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Grant from The REI Foundation Helps Hip-hop Recording in the Wilds at the Prospect Park Audubon Center

Audubon and The REI Foundation Promote Nature Programs for Culturally Diverse Neighborhoods Nationwide

Brooklyn, NY- 28 June, 2011 – Aspiring young artists from neighborhoods around Prospect Park will now have an opportunity to record their music and be inspired by nature at the same time through a new program at the [Prospect Park Audubon Center](#). With funding from The [REI Foundation](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by outdoor gear and apparel retailer [REI](#), Audubon will create a recording booth available as a community resource for young artists who want to record their music and document their explorations of the park.

This program is part of the second phase of an innovative national alliance launched last year. A \$100,000 grant from The REI Foundation will support education and conservation activities at four Audubon Centers throughout the country including sites in Norristown, Saint Louis, San Francisco, and Brooklyn. In collaboration with an audio engineering school in New York City, the Prospect Park Audubon Center (an innovative partnership between the [Prospect Park Alliance](#) and Audubon New York), will be able to hire a Conservation Audio Engineering Intern as the recording booth facilitator. This program intern will help young artists with recording and work with Audubon staff to structure and produce Oral Nature Journals, conservation podcasts, and even poetry slam programming.

“This is about continuing to listen to and learn from the community so we can make other programs nationwide equally inclusive,” said Audubon Vice President for Education, [Judy Braus](#). “Insights gained at Prospect Park can guide other communities in making sure that language and culture are never obstacles to people experiencing and conserving nature for the rest of their lives.”

For over a century, Audubon has been connecting people with nature. Outdoor activity is one of the best antidotes to obesity and what author Richard Louv calls “Nature Deficit Disorder.” But today’s busy lifestyles, coupled with more sedentary, indoor play and diminished access to nature due to urbanization can be a barrier to getting outside.

“We look forward to such a program being a great opportunity to train the future audio engineering leaders in such an exciting interdisciplinary way that fuses both the arts with environmental stewardship,” said Taylor Franks, Job Placement Director at the School of Audio Engineering Institute.

“The REI Foundation is committed to increasing the number of outdoor enthusiasts who have an enduring lifetime commitment to the outdoors and reflect the diversity of America,” said REI Foundation President Michael Collins. “Audubon’s hands-on programs are great opportunities to support efforts to bring young people to nature and the outdoors in ways that are meaningful to them and their communities.”

Audubon and its community partners hope to reach more than 10,000 children and adults throughout the country over the course of the one-year grant by building on a successful blend of hikes, bird-watching and nature experiences. Local REI stores will add their expertise to help individual programs succeed and to spread their recipe for success.

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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. www.audubon.org

The REI Foundation's mission is to increase the number of outdoor enthusiasts who have an enduring lifetime commitment to the outdoors and reflect the diversity of America. Recognizing that most people with a love of the outdoors discover the natural world early in their life, The Foundation's primary efforts are in encouraging active outdoor participation by young people and their families. The REI Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded and supported by national outdoor retailer, Recreational Equipment, Inc., known as REI.