

RAINFOREST TRUST®



VOL. XII: 2019

**CONSERVING FORESTS
FOR OUR CLIMATE**

RAINFOREST TRUST RECEIVES HIGHEST CHARITY NAVIGATOR RATING

For the fifth consecutive year, Rainforest Trust has been recognized as one of the most efficient and effective nonprofit organizations in the country by Charity Navigator, the largest independent evaluator of charities in the United States. It was awarded 4 stars, the highest possible rating.

"ONLY 13% OF THE CHARITIES WE EVALUATE HAVE RECEIVED AT LEAST 5 CONSECUTIVE 4-STAR EVALUATIONS, INDICATING THAT RAINFOREST TRUST OUTPERFORMS MOST OTHER CHARITIES IN AMERICA," SAID MICHAEL THATCHER, CHARITY NAVIGATOR CEO & PRESIDENT. "THIS EXCEPTIONAL DESIGNATION FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR SETS RAINFOREST TRUST APART FROM ITS PEERS & DEMONSTRATES TO THE PUBLIC ITS TRUSTWORTHINESS."

"As a donor and board member, Rainforest Trust's low overhead costs and financial transparency are very important to me," said Dr. Eric Veach, Rainforest Trust Board Chair. "I am proud that the Rainforest Trust team has worked so hard to maintain these high standards as we continue to protect threatened rainforest habitat throughout the world."



To further bolster its positive impact, Rainforest Trust is moving into its fifth year of the SAVES Challenge. In 2016, we committed to raising \$50 million by the end of 2020 to be matched by a generous friend and conservationist. The result of the SAVES Challenge is a total of \$100 million invested in the establishment of new protected areas to save threatened species across the globe.

WAYS TO GIVE

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RainforestTrust.org

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1 (800) 456-4930

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P.O. Box 841
Warrenton, VA 20188

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**RAINFOREST
TRUST®**

We purchase and protect threatened tropical habitats to save endangered wildlife through local partnerships and community engagement.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO



DEAR FRIENDS,

Three and a half years ago, Rainforest Trust launched the **SAVES CHALLENGE**, a bold initiative to invest \$100 million in protected area conservation projects and help **PROTECT 50 MILLION ACRES BY 2020**. Initiated by a generous and committed conservationist who pledged an anonymous gift of \$50 million, this money was intended to match another \$50 million raised by Rainforest Trust.

This was an ambitious goal — by design. We wanted to increase the sense of **URGENCY** around conservation work and further emphasize **LAND PROTECTION** as an effective and cost efficient way to reduce threats to endangered species. In the process we've been able to demonstrate, on a scale previously not possible, the many other benefits of **DIRECT LAND CONSERVATION**.

PROTECTED AREAS create a **RIPPLE EFFECT OF POSITIVE IMPACTS**, safeguarding biodiversity, improving our planet's health and securing the welfare of communities living nearby.

This year, the terrible fires raging across Brazil, Indonesia, Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo reemphasized the need to protect rainforests and other tropical habitat. These tragedies have delineated the connections between unprotected forests, deforestation, species survival and the repercussions of the climate crisis. This news coincided with the recent clarity of a new generation's voice, pleading with us to safeguard their future.

The **URGENCY** of our work — saving rainforests, protecting land and stopping deforestation, — **COULD NOT BE MORE CLEAR**.

Since the launch of the SAVES Challenge, Rainforest Trust has invested more than **\$85.9 MILLION IN CONSERVATION PROJECTS** that have or will soon protect **48.89 MILLION ACRES**. None of this would have been possible without our supporters, without you and thousands like you who believe that protecting ecosystems around the world is not only important, but crucial.

SO WE ARE NOT STOPPING. In fact, we are redoubling our efforts. As threats to rainforests around the world grow, we need your continued support more than ever. **THE WORK** — despite all we've accomplished — **IS FAR FROM OVER**.

In this newsletter, you will read stories about protected areas we worked to establish or expand with our local conservation partners in Thailand (p. 4), Ecuador (p. 9) and Indonesia (p. 5). We're also sharing the details of new projects we'll be undertaking with your support, in Liberia (p. 14) and another initiative in South Africa (p. 15). In addition, Rainforest Trust Conservation Fellows discuss ongoing wildfire management on the ground (p. 17).

You made all this work possible. From a small land purchase in the Cayman Islands (p. 7) to the protection of millions of acres of indigenous lands in Bolivia (p. 11), you have been and will continue to be the **CATALYST** for **RAINFOREST TRUST'S SUCCESS**.

I hope you continue to stand with Rainforest Trust in pursuit of the SAVES Challenge's audacious objectives. **THE RAINFORESTS — AND OUR PLANET — NEED YOU**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Gruin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

