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Titan America's Center Sand Site Recognized by Wildlife Habitat Council

CLERMONT, Fla., Nov. 26, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Employees at Titan America, LLC's **Center Sand** site received international recognition for their contributions to conservation education at the Wildlife Habitat Council's (WHC) 25th Annual Symposium, *Celebrating Corporate Conservation*, held in Baltimore, MD earlier this month. Titan America, LLC demonstrated its continued commitment to environmental stewardship by achieving *Wildlife at Work* certification at Center Sand's Gopher Tortoise/Blue Bird Preserve.

"Titan America is being recognized as an industry leader in corporate conservation," says Margaret O'Gorman, WHC president. "The company is a model for how the Wildlife Habitat Council connects corporations and communities to create habitat and increase biodiversity on corporate properties for the benefit of all." Through its certification programs of private lands owned by the corporate sector, WHC has set the standard for conservation programs on privately held land for more than 25 years.

The Center Sand site is a 1,400-acre property, consisting of two mines and associated processing facilities in Lake County. In 2006, it was discovered that threatened "gopher" tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) inhabit the mining area. "The find provided our wildlife team with a unique opportunity to work with local biologists to transport the turtles away from the active mining area and establish a 35-acre gopher tortoise preserve on-site," says Brian Bleakney, General Manager of Center Sand.

Native species, which provide food and habitat for the tortoises, were planted in 2008 and fences were installed around the area. The company declined the option of having the State of Florida move the turtles to another part of the state. The wildlife team, in partnership with local biologists, relocated over 200 burrows and 56 gopher tortoises to the preserve in July 2008. Informational signs were also installed to educate visitors and employees about the importance of protecting the gopher tortoise habitat.

"Titan America's encounter with the endangered gopher tortoise at the Center Sand's site provides a vibrant example of our commitment to sustainable practices," says George Pantazopoulos, Vice President of Cement, Pozzolans and Aggregate, Titan Florida. "The Wildlife Habitat Council's recognition is an added plus."

Over a 12-month period, employees, biologists and state employees conducted extensive monitoring. Gopher tortoise burrows within the preserve were observed to contain numerous mature adult tortoises that found the habitat satisfactory. Given that the tortoises were introduced to their new home in 2008, their continued residence strongly suggests that the habitat is more than suitable.

"The wildlife team is taking steps to initiate more partnerships with local organizations so that we can further enhance the site," says Bleakney. "For example, we are working with Bok

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Gardens to collect and store rare scrub plums found in the preserve for future germination. We are also working with the Florida Forest Service to implement an invasive species management program on the site. Center Sand is dedicated to enhancing wildlife habitat for all native species, including the rare gopher tortoise population."

Center Sand's wildlife team has also dedicated a five-acre piece of property to be maintained and monitored as bird conservatory area after noticing a decline in bird population from 2012 into 2013. Royal tern and black-necked stilts nest in the conserved habitat. The team is continuing to provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds by controlling the spread of invasive species, such as natal grass.

The Wildlife Habitat Council is a nonprofit, non-lobbying organization dedicated to increasing the quality and amount of wildlife habitat on corporate, private and public lands. WHC devotes its resources to building partnerships with corporations and conservation groups to create solutions that balance the demands of economic growth with the requirements of a healthy, bio diverse and sustainable environment. WHC-assisted wildlife habitat and conservation education programs are found in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 11 other countries. To learn more, visit www.wildlifehc.org.

Center Sand, Tarmac America LLC, d/b/a Titan Florida, is a subsidiary of Titan America, LLC, the premier heavy building materials producer in the eastern United States. Titan America LLC is headquartered in Norfolk, VA and its industries include cement, aggregates, ready-mixed concrete and fly ash beneficiation. Its parent company, Titan Cement Company, S.A., headquartered in Athens, Greece, is a signatory to the UN Global Compact, a group of companies committed to sustainable and socially responsible business practices.

Photo Available

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