

News Release

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MINGO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE GOES GOLD

The Conservation Fund Announces First Gold Level Project in U.S. Under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance Standards, Second Edition

POPLAR BLUFF, MO—The Conservation Fund, in partnership with [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(USFWS\)](#) and [Environmental Synergy Inc. \(ESI\)](#), announced today that its forest-based carbon sequestration project in southeastern Missouri received Gold validation, the highest level available, under the standards of the [Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance \(CCBA\)](#). The Conservation Fund is the first group in the nation to receive Gold validation under the CCB Standards Second Edition.

Supported by donations from the Fund's voluntary carbon offset program, [Go Zero](#)[®], the group restored 367 acres of walnut, hickory, oak and cypress trees at [Mingo National Wildlife Refuge](#) (Mingo NWR), near Puxico, Missouri. As the forest matures, it is expected to trap an estimated 100,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which is equivalent to taking approximately 18,000 cars off the road.

When settlers first came to Missouri's Bootheel region, lush bottomland hardwood forests, including giant cypress and tupelo trees, blanketed the southeastern corner of the state. Over the past century, the forests were cut for lumber, and by the 1930s, most of the land was cleared and the swamplands were drained.

"Today, Mingo Refuge protects the largest remaining bottomland hardwood forest in southeastern Missouri," said Mingo National Wildlife Refuge manager Ben Mense. "Thanks to the Go Zero project, we were able to restore forest habitat that benefits migratory birds, the endangered Indiana bat and many other species."

The restored forests will be open to the public for wildlife-dependent recreational uses.

Go Zero works with companies and individuals to help reduce and then offset the carbon footprint of everyday activities, such as the CO₂ emissions resulting from an in-town or cross-country move with [U-Haul](#), a flight purchased from [Travelocity](#), a package shipped from [Gaiam](#) or the electricity it takes to power a [Dell](#) notebook for three years. Customer donations help plant native trees in protected parks and wildlife refuges like Mingo NWR that will capture and store carbon over time, while also creating forest habitats that are critical to birds, fish, bears and other wildlife.

"Go Zero donors are providing critical, private capital that will help address two of the most extraordinary environmental challenges of our time, climate change and habitat loss," said The Conservation Fund's Go Zero director, Jena Meredith. "The Gold Level validation ensures these

donations deliver real, measurable results to help address climate change and restore important wildlife habitat on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the American people.”

Mingo NWR also benefits from donations from The Conservation Fund’s partnership with Dell’s via its “Plant a Tree” program.

“At Dell, we’re committed to making “being green” easy and cost-effective for our customers. Dell’s Plant a Tree program is a great example of that,” said Mark Newton, director of environmental sustainability at Dell. “This partnership with The Conservation Fund provides a simple, meaningful way for customers to help offset the CO₂ emissions of their computers, which adds up to a positive impact for our planet.”

More than 411,000 U-Haul customers have elected to offset their emissions by making a donation to The Conservation Fund.

“U-Haul and our customers are working to make a real difference in protecting the environment and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions,” said John “J.T.” Taylor, president of U-Haul International, Inc. “We commend the Fund on its CCBA Gold validation at Mingo NWR. They are committed to achieving measurable and real results. Together we hope to expand help to communities where we live and serve.”

Colorado-based Gaiam, a lifestyle company, has partnered with the Fund’s Go Zero program since 2006 by offering its customers the opportunity to zero out the carbon footprint associated with shipping their purchase. Gaiam was the first company in the U.S. to offer such a program.

“Gaiam customers care deeply about the environment and the impact their purchases make on their global footprint,” said Christopher Fisher, director of customer experience at Gaiam. “The Go Zero program is a simple, yet significant opportunity we can offer our customers to help them safeguard the earth. At Gaiam, we believe simple choices make a difference. We congratulate The Conservation Fund on the CCBA Gold Level validation and are proud to be their partner.”

“We are thrilled to see a third Go Zero project achieve CCB Standards validation,” said Dr. Joanna Durbin, director of the Climate Community and Biodiversity Alliance. “Not only do all the Go Zero projects satisfy the requirements for significant environmental benefits by restoring degraded native forests - this one achieves the more rigorous criteria for Gold Level recognition of its biodiversity value by protecting the globally endangered Indiana bat.”

“Together over the past decade, the Fund and ESI have forged creative partnerships to advance habitat restoration and forest-based carbon initiatives,” said ESI’s president, Carol Jordan. “Our work at Mingo NWR continues a legacy that will benefit the environment for years to come, and the CCBA Gold Level validation is a testament to our joint quest for high-quality projects and measurable results.”

The Conservation Fund’s Mingo National Wildlife Refuge Restoration Initiative was validated by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS).

“It is inspiring to see the continued, measurable impact of The Conservation Fund’s initiatives,” said Dr. Robert J. Hrubes, SCS senior vice president. “The Mingo NWR is the third CCBA project Scientific Certification Systems has validated for The Conservation Fund, and I look forward to providing carbon assessment services as their work continues.”

The Conservation Fund’s Go Zero program planted its one millionth tree at Mingo NWR this year. [Watch the video to learn more.](#)

Heroes of Go Zero include:

Hundreds of thousands of dedicated individuals, Accenture Supply Chain Academy, Americas Lodging Investment Summit, Bella Figura Letterpress Invitations, Carfax, Inc., City of Austin, Conde Nast Publications, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Dell Computer Corporation, Delta Air Lines, Inc., e-Blue Horizons, LLC, Ernest Maier Block, Florida Center for Environmental Studies, Gaiam, Inc., Indianapolis Colts NFL, Land Rover Portland, Lee County Board of County Commissioners, L'Oreal USA, Inc., McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry, LLC, Michigan International Speedway, Molinaro Koger, NBC Universal, New Jersey Natural Gas, Organic, Inc., Philadelphia Eagles, Premiere TV, Inc., Reverb Inc., SEAT Planners Incorporated, SESCO Lighting, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Inc., The Freshwater Institute, The North Face, Training Resources Group LLC, Travelocity, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U-Haul International, Inc., University of Delaware, Vans, Way Basics, William McDonough & Partners, P.L.C., World Class Charters, Inc.

USFWS

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.

Scientific Certification Systems is a global leader in independent certification and verification of environmental, sustainability, stewardship, food quality, food safety and food purity claims. SCS assessments lead to the recognition of accomplishments in greenhouse gas inventories and offsets, agricultural production, food processing and handling, forestry, fisheries, flowers and plants, energy, green building, product manufacturing and corporate social responsibility. SCS has audited voluntary carbon offset projects on five continents. www.sccertified.com

The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund is dedicated to advancing America's land and water legacy. With our partners, we conserve land, train leaders and invest in conservation at home. Since 1985, we have helped protect more than 6 million acres, sustaining wild havens, working lands and vibrant communities. We're a top-ranked conservation organization, effective and efficient. <http://www.conservationfund.org>

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