
FRIENDS OF THE RAINFOREST



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

Friends of the Rainforest is dedicated to promoting a sustainable world by educating and inspiring children and adults to take action to protect, support and expand the Rainforest in Costa Rica and beyond!

IT ALL STARTED WITH...

A group of Swedish school children started a worldwide effort in 1987 by sending money to Monteverde, Costa Rica to purchase rainforest land in an effort to protect its priceless natural treasures forever. Today, children and adults from over 44 nations have continued this tradition by taking action to protect this precious land.

IN 2020 OUR DONORS FUNDED THE FOLLOWING GRANTS



#27 Endowment Fund

Income is subject to fluctuations and external factors, but operational costs are ongoing. In order to foster greater economic stability – truly the linchpin of ensuring the “eternal” conservation of the CER – the MCL’s Board of Directors have established an endowment fund. Most of the original capital for the fund came from the late Dwight and Rachel Crandell (Founders of FOTR).

#29 & #30 Guard Salaries

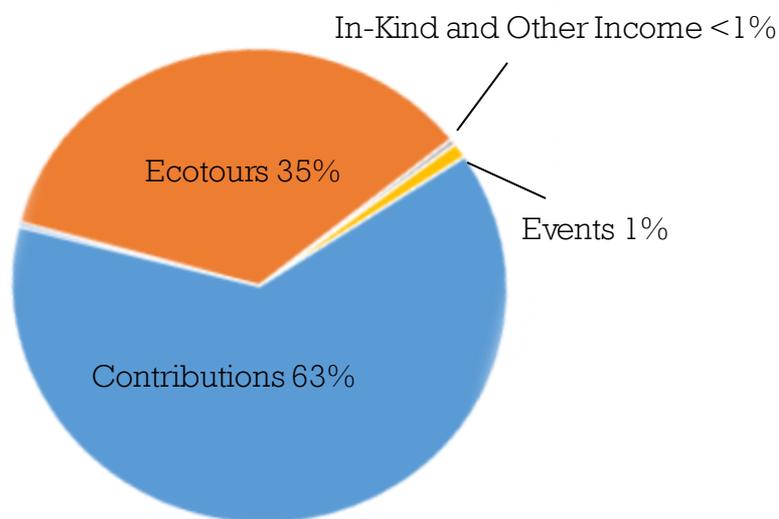
The MCL has received zero income from trails and field stations for the months of April, May, and June. Visitation at these sites typically generates income that is crucial for the protection of the entire CER. We are predicting seriously reduced visitation into 2021. Having MCL staff at 50% time is already seriously impacting the ability to effectively protect the CER. And unfortunately, the need to patrol and protect the CER, and continue outreach in neighboring communities, has never been greater, as growing unemployment in surrounding communities has led to increased illegal poaching, logging, and capture of birds and other wildlife.



#31 Santamaria Land Purchase

The “Santamaria property” – has been prioritized for purchase for several reasons. First, it protects highland rain and cloud forests, including the headwaters of local watersheds. Second, montane habitat along the continental divide, like the forest protected within the Santamaría property, is highly threatened and has great value in terms of ecosystem and biodiversity conservation. In fact, the property is close to other areas of the CER where highly endangered frog species were rediscovered after ostensibly having been declared extinct. Finally, prior to signing the purchase contract with MCL, the property was at risk of being sold for touristic development, so securing this land for conservation is a high priority.

