

RIVERBANKS ZOO & GARDEN

columbia south carolina

In 1996, the Riverbanks Zoological Society Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Riverbanks Conservation Support Fund with the objective of providing assistance to carefully selected conservation initiatives originating both from within and outside of Riverbanks.

This is the twenty-fourth year of existence for the conservation fund that was renamed Satch Krantz Conservation Fund in 2017, in honor of retiring president & CEO Satch Krantz for his 44 years of service to Riverbanks and his passion for saving species.

This year the availability of funding was announced on the Riverbanks website, and the number of application deadlines was reduced from two to one. Following receipt of applications for the 1 June 2019 application deadline, Riverbanks suspended acceptance of further grant applications until a conservation strategic planning process can be completed.

Grant awards, including Field Conservation Associates grants, are summarized below:

1 June 2019 Funding Application Deadline

- 1) \$5000.00 to Akwasi Anokye and Emmanuel Amoah of THRESCOAL for their project titled, "Conservation of West Africa's Critically Endangered *Mecistops cataphractus* through Mitigation of Human Crocodile Conflict."

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Create and train local community volunteer groups in crocodile handling and relocation.
 - Introduce and train local fringe communities in the establishment of crocodile exclusion fences
 - Raise the awareness at various stakeholders in crocodile conservation and environmental protection.
 - Mitigate threats and promote long-term survival of this critical population.
 - Development of a reviewed training manual for community volunteers.
 - Training of local people will establish a long-term legacy of local expertise who will provide timely intervention to rescue the species.
- 2) \$3541.78 to the Riverbanks AAZK Chapter to match the funds raised by the Chapter via its 2018 Bowling for Rhino event. On an annual basis, the SKCF matches funds generated by AAZK for rhino conservation efforts.
 - 3) \$4380.00 to Annie Beckhelling and Deon Cillers of the Cheetah Conservation Trust for their project titled, "Cheetah Conservation through mitigation of human-wildlife conflict in South Africa."

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- To conserve the free-ranging cheetah population in South Africa through the elimination of lethal predator controls on farmlands.
 - Annual placement and monitoring of 20 livestock guarding dogs on farms within the cheetah range in South Africa.
 - Expand into new cheetah range areas - Increase the current 425000Ha viable hectares of “predator-friendly” habitat by 35000Ha where livestock guarding dogs are newly placed.
 - Establish viable habitat corridors enabling free-ranging cheetahs to migrate across borders, increasing mating opportunities and potential for genetic transfer.
 - Foster and encourage informed and supportive local farming communities.
- 4) \$4993.00 to Richard Busobozi and Kugonga Moses for their project titled, “Conservation to Coexist: Participatory Action Research for Wildlife Conservation and Community Development.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Reduce human-wildlife conflict around Kibale National Park (KNP), Uganda, through capacity building and land-use changes that reduce crop raiding.
 - Expand an already successful Participatory Action Research project that empowers people to improve issues in their community and provides them the knowledge necessary to do so successfully.
 - Support ongoing, proven community conservation initiatives, including maintaining a trench along the boundary of the park, building “beehive fences” in swampy areas where the trench could not be dug and planting garlic as a cash crop.
 - In addition to expanding the project, continue to support the initial communities until the projects are fully self-sustaining.
- 5) \$5172.73 to Dr. Jeff Camper of Francis Marion University and Scott Pfaff and Karyn Wheatley of Riverbanks Zoo & Garden for their project titled, “Emerging Infectious Disease Survey of Wildsumaco, Ecuador.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Determine the incidence and infection prevalence of chytrid fungi and *Ranavirus* in amphibian and reptile populations at the Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary in Napo Province, Ecuador.
- 6) \$5125.00 to John Davis, Andy Cabe and Melodie Scott-Leach to construct a ComPOOst loading pad behind the elephant barn to facilitate the sifting of ComPOOst and loading during bulk sales events. Construction was accomplished by Snyder Construction and Concrete LLC.
- 7) \$5000.00 to Dr. Arnaud Desbiez of Instituto de Conservação de Animais Silvestres – ICAS for his project titled, “Saving South America’s Giants.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Determine the impacts of road-kill and road barrier effect on Giant anteater densities, population structure and health quantified and evaluated.
 - Identify main spatio-temporal drivers and specific behaviors influencing the road-kill likelihood of Giant anteater Identified.
 - Develop specific guidelines defining landscape and road management strategies, road planning and mitigation measures determined in collaboration with stakeholders.
- 8) \$5000.00 to Bertie Ferns of the Cikananga Wildlife Center, West Java, Indonesia for her project titled, "Cikananga Wildlife Center: Upgrading security measures to protect species saved from the wildlife trade from returning to a life within trade."

