

NEWS

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Gabriela Fleury, 29, is Recognized on International 2021 “30 Under 30” Science List

Rainforest Trust’s Conservation Partnerships Officer hailed for her work in Namibia

WARRENTON, Va., Dec. 14, 2020 – Gabriela (Gabi) Fleury, 29, has just been recognized by [Forbes annual 30 Under 30 Class of 2021](#). This year’s list includes 600 individuals from 30 countries. They range from entrepreneurs, activists, athletes to scientists and entertainers. This year marks the 10-year anniversary for the list that includes many of the brightest minds and innovations of 2020. Fleury is one of 30 selected in the science category for her conservation work, and one of three conservationists chosen from around the world.

Fleury, who resides in Warrenton and works as the conservation partnerships officer for the Rainforest Trust (also headquartered in Warrenton,) was recognized in the science category by Forbes for the work she has done in Namibia where she studied ways for humans and wild carnivores to co-exist. Fleury led a research team to test ways to reduce cheetah-livestock conflict, designed a picture-only video game to teach non-literate Mozambican villagers different ways to prevent livestock losses and will soon be testing scent deterrents to safely keep African wild dogs off commercial farms.

Fleury has been passionate about wildlife conservation since the age of five and throughout her childhood spent in locations from Brazil to Alaska. She majored in geographic science at James Madison University with a concentration in environmental conservation and completed her undergraduate thesis on lion and livestock conflict with pastoralists in the Amboseli Region of Kenya. She received a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship from Rotary International and completed her master’s degree in conservation biology from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She completed her master’s thesis on the social drivers of land cover change in a land restitution case in the Northern Cape of South Africa. After graduate school, Fleury spent two years assisting on-the-ground NGOs Action for Cheetahs and Big Life Foundation in Kenya with human-wildlife conflict research, data analysis and grant-writing and leading Cheetah Conservation Fund’s human dimensions research team in north-central Namibia. She received a Fulbright Study/Research Award for work in Botswana.

At Rainforest Trust, Fleury develops and manages the organization’s Fellows and Guardians programs. The Fellows program focuses on individual capacity building to improve partners’ skill sets in protected area management. The Guardian program supports partners’ rangers and park guards through providing them with resources they need to do their conservation work effectively and recognizing them for their commitment to an often-difficult occupation.

For example, when the University of Wisconsin-Madison developed a conservation standards course over the past summer, Rainforest Trust partnered with them to have [10 Rainforest Trust Fellows](#) attend the course. Because the course was online, students could attend from around the globe. Fleury was instrumental in facilitating the Fellow participation. At least two of the attendees from Ghana and Uganda remarked about how meaningful the course was.

Throughout her career in four African countries and now at Rainforest Trust, Fleury has always worked with and alongside rangers. She said, “In general, mentorship opportunities and capacity-building of in-country conservationists is something I think is often overlooked in the push to reach critical conservation objectives, but it’s essential for long-term sustainability of initiatives.”

“We are extremely proud that Forbes chose to recognize Gabi for her conservation work,” said James Deutsch, CEO of Rainforest Trust. “Gabi has done so much for conservation and we’re delighted to have her as part of our team. She is indicative of the talent and dedication of many at the Rainforest Trust.”

To learn more about the Rainforest Trust, visit www.rainforesttrust.org.

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About Rainforest Trust

Founded in 1988 by three visionary conservationists, Rainforest Trust was created to purchase and protect threatened rainforest and save endangered wildlife through community engagement and local partnerships. Today, the Rainforest Trust continues to purchase and protect threatened tropical forests through innovative in-country partnerships and has approximately 25 million acres under protection. Its Fellows and Guardians include conservation professionals from around the world. Through this work, the Rainforest Trust has saved essential habitat for countless numbers of endangered species. As a 501(c)3 organization, it holds a 4-star rating on Charity Navigator.