



Jenga Mwendo Named New Orleans Cox Conserves Hero

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Cox Communications and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) announced today that Jenga Mwendo was chosen as New Orleans' 2010 Cox Conserves Hero. The award was presented at Cox's annual Heroes Banquet today.

Mwendo was nominated for the program by a member of the community, selected as a finalist by local environmental leaders and ultimately named as the Hero after receiving the most votes in an online public poll. She has selected New Orleans Food and Farm Network to receive the \$5,000 award in her honor.

A native of New Orleans, Mwendo returned to the city following Katrina and immediately began working to revitalize gardens. She has converted the Laurentine Ernst Garden into a vibrant space and secured the donation of a storm-damaged cottage next door for garden use as a storage shed and library. Through creative thinking and diverse donations of time, materials and talent, she is also transforming the Guerilla Garden from an overgrown lot used as a dumping ground into a beautiful centerpiece for the community.

"We've created a new community hub, a place where children and adults can gather together, commune with nature and take pride in the Lower 9th Ward again," said Mwendo. "When blighted lots become something beautiful that produces food for the community, it is a powerful illustration of transformation and encourages more positive change."

The Cox Conserves Heroes program was created in 2007 through a partnership between TPL and Cox Enterprises, the parent company of Cox Communications. The partnership stems from Cox Enterprises' national Cox Conserves program designed to significantly reduce the company's carbon footprint and promote eco-friendly behavior among its employees and the communities it serves. To date, Heroes have been named in Atlanta, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle and New Orleans. By showcasing these unsung heroes, Cox and The Trust for Public Land hope to inspire more people to take an active role in preserving the natural environment.

"The New Orleans finalists have all driven impressive results that have helped to aide the revitalization of the city following one of the worst disasters this decade. Jenga Mwendo and the stories about Cox Conserves nominees, finalists and heroes reflect a new vision for a better place for us all," said TPL President Will Rogers.

The other New Orleans Cox Conserves Heroes 2010 finalists were Amelie Oriol, Al Petrie, Sally Shushan and Phillip Soulet. [Click here to access videos about each finalist.](#)

To qualify for Cox Conserves Heroes, nominees must be everyday citizens that volunteer their time and do not receive compensation for their conservation efforts. Residents in the Jefferson, Orleans, St. Bernard and St. Charles parishes who work to create, preserve and improve the shared outdoor spaces in their communities were eligible for consideration. Outdoor spaces include parks, greenways, gardens, waterways, plazas, streets and public squares.

About Cox Louisiana Cox Louisiana employs nearly 1,800 people with an annual payroll of over \$80 million. In this region, Cox serves over 511,000 customers with voice, video and data products in the 17 parishes of Acadia, Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Livingston, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion and West Baton Rouge.

About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and natural areas, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Since 1972, TPL has worked with willing landowners, community groups, and national, state, and local agencies to complete close to 4,000 land conservation projects in 47 states, protecting 2.8 million acres. TPL has helped states and communities craft and pass over 380 ballot measures, generating \$36 billion in new conservation-related funding.