

1 The Inside Story on Saving Earth's Last Great Places legacy



Davis Mountains, Texas © David Muench

preserving place

Saving a Sky Island

Partnerships Preserve Natural, Native Treasures in Texas

Scenic mountains jut toward the sky in dramatic contrast to the “sea” of the surrounding Chihuahuan Desert. Golden eagles soar past rugged outcrops adorned with Indian pictographs. Mountain lions roam the canyons that carve into the arid mountains, while gray foxes pad through evergreen forests under the keen gaze of Mexican spotted owls. *(continued on page 2)*

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Davis Mountains, Texas © David Muench

Here at the southeastern extension of the Rockies, up to 10 species of hummingbirds wing through on their migrations, while southwestern specialties such as the painted redstart and buff-breasted flycatcher make the area their summer home. The Madera Canyon Preserve in West Texas' Davis Mountains is a crucial part of the Conservancy's strategy to save a fragile ecosystem and sustain a critical watershed.

Strategy

The Nature Conservancy has purchased nearly 6,000 acres of this "sky island," as isolated mountains surrounded by lowlands are popularly called, as part of the Davis Mountains project.

Naturalists enjoy Little Aguja Creek, home to two rare plants: the Little Aguja pondweed (*Potamogeton clystocarpus*) and Shinners' tickle-tongue (*Zanthoxylum parvum*). In the water, fortunate visitors can catch a glimpse of the elusive Rio Grande chub. And as if in response to the canyon's wild beauty, a series of ancient American Indian pictographs adorn its towering walls.

The scene would be idyllic if it weren't overshadowed by a critical lack of water. Multi-year droughts,

together with overgrazing and thirsty scrub brush, threaten both the forests and animals they shelter.

Solid partnerships are key to keeping this western wilderness intact. Ongoing help is provided by



The Montezuma quail, seen in higher elevations of the Davis Mountains © Thomas Mangelsen/Minden Pictures

Friends of the Davis Mountains, a group of some 250 volunteers which handles tasks from building trails to creating watershed restoration demonstration areas.

Other partners study the pictographs, which are well over a thousand years old. And archaeologists from Sul Ross State University have designed a boardwalk and railing to keep visitors at a safe distance—a project for which

the Conservancy will supply the materials and the local Boy Scouts the labor.

Critical among the Conservancy's projects is restoration of the watershed. Strategies include reintroducing natural wildland fire to land formerly used for grazing. Acre by acre, brush is being cleared, allowing moisture to remain in soil stressed by years of drought. Meanwhile, managed grazing preserves grasslands that retain rainfall to replenish groundwater, springs and creeks.

Success

The Madera Canyon Preserve represents a major step toward the Conservancy's ultimate goal—preservation of more than 200,000 contiguous acres in the most biologically diverse portions of the Davis Mountains. The Conservancy has already embarked on the next step: negotiations to purchase 10,000 acres of the nearby Eppenauer Ranch. This landmark acquisition will connect conservation lands acquired during various phases of the Davis Mountains project, allowing the Conservancy to safeguard the core highland area ... assuring the sky island will be enjoyed intact by generations to come.

“It's a joy to know that you've done something—that you're going to leave something that other people are going to enjoy.”

—Dr. Richard Goodwin, former Nature Conservancy president and Legacy Club member

“I guess the things that captured me most were the mountains and the lay of the land. There was something about that area that always lightened my spirit.”

—Toby Jordan, Nature Conservancy partner

planning matters

Mary Clashman's Rare Gift

Like her father, Mary Clashman adored her family's 116-acre forest in Indiana. After he passed away, his friends in the state Department of Forestry helped Mary maintain the land, but she attended to key details herself—selecting mature trees for sale, maintaining roads and supervising timber stand improvement. As she puts it, “the forest fit me as comfortably as it had fit my father.”

Eventually she knew she needed to decide the land's future. “I had three goals,” she explains, “professional management of the land, an annual monetary return, and assurance that the land would be protected.” Thanks to the tract's unusual stand of flatwoods and a diverse community of plants, The Nature Conservancy was able to accept Mary Clashman's land as a gift in exchange for a charitable gift annuity. The annuity will give Mary an income for the rest of her life and ensure the property is managed and preserved for future generations to enjoy.



Forest with autumn foliage, Indiana © CORBIS

Gift Annuities and Real Estate

Gifts of natural areas like Mary's are one way to fund a charitable gift annuity (CGA). A more typical option is to donate a piece of non-conservation real estate. This type of property, called a trade land, includes second homes, commercial tracts and undeveloped lots that the Conservancy sells to fund conservation efforts.

Whatever form the gift takes, a charitable gift annuity provides the giver with a set income for life and a

guarantee the funds will ultimately be used for conservation. For more information about funding a charitable gift annuity with real estate, please call the Conservancy's gift planning department or return the enclosed card.

