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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES “FIRST BLOOM” SPRING PLANTINGS

Nationwide Conservation Program Teaches Urban Youth about Restoring Native Habitats

WASHINGTON, DC (April 7, 2010) – Urban youth around the nation will be breaking ground this spring on gardens of native plant species as part of the [National Park Foundation’s](#) First Bloom program. [First Bloom](#) gives students firsthand experience in national parks, and teaches important conservation lessons including the difference between native and invasive plant species. Youth groups participating in the program work with park rangers to design and plant their own gardens in national parks.

“One of the most important things anyone can do for the environment is to connect young people to parks,” said Neil Mulholland, president and CEO of the National Park Foundation. “Kids who are forging connections with the national parks today, are likely to have lasting relationships with the parks and the outdoors for their whole lives.”

First Bloom connects kids between 4th and 6th grades to nature and national parks. The nationwide program is currently taking place in 26 national parks in partnership with 31 youth groups, primarily local Boys and Girls Clubs, across the country.

The National Park Foundation funded the 2010 First Bloom projects with support from the UPS Foundation, ARAMARK Parks and Destinations through the Yawkey Foundation, and through the generous support of private citizens and foundations.

“UPS is known for delivering packages, but this time our goal is to deliver kids—into our national parks,” said The UPS Foundation President Ken Sternad. “First Bloom is changing children’s lives by showing them that the national parks belong to each of them. The gardens they plant will create a lasting connection to the parks and to the outdoors.”

“First Bloom teaches today’s youth about the importance of preserving our national parks and protecting their local communities’ natural resources,” said Bruce Fears, president of ARAMARK Parks and Destinations. “Welcoming people into national parks, and making them feel at home is what we do, and we are very proud to be helping make that connection for a new generation.”

Parks with upcoming plantings include:

- Hamilton Grange National Memorial and General Grant National Memorial, NY
- San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, CA
- Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH
- Boston African American National Historic Site, MA

To learn more about the First Bloom program, visit www.first-bloom.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

You are the part-owner of 84 million acres of the world's most treasured landscapes, ecosystems, and historical sites -- all protected in America's nearly 400 national parks. Chartered by Congress, the [National Park Foundation](http://www.nationalparks.org) is the official charity of America's national parks. We work hand in hand with the National Park Service to help connect you and all Americans to the parks, and to make sure that they are preserved for the generations who will follow. Join us – *This is Your Land*. www.nationalparks.org

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