

Toyota Gives Northern Alabama Park Accessibility Makeover

September 29, 2022



HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (Sept. 29, 2022) – Accessibility to nature for people of all abilities is the focus of a new three-year project aimed at transforming The Harvest Square Nature Preserve, part of the Land Trust of North Alabama.

Toyota and the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) unveiled the project as part of kick-off festivities for [National Public Lands Day](#), the largest single-day volunteer event for America’s public lands.

Nearly 50 Toyota Alabama employees joined together with local officials at the preserve to help construct a boardwalk, widen trails and install an accessible lunch table.

“Connecting people with nature is at the core of the Land Trust’s mission, and improving the Harvest Square Nature Preserve to be more inclusive and accessible speaks directly to that mission,” said Land Trust of Alabama board chair, Glynn Below.

Mobility for All

Toyota and NEEF awarded a \$150,000 grant to support various projects focused on physical and visual accessibility. The funding is part of Toyota and NEEF's 2022 Driving Mobility and Accessibility on Public Lands Grants awarded to various projects focused on mobility and accessibility considerations on public lands and waterways across the country.

The nature preserve is located approximately six miles from Toyota's 1.3 million-square-foot manufacturing facility in Huntsville and welcomes approximately 70,000 visitors per year.

"I look forward to people of all abilities enjoying this wonderful preserve and connecting with nature," said Jason Puckett, president, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Alabama. "This initiative supports our mission of mobility for all, and our environmental and educational goals, all while creating a place for everyone to enjoy year-round."

Creating Inclusion in Nature

Projects range from creating bridges and boardwalks and clearing and widening trails to inclusive signage and navigation, and audio guided information. A variety of education initiatives, including pollinator focused education, is also envisioned to support local schools. Toyota employees are expected to continue to volunteer throughout the year, with additional volunteer opportunities created by the Land Trust for the public.

"NEEF is committed to making the environment accessible, relatable, relevant and connected to the daily lives of all Americans," said Meri-Margaret Deodes, president and CEO of NEEF. "Together with Toyota and the Land Trust, we are working to improve accessibility to nature and the outdoors."

National Public Lands Day

Currently celebrating its 29th year, [National Public Lands Day](#) (NPLD) is the nation's largest single-day volunteer event for public lands. Created and coordinated by the National Environmental Education Foundation, NPLD was established in 1994 and is held annually on the fourth Saturday in September. Toyota is the national corporate sponsor of NPLD.

For more information on this year's NPLD event with the Alabama Land Trust, or to find volunteer opportunities in your area, visit www.neefusa.org/npld.