A Cathedral Conserved

Reflections by Mary Clashman, Legacy Club Member

I had always thought of my hardwood forest in Southern Indiana as a natural cathedral. With tall straight ash, oak, and tulip tree trunks extending to

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inside the Conservancy



Oystermen tonging, Apalachicola Bay © Richard Bickel

Five Ways to Change the World *The Conservancy's Five Initiatives Guide Conservation by Design*

Climate Change. Fire. Freshwater. Invasive Species. Marine. Five global concerns help give practical shape to The Nature Conservancy's strategic process, Conservation by Design. "These issues address either major

threats to our conservation targets or major opportunities where we feel we can make a substantial impact," says Joy Grant, managing director, Atlantic Conservation Region. Here's a quick overview:

Climate change contributes to elevated sea levels, altered habitats and increased threats to species at risk. Record-high ocean temperatures in 1998 may have killed as much as 10% of the world's coral ecosystems which, already facing other pressures, may be pushed beyond their natural ability to adapt to the pace and severity of this threat. The Conservancy is confronting this issue head-on to help diminish the likely impacts of climate change on sensitive ecosystems and to seek solutions that will enable these natural areas to cope.

Fire plays a critical role in many ecosystems. The Conservancy has identified at least 107 million acres of important conservation areas in the U.S. alone that are threatened by altered fire regimes. Building on three decades of experience in ecological fire management and a respected in-house cadre of fire professionals, the Conservancy is addressing the threat

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A Tale of Two Rivers *Illinois Restoration Linked to Pantanal Preservation*

The birds are starting to come back along the banks of the Illinois River. Along the Cuiabá River in Brazil, they've never left. A landmark partnership is helping further the restoration of the one and the preservation of the other.

Since 1998, The Nature Conservancy and the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, have been exchanging information about the Illinois—a component of the Upper Mississippi River system—and the Cuiabá, which feeds the Pantanal ... the planet's greatest freshwater wetland. The

agreement, which emerged through the Freshwater Initiative, is part of an effort to share lessons learned along similar freshwater systems around the world.

"We're sharing our experiences so Brazil has the information that we wish we had 100 years ago," says Michael Reuter, chief conservation officer for the Conservancy's Illinois chapter. The Conservancy's assistance, given in conjunction with scientists affiliated with the U.S. Geological Survey Long Term Resource Monitoring Program on the Upper



Spunky Bottoms Preserve, Illinois © Tharran Hobson/TNC

Mississippi, has extended to such practical matters as recommending the type of nets for capturing fish to monitor their ages and growth rates. By making a benchmark assessment,

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More than a Pipe Dream

Low Tech Has High Potential for Nebraska Wetlands

Sometimes they're tubes with fish ladders built-in so small species can make their way upstream for spawning. Sometimes they're just weirs ... pilings with notches for overflows. These simple engineering projects in the Sandhills region of Nebraska represent fast, cost-effective methods of restoring the country's most extensive wetland/grassland system and provide channels that raise the level of communication for vital partnerships.

The Sandhills Task Force, a rancher-led group that collaborates with government and conservation organizations, is achieving multiple conservation goals while maintaining livestock in a region that provides vital habitat for fish such as the blacknose shiner and northern redbelly dace, as well as birds in the Great Plains Flyway.

The task force evolved from a 1991 agreement between the Nebraska

Cattlemen and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Nebraska chapter of The Nature Conservancy is part of the task force, providing fundraising expertise and science consulting for the group.

Ranchers such as Mike and Cynthia Kelly, also members of the task force and owners of Kelly Ranch, partner with local and national groups to plan simple, effective strategies. Tubes and pipes are a low-cost way to restore natural drainage to an area formerly ditched and drained for hay production. Grazing cattle on a rotational system is another. Allowing the range to rest results in more forage for livestock and vastly improved wildlife



Sandhill cranes in flight, Nebraska
© Thomas Mangelsen/Minden Pictures

habitat—especially vital during times of drought. The Kellys have also added down-to-earth improvements including wells and over 11,000 trees. Meanwhile, the Sandhills Task Force has helped the Conservancy fund a 9,920-acre conservation easement to protect fragile habitat along a five-mile stretch of the Kelly Ranch's Birdwood Creek.

The Sandhills Task Force partnership is being watched around the

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Five Ways (continued from previous page) of altered fire regimes on both public and private lands.

Freshwater ecosystems—including rivers, lakes, and wetlands—provide drinking water for more than 80% of the world's human population and homes for countless species. Because species declines in freshwater systems are five times higher than terrestrial species declines, the Conservancy is working with other conservation organizations, government agencies and community groups to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems around the world.

Invasive species can rapidly devastate key components of natural ecosystems. Invasive, non-native species are the second highest threat to biodiversity after habitat destruction. The Conservancy's work to combat invasive species involves prevention, eradication, restoration, research and outreach efforts. For instance, we encourage hikers to clean their boots before leaving an area to stop the spread of hitch-hiking seeds and pathogens.

Marine biodiversity is increasingly threatened. Overfishing, pollution, the complexities of international law ... the

challenges are taking their toll. The Conservancy is working with global partners to develop policies and programs that preserve the rich variety of life in our oceans. For example, the Conservancy supports sustainable fishing practices that balance human needs and ecosystem protection. We also work to protect the oceans' nurseries, where fish spawn and reproduce.

