

For Immediate Release
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Volunteers to Lend a Hand During National Public Lands Day

*Volunteers invited to help spruce up
Valley Forge National Historical Park*

VALLEY FORGE, Pa. – Volunteers are invited to dig in and spruce up Valley Forge National Historical Park on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009 in celebration of National Public Lands Day.

The annual event, now in its 16th year, is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the nation's 600 million acres of public lands. Activities at Valley Forge begin at 8:30 a.m. with walk in registration and volunteer sign-in. Participants are asked to meet at the Visitor Center lower parking area. Volunteers will have the opportunity to make a real difference in the park by joining park staff to remove invasive plants and crayfish, repair historic fencing, plant native trees, construct and maintain trails, reroof solidier huts and much more.

“We plan to have at least 14 projects for volunteers to choose from, as well as a guided nature hike and an Environmental Expo. We'll also be showing a preview of the new Ken Burns documentary series, *National Parks: America's Best Idea*, that's scheduled to air on PBS starting September 27” said Mike Caldwell Superintendent for Valley Forge National Historical Park.

“We hope that volunteers who participate in these important activities on National Public Lands Day will discover the value and importance of this special place and will continue to stay connected to the park throughout the year by additional volunteering, joining the Friends of Valley Forge Park, or shopping at the Encampment Store located in the park's Visitor Center,” said Caldwell.

He added that “We're happy to be partnering with REI for the fourth year in a row and with Unilever National Park Tour for this important public event, and appreciate their commitment and dedication to preserving our environment.

Last year at Valley Forge, more than 320 participants planted native trees and plants, removed trash, stabilized streambanks along Valley Creek, painted park rest rooms, and removed invasive plants. The group also constructed a walk way to the historic Maurice Stephens House to prevent erosion.

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For more information on how to participate in National Public Lands Day activities at Valley Forge National Historical Park, contact Ernestine White at 610-783-5384 or ernestine_white@nps.gov.

To see a list of all National Public Lands Day sites, activities, contacts and downloadable photos from past events, visit the media center section of www.publiclandsday.org.

For details about other area attractions in the Valley Forge visit www.valleyforge.org.

About Valley Forge National Historical Park

Valley Forge National Historical Park educates present and future generations of Americans about one of the most defining events in our nation's history by preserving the natural and cultural resources that commemorate the encampment of the Continental Army at Valley Forge in 1777-78. To learn more visit www.nps.gov/vafo.

National Public Lands Day began in 1994 with three federal agencies and 700 volunteers. Last year nearly 100,000 volunteers worked in 1,100 locations and in every state. Now, nine federal agencies and many state and local lands participate in this annual day of caring for shared lands. National Public Lands Day keeps the promise of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the "tree army" that worked from 1933-42 to preserve and protect America's natural heritage. www.publiclandsday.org.

About REI

Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) is an outdoor retail co-op dedicated to inspiring, educating and outfitting its 2.8 million active members and the community for a lifetime of outdoor adventure. Founded in 1938 by a group of Pacific Northwest mountaineers seeking quality equipment, REI operates retail stores nationwide, two online stores – REI.com and REI-OUTLET.com – and an adventure travel company. As an active supporter of the communities in which it does business, REI is committed to promoting environmental stewardship and increasing access to outdoor recreation through education, volunteerism, gear donations and financial contributions. REI is helping build a lasting legacy of trails, rivers, and wild lands for generations to come, supporting programs to help people of all ages and experiences participate. In 2005, REI will give over \$2.5 million back to the communities in which it does business through grants and outreach programs. To learn more about REI, www.rei.com

About Unilever's National Parks America

Unilever's National Parks America Tour is a volunteer-driven initiative designed to engage employees, community groups, school children, scouts and citizens of all ages in volunteer service-to-the-land activities in America's National Parks. With more than 25 events each year, National Parks America Tour volunteers assist by completing priority improvement projects. From restoring worm-rail fencing to its historic footprint alongside battlefields and trails in Pea Ridge National Military Park to coastal clean-ups in Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Biscayne National Park, the *National Parks America Tour* adds vitality by providing essential volunteer manpower. Since 1999, the *National Park America Tour* has donated more than 250,000 volunteer hours to the National Park Service resulting in an in-kind manpower donation of \$4.25 million. To learn more visit www.unilevernationalparks.com

About Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau, Ltd. is a nonprofit, membership-based sales and marketing organization that aggressively promotes the Valley Forge area and Montgomery County as a convention site and leisure visitor destination by encouraging patronage of its 500-plus member hotels, restaurants, attractions and services. The Bureau's web site, www.valleyforge.org, serves visitors, residents, meeting planners and tour operators.

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