Sales, and 2009 marks the 11th straight year the auto-maker has sponsored this event. We have information about National Public Lands Day, and photos of the sites and stories of volunteers who participated in previous years. For more information, visit www.publiclandsday.org.

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.