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**Pittsburgh World Environment Day 2011 kicks off with a World Record-Setting Announcement
Venture Outdoors Offers Customized Memorabilia from “Paddle at the Point,” the Largest
Canoe and Kayak Flotilla Ever Assembled**

(PITTSBURGH, PA) - It's official. As part of its ramp up efforts for World Environment Day (WED) 2011, the Pittsburgh World Environment Day Partnership is pleased to announce that on last year's WED on June 5, 2010, this region broke the world record for largest raft of canoes and kayaks! Guinness World Records recently notified Venture Outdoors of the accomplishment, staged as a key Pittsburgh World Environment Day Partnership event.

“We're thrilled to have broken the world record,” said Erik Lingren, Venture Outdoors Executive Director. “Thousands of people devoted a great deal of time and effort to make this event a success. They can now officially celebrate!”

“Paddle at the Point,” as the event was called, served as a focal point for community engagement for WED 2010 and advanced the regional WED theme of *Water Matters!*. Reviewers determined 1,619 canoes and kayaks participated. Previously the record was set by 1,104 boats in Inlet, New York, and prior to that the record was held by Cleveland. Both of the previous record holders are attempting to reclaim their titles in 2011.

On display at the new Venture Outdoors' office on the South Side are large photographs of the event from within the raft, a panoramic GigaPan taken from Mt. Washington and the official Guinness World Record certificate. These photos can also be found on the media only webpage: www.paddleatthepoint.com/media.

Participants can order Paddle at the Point memorabilia via www.PaddleatthePoint.com, including stickers, t-shirts, and photos in a variety of sizes from the event. Photos can even be customized to feature a close-up inset of a participant within the larger GigaPan image of the flotilla.

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WED serves to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention and action. It is celebrated annually on June 5 and coordinated on a global scale by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

This year, once again embracing the theme of *Water Matters!*, the Pittsburgh World Environment Day Partnership is encouraging individuals to celebrate WED by bridging Earth Day (April 22) to WED (June 5) with programming and activities. Nonprofits, businesses, and other agencies are invited to add their events to the Pittsburgh World Environment Day website (www.PittsburghWED.com). The site, graciously supported by the Bayer USA Foundation, will be used as a central repository for events and activities tied to WED in the Pittsburgh region.

“Globally, Bayer has been a long-time partner of UNEP, and we are pleased to once again be part of our region’s celebration of World Environment Day,” said Rebecca Lucore, Executive Director of the Bayer USA Foundation.

Court Gould, facilitator of the Pittsburgh World Environment Day Partnership and Executive Director of the nonprofit Sustainable Pittsburgh, stated, “Our region’s environmental transformation has been recognized the world over. However the work must continue to advance environmentally friendly policies and practices that harness our innovation prowess and foster our region’s sustainable development.”

The theme *Water Matters!* relates to the many ways in which southwestern Pennsylvania identifies with, and is rich in, its abundant water resource—from the confluence of the three rivers to the role these rivers and others play in the region’s quality of life and economic vitality. *Water Matters!* also relates to water challenges in this region, including outdated sewer infrastructure, stormwater runoff, acid mine drainage, pharmaceuticals and agricultural chemicals, and industrial processes including natural gas development.

About the Pittsburgh World Environment Day (WED) Partnership

The United Nations Environment Programme appointed the Pittsburgh region to serve as North America's host for World Environment Day in 2010. The then-formed Pittsburgh World Environment Day Partnership chose to focus on water as the regional theme. More information on the Pittsburgh WED Partnership can be found at www.pittsburghwed.com. For social media users: Follow Pittsburgh World Environment Day on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PittsburghWED and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PittsburghWED2011.