

# Volunteers Dig Deep into Local Parks for National Public Lands Day

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Blue Springs, Miss. (Sept. 22, 2014) – What can 1700 hands and 850 hearts accomplish on a Saturday? In Mississippi, they can create a brand new community park and revitalize two other popular local public green spaces in the span of just a few hours.

That's exactly what team members from Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Mississippi, Inc., did last Saturday. Along with family members, the Toyota Mississippi team built a new park in Blue Springs, plus spruced up the Park Along the River and Shady Dell Park in New Albany.

The project is part of a nationwide Toyota commitment to support National Public Lands Day (NPLD). Nearly every Toyota affiliate in the country engages in NPLD, but Toyota Mississippi year after year sets the record for the number of team member volunteers. This year was yet another all-time high with 800 team members and families who came out to roll up their sleeves, get their hands dirty and make their community a better place. Toyota Mississippi's more than 850 volunteers exceeded the number for all other affiliates combined.

Because of the large number of people who signed up, the plant chose to do three separate NPLD projects in Union County on Saturday.

“We know our team members do great work inside the plant, but it's amazing to see this commitment carry over to outside the plant as well,” said Sean Suggs, vice president of Toyota Mississippi. “Improving the environment and contributing to our communities is a global Toyota commitment. Our team members are certainly embracing that commitment in their local community today.”

The “greenfield” project in Blue Springs is just up Highway 9 from the plant. Team members transformed a previously empty half-acre lot into a park that includes a playground, greenhouse, pavilion and community garden. A walking track also circles the space. The new “Toyota-Blue Springs Education Park & Garden” will be an example of environmental sustainability with its flower beds, pollinator garden and compost station.

“The gift Toyota has given the town of Blue Springs will serve as a safe and inviting space that all our residents can enjoy,” stated Rita Gentry, mayor of the Town of Blue Springs. “We are truly honored and blessed to have such a wonderful corporate partner as part of our community.”

Volunteers at the New Albany Park Along the River and Shady Dell Park restored and painted playground equipment, built new picnic tables and benches, cleared invasive weeds and planted flower beds. Even the young children of Toyota team members got into the act. At each location, the kids did such things as artistic painting of trash cans, building bird houses and decorating fencing.

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