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NATIONAL PARK TRUST AND PARTNERS EXPAND ‘BUDDY BISON’ EDUCATION PROGRAM TO BENEFIT ATLANTA SCHOOL

200 students celebrate Black History Month and the National Park Service Centennial in support of President Obama’s Every Kid in a Park initiative.

(Atlanta–February, 23, 2016) – National Park Trust (NPT), in partnership with the Georgia-Pacific Foundation and the National Park Service, is pleased to announce the expansion of the Buddy Bison School Program at M. Agnes Jones Elementary. The program uniquely integrates STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), history, and social studies with outdoor recreation using parks and public lands as outdoor classrooms.

As part of Black History Month and in celebration of the National Park Centennial, 200 third and fourth grade students will visit the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site on Feb. 23 through Feb. 26. Park rangers will lead a program based on Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “What’s Your Life’s Blueprint?” speech and students will tour Dr. King’s birth home and explore the “Courage to Lead” exhibit.

Now in its seventh year, the Buddy Bison School Program grew out of an important need to encourage young people to discover, explore, and steward America’s public lands and waters. The program engages students from predominantly under-served urban communities and focuses on cultivating park stewards, outdoor enthusiasts, and future career professionals.

“Thanks to our important partnership with Georgia-Pacific, Atlanta students have the opportunity to participate in the Buddy Bison School Program for two consecutive years,” stated National Park Trust Board Chair Bill Brownell. “This will provide the students with a broad range of educational and recreational experiences at a variety of parks in their local community. Our goal is that these students learn and have fun at these outdoor ‘classrooms’ and that they continue to visit them with friends and family.”

Curley Dossman, president of the Georgia-Pacific Foundation said, “We are excited about our continued partnership with NPT to provide meaningful park experiences for the students at M. Agnes Jones Elementary. By visiting the Martin Luther King Jr., National Historic Site this month, the students will learn about the history of the Civil Rights movement and the important contributions of Dr. King. Our nation’s parks tell the stories of our country and also are wonderful places to learn about science and math.”
As part of President Obama’s *Every Kid in a Park* initiative, the students will also receive vouchers that will allow them to visit more than 2,000 federally-managed sites nationwide, including returning to Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site to share the experience with their families.

Through the Buddy Bison School Program, earlier this school year students have also visited Stone Mountain Park during the Indian Festival and Pow-Wow and were visited by Chattahoochee Nature Center for in-class programming about native animals and their adaptations. Third grade students will visit Sweetwater Creek this spring to learn more about the geology of Sweetwater Creek and the forces that shape our landscape.

**About National Park Trust**

National Park Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the preservation and protection of our nation’s critical parks and engaging our youth – especially those that are under-served – to our parks and the outdoors. Through the Buddy Bison School Program and Kids to Parks Day, a national grassroots movement celebrated annually on the third Saturday in May (this year on May 21st), NPT is building a greater awareness of and appreciation for the importance of our nation’s parks. NPT’s Buddy Bison School Program and Kids to Parks Day National School Contest were selected in 2015 by the National Park Service as a Centennial Challenge Project. NPT’s mission is preserving parks today and creating park stewards for tomorrow (www.parktrust.org).

**About Georgia-Pacific**

Based in Atlanta, Georgia-Pacific and its subsidiaries are among the world’s leading manufacturers and marketers of bath tissue, paper towels and napkins, tableware, paper-based packaging, office papers, cellulose, specialty fibers, nonwoven fabrics, building products and related chemicals. The company employs approximately 35,000 people directly, and creates nearly 92,000 jobs indirectly. Founded in 1958, the Georgia-Pacific Foundation has four key investment areas: education, community enrichment, environment and entrepreneurship. For more information on the Georgia-Pacific Foundation, visit www.gp.com/gpfoundation

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