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Assist the Indonesian government in the rescue and conservation of the habitat and wildlife of Indonesia.
 - Where possible, reintroduce animals to areas of assessed habitat, translocate individuals to other reintroduction programs, translocate animals to other institutions where long-term high standard of welfare can be provided.
 - Where applicable, breed species threatened with extinction and, if necessary, provide life-long care.
 - Strengthen security of Cikananga Wildlife Center to provide a safe environment for a wide variety of species, many of conservation value.
- 9) Jennifer Rawlings and the Aquarium staff of Riverbanks Zoo & Garden for their participation in the "AZA Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project" as a coral holding institution.

This rescue of the FRT is being coordinated by a multi-pronged collaboration. In an unprecedented event, AZA professionals and resources have been sought in a nationwide effort to support State and Federal agencies to manage and respond to a marine environmental crisis. AZA-FRTRP is Hope and Empowerment: "We are helping Nature respond to crisis and RECOVER".

- 10) \$5000.000 to Francesco Garzon and Alexander Seymour for their project titled, "Baseline Assessment of a Critical Nursery for Lemon Sharks to Inform the Creation of a Marine Protected Area."

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Generate baseline ecological data needed to inform the creation and management of a long-term of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) for lemon sharks in Cabo Verde and monitor future impacts of development in the area.
 - Bring attention to this understudied and poorly understood population of lemon sharks and lay the foundation for ongoing research and conservation of the species at a regional and international scale.
- 11) \$10,000 to Rick Hudson of the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) for operating support of the TSA Turtle Survival center (TSC) in Cross, South Carolina.

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Establish captive assurance colonies for carefully selected species of critically endangered turtles.
- Provide emergency veterinary back-up for the Turtle Survival Center, as needed and as is practical.

- 12) \$4000.00 to Brad Lock of the Oklahoma City Zoo and Thomas Schrei of the Foundation for the Endangered species of Guatemala (FUNDESGUA) their project titled, “Conservation awareness campaign and formal declaration of a Protected Area for a newly discovered population of the critically endangered Guatemalan beaded lizard.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Protect large portions of well-preserved habitat of *Heloderma charlesbogerti* to help sustain the species in the long term.
- Develop tools for decision making regarding the genetic management of the Guatemalan beaded lizard.
- Encourage and support communities that live near the new protected area to value and protect the Guatemalan beaded lizard.
- Support conservation education programming in local schools.

- 13) AZA Monarch butterfly SAFE Program - Andy Cabe and Melodie Scott-Leach are serving as Riverbanks’ representatives to the newly approved Monarch SAFE Program and are working to develop the SAFE Action Plan as members of the Engagement working group.
- 14) AZA North American Songbird SAFE Program – Ed Diebold is serving as a member of the newly approved NAS SAFE Program Steering Committee and working to develop the SAFE Action Plan as members of the Citizen Science working group.

- 15) \$5000.00 to the AZA Giraffe SAFE Program as part of a three-year (\$5000.00/year) commitment to the program. Riverbanks support will be directed to the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) project, led by Dr. Sara Ferguson and Dr. Julian Fennessy and titled, “Conserving Uganda’s threatened Nubian giraffe – veterinary response and anti-poaching.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Focus on the key threats identified in the Strategy and Action Plan and importantly within Murchison Falls NP – illegal hunting (poaching) activity.
- Target regular surveying efforts to identify snared giraffe and allow for timely removal and appropriate treatment.
- Decrease the morbidity of wire snare traps on giraffe and other animals, thereby aiding in maintaining healthy populations.
- Examine various avenues to decrease the presence of wire snares within the park’s boundaries.

