

NEWS

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Ten-Year-Old is Saving the Earth One Frog at a Time

Justin Sather raises money to help save critical habitat in Ecuador

WARRENTON, Va., Jan. 21, 2021 – Los Angeles resident Justin Sather is not one to sit back and watch many of the frogs he loves go extinct. In kindergarten, he learned that almost one-third of frog species are on the verge of extinction due to pollution, pesticides, contaminated water and habitat destruction. “I learned that frogs are an indicator species,” said Sather. “They breathe and drink through their skin and are very sensitive to pollution. They’re a true sign that the planet needs our help.”

Justin joined [Reserva: The Youth Land Trust’s Youth Council](#), an international group of young people that is leading an initiative to create the world’s first entirely youth funded nature reserve in partnership with [Rainforest Trust](#) and [EcoMinga Foundation](#), an Ecuadorian conservation organization. The goal is to save a 244-acre piece of critical habitat for endangered species in Ecuador’s threatened Chocó cloud forest. The parcel is an important component of a larger project by Rainforest Trust and EcoMinga to protect the region.

In celebration of his birthday, Justin set out to [purchase](#) two acres of land in the Ecuador project. The cost is \$730 an acre. He raised the funds for one acre, which was matched by the Rainforest Trust [SAVES Challenge](#) to pay for the second acre.

The Chocó is one of the most biodiverse places in the world, home to iconic and rare rainforest species, both critically endangered and new-to-science. The site Reserva is working to protect is home to some of the rarest, including several new frog species and the Ecuadorian Brown-Headed Spider Monkey, one of the most endangered primates in the world.

In addition to frogs and three species of monkey, the area contains iconic wildlife including the endangered black-and-chestnut eagle, spectacled bear, puma, several species of toucan, two species of sloth, ocelot, olingo, olinguito, jaquarundi and other species. The reserve is named for its abundant orchids, with the flowers from the *Dracula* genus of orchid being perhaps the most striking.

His love of frogs has also sparked interest in recycling and Justin is on a crusade to turn the planet’s plastic trash into treasures. He’s inspiring other kids to join in and is working with youth in Cameroon on an initiative [The Parallel Projects](#).

“Justin is an inspiration for all of us,” said James Deutsch, Ph.D., CEO of Rainforest Trust. “He has demonstrated how each one of us can make a difference for our planet. We’re so excited to have his support for Rainforest Trust.”

Recently, Rainforest Trust announced that it has met a milestone in protecting more than 25.6 million acres to date around the globe. To learn more about the Rainforest Trust, visit www.rainforesttrust.org.

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About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been safeguarding imperiled tropical habitats and saving endangered species by establishing protected areas in partnership with local organizations and communities. With its partners, Rainforest Trust has safeguarded more than 25.6 million acres of vital habitat across Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Rainforest Trust is a nonprofit organization that relies upon the generous support of the public to successfully implement its important conservation action. The organization is proud of earning a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Learn more about the work of Rainforest Trust by visiting www.RainforestTrust.org, [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#).