



— Friends of the —
RAINFOREST
From St. Louis, MO
To Monteverde, CR

FOREST

FIELD

NEWS & NOTES

SPRING 2022

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN'S ETERNAL RAINFOREST SINCE 2002

Friends of the Rainforest Turns 20! Rainforest Conservation and Advocacy Through the Years

The history of Friends of the Rainforest is a history of amazing women. Our work and mission wouldn't be possible today without the incredible ambition and care of the environmental stewards who paved the way. This year, as we celebrate our 20th year as an official organization, we want to reflect on our past two decades and honor those who have made our work possible.

So, here's to 20 incredible years of Rainforest conservation, education, and adventure, and the many more come!

Our story as an organization begins in 1987, when Swedish schoolteacher, Eha Kern, and her students began a classroom unit on Rainforests. She invited an American biologist, Sharon Kinsman, to visit their classroom to speak about the Cloud Forest Reserve in Monteverde, Costa Rica, and the destruction and deforestation the tropical Rainforest faced. Eha's students were shocked that the Rainforest was being destroyed. Roland Tiensuu, one of her students, then famously said "Why can't we buy some Rainforest so there's some left when we grow up?"



With Eha's energy and guidance, the kids of the class began hosting bake sales, making cards to sell, and raising money for the Monteverde Conservation League. Soon, other schools began to join in the fundraising efforts. They raised enough money to purchase 15 acres of Rainforest land and started an international youth-led fundraising effort. This land was then named the Children's Eternal Rainforest (CER).



Our story continues into the 90s. Rachel Crandell, a school teacher in St. Louis, had the idea of finding something hopeful and inspiring for her 2nd-grade class to learn about. Similar to Eha Kern's class, this search led her to discover the CER of Costa Rica. She had a deep love for education and conservation and these passions led to the creation of Friends of the Rainforest (then named the Monteverde Conservation League, US.). Rachel gave us a wonderful example of how one idea put into action can make a huge difference. Rachel taught her students about the Rainforest, fundraised for the Monteverde Conservation League, and led Ecotours in the CER - building on the legacy of Eha Kern and her students.

In Memory of Dr. Thomas Lovejoy



Friends of the Rainforest has suffered a great loss in the passing of advisory board member Dr. Thomas Lovejoy. Dr. Lovejoy was instrumental in the birth of our organization as a close contact of our founder Rachel Crandell. He helped with fundraising by giving a talk in St. Louis that we sponsored. Dr. Lovejoy coined the term biological diversity and was key to the establishment of conservation biology as a field of study, both of which are integral to the appreciation of the Children's Eternal Rainforest in Costa Rica. Perhaps most important was his work on edge effects as a feature of forest fragmentation. This made it clear that preserving the largest possible tracts of rainforest with a high ratio of interior to edge is crucial to preventing species extinction. Maximizing that ratio to minimize edge effects informs every purchase of land added to the Children's Eternal Rainforest and is the reason that reserve is so incredibly valuable to biodiversity and conservation of rainforest species in Central America. He will be missed.



Rachel passed away in 2009, but we continue to honor her memory by continuing her conservation work with the same dedication, integrity, and enthusiasm that she abundantly expressed.

Laurie Waller is the next incredible woman to have graced and guided Friends of the Rainforest and our work.

After moving to St. Louis in 2006 and volunteering with Friends of the Rainforest, Laurie accepted the role of Executive Director when Rachel passed away. Laurie was unique in her ability to rattle off scientific facts about the Rainforest, and 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. With us until 2014, her hard work was pivotal to the organization, helping to build on Rachel's legacy and to set a foundation for future work to come. Laurie passed away in 2020.

In 2015, at a point when the organization needed to tighten both our focus and our belts, Chelsea Raiche (who had been Laurie's assistant) stepped into the position of Executive Director and made hard decisions that enabled us to maximize our impact. Through her leadership, our Education and Ecotours programs grew into what they are today.



Passionate about protecting the Rainforest for future generations, Chelsea fiercely guided Friends of the Rainforest through our second decade as an organization. Now, as Friends of the Rainforest enters its third decade as an organization, I am prepared to honor the legacy before me and continue the meaningful and important work of Rainforest conservation and education. Incredible women have come before me and I am proud to follow their lead.

- Sophie Arp, Executive Director since January 2022

Ecotours are Back!

2022 began with exciting news: the resuming of our Ecotour programming! Friends of the Rainforest sent a group of students and adults from the Mead Montessori School in Knoxville, TN, to the Children's Eternal Rainforest at the end of February - our first Ecotour since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020! Through our Biodiversity and Peace program, the Mead Montessori group stayed in Pocosol Field Station, assisted with meaningful, long-term scientific investigations, pursued their own independent studies, and visited the Arenal Volcano, all guided by our partner, Jeff Norris, from Natural Solutions.



Friends of the Rainforest offers an authentic study-abroad and field research experience in the Children's Eternal Rainforest that incorporates tropical ecology, scientific study, international travel, and the opportunity for students to become engaged in taking action on important conservation issues. Our trips are also available for groups of friends, family, or anyone who wants to visit one of the most incredible places on earth.

If you are interested in learning more about our Ecotour programming, please visit our website at www.friendsoftherainforest.org/ecotours or email Sophie at sophie@friendsoftherainforest.org



Friends of the Rainforest

Our mission is to promote 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.

