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National Grant Funds Environmental Education to Rio Grande Tribes

Small Grant Hopes to Lay the Groundwork for Big Result – Saving the Rio Grande

One of 48 *TogetherGreen* national innovation grants will power new efforts to preserve the development-threatened Rio Grande River Basin through education, active engagement, and alliances between environmental groups and New Mexico Tribes. Audubon New Mexico, Randall Davey Audubon Center, and the New Mexico Tribes will team up to provide educational programs focused on the importance of conserving the Rio Grande not only to students, but also to tribal members and administrators—with the goal of keeping the Rio Grande safe now and for future generations.

The \$4,400 grant will provide students and tribe members—many of whom live near the river and are first water rights users— with environmental education through the Randall Davey Audubon Center. Participants will learn the importance of conserving the Rio Grande, focusing specifically on birds and threatened habitats. The project also plans to work directly with teachers and tribal officials regarding educational programs and to help alert them to the threats that may be affecting the third largest river in the Nation.

“Exploring stronger partnerships with tribal stewards along the Rio Grande through this planning grant offers Audubon New Mexico the potential to further protect and restore this New Mexico treasure collaboratively,” said Karyn Stockdale, Vice President and Executive Director of Audubon New Mexico. “Incredible bird and wildlife habitat along the Rio Grande has been improved through the efforts of tribal land managers and we hope to integrate Audubon's education programs with these tribal initiatives to increase future opportunities for conservation.”

As Audubon New Mexico and New Mexico Tribes collaborate on issues

threatening the Rio Grande, this initiative will build on efforts to preserve the river while looking to expand these efforts in the future.

The Audubon New Mexico innovation grant is part of \$1.1 million awarded by the *TogetherGreen* initiative this year. Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. Grantees were selected from scores of applicants across America. Funds were awarded to Audubon organizations that demonstrated exceptional innovation in working with other groups on projects that will produce tangible benefits for environmental quality.

“The real innovation here is making sure every member of the community is involved in environmental protection. Individual actions will add up to big results for the wildlife and people along the Rio Grande,” added *TogetherGreen* Project Manager Judy Braus.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. Nearly 90 projects totaling more than \$2.5 million dollars have received Innovation Grants to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

About Audubon

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world. To learn more, visit www.audubon.org

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyota.com/community.