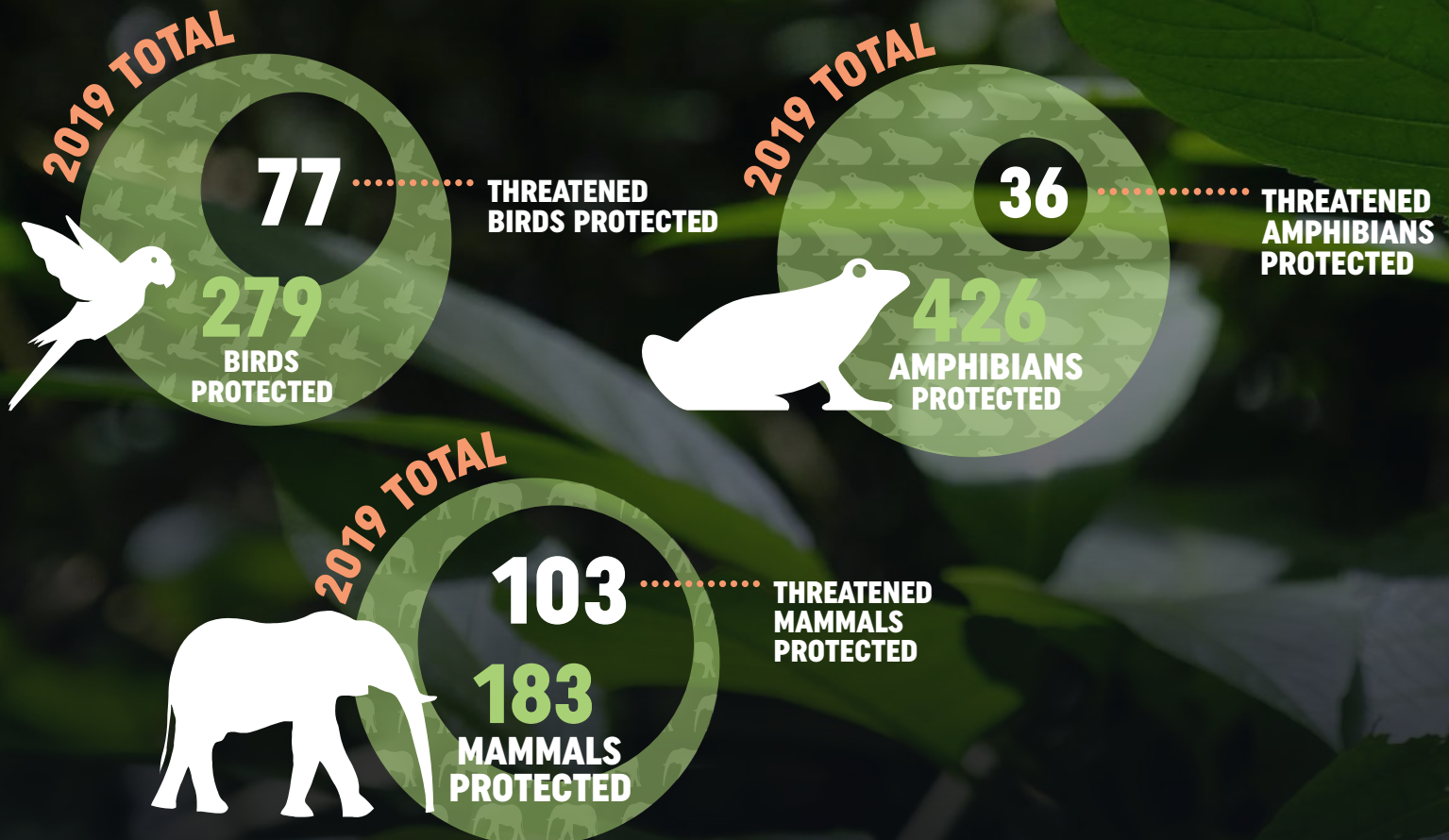
MARK GRUIN

YEAR IN REVIEW

RAINFOREST TRUST MADE INCREDIBLE STRIDES IN 2019. WE COMPLETED IMPORTANT PROJECTS IN AFRICA, ASIA-PACIFIC, LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. WITH THE SUPPORT OF OUR LOCAL PARTNERS, AND RAINFOREST TRUST CONSERVATION FELLOWS AND GUARDIANS, WE SAFEGUARDED VULNERABLE HABITATS AND THEIR RESIDENT SPECIES.

EACH ACRE WE HELP SAVE PREVENTS DEFORESTATION AND KEEPS CARBON WHERE IT BELONGS — STORED IN EARTH'S TROPICAL FORESTS.

WE CELEBRATE THESE VICTORIES WITH YOU AND LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED CONSERVATION SUCCESS IN THE COMING YEAR.



123,905
ACRES

5
NEW
GUARDIANS

7
NEW
FELLOWS



23,582,815 mT
OF CARBON STORED
IN CO₂ EQUIVALENT

471,151 mT
OF CARBON STORED
IN CO₂ EQUIVALENT

792,280
ACRES

8
NEW
FELLOWS

16
NEW
GUARDIANS



16
NEW
GUARDIANS

8
NEW
FELLOWS



258,910,372 mT
OF CARBON STORED
IN CO₂ EQUIVALENT

2,393,446
ACRES



NEW PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

Rainforest Trust relies on the expertise and networks of local partners for the continued success of our protected areas. This year, we had the opportunity to collaborate with many new partners, including these in **Laos, Mexico** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.



RAINFOREST TRUST is working with partner organization Asian Arks to establish the Khoun Xe Nong Ma National Protected Area in Laos. Asian Arks, founded last year, is the world's only nonprofit organization devoted exclusively to safeguarding Asia's wildlife through direct conservation

land management. Working in partnership with communities and governments, this new organization creates refuges and provides an insurance policy against extinction for Asia's iconic species. The Khoun Xe Nong Ma project is in the Annamite Mountains, a biodiversity hotspot

stretching through eastern Indochina. Scientists note that this area of Laos is one of the most important sites in the region for a suite of threatened and endemic species, including the Critically Endangered Saola and Large-antlered Muntjac.



THROUGH A STRONG new partnership with Pronatura Veracruz, Rainforest Trust has helped establish the 1000-acre Coatepec Protected Area in a rare tropical montane cloud forest in central Veracruz, Mexico. Pronatura Veracruz has worked in the region

for over 11 years and is the most active conservation organization in the three Mexican states along the Gulf of Mexico. They have worked on a variety of projects and supported the protection of over 40,000 acres of land in the country. But the Coatepec project

is especially vital: tropical montane cloud forests occupy less than 1% of the total area of Mexico but contain the country's most biodiverse vegetation and a high rate of plant, amphibian, reptilian and avian endemism.



THIS YEAR, Rainforest Trust worked with partner Lola ya Bonobo to designate the 117,412-acre Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve. The reserve, almost 25% larger than initially planned, now protects habitat for the Bonobo, an Endangered great ape species. Bonobos are found in Congo Basin forests of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo. The Congo Basin spans six countries and holds, the second largest tropical rainforest in the world. Since its founding, Lola ya Bonobo has been a pioneer in Bonobo conservation. Right now, they manage the world's only sanctuary for orphaned Bonobos rescued from the bushmeat and

wildlife trade. To create and maintain successful projects, their work encompasses conservation education, community engagement, ethological research facilitation, wildlife law enforcement and the reintroduction of rehabilitated Bonobos.

TOP: PRONATURA NORESTE; MIDDLE LEFT: ASIA ARKS; MIDDLE RIGHT: PRONATURA NORESTE; BOTTOM LEFT: LOLA YA BONOBO



12
THREATENED
SPECIES

SPOON-BILLED SANDPIPER

KEY SHOREBIRD HABITAT SAFEGUARDED IN THAILAND

IN SEPTEMBER, Rainforest Trust and partner Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) worked together to purchase 19 acres of shorebird habitat in Pak Thale, a Key Biodiversity Area in Thailand's Inner Gulf.

