

## BATEMAN AND WYLAND INVITE AMERICAN YOUTH TO GET OUTDOORS, GET TO KNOW

Various – Renowned wildlife artists Robert Bateman and Wyland are inviting American youth to “get to know” their wild neighbors of other species through the Get to Know Contest. Launching nation-wide on October 1, 2010, the contest encourages young people to submit art, writing, photography, and videos inspired by first-hand experiences with nature in the outdoors.

Iconic Canadian artist Robert Bateman created the Get to Know Contest in 2000 to inspire children and youth to get outdoors and “get to know” their neighbors of other species. Says Bateman, “I encourage you to celebrate International Year of Biodiversity and learn the names of your wild neighbors. Get to know them through art, photography, writing and video, and enter the Get to Know Contest!”

The contest launched in the United States in 2009, following the signing of an unprecedented MOU between the Get to Know Program, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Children & Nature Network. Over 7,000 entries were submitted in the first year. The Get to Know Contest is enthusiastically supported by visionary marine life artist and conservationist Wyland, who says: “Robert Bateman’s Get to Know Contest is a natural fit with what I’ve dedicated my life to – getting people, especially youth, to fall in love with the beauty of oceans and the world.”

In celebration of 2011 International Year of Forests, this year’s contest will feature an all-new video category. To enter, young people are invited to go outdoors and create videos that convey the theme “This is My Forest”. A selection of winning videos will be shown at key United Nations International Year of Forests events starting on January 24, 2011. “What a great way for young people to learn about nature than through art, photography, writing and this year’s new video category in the annual Get to Know competition,” said Tom Tidwell, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. “It is especially exciting this year that our future stewards of urban forests, national forests and grasslands will go outdoors and create videos capturing ‘This is My Forest’ as a theme.”

The theme for the 2010 Get to Know Contest art, writing and photography categories is “Celebrating Biodiversity”, in honor of 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. The 2010 US Get to Know Contest runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, with launch events taking place at the Los Angeles Zoo (October 1), at the Wyland Living Green Fair in Long Beach (October 2), and at the San Diego Natural History Museum (October 4).

Art, writing, photography and video entries can be submitted online at [www.gettoknow.ca](http://www.gettoknow.ca), between October 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Photography and video entries will be available for viewing online during the contest run. Contest winners will receive prizes, including an opportunity to attend an Art and Nature Camp at a National Park in Canada (for youth age 12 and over), where they will be joined by Canadian Get to Know Contest winners. Winning art and writing entries will be published in the 2012 Get to Know Contest Calendar.



Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, sees the Get to Know Contest as a gateway into sustained interaction with the outdoors: "All children, teens and adults should have a chance to 'get to know; nature – and the Get to Know Contest provides the motivation to take the first step." The Get to Know Contest endeavours to cultivate a generation of healthy, environmentally focused youth.

#### **About the Robert Bateman Get to Know Program**

Canadian wildlife artist Robert Bateman launched the Get to Know Contest in Canada in 2000 to inspire youth to "get to know their wild neighbors" by going outdoors and actively connecting with nature. All entries must be based on first-hand experiences with nature to qualify. The first U.S. Get to Know Contest ran in October and November of 2009, and attracted nearly 7,000 entries on the theme of Forests. The U.S. Forest Service is a key partner of the Contest in the United States, and promotes it as an effective way to increase awareness of the value of America's public lands among youth.

The program provides youth with engaging hands-on learning opportunities through cutting-edge educational initiatives based on current research. The Get to Know Program envisions a continent-wide shift in thinking, towards an understanding that conserving biodiversity is our shared responsibility. By encouraging young people to regard other species as important members of their community, the Get to Know Program is working to foster the next generation of passionate environmental stewards. Recent Get to Know initiatives include Virtual Hikes - interactive learning resources which introduce youth to local greenspaces; Natural Treasure, a program which draws youth outside to local parks in search of hidden hieroglyphs; and the Get to Know BioBlitz, a continent-wide event for youth which invited youth to participating parks, wildlife refuges, and other natural areas on May 22, 2010.

For more information visit [www.gettoknow.ca](http://www.gettoknow.ca).

#### **Media Contact**

For Information on the Get to Know Program:  
Mary Krupa-Clark  
Director, Get to Know Program  
(250)980-3969, or [mkrupa@gettoknow.ca](mailto:mkrupa@gettoknow.ca).