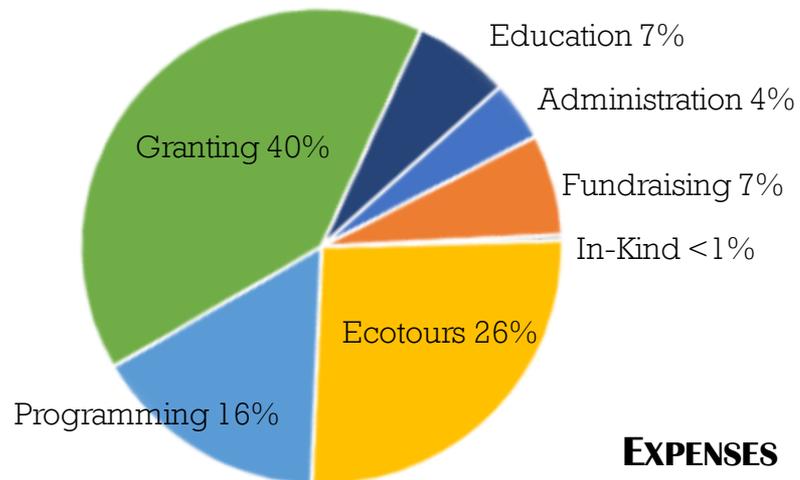
2020 BY THE NUMBERS



INCOME

TOTAL INCOME: \$216,036

TOTAL ASSETS: \$3,160,644



EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$219,439

TOTAL LIABILITIES: \$3,373

We remember our FRIENDS

Our dear Friend, and former Executive Director, Laurie Waller passed away on November 19, 2020. Laurie served as the leader of Friends of the Rainforest from 2010 - 2014 and continued to support our mission after her departure.

After Rachel's death in 2009, Laurie stepped into a leadership role at Friends of the Rainforest and became the Executive Director in 2010. Laurie was unique in her ability to rattle off scientific facts about the rainforest with a child-like wonder of it all. She understood the connection of all living things, the earth, the air, and the water, and took her role in protecting it all very seriously.

We will continue her legacy by protecting the rainforest that was so close to her heart.



2020 BY THE NUMBERS

Your Gifts Made a Difference.

59% of donors gave \$100 or less

10% of donors gave \$1,000 or more

Your Purchases Made a Difference.

200% increase in money raised through affiliates and giving programs.

This includes purchases made through our affiliates:



as well as through Amazon's giving program:



New affiliate coming in early 2021:



2020 BY THE NUMBERS

*compared to 2019

donations.

Give STL donations increased by 357%

Spring Appeal donations increased by 267%

Unsolicited donations increased by 180%

End of Year donations increased by 110%

Sustaining Supporters increased by 168%

social media.

558% increase in  **facebook** reach
(632% increase when including paid post)

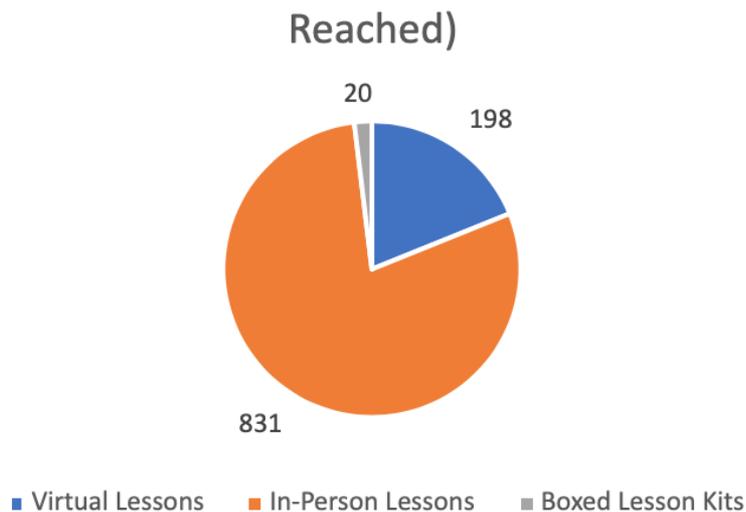
864% increase in  **Instagram** reach
(1,100% increase when including paid post)

Reach: the number of *unique* accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once, whether or not they were following us.