Scientists consider the Inner Gulf the region's most important habitat for shorebird abundance and diversity. Part of the reason for that distinction is sites like Pak Thale, which hosts over 7,000 waterbirds during the northern hemisphere winter.

The new protected area is vital to the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, the most threatened migratory bird flight path in the world. Several threatened bird species make their way to Pak Thale seasonally, including the Critically Endangered Spoon-

billed Sandpiper and the Endangered Great Knot, Spotted Greenshank and Far Eastern Curlew.

BIRDS FOLLOWING FLYWAYS RELY ON REGULAR STOPOVER SITES TO REST & REFUEL. BUT STOPOVER HABITATS LIKE PAK THALE ARE IN SERIOUS DANGER OF DISAPPEARING FROM LAND DEVELOPMENT & HIGH RATES OF COASTAL EROSION.

Pak Thale is also the origin point for salt production from salt pans in Thailand, a tradition that dates back over 800 years. In this area, tides naturally bring water over the flats, leaving shallow pools. During the evaporation process, these shallow pools serve as important feeding grounds for migratory birds, but as these salt flats are converted to other uses, like fish farming, feeding opportunities are lost.

BCST has been managing the area and promoting birding — or birdwatching — providing ecotourism benefits to the local people. People travel locally and from around the world with the express purpose of viewing rare birds, often investing in local protected areas and enlisting community members as guides.

Rainforest Trust and BCST recognize the importance of protecting birds in Pak Thale while promoting sustainable tourism that benefits local communities. The protection of this area will ensure that the shallow pools that are vital for migratory birds will be maintained to further promote ecotourism in the area.





BURUNG INDONESIA

PROTECTED AREA EXPANDED IN WEST JAVA

BURUNG INDONESIA, ("Burung" means "bird" in Indonesian) is a conservation nonprofit organization established in 2002. As the country's BirdLife International partner, Burung Indonesia aims to conserve nearly 2,000 species of birds and their habitat. The organization's work spans the 17,000 islands of this sprawling archipelagic nation, which is rich in endemism and home to many of the world's endangered and critically endangered species.

Burung Indonesia and Rainforest Trust are working to expand a network of strategic protected areas across West Java. This work is crucial for the conservation of remaining forest areas on the most densely populated island of the fourth largest country in the world.

Through this project, two priority sites for biodiversity are to be designated as new protected areas, complete with management plans that incorporate the needs of local communities, ensuring support for the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

Burung Indonesia is currently completing the analysis phase of the project. They have surveyed 20 montane forest regions on the island of Java. The results have proven to be fruitful thus far. They encountered the Critically Endangered Javan Green Magpie and other endangered bird species like the Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher and

Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush. They also observed primate species such as the Endangered Silvery Gibbon, as well as the ever-majestic and elusive Javan Leopard, an endemic subspecies. This indicates that there are still key regions of the island that are rich in biodiversity in need of protection.

"RAINFOREST TRUST IS THRILLED TO BE WORKING WITH BURUNG INDONESIA," SAID DAVID DELLATORE, RAINFOREST TRUST ASIA-PACIFIC CONSERVATION MANAGER. "WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT STEP OF CREATING NEW PROTECTED AREAS IN SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE WORLD FOR BIODIVERSITY."





BAPAK ANTON

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE FOR COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

PAK SADAR ANTON is part of the last living generation of Dayak Ngaju, one of the oldest indigenous groups on the island of Borneo. As a respected and well-known elder member of the Mungku Baru village, his perspective is deeply valued because of his understanding of centuries-old Dayak knowledge and practices. Pak Anton also serves as a senior member of the Mungku Baru Kelompok Tani, a small-scale farmer's group, which, like other similar local organizations, is one of the most influential social networks at the village level.

Rainforest Trust partner Borneo Nature Foundation (BNF) has high-profile conservation projects throughout the island, including several along the Rungan River. BNF met Pak Anton in 2014 when they began working on a project in his village. They spoke to him during the initial socialization meetings for their initiative, Education Forest, which aims to bring environmental education courses to the local school. Realizing Pak Anton's status in the community, BNF tried to involve him in community forums, strategic meetings

and socialization events. They hoped he would support the implementation of their conservation strategies. He declined.

"As a senior community member, Pak Anton's voice was respected, and [his refusal] initially created a perception of distrust," said Bernat Ripoll Capilla, Co-director of BNF.

"OUR COMMITMENT TO THE RUNGAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IS WHAT CAUSED PAK ANTON TO REALIZE THAT WE BOTH HAD THE SAME GOALS & LONG-TERM HOPES," SAID CAPILLA.

But in recent years, BNF has made significant efforts to socialize their mission, vision and organizational goals while demonstrating the benefits that conservation can bring to local communities. And in 2015, they started developing research activities for their Education Forest initiative and hired local staff to support fieldwork. Their community development teams also offered training on permaculture with agricultural cooperatives like Mungku Baru farmer's group.

Hundreds of Mungku Baru community members have benefited from BNF's research and conservation activities. After realizing the positive impact these programs had on his community, Pak Anton began to view BNF in a different light.

