

For Immediate Release

The Ultimate Biodiversity Endeavor Returns to Greater Hartford

Hartford, CT. – The internationally recognized Connecticut State BioBlitz returns to Greater Hartford, Friday, June 12th through Saturday, June 13th. The Connecticut State BioBlitz is a distinctive scientific endeavor—part contest, part festival, and part educational event. It will bring together school children, college students, and scientists from a number of universities and scientific institutions in a race against time to see how many species they can count in a 24-hour biological survey. This is the 10th anniversary of the Connecticut State BioBlitz and this year includes a return to Keney Park, site of Connecticut's very first BioBlitz in 1999. Scientists will have the opportunity to return to a previous blitz site, do a survey, and assess the differences.

On Friday, June 12th, public programs begin at the Keney Park Pond House, 323 Edgewood Street in Hartford at 5pm. Additional parking is available via Keney Park's Greenfield Street entrance, located at the Greenfield Street/Woodland Street intersection. This is the formal kick-off of the 10th anniversary of the Connecticut State BioBlitz with remarks from special guests: Hartford Councilman Luis Cotto; Mayor Eddie A Perez (invited); Hartford Councilman Robert Pinter; State Senator Eric Coleman; Congressman John Larson (invited); Bayyinah Loyons, President, Friends of Keney Park; Henry Hester, Vice President, Friends of Keney Park; State Representative Kenneth Green; Jeremy Teitelbaum, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn; and Richard Conniff, noted naturalist and author.

On Saturday, June 13th, public programming moves to Goodwin College River Campus, One Riverside Drive, East Hartford, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Visitors can join guided tours of BioBlitz Central—observing the BioBlitz scientists in action. Additionally, nature walks and talks will be offered, and visitors can experience an exciting array of information, resources, and activities presented by over 30 organizations. The BioBlitz closing ceremony will take place at 3:00 p.m, showcasing the final tally of species counted and additional BioBlitz highlights.

A total number of 1,369 Species were counted during the 1999 BioBlitz at Keney Park. In 2001, the world record of 2,519 species identified occurred during the Connecticut State BioBlitz in Danbury.

This year, twenty-six middle and high school students were selected as Jr. Scientists and will have an uncommon opportunity to work side-by-side with notable scientists from respected institutions throughout the region. The students will rotate among collecting specimens, making presentations to the public, and counting species throughout Saturday.

The 2009 Connecticut State BioBlitz is sponsored by The Dorr Foundation. Other major financial and in-kind contributors include the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn, Center for Conservation & Biodiversity at UConn, Goodwin College, the Friends of Keney Park, the City of Hartford, the Town of East Hartford, the Department of Ecology and Evolution Biology at UConn and the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History. Significant partners also include Leadership Greater Hartford, Keney Park Trailblazers, Upper Albany Collaborative, and the VCB Association.

BioBlitz is a celebration of the diversity of life in our backyards. As we gain valuable information about the natural world within urban environments, we can begin to understand the extent to which the urban areas are sustaining the richness of Connecticut's biodiversity. For additional information please visit <http://web.uconn.edu/mnh/bioblitz/> or call (860) 486-4460.

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