Board of Directors

Maggie Eisenberger
Chair

Teresa Crossland
Vice Chair

Sarah Craig
Treasurer

James Crain

Jeremy Crandall*

Melissa Hoener

Chad Hoener

Dr. Peter Raven*

David Robnak

Alissa White

*Advisory Board Members

Sophie Arp
Executive Director
sophie@friendsoftherainforest.org

Jamie Kisela
Education Director
jamie@friendsoftherainforest.org



1324 Clarkson Clayton Ctr #312

Saint Louis, MO 63011

314-941-1257

www.friendsoftherainforest.org

The Children's Eternal Rainforest Has Grown!

Thanks to the outpouring of support we received at the end of 2021, we were able to use the money raised for our Land Purchase Fund to send our partner, the Monteverde Conservation League (MCL), a grant allowing them to purchase and protect 46.9 acreage of previously privately-owned Rainforest land (the Máximo Ramírez property). MCL has had their eye on this piece of land for a while. The purchase of this land was necessary and strategic because it previously acted as an "island" within the Children's Eternal Rainforest (CER).



Lindsay Stallcup of MCL with Máximo Ramírez



MCL Staff Erick Barquero, Armando Villalobos, and Yúber Rodríguez at the entrance to the new property.

Because of Costa Rican law, this meant that anyone visiting the privately owned land could cut through the Children's Eternal Rainforest, whether on foot, horse, or motorized vehicle. Now that this land is now under MCL's ownership, third parties who visited this land will no longer do so, reducing opportunities for trespassing, poaching, and other illicit activities in this area of the Rainforest.

If Friends of the Rainforest hadn't been able to supply this grant, and MCL had missed this opportunity to acquire this land, it's likely that it would have been sold off to a tourism and development group, and nothing could have stopped them from paving a road directly through the CER for easier access to the property.

This purchase is a huge win for MCL and Friends of the Rainforest - and that's not even mentioning all of the incredible conservation value this property has in terms of the forest habitat, biodiversity, and water resources it protects, as well as the potential for reforestation and habitat restoration of pastured areas.

Why We Give: Our Friends Share Their Stories *Valerie and the Stewart Family*

I had the opportunity to visit Costa Rica in 2002 during the time when my son was participating in the Institute for Central American Development Studies program through his college. He was an Environmental Studies major and this sort of experience intrigued him. Fortunately, he asked me to tag along for a while. I was struck by the beauty of the landscape and the diversity of wildlife that I saw.



When I visited the Children's Eternal Rainforest with my son after a long chugging bus ride up the mountain to Monteverde, I continued to be overcome by the beauty and the diversity that I witnessed. We had a guide take us into the forest so we could learn more about the habitat and all that lived there. I remember he told us to watch out for the capuchins above in the trees, "they might pee on you", and sure enough one tried. The birds with their rainbow of colors were breathtaking. I never knew there could be such overwhelming beauty in one place.

My experiences there stayed with me, so when I returned home, I kept in touch with Children's Eternal Rainforest and have supported it ever since. I learned more about the history and how it all got started. Being a teacher myself, I was inspired to learn that a classroom of Swedish students wrote letters and raised money to help protect the rainforest and its inhabitants. I have since read that the area preserved is about the size of Seattle which is where I've lived and raised my children. This goes to show that one teacher and one classroom of students can make a lasting difference.

As we see more and more development worldwide, I feel an urgent need to have a hand in protecting some of the wild places we have left. Fortunately, with the resources that I have I can help. This is why I felt compelled to give a gift to help secure a tract of adjacent land to the already preserved rainforest in Costa Rica. I am forever grateful to the initial group of students and others along the way, and especially now for the leadership of Friends of the Rainforest and Monteverde Conservation League.

- Valerie Stewart; a Friend since 2007



— Friends of the —

RAINFOREST

St. Louis, MO

1324 Clarkson Clayton Ctr # 312

Saint Louis, MO 63011

Phone: (314) 941-1257

www.friendsoftherainforest.org



Spring Events

TAPPED STL

April 5th-9th, 2022

7278 Manchester Rd, Maplewood, MO 63143

Come grab a snack and try out some awesome beers at Tapped in Maplewood. In lieu of tips, Tapped will donate all gratuity from this week to Friends of the Rainforest.

Q&A WITH LINDSAY STALLCUP OF THE MONTEVERDE CONSERVATION LEAGUE

April 22nd, 2022

Virtually on Zoom

Join us for a discussion with Lindsay Stallcup to learn about their most recent land purchase, how our granting efforts have impacted their work, and any other information you would like to know about MCL and the Children's Eternal Rainforest.

EARTH DAY 365

April 23rd-24th, 2022

Muny Grounds in Forest Park

Friends of the Rainforest will be tabling at the Earth Day Festival in Forest Park. The St. Louis Earth Day Festival is a community tradition to celebrate Earth Day and share sustainable resources!

We have a number of different in-person and virtual events happening in the coming months. Mark your calendar and come say hi!

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WEEK

April 18th-21st, 2022

Virtually on YouTube

For the last three years, Friends of the Rainforest has celebrated EE Week by premiering a different video each day! Join us this year for a whole new series of different educational videos.

POLLINATOR FAIR AT THE SOPHIA M. SACHS BUTTERFLY HOUSE

April 23rd-24th, 2022

15050 Faust Pk, Chesterfield, MO 63017

Friends of the Rainforest will be tabling at the Earth Day Festival in Forest Park. The St. Louis Earth Day Festival is a community tradition

GIVE STL DAY

May 5th, 2022

Online though GiveSTLDay.org

Friends of the Rainforest will be participating in St. Louis's Give STL Day another year! Join us on May 5th for a day-long fundraising event focused on non-profits in St. Louis.