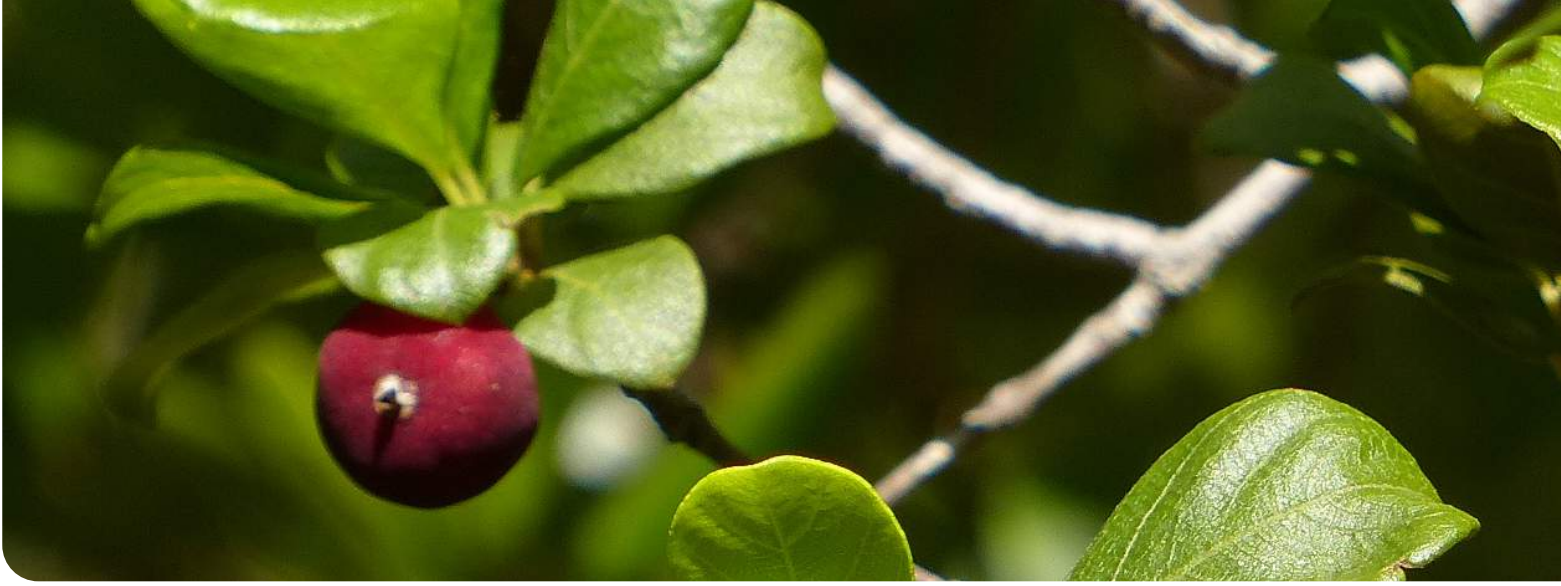
"After three years of successful collaborations, he became a part of the Education Forest project," said Capilla. "Since then, he has been supporting our work and has even facilitated meetings when community conflicts arose."

Pak Anton was made the Mungku Baru Education Forest public relations representative. He represents the initiative working full-time for the local University Muhammadiyah of Palangkaraya (UMP), where his objective is to build and maintain beneficial relationships between the university and the community.

"Pak Anton's story exemplifies a common conservation issue that environmental NGOs face when they work with small villages or communities," said Capilla. "Initial distrust, lack of understanding [of] the conservation goals and not recognizing the long-term benefits for community members are often a source of conflict in effective conservation."

BNF is still facing challenges at the community level, but they believe that regular socialization efforts, communication and transparency — and bringing direct benefits to communities — are the best ways to implement positive change. Building trust is the most effective way to create more stories like Pak Anton's and ensure the viability of long-term conservation programs.





CAYMAN ISLANDS

LAND PURCHASE IN CAYMAN ISLANDS PROTECTS BLUE IGUANA

RAINFOREST TRUST and local partner The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds-Cayman Islands Nature Limited (the RSPB-CINL) purchased 9 acres on Grand Cayman to safeguard habitat for the Endangered Grand Cayman Blue Iguana. The partner will be leasing the land to the National Trust for the Cayman Islands (NTCI) for management in perpetuity. This property expands NTCI's existing 646.6-acre Salina Reserve, a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA).

GRAND CAYMAN, THE LARGEST OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS, IS THE SOLE GRAND CAYMAN BLUE IGUANA HABITAT IN THE WORLD.

Researchers estimate the species' total population at 443 adults, and the Salina Reserve has part of that. But the partner expects their ongoing conservation efforts will increase this number. The new protected area is one of many release sites for NCTI's Blue Iguana Recovery Program. This initiative breeds and head-starts individuals for release into the wild. The program allows experts to research and monitor the species to ensure its long-term survival and population sustainability.

This new protected land will buffer the reserve from threats like road construction and housing developments. This growth

destroys Grand Cayman Blue Iguana habitat and increases contact with predators like feral cats and competitors such as the invasive Common Green Iguana. Because of the spatial nature of these threats, this new protected area is the most effective conservation solution.

The island's biodiverse dry forest habitat is home to many globally threatened endemic trees such as the Endangered Ironwood. Ironwoods are some of the island's key forest canopy trees and a source of fruit for iguanas. The reserve has several other notable botanical residents, including the Critically Endangered



TOP: BOTTOM RIGHT: ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS; BOTTOM LEFT: CPHIFER



Grand Cayman False Foxglove and the Endangered Corato and Cayman Thatch Palm. A system of cave habitats for bats and other endemic cave fauna also runs through the Salina Reserve.

"THE EXPANSION OF THE SALINA RESERVE WILL BE PIVOTAL TO THE RECOVERY OF THIS SPECIES & THE LONG-TERM PROTECTION OF THE UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS," SAID ANGELA YANG, RAINFOREST TRUST'S CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER.

The site is almost completely undisturbed by neighboring human communities. This isolation, combined with the area's habitat diversity, means the reserve safeguards a high proportion of Grand Cayman's biodiversity. In future years, the new land will be a gateway to larger-scale land acquisition and expansions of the Salina Reserve to further safeguard the island's unique species. NTCI and the RSPB-CINL's dedicated, combined efforts will ensure conservation success for the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana and other endangered species that call the island home.





185
THREATENED
SPECIES

2,852
ACRES
SAVED

2,584,537
TREES
SAVED

44,105 mT
CARBON SECURED
(CO₂ EQUIVALENT)

ECUADOR

CRITICAL EXPANSIONS IN THE ECUADOREAN AMAZON

The unique and threatened biodiversity of the **Ecuadorean Amazon** has long been one of Rainforest Trust's conservation priorities. Since our founding, we have helped to protect over **327,000 acres of critical rainforest** habitat in Ecuador. Recently, Rainforest Trust helped **expand two significant reserves** in the Ecuadorean Amazon.

