



*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

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**BACK TO NATIVES RECEIVES \$1000 PROJECT LEARNING TREE GREENWORKS! GRANT
TO RESTORE HABITAT IN SANTA ANA'S SANTIAGO PARK NATURE RESERVE**

IRVINE, Calif., December 10, 2012 – **Back to Natives Restoration**, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit public charity has received a \$1000 GreenWorks! grant from Project Learning Tree® (PLT), the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF). The grant will assist Back to Natives (BTN) in funding a habitat restoration service learning project at Santiago Park Nature Reserve in Santa Ana, CA.

Students from Santa Ana and Orange County meet Back to Natives at the Santiago Park Nature Reserve once a month to remove non-native plant species and plant locally native plants. They perform community service to improve the park for both wildlife and people as they learn about the value of native plants, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat. Volunteer dates are listed on BTN's website, www.backtonatives.org.

“Students learn what it is like to be a real restoration ecologist, and how volunteering in their community really does make a difference,” said Reginald Durant, Director of Restoration for Back to Natives Restoration.

PLT GreenWorks! engages educators, students, and their communities in “learning-by-doing” local environmental stewardship projects. Since 1992, AFF has distributed more than \$1 million to fund more than 1,000 PLT GreenWorks! action projects in communities across the country.

“GreenWorks! is the service-learning component of Project Learning Tree,” said Jaclyn Stallard, PLT Manager of Education Programs, in announcing the grants. “In these student-driven projects, youth become personally responsible for improving their environment, taking what they learn in the classroom and applying it to their own communities.”

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. BTN strives to involve the community in the process of ecological restoration and conservation because it believes that a little "ecological enlightenment" and a chance to "get your hands dirty" is the best way to improve relations between people and nature.

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About Project Learning Tree

Project Learning Tree® (PLT) uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase students' understanding of the environment. PLT provides educators with curriculum, professional development, and resources to integrate environmental education into lesson plans for all grades and subject areas, and to use the outdoors to engage students in learning about the world around them. PLT teaches students about complex environmental issues, and helps them acquire the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills they need to make sound choices about the environment. Developed in 1976, PLT's 50-state network includes more than 500,000 trained educators using PLT materials that cover the total environment and more than 2,000 PLT GreenSchools! PLT is a program of the American Forest Foundation. In California, PLT is sponsored by the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection and California Community Forests Foundation. For more information, visit www.plt.org.

About Back to Natives

Back to Natives Restoration, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to the restoration and conservation of Orange County and California wild lands, through education and restoration programs featuring native plants as a centralizing theme. For more information, please visit www.backtonatives.org or call 949-509-4787.

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