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Coast to Coast Volunteer Projects Mark National Public Lands Day on September 26
Among projects include parks damaged by wildfires and cultural and historical landmarks

WASHINGTON, D.C. –On Saturday, September 26, more than 100,000 Americans will offer their services at an estimated 2,300 projects across the country during National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest one-day outdoor volunteer effort.

Among those projects will be four featured sites government. Private industry and nonprofit leaders will offer remarks to mark the day.

Now in its 16th year, National Public Lands Day draws tens of thousands of volunteers to sites across the country. A renewed emphasis on service and community involvement prompted by President Obama's **United We Serve** initiative is expected to drive record turnout with 130,000 volunteers expected at sites in 2009. National Public Lands Day is a project of the National Environmental Education Foundation and sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.

"This is our biggest year yet for National Public Lands Day," said Robb Hampton, director of the program. "Interest in volunteering is surging. We have more projects than ever, and an exciting lineup of activities and speakers at our four signature sites."

Four signature sites across the country include a National Park ravaged by a wildfire in need of clean up; an urban oasis in one of America's most beautiful cities; the birth home of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and America's front yard, the National Mall.

Each will draw dignitaries and volunteers, alike, as they work to improve and preserve America's treasured public spaces.

- **Angeles National Forest, Los Angeles County, Calif.**

Just a week after firefighters extinguished nearly all of the Station Fire that burned more than 160,000 acres of land in Angeles National Forest, volunteers will work with crews to rehabilitate trails, recreation sites and riparian areas and clear rubbish while learning about fire management in the Big Tujunga Canyon.

Tom Tidwell, chief of the U.S. Forest Service will be on hand, as well as Hiroshi Mazawa, vice president, Technical Administration and Planning Office, Toyota Technical Center.

After spending the morning on work projects around the area, volunteers will have an opportunity to take a guided hike through the recently burned area, learn more about the Station Fire and hear about recovery efforts underway.

- **Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, Calif.**

The annual tradition of projects at this beautiful urban park will take on more importance as part of the **United We Serve** initiative. Volunteers will have a number of opportunities to choose from

at the park to suit their interests and abilities, including habitat restoration, vegetation management and grounds and trail maintenance. Over 400 volunteers are expected at locations throughout the park.

The Ken Burns' documentary, "America's Best Idea," will premiere the day after National Public Lands Day, on Sunday, September 27. As part of the nationwide celebration, a preview of the documentary will be aired during an opening ceremony at 9 a.m. on National Public Lands Day.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Atlanta, Ga.**

Volunteers at the site will undertake a number of projects, including helping to restore historic houses adjacent to the King property as well as weeding, mulching and planting around the site.

The event will coincide with the conclusion of a national conference, "Breaking the Color Barrier in the Great American Outdoors" held in Atlanta. Speakers at opening ceremonies before the volunteer projects include Jody Forte, superintendent of the National Park Service and Arthur Gibson, board chair of the National Environmental Education Foundation and vice president of Environment, Health and Safety for Baxter Healthcare.

- **The National Mall, Washington, D.C.**

A kick-off event for a number of projects in the D.C. area will be held at the historic Watergate Steps, next to the Potomac River and near the Lincoln Memorial. Volunteers at the site will prune trees, clear invasive plant species, remove trash and help to create mulch that will be used throughout the National Mall.

Dignitaries from government agencies, private industry and the White House include: Dan Wenk, acting director of the National Park Service, David Hayes, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Nancy Sutley, chair of The White House Council on Environmental Quality, Michael Rouse and vice president, Philanthropy and Community Affairs for Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.

As part of the celebration, free entrance will be granted to all 391 National Parks on Saturday, September 26.

National Public Lands Day was established in 1994 to carry on the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program to revive communities and create opportunities for employment following the Great Depression. The event is a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

For more information about National Public Lands Day and to locate a volunteer project in your area, please visit www.publiclandsday.org.

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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.