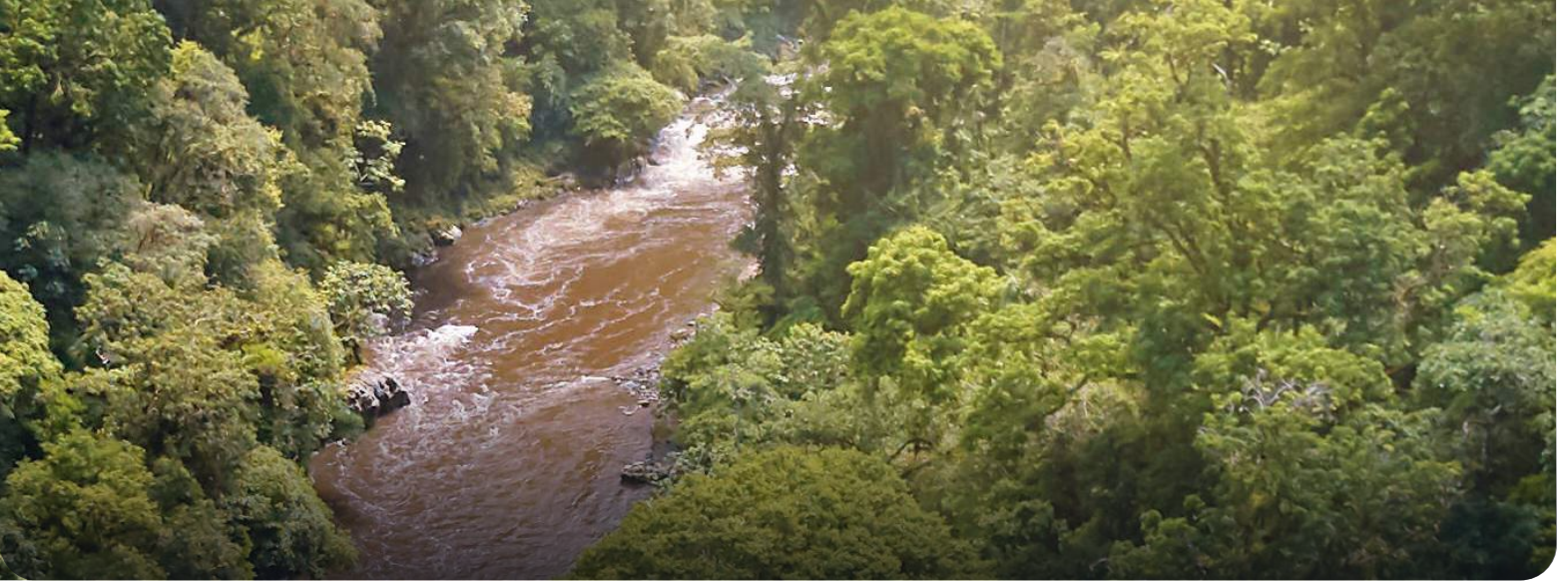
NARUPA RESERVE

In collaboration with our longest-running partner in Ecuador, Fundación Jocotoco, we purchased three new parcels, totaling 392 acres, to expand the Narupa Reserve. The protected area will ultimately be 1,333 acres, safeguarding key habitat in the Napo bioregion of northeast Ecuador.

THIS REGION IS HOME TO 300 SPECIES OF BIRDS, INCLUDING THE ENDANGERED BLACK-AND-CHESTNUT EAGLE & THE VULNERABLE CERULEAN WARBLER, A NEOTROPICAL MIGRANT THAT APPEARS IN MANY NORTH AMERICAN FORESTS DURING THE SUMMER.

This purchase contributes to Fundación Jocotoco's long-term aspiration to further expand the Narupa Reserve and protect threatened forests and species in the surrounding areas.



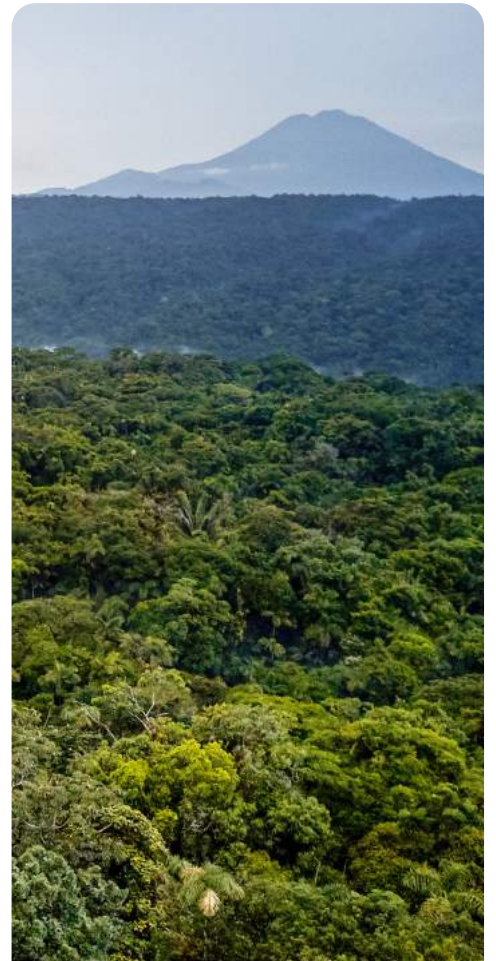


BIGAL RIVER BIOLOGICAL RESERVE

We also worked with Fundación Sumac Muyu to expand the Bigal River Biological Reserve by 199 acres. The reserve houses ecologically unique, old-growth upper-tropical foothill forests, providing a protected wildlife corridor from highlands to lowlands. The reserve is also a buffer to the Sumaco Napo-Galeras National Park in the Sumaco Biosphere Reserve. This protected area is part of the Northern Andes Endemic Bird Area, which is classified as a Key Biodiversity Area.

These strategic expansions have protected critical rainforest habitats from agricultural encroachment and harmful development. Safeguarding Latin America's rainforests is vital, and Rainforest Trust plans to continue expanding our network of protection. We are currently working on projects that will safeguard another 4,000 acres in the region and are constantly seeking out new opportunities to expand and create reserves that protect the vital wildlife of Ecuador.

THE HOTSPOT SUPPORTS TAXA FROM BOTH THE ANDES & THE AMAZON, & IS HOME TO OVER 480 BIRD SPECIES, 56 LARGE MAMMAL SPECIES, 77 REPTILE SPECIES, 64 AMPHIBIAN SPECIES, 159 ARACHNID SPECIES & 1,396 INSECT SPECIES.



