

Helping a Friend in NEEF

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Washington, DC (August 6, 2014) – Thirty five nonprofit organizations nationwide will share in more than \$150,000 in capacity building grants to help support public lands. The Public Lands Program of the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) provided the grants thanks to a partnership with Toyota.

“It is often difficult to raise funds for strategic planning, communications and technology upgrades, but these activities are vital to the growth and engagement of Friends Groups,” said Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation.

With stretched budgets and limited staff, land managers at federal, state and local public lands need all the help they can get. That help often comes from nonprofit organizations, often called Friends Groups, whose missions are focused on serving public land sites in the nation and the improvement and responsible use of those sites. They are invaluable in supporting, promoting and helping maintain public lands.

These volunteer organizations, while dedicated and passionate, are often underfunded and understaffed. NEEF, with support from Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc. (TMS), seeks to strengthen these organizations and unleash their potential to serve public lands every day.

“We believe stewardship of our public lands starts at the local level,” said Michael Rouse, TMS vice president of diversity, philanthropy and community affairs. “We hope to help local community groups gain traction in caring for millions of acres of public lands and grow as stewards of an important American resource.”

The groups are receiving grants of up to \$5,000 each for “capacity building” activities to serve public lands including: communications and website, strategic planning, software and technology, fundraising, board development and volunteer training.

The [list of *Public Lands Every Day* grantees](#) is available online.

Now in its fourth year, NEEF’s Public Lands Program has granted more than \$700,000 to Friends Groups to support capacity building and events.

[Proposals for the next round of *Public Lands Every Day* capacity building grants](#) are due October 30.

“If a Friends Group can better engage the public, it can attract more volunteers. If it can attract more volunteers, it has a larger base of individuals to ask for support. If it can gain more support, it can offer more volunteer events,” added Wood.

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