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## **National Innovation Grant Funds Green Leadership Academy for Missouri Teens**

*Support Ensures Another Year of Environmental Leadership Development*

One of 48 newly-announced *TogetherGreen* national innovation grants ensures that the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society can continue its Green Leadership Academy for Diverse Ecosystems (GLADE) for the second year in a row to the benefit of local teens and nearby giant cane and glade habitats.

The \$15,000 grant supports the week-long, service-learning, peer-mentoring student academy which is held at Missouri State University's Bull Shoals Field Station. GLADE provides opportunities for hands-on giant cane and glade habitat restoration, species monitoring, and independent conservation projects. The program will target students from underserved communities in an attempt to give them opportunities to increase their ecological knowledge and awareness of nature, interact with environmental professionals and potential career opportunities, develop the skills needed to become environmental stewards, and restore an important local habitat.

The goal of GLADE is to inspire teens to love and protect their natural environment and give them the tools and opportunities they need to become conservation leaders in their communities.

"We imagine these young people returning to this restored and biodiverse cane habitat with their children one day," said Greg Swick, Director of GLADE. "And, perhaps more importantly, we foresee our graduates as community leaders, actively shaping public policy on conservation issues within their hometowns, throughout the Ozarks bioregion, and across the nation and world."

"We are excited to partner with Audubon to be able to bring young people into the outdoors for a week," said Janice Greene, Director of the Bull Shoals Field Station. "We believe this opportunity will raise the students' awareness and appreciation of the unique area in which we live. This is also a great opportunity for Missouri State to be involved in the development of future leaders."

The Bull Shoals Field Station area is located within the White River Glades and Woodlands Important Bird Area (IBA) and the Drury-Mincy Conservation Area. This region was historically characterized by abundant hill-top glade areas mixed with savanna and woodland, and streams lined with giant cane. Today, many of the glades are overgrown with eastern red cedar. Encroaching commercial development from nearby Branson and Table Rock Lake resort districts poses a threat to habitat coverage, continuity, and management.

The Missouri innovation grant is part of \$1.1 million awarded by the *TogetherGreen* initiative this year. Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to fund conservation projects, train environmental leaders, and offer volunteer opportunities that significantly benefit the environment. Grantees were selected from scores of applicants across America. Funds were awarded to Audubon organizations that demonstrated exceptional innovation in working with other groups on projects that will produce tangible benefits for environmental quality.

“This academy program is a wonderful opportunity for creating a generation of environmental leaders in Missouri and we’re happy to support it for another successful year,” said *TogetherGreen* Project Manager Judy Braus.

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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. Nearly 90 projects totaling more than \$2.5 million dollars have received Innovation Grants to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit [www.togethergreen.org](http://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. To learn about Audubon’s nationwide efforts to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, visit [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

**About Toyota**

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. 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 \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota’s commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit [www.toyota.com/community](http://www.toyota.com/community).