CENTER/BOTTOM RIGHT: PAUL BERTNER; MIDDLE RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT: FUNDACIÓN SUMAC MUYU



143
THREATENED
SPECIES



2,123,347
ACRES
SAVED



1,924,578,912
TREES
SAVED



200,064,515 mT
CARBON SECURED
(CO₂ EQUIVALENT)



BOLIVIA

NEW RESERVE PROTECTS VITAL ECOREGION IN BOLIVIA

THIS YEAR, Rainforest Trust and partner Wildlife Conservation Society-Bolivia (WCS-Bolivia) established the Rhukanrhuka Municipal Reserve. The 2,123,749-acre reserve in the Beni region protects grasslands in the transition area between the Sub-Andean and Llanos de Mojos ecosystems. The Beni grasslands, an area twice the size of Portugal, is South America's third largest savanna complex and one of Bolivia's most vital ecoregions.

This expansive tropical savanna and the pristine forests found to the north contain multiple rivers that follow the eastern slope of the Andes Mountains. A combination of rain during the wet season and snowmelt from the Andes causes these rivers to flood almost half of the land each season. This flooding creates suitable habitat for an extensive variety of wildlife in this region.

The new reserve will help safeguard important populations of emblematic and threatened mammal species, including Jaguars and Pumas. Other resident mammals include Maned Wolves and both Collared and White-lipped Peccaries. The area is home to two endemic Titi monkeys, as well as Black-faced Black Spider Monkeys, two species of Howler Monkeys and Tufted Capuchins.

The northern section of the reserve is part of the Rogaguado and Ginebra Lakes Important Bird Area (IBA). This wetland savanna habitat is home to a variety of wading birds such as the Cattle Egret, Maguari Stork, Jabiru, Wood Stork and Whistling Heron. The flooded areas attract birds including Black-collared Hawks, Sunbitterns, Sungrebes and Wattled Jacanas.

"THE DESIGNATION OF THIS RESERVE WILL NOT ONLY EXPAND CONNECTIVITY FOR WILD SPECIES IN A CRITICAL REGION OF BOLIVIA, BUT WILL CEMENT THEIR LONG-TERM PROTECTION," SAID ANGELA YANG, RAINFOREST TRUST'S CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER.

"The new protected area is now almost twice as large as the originally proposed reserve due to the great collaborative work of our partner and stakeholders, especially the communities and municipal government."

The Rhukanrhuka Municipal Reserve is a key part of a network of protected areas and indigenous lands. This network stretches over 34 million acres, from the snow-capped Andean peaks of Apolobamba near Peru to the Beni alluvial plains. Three indigenous titled lands, as



TOP, BOTTOM LEFT: WCS-BOLIVIA; BOTTOM RIGHT: RAINFOREST TRUST



well as the Pilon Lajas Biosphere Reserve and the Santa Rosa de Yacuma Municipal Protected Area all border the reserve.

The protected area will prevent further habitat loss from agricultural expansion and increase the landscape's resilience to anthropogenic threats. Creating this reserve is an opportunity for local authorities to improve natural resource governance. Having a protected area allows the municipal government to increase vigilance over illegal settlements, timber extraction, fishing and hunting.

"We applaud the Municipal Government of Reyes, its communities and private ranchers for taking this huge step towards reconciling local livelihoods, sustainable development and cultural values with the need to protect this vast wilderness and key species," said Dr. Lilian Painter, Country Director

for WCS's Bolivia Program. WCS-Bolivia will provide expertise in protected area management, including strategic vision and objectives, a financial strategy and participation mechanisms. They will support the Reyes municipal government in developing management programs focused on endangered species conservation, monitoring, control and vigilance, local participation, outreach and ecotourism.

"RAINFOREST TRUST IS INCREDIBLY PLEASED TO BE PARTNERING WITH WCS-BOLIVIA, THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT & THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE PROTECTION OF THIS EXTRAORDINARILY IMPORTANT & RICHLY BIODIVERSE HABITAT," SAID MARK GRUIN, ACTING CEO OF RAINFOREST TRUST "FOR US, PARTNERSHIPS LIKE THIS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE PROTECTED AREAS."



TOP RIGHT, MIDDLE RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT, BOTTOM RIGHT: WCS-BOLIVIA



PHILANTHROPY

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS SUPPORT RAINFOREST TRUST

WHITNEY KEELER, a teacher at Hopi Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona, was paying attention to the recent student-led climate movement. In response, she decided to take a proactive approach to educating her students about conservation. Along with assistance from fellow teachers Jacqueline Comerford and Kelsey Wolf, Keeler created the Environmental Leaders Club for upper elementary students. Some of the club's activities involve fundraising for environmental organizations, and over the past two years they've donated money to Rainforest Trust through their Penny Wars Challenge.

The Penny Wars Challenge is a way to motivate students while educating them about the climate crisis. Students ask for donations in pennies, competing with other classes to see who can collect the most in a week. "Last year was our first Penny War. We made an insane amount of money in change, and we donated it all to Rainforest Trust." This year, students raised \$2,424 for rainforest conservation.

Rainforest Trust is keenly aware of how important it is to engage students in the fight against deforestation. Students that participate in a Penny Wars Challenge, or any other educational fundraising

initiative, become part of Rainforest Trust's Rainforest Ambassadors Program. If you have a student or school that would like to raise funds and awareness for rainforest conservation, please call us at (800) 456-4930!



ZOO ATLANTA'S QUARTERS FOR CONSERVATION

A ZOO is a great place to see and learn about wildlife from all over the world and many zoos are also taking conservation action to protect the natural habitats of the species in their care.

Zoo Atlanta hosted a contest beginning in 2018 and concluding the summer of 2019 called "Quarters for Conservation." With each ticket purchase, they set aside 25 cents and visitors got to vote on the specific animal they wanted to protect. Thanks to the efforts of zookeeper Kelly Daire, the winner this year was the Fossa, Madagascar's largest native predator.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List lists the Fossa, native only to the island nation of Madagascar, as "Vulnerable" to extinction. Much of this threat comes from habitat loss: 80% of the Fossa's forest habitat has been destroyed. This deforestation has contributed to a 30% decrease in the Fossa population. Now, these already solitary animals are finding it even more difficult to find food and mates.

But Zoo Atlanta's contest and marketing raised \$7,000 for Rainforest Trust and the Ivohibory Protected Area. Rainforest

Trust is working to protect this area with MICET, the Madagascar Institute for the Conservation of Tropical Environments. This forest reserve will be a safe haven for Fossa and many other species found only in Madagascar.





