

Dust Off Your Gloves: It's National Public Lands Day

September 25, 2017

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Nationwide – Sept. 25, 2017 – From national parks to urban trails, to local playgrounds and wildlife refuges, hundreds of thousands of volunteers will descend on public lands across the nation on Saturday, September 30 to participate in National Public Lands Day (NPLD) – the country’s largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands. Volunteer sites and information about the day can be found at NEEFusa.org/NPLD.

Organized by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), NPLD, now in its 24th year, is a fee-free day for all federal public lands across America and many state parks. The event encourages people of all walks of life, families and neighbors, to work side-by-side to give back to public lands, with activities ranging from trail maintenance, to planting, to trash pick-up and more. The day also features hikes, bike rides, festivals, paddling excursions and other fun activities.

“National Public Lands Day connects people to public lands in their community, inspires environmental stewardship and encourages use of public lands for education, recreation and general health,” says Diane Wood, president of NEEF. “A wonderful thing about the day is that it often draws people out to nearby public lands for the first time, and helps them discover a wonderful green space they can return to and enjoy throughout the year.”

For the 19th consecutive year, Toyota is the national corporate sponsor of NPLD. In addition to financial backing for the program, Toyota hosts more than 30 events at sites across the nation for employees, ranging from Oak Point Nature Preserve in Texas to Tombigbee State Park in Mississippi and The Leslie Science and Nature Center in Michigan.

“These events help build a connection with the environment and the public lands we all cherish, trying into our own challenge to ourselves to create a net positive impact on the planet by 2050,” said Kevin Butt general manager of environmental sustainability, Toyota Motor North America. “While each of us can make a difference in our neighborhood parks, together, through our combined efforts, we can have a larger impact on our public lands across the country.”

According to Wood, Toyota’s exceptional support of National Public Lands Day serves as a prime example of how a strong, sustained public private partnership can translate into millions of taxpayer dollars saved. In 2016, a record 200,000+ volunteers at more than 2,600+ sites across the country contributed an estimated \$18.5 million in volunteer services.

In addition to Toyota, NEEF’s NPLD federal partners—the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense (DOD), the Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation—along with hundreds of state and local partners are set to host events in every state of the Union.

To encourage people to join the celebration, National Public Lands Day is a fee-free day for all federal public lands across America and many state parks. Everyone who attends an NPLD event at a federal land site gets a coupon good for free entry to any public land managed by one of the federal partners any time before NPLD 2018. Here’s just a sample of what you’ll find throughout the country:

- The U.S. Forest Service is teaming up with the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (BCRP) and several other partners to install pollinator gardens in Baltimore City Parks. The project aims to rejuvenate the city’s dwindling bee population while encouraging environmental stewardship and promoting outdoor engagement.
- In Northeast Los Angeles, youth soccer players will give back to the park they spend so much time enjoying when The City Project joins Anahuak Youth Sports Association and others to host a bilingual,

multi-cultural event in Río de Los Angeles State Park. Local youth, their families, friends and other volunteers will clean up the 40-acre park and enjoy a variety of educational workshops and other fun activities.

- The DoD is inviting families stationed at Ft. Meade, students who attend school at the installation, and military personnel to help with existing storm water infiltration practices. Volunteers will spend the morning weeding and pruning overgrown vegetation, removing invasive species, and replacing them with trees, shrubs and grasses that are native to the area and help filter rainwater.

The public is encouraged to follow and participate in the environmental stewardship conversation on social media using the hashtags ‘#NPLD’ and ‘#WhyICare’. Participants can also join the celebration online by showing their support on Facebook with a National Public Lands Day [profile frame](#).