- 16) \$3040.00 to Sunny Nelson of the Lincoln Park Zoo and Dr. Chris Shepherd of Monitor Conservation and Research Society for their project titled, “Assessing the Trade of Asian Songbirds into the United States.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Examine to what extent the trade is occurring
- Communicate the results to a broad global audience to elucidate the issue
- Seek ways to mitigate the illegal import and illegal trade of birds into the U.S.
- Use results to encourage the support of additional species listing through our CITES management authorities.
- Increase awareness of the issue within the AZA avian community, whose members may be unaware and unknowingly contributing to the trade by not understanding the source of birds they acquire.

17) Parking with a Purpose – Planting with a Purpose. Andy Cabe and Melodie Scott-Leach

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- To generate awareness of pollinators and encourage visitors to dedicate space for pollinator habitats in their own yards.
- Expand pollinator habitats in Riverbanks parking lots to impact local pollinator populations branded “Parking with a Purpose.”
- Develop an on-site interpretive strategy educating guests about pollinator population decline and pollinator habitats.
- Demonstrate actions guests can take at home in the planting and maintenance of their garden spaces to support pollinator populations.

18) \$4892.00 to Vera Pfannerstill of Georg-August-University Göttingen and Michael Fitt of Rhino Conservation Botswana for their project titled, “Increasing white rhino translocation success using natural communication methods.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- Record wild rhino vocal calls.
- Identify the detection distance of rhinos to conspecific calls.
- Record rhino behavioral responses to playbacks of different types of conspecific calls.
- Analyze behavioral responses and discuss the suitability of playbacks as a management tool.
- Train local monitoring personnel and managers in the application of playbacks for management purposes.

19) \$4500.00 to Dr. Stephen Van der Spuy of Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) for his project titled, “African Penguin Chick Bolstering Project.”

The specific conservation/management objectives of this project are to:

- To address the loss of African penguins by supplementing existing wild colonies, and new colonies, should they be established, with hand-reared chicks. Rescue, rehabilitate and release African penguin chicks to bolster the wild African penguin population.
- Train and develop 150 volunteers and interns over each 12-month period. Maintain 16 full

time employees as part of the core rehabilitation and conservation team.

20) \$500 to the South Carolina Wildlife Federation Scholarship Program.

The specific conservation/management objective of this project is to:

- Distribute educational grants to full-time students pursuing environmental education at South Carolina schools of higher education.
- Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible, based on their performance in academia and in related community activities.
- Special attention is paid to a student's leadership and volunteer experience when determining winners of these scholarships.

21) \$2771.27 for Diane Baker to travel to Mexico as a Field Conservation Associate (FCA) as part of ECOLIFE Conservation's Roar of the Monarch program.

- Diane witnessed the spectacle of overwintering grounds of the monarch butterfly in Michoacán, Mexico.
- ECOLIFE Conservation's Stove Program helps the families living near these reserves to live sustainably and with minimal impact on the storied monarch wintering grounds.
- The program's overall goal is to surround the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (the reserve is 56,259 ha or about 140,000 acres) with fuel-efficient stoves by 2022.
- Diane's participation also formed synergy between Riverbanks and ECOLIFE Conservation that contributed to the subsequent application for an AZA approval of the Monarch Butterfly SAFE Program.

Field Conservation Associates applications, approved for 2019-2020 but not included in the totals below, are as follows:

Karyn Wheatley to participate in Nikhil Whitaker's project, "Radio Telemetry Studies of King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*) Behavioral Ecology in a South Indian Rainforest."

Matt Eggert to participate in Tim Snow's project, "Wildlife poisoning forensic training and awareness for rangers, enforcers and communities in Africa."

Samantha Amstutz to participate in the Powdermill Avian Research Center "Banding Workshop:" Extraction and Molt.

A total of \$77,916 in grants was distributed during fiscal year 2018-2019 (i.e., 1 June 2019 funding cycle). Note that grants awarded during the 1 June 2019 deadline were distributed during the first part of fiscal year 2019-2020 but have been included in this summary for the sake of consistency with previous year's summaries.

This brings the total support granted by Riverbanks' conservation fund to \$1,063,173 since its inception, backing some 260 projects in 36 countries around the globe.

Select projects funded by the Satch Krantz Conservation Fund are featured in *Riverbanks* magazine.