525
THREATENED
SPECIES

40,413,780 mT
CARBON SECURED
(CO₂ EQUIVALENT)

GOLA FOREST NATIONAL PARK

COMMUNITY PROJECT TO PROTECT WILDLIFE & LIVELIHOODS

THE UPPER GUINEA forests of West Africa are home to some of the world's most iconic wildlife. African Elephants maneuver through the thick jungle. The Endangered Pygmy Hippopotamus, a relative of the much larger Hippopotamus, lurks in hidden pools. Bird species range from the unusual Vulnerable White-necked Rockfowl to the striking Endangered Gola Malimbe.

BUT 70% OF THESE MAGNIFICENT FORESTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DESTROYED. THE REMAINING PATCHES ARE SCATTERED & FRAGMENTED WITH FEW LARGE, UNINTERRUPTED FOREST STRETCHES.

Without these expansive habitats, many of the resident species are disappearing. Yet Liberia offers an opportunity for hope. The country holds 42% of the remaining forests — and an opportunity to save the Upper Guinea forest ecosystem. In 2016, Rainforest Trust partnered with the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL) to create Gola Forest National Park. This area, securing over 200,000 acres, was the country's second national park. Now, Rainforest Trust is partnering with SCNL again. This time, they plan to create five new Community Forests. These community-managed zones will expand forest protection and increase long-term sustainability for the Gola Forest ecosystem.

Elephants and Chimpanzees. One of the most pervasive problems in the region is the lack of land-use planning and enforcement capacity for maintaining protected sites. These community forests will provide an opportunity to institute such strategies that will help reduce bushmeat hunting and deforestation.

SCNL will work with four different local clans (Tonglay, Normon, Gola Konneh and Sopko) to create these Community Forests. These groups will manage their protected areas through Community Forest Organizing Committees. These committees will include a Community Conservation Team of six men and six women who will run patrols, coordinate conservation education and monitor the forests for conservation progress. For this new project with Rainforest Trust, SCNL is bringing their institutional knowledge and their relationships with local and federal government officials in Liberia. These Community Forests will cover 354,350 acres and connect Gola Forest National Park to the upcoming Foya Reserve, creating one of the last uninterrupted stretches of forest habitat in West Africa.



These areas are home to the Endangered Chimpanzee, Jentink's Duiker and Upper Guinea Red Colobus, as well as amphibians like the Endangered Tai Toad and Ringed River Frog. Over 300 bird species inhabit these forests, in addition to 31 fish species and 600 butterfly species. Because of this diversity and abundance, wildlife scientists have recognized the area as one of the world's conservation priority sites. But threats abound.

Deforestation, often from mining and logging, as well as cocoa and oil palm plantations, is eroding the forest edges. Bushmeat hunting is an acute threat, especially to colobus monkeys, African





 **47,916**
ACRES
SAVED



SOUTPANSBERG, S. AFRICA

PROTECTED AREA SECURES VITAL CORRIDOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S Soutpansberg mountain range has an extraordinary variety of important and unique habitat types. The resident species reflect that diversity, ranging from small Endangered species, like the Forest Rain Frog, to large, wide-ranging predators, like the Leopard. But wildlife poaching, agricultural expansion and sand-mining threaten the future of the region's ecosystem.

RAINFOREST TRUST'S LOCAL PARTNER, THE ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST (EWT), PURCHASED A VITAL LAND PARCEL IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SOUTPANSBERG MOUNTAIN RANGE. SECURING THE 3,298-ACRE PROPERTY IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD CONNECTING A NETWORK OF RESERVES IN THIS UNIQUE & BIODIVERSE LANDSCAPE.

Besides purchasing land for conservation, this project engages local landowners in biodiversity stewardship to combat the poaching of leopards and other threatened species.

The final goal is to declare the Soutpansberg Protected Area (SPA), covering over 60,000 acres of intact habitat.



TOP: ENDANGERED WILDLIFE TRUST (EWT); BOTTOM LEFT: RAINFOREST TRUST; BOTTOM RIGHT: BENNY REBEL EWT



Oldrich van Schalkwyk, the EWT SPA manager, said the reserve "will work with existing landowners and local communities to make one large protected area with the aim of saving species and habitats, providing critical ecosystem services such as clean water and developing climate change resilience."

"OUR STRATEGY IS TO PROTECT THE EXPANSIVE MOUNTAIN RANGE HABITAT & CURB THE POACHING OF PRECIOUS WILDLIFE," SAID RAINFOREST TRUST'S AFRICA CONSERVATION OFFICER KATIE PUGH. "CONNECTING THIS PROPERTY TO OTHER IMPORTANT BIODIVERSITY SITES IS CRITICAL TO BOLSTER PROTECTION FOR A WIDE RANGE OF THREATENED & ENDEMIC SPECIES."

Researchers are still assessing the new property's unique biodiversity value. But many of the range-restricted species found nearby, such as the Endangered Southern Mountain Reedbuck, are likely to live in this parcel. The Soutpansberg Protected Area will safeguard large swaths of land vital to the reedbuck, rare reptiles and other threatened species.



TOP CENTER, MIDDLE: EWT; LOWER LEFT: OLDDRICH VAN SCHALKWYK, EWT; BOTTOM RIGHT: BENNY REBEL, EWT



WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT IN THE FIELD

The recent **wildfire tragedies** across the globe are detrimental to flora, fauna and people living and working in these areas. They witness this habitat destruction first-hand, and in most cases, are burdened with **finding the solutions** to stop it.

RAINFOREST TRUST spoke to **Conservation Fellows Sonam Tashi Lama (STL) of Red Panda Network, Herman Michael Lyatuu (HML) of Tanzania Forest Conservation Group and Jerónimo Vázquez Ramírez (JVR) of Pronatura Veracruz A.C. about their experiences with wildfire management and the impact these crises have on their work and the world around them.**



Do you have any training in forest fire crisis management?

STL

Yes, I attended courses during my undergrad degree about forest fire management in Nepal. Then, when I started working with the community on Red Panda conservation in eastern Nepal, I trained users of the community forests on community-based forest fire management training.

The training involved theory classes along with some practical sessions to handle tools and protective gear.

In total, I have trained around 60 community members.

JVR

Although "fire" is not an area/program in Pronatura Veracruz, we have some experience. Some of our staff are highly trained to combat fires in the field, to plan and execute fire protection actions, to protect restored or protected areas and in the study of fire regimes in ecosystems.

Have you ever had exposure to out-of-control fires, either near your project site or elsewhere? If so, how were they controlled?

