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Two Miami Valley Women Singled Out for Environmental Leadership *Honorees Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship*

New York, NY, October 6, 2010 –Two Ohio environmentalists are the recipients of a national conservation fellowship that will allow them to empower and energize children to make a difference.

Nicole Conrad and Beth Krisko are two of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2010 *TogetherGreen* Fellow. Supported by a conservation alliance of Audubon and Toyota, the *TogetherGreen* Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For her project, Conrad plans to expand the [Aullwood Audubon Center's](#) successful Avian Art Contest into a larger program entitled Birds + Art = Conservation Action. Elementary and high school students, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged areas, will work on restoring bird habitats, further teaching students the importance of protecting native birds and plants. In addition to habitat restoration, the art contest will be expanded to include more artwork. At the end of the year, the program will culminate with two new habitats being created and a special art exhibit at Aullwood that nearly 10,000 visitors will be able to enjoy. The art exhibit will feature select work created through the program as well as a large bird sculpture the students will create from recycled materials.

Conrad, an Audubon naturalist, dedicates her time to guiding children and young adults through Aullwood's Audubon Center and Farm in Dayton. For many of her students, this is one of their first interactions with nature. In 2005, Conrad developed the Avian Art Contest, which inspires students to create artwork of both birds native to Ohio and neo-tropical species that migrate through the state.

Krisko will use her *TogetherGreen* fellowship to create a new program at Antioch College's [Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center](#), a residential environmental learning center serving students in grades 4-6 from forty Ohio schools, many from the Miami Valley. Krisko's project focuses on climate change and encourages energy conservation practices. The program will empower the students and teachers that visit the center to make everyday choices to help protect the environment. Using solar thermal panels as a demonstration of an alternative energy source, students will interact with the technology and learn what they can do in smaller ways to reduce

carbon dioxide emission. At the end of a Glen Helen visit, teachers will be given tools to take the message back to the classroom by leading energy-reducing initiatives. By reaching over one thousand local students each year, Krisko believes that this project has will contribute to reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the Miami Valley.

Krisko has demonstrated her commitment to conservation throughout her career at Glen Helen, holding a variety of leadership positions while motivating diverse groups of people to achieve conservation results. As Volunteer Coordinator, she organized stewardship activities for both university and elementary students, including a “Bioblitz,” a 24-hour science and educational event. She is now the Director of the Outdoor Education Center and continues to empower others to make positive differences.

“Nicole and Beth are the kind of people who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future,” said Audubon President David Yarnold. “Each of our *TogetherGreen* Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us today and in the years to come.”

"This fellowship allows me to share conservation messages with youngsters and provide hands-on opportunities for these same youngsters to make positive changes to out environment that will last for many generations," said Conrad. “I’m very exciting about receiving it.”

“*TogetherGreen* has given me the tools, inspiration, and the motivation to incorporate a program into Glen Helen’s environmental education lessons that not only teaches students, but actually motivates and inspires them to make positive environmental choices in their everyday lives,” said Krisko. “*TogetherGreen* is helping me localize a global crisis to actually make a real difference in my community.”

Conrad has worked at the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm since 2004. Krisko has worked at Glen Helen since 2002. Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon’s far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations, such as Glen Helen.

Conrad received her B.S. in geography (with an emphasis on resource and environmental study) from Southwest Texas State University in 2002. In 2006, she received the Audubon ACE Award for Individual Achievement. She currently volunteers with several organizations in Ohio, including Team Greyhound.

Krisko received her M.S. in environmental science and her B.A. in communications from Miami University of Ohio, and earned her Ohio teacher licensure from Antioch University. She has played a variety of roles in conservation driven projects, including scientific research, land-use planning, and educational outreach.

Fellowship recipients were chosen from a large pool of highly qualified individuals. All were required to have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education,

policy, or related issues; a demonstrated passion for conservation and a proven track record of reaching previously underserved audiences. Applicants also need to express a desire to learn and grow. An advisory committee composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning made selections.

"*TogetherGreen* gives me optimism," said Diane Wood, President, National Environmental Education Foundation, and *TogetherGreen* Advisory Board Member. "*TogetherGreen* Fellows are smart, passionate and representative of diverse communities. They bring vital new voices and perspectives into environmental conversations and are clearly ready to take on today's and tomorrow's ever more challenging conservation issues."

A complete list of the 2010 *TogetherGreen* Fellows can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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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. To date, 120 environmental leaders-half from within Audubon and half from outside organizations-have received *TogetherGreen* Fellowships 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. Visit Audubon online at www.audubon.org.

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants, including one under construction. Toyota directly employs nearly 30,000 in the U.S. and its investment here is currently valued at more than \$18 billion, including sales and manufacturing operations, research and development, financial services and design.

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 \$500 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S.

For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit <http://www.toyota.com/community>.