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FIVE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTALISTS RECEIVE AUDUBON & TOYOTA TOGETHERGREEN CONSERVATION FELLOWSHIPS

Prestigious Award Furthers Efforts of Local Leaders

New York, NY, June 21, 2012 – Toyota and the National Audubon Society today announced *TogetherGreen* Fellowship awards for five California community leaders engaged in conservation and environmental causes throughout the state. Emily Sadigh of Berkeley, Tony Marks-Block of Oakland, Jacqueline Rose of Carmel, Elizabeth Sarmiento of San José, and Jacob Holzberg-Pill of Nevada City received fellowship awards after a competitive nationwide selection process.

TogetherGreen, a conservation initiative of the National Audubon Society and Toyota, selects 40 high-potential local leaders annually to receive a \$10,000 grant. With the funds, Fellows conduct community projects to engage diverse audiences in habitat, water, or energy conservation. In addition to receiving support launching their conservation initiatives, the Fellows also benefit from specialized training and the opportunity to become part of an exciting alumni network of conservation professionals.

“These are heroes. They help people engage with nature. They look like America: diverse, passionate, and patriotic,” said Audubon President David Yarnold. “Emily, Tony, Jacqueline, Elizabeth, and Jacob are leaders, and we’re pleased to give them a chance to invent the future.”

Five of this year’s 40 Toyota and Audubon *TogetherGreen* Fellows:

- **Jacob Holzberg-Pill: Environmental Science Teacher; Woolman Semester**

Just two years into his position at Woolman, a renowned high school semester program that focuses on peace, social justice, and sustainability, Holzberg-Pill intends to channel an adult lifetime of education experience into a fellowship project that will focus on a “Farm to Forest” land stewardship approach that acknowledges the role of humans as active stewards of the earth. Instead of managing land in isolated units—garden, orchard, pasture, campus, and forest—he will create a student curriculum to teach how to manage entire properties holistically to safeguard water resources, increase habitat resiliency, encourage target species, and sequester carbon, while promoting alternatives to fossil fuels. The project will include reclaiming an abandoned gold mining ditch that circumnavigates school property (by clearing the debris clogging the ditch and opening the area around it, ground water recharge will be increased), permaculture design techniques to install a keyline forest garden, plantings of native and beneficial pollinator species and nut-bearing mast trees, and other hands-on activities.

- **Tony Marks-Block: Program Coordinator; East Bay Academy for Young Scientists**

As a Fellow, Marks-Block intends to establish an ambitious project engaging principally low-income students of color in Oakland with opportunities to participate in field research and conservation efforts within their own local watersheds, as well as the nearby Tomales Bay watershed in Marin County. The work in Tomales Bay will focus on conserving threatened salmon habitat. Both locally and in Tomales Bay, students will participate in year-round stream bank stabilization, native plant restoration, and water quality monitoring.

- **Jacqueline Rose: Founder, Programs Director, Environmental Educator; SeaVibe Foundation**

TogetherGreen fellowship support will allow Rose to complete a SeaVibe Community Water & Art Internship in Watsonville to protect water resources by improving water quality in Pinto Lake. Intensive agriculture has degraded the water quality in Watsonville, which threatens the health of the entire ecosystem. Dangerous levels of bacteria from the lake have also been connected to a die-off of sea otters—a critical, endangered keystone species that depends on healthy water in the Monterey Bay. The project will cultivate a team of civic leaders working together to improve water quality in the distressed area.

- **Emily Sadigh**: Sustainability Project Manager; Alameda County
Sadigh plans to harness her *TogetherGreen* fellowship to make it easier for the 9,000 employees of Alameda County to take energy- and habitat-conservation actions that involve connecting with other employees, such as carpooling, turning off shared equipment when not in use, ordering healthy produce from local farms, and ensuring their departments buy recommended green products. In a model inspired by the self-organization of natural ecosystems, employee volunteer “green ambassadors” in 20 county agencies will serve as hubs for local sustainability action teams, create channels for rapid feedback, and share stories from other participants.
- **Elizabeth Sarmiento**: Outreach Coordinator; Acterra’s Green@Home program
In 2011, Sarmiento initiated an energy conservation DIY workshop as a pilot program for Acterra, an environmental education and action nonprofit based in Palo Alto. Designed specifically to meet the needs and interests of Spanish-speaking families, these workshops—while focusing on action about home energy conservation practices and behavior change—include engaging participants on storytelling about their personal connection with nature, and conclude with hands-on installation of energy- and water-efficient devices such as low-flow shower heads and energy-saving lighting. *TogetherGreen* fellowship will allow her to expand the program’s scope in a variety of ways, including amplifying the current training to four, three-hour workshop sessions and employing a team of three Spanish-speaking volunteers who will help conduct them. She ultimately plans to engage 100 households in the Peninsula and San José areas.

The *TogetherGreen* Fellowship Program invests in high-potential individuals from all backgrounds, providing them with resources, visibility, and a growing peer network to help them lead communities nationwide to a healthier environmental future. To date, 200 environmental leaders from across the country have been awarded *TogetherGreen* fellowships. These leaders have worked with nearly 500 organizations and engaged over 100,000 people in community-based conservation action, achieving results in habitat, water, and energy.

A complete list of the 2012 *TogetherGreen* Fellows and details about their conservation projects can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to foster diverse environmental leadership and fund innovative conservation ideas. *TogetherGreen* funding recipients have helped protect 250 species of birds and other wildlife, improved 10,000 acres of habitat, mobilized 220,000 individuals, collected two million pounds of recyclables, and captured \$5 million worth of volunteer time. 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 established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants and has a network of nearly 1,500 dealerships. Toyota directly employs over 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. The company supports numerous organizations across the country focusing on education, the environment, and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed over half-a-billion dollars to philanthropic programs in the U.S.

For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyotainaction.com/community or www.toyota.com/community.