

Wege Foundation - Commitment to Costa Rican Biodiversity Protection Through Biodiversity Development

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The Wege Foundation recently announced a \$5 million grant over five years to help protect, through biodiversity development, one of the most biologically rich places on the planet in northwestern Costa Rica, Area de Conservacion Guanacaste (ACG). The ACG is a highly diverse collage of three forest ecosystems (Pacific tropical dry forest, cloud forest on the volcanoes, Caribbean rain forest), and a marine ecosystem that extends several kilometers out to sea and includes many islands.

The award was made to the Guanacaste Dry Forest Conservation Fund (GDFCF), a U.S.-based non-profit founded in 1997 by the tropical biodiversity biologists Dan Janzen and Winnie Hallwachs, who have worked for three decades to conserve biodiversity and build systems to protect Costa Rican tropical biodiversity into perpetuity, a biological asset that the World Bank has called a “global public good.”

The GDFCF operates as a long-standing partner to the federally-owned and managed ACG protected area, with an especially significant role in biodiversity research, management, development, and discovery of new species. In addition the GDFCF annually educates over 2,500 school children from 53 surrounding schools in the ACG forest and sea, they learn science, natural history, ecology and how it applies to their lives. The GDFCF also played a major role in building the ACG protected area to its current size of 165,000 hectares (over 400,000 acres) by systematically buying land from willing sellers over the last two decades and donating that land to the government of Costa Rica or holding it in national park status.

“Dan & Winnie’s innovative work and passion for biodiversity conservation and restoration caught the eye of Peter Wege more than twenty years ago,” said Wege Foundation President Ellen Satterlee. “This award celebrates that partnership and, just as importantly, is an investment in the vision of this unique public-private conservation model; one that has many lessons for management and conservation of the biodiversity of protected areas in other places.”

“We are grateful to the Wege Foundation for its commitment to the future of this global model for sustainable biodiversity conservation,” said GDFCF Executive Director Eric Palola, and echoed by Janzen and Hallwachs.

More information on the Wege Foundation: <http://www.wegefoundation.com>

Also see: <http://www.gdfcf.org> and <http://www.acguanacaste.ac.cr>