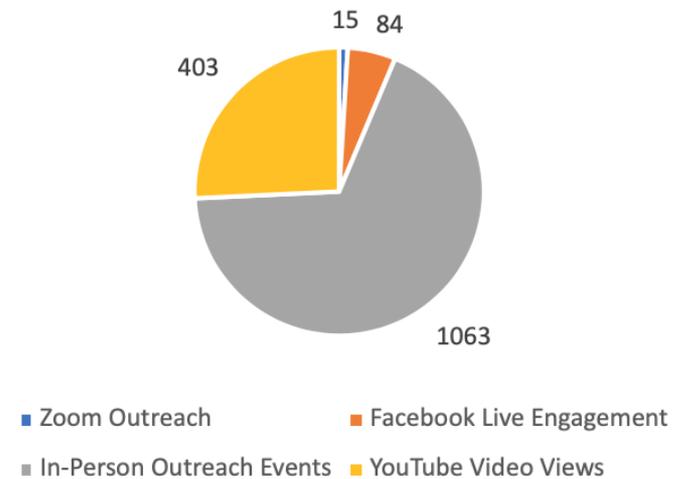
Gained 217 Instagram followers

Education & Outreach

2020 Lessons: Breakdown of Engagement by Lesson Type (1,049 Total Learners & Educators Reached)



2020 Outreach: Breakdown of Engagement by Event Type (1,565 Total People Reached)



Success through adaptation!

We found creative ways to adapt our programs for virtual formats and were able to continue serving local schools through platforms like Zoom and Google Meet.

This year we reached 1,049 learners and educators through our educational programming, both in-person before the pandemic, and virtual. In addition, we reached 1,565 learners and educators through in-person and outreach events. This includes views of new educational videos on our YouTube channel, and engagements with Facebook Live events.



Education & Outreach

The past year was marked by a global pandemic and historic civil unrest. These events laid bare the inequities many American systems and institutions are built on. Our local educational programs serve a region where the resource disparities between schools with predominantly white student bodies and schools serving predominantly Black, Indigenous, and students of color are stark.

After pausing a moment to redefine our core values, we formed the Educational Equity Committee, a subcommittee to our Education Committee. This committee is focused on using our platform to answer to the diverse needs of students and educators in the St. Louis area, actively close opportunity gaps between Black, Indigenous, and students of color and their white counterparts, and work toward environmental and educational justice.



One way we have grown our programs in a way to meet these diverse needs is the creation of our lending library, in partnership with the Thomas Dunn Learning Center. We are excited to roll out this program in January 2021. Classroom materials, books, curriculum resources, and boxed lessons will be available for check-out from the Friends of the Rainforest office. Additional boxed lessons for individual learners will be available for check-out through the Thomas Dunn Learning Center. In this way, we can provide supplemental education to families who are homeschooling or doing virtual school.

We look forward to a healthier and more active 2021!

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Lessons from the Rainforest teach us to adapt, diversify, and always keep growing.

My Dear Friends,

My gratitude for you is boundless. At the end of 2019, our organization made big plans to keep our momentum of record levels of school visits, ecotours, and donor engagement. As 2020 threatened what we had worked so hard to create, our staff, through the support of our donors, have been able to adapt and make this year a success.

Our work is more important now than ever. I have heard it said that 2020 is the year of misfortune, but I believe it is a year of consequence. We are seeing the consequences of treating our Earth and its inhabitants as disposable for hundreds of years. Mass extinctions, climate crises, and even the pandemic can be directly attributed to our own behavior and negligence when it comes to protecting our planet from harm - rainforests and all.

Destruction to the rainforest is, sadly, nothing new. However, 2020 came for this resource with renewed ferocity. The fires in the Amazon have destroyed over 5,019 square miles this year alone. Price increases and health concerns in the meat industry led to unmitigated deforestation and violence against indigenous communities to allow for cattle grazing.

And yet, I am hopeful. This is a year of positive consequence as well. When we first began to see that the pandemic was going to have a huge financial impact on many of our donors, we asked those of you with the means to make an extra donation in their stead. You responded quickly. When we knew we would be losing our income from our annual trivia night, you began sending in donations the second we announced our campaign, before it officially began. Two long time donors have even offered a match of \$25,000, which is available through the end of the year. We have already reached \$14,845 towards that match with just a few weeks left in the year.

We now appear virtually to schools across the country and bring our lessons to new learners. In the future, we will be able to combine this with our in-person lessons to maximize our educational reach. With only two months of in-person lessons this year, we were still able to reach nearly 70% of the number of students from the previous year.

