

NATURE IS CALLING

HOW YOUR SUPPORT OF NATURE AND CULTURE INTERNATIONAL IS SAVING THE PLANET

WE DID IT! 20 MILLION ACRES PROTECTED

Celebrating the protection of 20 million acres in the heart of our planet's biodiversity.

Latin America is the heart of our planet's biodiversity. It is home to an estimated forty percent of earth's species as well as numerous indigenous nationalities, provides twenty percent of our planet's freshwater, and stores billions of tons of carbon that would otherwise pollute our atmosphere.

Five years ago, together with donors and partners, Nature and Culture pledged to conserve 20 million acres in the world's most species-rich areas by the year 2020.

In May, one year ahead of schedule, we crossed the 20-million-acre mark with the declaration of Ñembi Guasu, the second largest conservation area in Bolivia.

From Bolivia's Chaco to Mexico's dry forest, you and other generous supporters have protected habitat for birds and bears alike, secured clean water for hundreds of thousands of people, and improved the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities.

Together we have saved 20 million acres of the most diverse, complex, and beautiful ecosystems on Earth – an area nine times the size of Yellowstone National Park! Proud as we are, we know that there is still more to be done to defend the extraordinary diversity of life on our planet. Your continued support will make the next 20 million acres possible.



Protected areas established by Nature and Culture since 1997.



CONSERVING THE CHACO WITH INDIGENOUS GUARANÍ

As climate change intensifies and deforestation persists, an indigenous autonomous government in the Gran Chaco of Bolivia recognizes the urgency to protect their land.

In collaboration with Nature and Culture and Nativa Bolivia, the Autonomous Indigenous Campesino Government of Charagua (GAIOC) recently declared **Ñembi Guasu, the second largest conservation area in Bolivia.**



The GAIOC's mission is to contribute to the "Yaiko Kavi Pave" or well-being of the Guaraní people. Photo: GAIOC Charagua

Ñembi Guasu is located in the municipality of Charagua, home to an indigenous Guaraní population. Having lived in eastern Bolivia for hundreds of years, the Guaraní finally secured the right to govern themselves in 2017. Now, the GAIOC, the governing body, hopes to create a system of protected areas.

"For us, when establishing conservation areas, we are **conserving our home** and that of our children and all following generations," said Adhemar Flores, a member of the GAIOC's legislative body.

Ñembi Guasu is the first protected area created by the indigenous autonomous government. It spans three million

acres in the Gran Chaco, a hot and semi-arid lowland region increasingly threatened by climate change and agricultural development. The ecoregion holds huge reserves of ground water, energy, and cultivable land, and a great diversity of indigenous people.

Because of you, Ñembi Guasu will maintain land for the **Ayoreo** population, thought to be the only **uncontacted indigenous people** south of the Amazon. Traditional hunter-gatherers, the small group is increasingly threatened by loss of territory.

The reserve adds to existing national parks Kaa Iya in Bolivia and Defensores del Chaco in Paraguay, creating an immense conservation corridor (connected protected areas) in the Gran Chaco. **Connectivity in the region will increase resilience in the face of climate change and provide habitat for Ñembi Guasu's abundant wildlife**, including armadillos, giant anteaters, jaguars, and Chacoan guanaco. The area will also secure essential non-timber resources such as clean water and local medicinal plants for nearby communities.



Chacoan guanaco, the region's most endangered species.

WATER AS A TOOL FOR CONSERVATION

Humans need healthy ecosystems for many reasons. One of the most tangible is water. **Your support has harnessed the basic human need for clean, abundant water to drive conservation.**

For the past three years, you have enabled Nature and Culture and partners to design and implement Ecuador's first Water School. The School has equipped dozens of municipalities throughout the tropical Andes to sustainably manage their watersheds through a year-long educational course. It also accelerates the enrollment of new municipalities into existing water funds to increase the protection of natural resources.

Water funds collect water use fees from municipalities and communities. Funds provide **clean and accessible water** to communities, while protecting forested watersheds for the long-term management of Ecuador's water resources.

This model of using water as a tool for conservation has met with great success. It illustrates the connection between the health of the environment and the health of the local people who rely on it. Governments and the general public are able to recognize the value. And, best of all, it provides a sustainable source of local funding for the management of watersheds.

More than 180 government officials have participated in the School since its start in 2016. **Thanks to you, it has increased the protection of critical water resources, forests, and biodiversity within 27 municipalities.** With your support, the School will continue to grow as a national structure for training.



Felipe Serrano, Nature and Culture's Country Director of Ecuador, leading a training session.



MEXICO'S MOST ENDANGERED ECOSYSTEM

Pitayas, or Organ Pipe Cactus, are found only on the southern edge of the Sonoran Desert. They are critical for migratory birds and pollinators, and provide essential connectivity, forming part of a bi-national corridor between Mexico and the US. Yet two million acres have already been lost in Mexico since the 1980s.

With your support, Nature and Culture is collaborating with indigenous Mayo-Yoreme communities in Sonora, Mexico to **protect one of the last remaining Pitayal forests in the world.** Together we plan to conserve 116,000 acres of Pitayal surrounding the Estero de Agiabampo, an estuary off the Gulf of California.

Thanks to you, conservation agreements are protecting 900 acres in the region. We are also spearheading conservation initiatives in the adjacent estuary, promoting sustainable fishing practices and conducting water quality and carbon storage studies with the Sonora Institute of Technology.

We are hopeful that Coastal Reserve El Pitayal will soon become a state reserve!



A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE FROM OUR FOUNDER

More than 20 years ago, I took my daughter to South America. We were flying over Brazil at 30,000 feet and it seemed like all I saw were logging roads and forest fires. One of the last great ecosystems on Earth was disappearing before my eyes.

In that heartbreaking moment, I vowed to do something, saying to myself, "If not me, then who?" and the dream of Nature and Culture was born.

Since that fateful day, the many donors who've joined us to support the conservationists at Nature and Culture have protected over 20 million acres of the world's most diverse, complex, and astonishingly beautiful ecosystems.

But much remains to be done. Together, we are deep into one of the greatest battles that our living planet has ever faced — creating protected areas where the imperiled plants, animals, and indigenous people who live in the heart of the world's diversity can find refuge.

On their behalf; thank you for your heroic generosity so that these glorious places will still thrive with life thousands of years from now.

Ivan Gayler, Founder of Nature and Culture

OUR FORESTS NEED YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER

Your generosity has accomplished SO much. But there is still more to be done.

Fires have been ravaging Latin American forests for months. Many of these fires are directly related to increasing rates of deforestation. Humans are cutting down forests, allowing them to dry, and then setting them ablaze to clear land for agriculture, cattle grazing, and other economic activities. These fires can easily spread and burn beyond what was intended. The extent of destruction to local plants, animals, and indigenous people cannot be fully known.

In Bolivia alone, nearly 13 million acres have been affected, an area larger than the whole of Costa Rica. The fires threaten the survival of the region's wildlife and indigenous people, including the uncontacted Ayoreo tribe.



Conservationists – whose vital work you support – are fighting the fires raging through Bolivia's forests.

Latin America's people, plants, and animals need you now more than ever. The time is urgent to save these great ecosystems from being lost forever. **Your gift today protects the heart of our planet's biodiversity – and all life on Earth.**

Make a difference today at www.natureandculture.org.