JVR

Yes, out-of-control fires as a consequence of human productive activities (agriculture and livestock mainly) are common in the area where we are implementing the project with Rainforest Trust, but also in other regions where we work (from mangroves to pine forests). In México, fires are fought with the collaboration of local communities, state and federal brigades and sometimes the army. Laws and committees have been established to address this topic in every state of the country. Together with the other stakeholders controlling actions are implemented.

HML

Yes, there was once a fire in my working area. I was informed of it by the local villagers. I asked them to help to fight it, and they did so.



How are you feeling concerning the news of wildfires overcoming tropical forests around the globe?

STL

The news about the tropical wildfires around the globe is upsetting and devastating. The forest fires are not only destroying the tropical forests but destroying the homes of thousands of species.

HML

Fire is a big threat to tropical forests; it has the power to clear trees that have grown for 100 years within seconds. It destroys animals and their habitat.



Do you see a relationship between fires & climate change?

HML

Yes, I can see that it has a double effect. First, it clears trees that remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, like carbon. And second, it emits the carbon that has been stored in the trees.

JVR

Yes, we think there is a direct relation between fires and climate change. Specifically, in the periodicity (as a consequence of prolonged dry season fires are becoming more frequent) and intensity (as a consequence of fires in ecosystems that are not adapted like rainforests). It is important to clarify that although fires are becoming more frequent and more intense, 98% of the current ones originated from human activities (at least in México).

What do you think are the best ways to prevent forest fires, apart from creating protected areas?

HML

Creating fire breaks around the area by clearing all combustible materials that will connect fire to the protected areas. Educate the community on the effects of forest fire/uncontrolled fire.

STL

One of the best ways to prevent forest fires is to train, engage and mobilize the local community on forest fire management. The people from their own community

could be the cause of the forest fire, and thus working with the primary reason [for fires] would be the best option. Secondly, education and awareness about the adverse effects of the forest fires with the local community will also be effective. In the Nepali context, the model of the community forest is working well to mitigate the incidents of forest fires as each and every member of the community is a watchdog of their forest.

JVR

To prevent forest fires, it is necessary to fully understand their role in the ecosystems you are working on. Where the fire plays a natural role, the periodicity of fires should be determined and controlled fires could be started when the ecosystem requires it. On the other hand, where the fires are not beneficial for the ecosystems, direct protection activities should be implemented, such as firebreaks or pruning trees to prevent surface fires from becoming crown fires (forest fires that spread through the treetops).

Complementary to this, it is important to create capacities in local communities to prevent and fight fires. This way they can control and extinguish a fire when it starts or protect their communities while the state brigades arrive. Besides, it is necessary to raise awareness and train farmers to prevent catastrophic fires initiated by their activities.





FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

THE WORLD is witnessing a series of severe ecological tragedies, from fires that continue to blaze in the Amazon to a recent survey detailing an immense decline in North American bird populations over the last 50 years. While the attention these stories capture may be a passing trend in the media, the common denominator between these events remains a present threat: the impending climate crisis.

Directly or indirectly, climate change plays a large part in these tragedies. Anthropogenic influence is bringing the planet to an increasingly unstable climate and leaving many threatened species without habitat. In fact, Earth faces such crippling biodiversity loss that scientists have dubbed the current era the "Anthropocene," a geologic period where people are spurring enormous, permanent changes in the planet's climate and ecosystems. Indeed, we are now living through "The Sixth Mass Extinction."

A multitude of factors contribute to this loss, such as fossil fuel use, unsustainable agricultural practices, logging, mining and encroaching land development, among many others. And with all these processes, deforestation is often the first and most devastating step.

Clearing forests not only releases stored carbon *into* the atmosphere, it also removes trees which filter carbon *from* the atmosphere. This excess of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide is causing an increase and unpredictability in global temperature which threatens habitat for species and livelihoods for indigenous communities. So deforestation is a triple-threat to the planet: increasing the rate of climate change, reducing the planet's ability to mitigate the climate crisis, and destroying homes for species

and communities through both physical deforestation and the climate crisis.

Rainforest Trust's core mission has always been to take the first step in preventing these tragedies: to purchase and protect the most threatened tropical forests, saving endangered wildlife through partnerships and community engagement. Conservation is crucial to the planet's sustainability and protecting land will play a key role in mitigating the climate crisis.

OUR ORGANIZATION WAS CREATED ON THE PREMISE THAT ALL RAINFORESTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE REPLETE WITH ENDANGERED SPECIES & ENDEMIC BIODIVERSITY, SHOULD BE PRIORITY CONSERVATION SITES.





We also know that creating protected areas provides the best means of preventing destruction. For the past 31 years, we have stayed true to our core mission of working with local partners to establish protected areas for biodiversity.

Rainforest Trust and our partners know these forests and the indigenous and local communities that rely on them. We know the science and understand the sobering reality that the world is rapidly approaching an irreversible tipping point.

FORESTS MUST BE PROTECTED — FOR BIODIVERSITY, FOR VITAL NATURE-DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEM SERVICES LIKE CLEAN WATER AND HEALTHY SOILS, & FOR OUR CLIMATE. THIS FOCUS — OUR FOCUS — NEVER WAVERS.



UrgentProtection

Support the conservation work of Rainforest Trust around the world.

IN 2016, RAINFOREST TRUST LAUNCHED AN AMBITIOUS PLAN TO INVEST \$100 MILLION IN CONSERVATION PROJECTS THAT WOULD ULTIMATELY PROTECT 50 MILLION ACRES OF TROPICAL HABITAT BY THE END OF 2020.

Inspired by a generous friend who pledged to match every dollar we raised up to \$50 million, the SAVES Challenge was a bold undertaking. Since then, we have invested **\$85.9 MILLION** in projects totaling over **48.8 MILLION ACRES**.

But we're not stopping there! You can help Rainforest Trust go beyond this goal by making a gift to the **CONSERVATION ACTION FUND**. This crucial fund supports projects that safeguard critical rainforests and other habitat that benefits species, communities and our planet.

JOIN US TODAY.

COMBINED ACREAGE THROUGH 2020

**48.8
MILLION+
ACRES**

SAVES
CHALLENGE
SAFEGUARDING AREAS VITAL TO ENDANGERED SPECIES

COMBINED INVESTMENTS THROUGH 2020

**\$85.9
MILLION
DOLLARS**