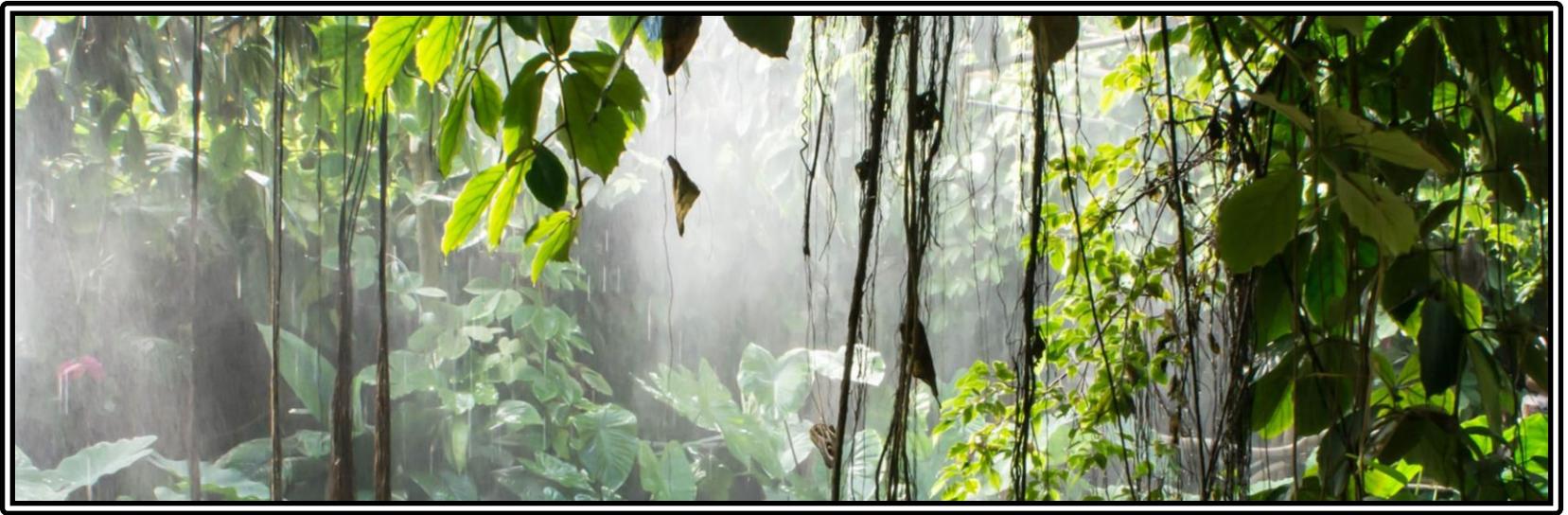
Our granting has also had a mast year. Monteverde Conservation League still struggles with making their payroll, even after drastically reducing costs. Our board and donors made them a priority and fully funded two quarters of their guard salaries with \$22,320. We also were able to make sure the property they had been trying to secure was not lost through a land purchase grant toward the Santamaria property of \$40,560. Finally, we completed the transaction sending \$25,000 to their endowment fund, thereby giving the Children's Eternal Rainforest a more secure future.

I choose not to remember 2020 as a year when everything went wrong, but as a year when we recognize our impact - positive or negative - on the surrounding people and environment. We all carry different passions, resources, and capacity for giving aid at any given time. As we transition into this new year, we consider what we are able to offer to protect the rainforest for ourselves, our children, and our children's children.

With a grateful heart,

Chelsea Raiche

Chelsea Raiche
Executive Director



Our dedicated Board & Staff

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN

Maggie Eisenberger

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Teresa Crossland

SECRETARY

Cara Murphy-Smith

TREASURER

Sarah Craig

BOARD MEMBERS

James Crain

Jeremy Crandell*

Chad Hoener

Melissa Hoener

Dr. Thomas Lovejoy*

Tom Newmark*

Dr. Peter H. Raven*

David Robnak

Dr. Mark Routburg

Norm Shore

Carrie Wilson-Herndon

**Advisory Board Members*

STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chelsea Raiche

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Sophie Arp

EDUCATION/OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Jamie Kisela



Friends of the Rainforest

1324 Clarkson Clayton Center, #312 | Saint Louis | Missouri | 63011

www.friendsoftherainforest.org | 314-941-1257