For more details about the Five Initiatives, please visit: nature.org/legacy.php?initiatives.

legacy connection

Legacy Club benefits, trips & opportunities

Great Escapes

We invite you to renew an essential natural resource: yourself. Meet fellow Legacy Club members, expand your natural knowledge, and just relax ... all in the scenic beauty of one of the great places you are helping to protect.

Montana: Pine Butte Guest Ranch

August 24-31

\$1,500 per person, all-inclusive from Great Falls, Montana

Montana's rugged East Front offers you a rich array of outdoor experiences—including the chance to trek to Egg Mountain, one of the world's richest troves of fossilized dinosaurs. At The Nature Conservancy's Pine Butte Guest Ranch, you can study with the staff naturalist, ride horseback, hike, swim and unwind. Nearby, the Conservancy's 18,000-acre Pine Butte Swamp Preserve beckons. There you'll see lush wetlands and rolling prairies sheltering brilliant wildflowers and animals including bears, badgers and many bird species—all in view of snow-capped peaks gracing the largest wilderness area in the lower 48 states.

Please contact Dawn Baker or Lee Barhaugh at Pine Butte Guest Ranch for more details: (406) 466-2158.

Chile: Following Darwin's Footsteps

October 25-November 2

\$4,790 per person, all-inclusive from Miami

Optional Extension: November 2-8; Torres del Paine National Park \$1,995 per person

From the cosmopolitan capital city of Santiago to a Conservancy project site, Punta Curiñanco—one of the last unaltered coastal areas in southern Chile—this Legacy trip is an odyssey you'll never forget. Experience the majestic Osorno Volcano ... the natural hot springs at Puyehue ... and breathtaking views of the places the Conservancy, local partner Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y la Flora (CODEFF) and you are collaborating to protect.

Colorful ports, rural vistas, and multinational influences provide an exciting counterpoint to the natural beauty of Chile. The trip also offers an optional extension to majestic Torres del Paine National Park.

For more details, please contact Sherry Howland at Wildland Adventures: (800) 345-4453.

The Legacy Club

"To make a gift of any kind to The Nature Conservancy is an act of generosity. To make a long-term gift—one derived from the work of a lifetime—is to make a commitment beyond measure."

Membership in The Legacy Club is open to those who wish to join the tradition of making a lasting gift. These include gifts through your will, retirement plan and insurance policy, as well as life-income and other deferred gifts. Membership is voluntary and without obligation. It is our way of recognizing a remarkable contribution to the Conservancy.

Benefits

- A personalized membership certificate
- Free subscription to *Nature Conservancy* magazine
- Special publications including the Conservancy's annual report
- Our semi-annual newsletter, *Legacy*
- Trip invitations to see the Conservancy's work in action
- Special offers (With this issue we are pleased to present the enclosed discount for the Conservancy's online store!)



Rachel Carson, Circa 1951

A Legacy Leader *Silent Spring* Speaks for Maine's Coastline

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the book that launched the contemporary environmental movement, continues to influence environmental protection through The Nature Conservancy. Since the legendary scientist passed away in 1964, royalties from her famous book are helping us preserve coastal Maine. This bequest extends the legacy of this lover of the sea ... and fellow Legacy Club member.

“This land—this place—is in
my soul and in my heart.

It gives me direction ... and a purpose.”

—Heidi Redd, Legacy Club member

currents

World Parks Congress

The Nature Conservancy will be represented at the fifth International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) World Parks Congress, to be held in Durban, South Africa, September 8-17, 2003. Meeting every 10 years, the World Parks Congress—the major global forum for protected areas—assesses protected areas, appraises progress and setbacks, and charts the course for the future.

New Australia Country Program

Home to the Great Barrier Reef and 10% of the world's species, including 85 unique species of flowering plants, Australia has been identified by the United Nations Environment Program as one of the world's 12 “megadiverse” countries. Nevertheless, the threats to Australia's diversity—primarily from land clearing, salt intrusion, unsustainable agriculture, and misuse of water—are enormous. Through our new Australia program, the Conservancy is working with local conservationists to help save the country's Last Great Places. At the



Queensland, Australia © Ron Geatz/TNC

same time, Australia's experience fighting invasive species, managing wildland fire, and conserving dryland and marine ecosystems is making a valuable contribution to the Conservancy's efforts elsewhere.

World's Richest Reefs

Following an expedition led by The Nature Conservancy, leading tropical marine scientists have confirmed the Indonesian islands of Raja Ampat contain some of the planet's richest coral reefs. Fully 505 species of coral as well as 1,065 species of fish have been recorded. Since the corals are

resistant to bleaching, their larvae can aid in the recovery of damaged reefs elsewhere. The Conservancy and its partners are working with local communities to protect this irreplaceable ecosystem.

Natural Events— Spring/Summer 2003

Pantanal, Brazil—May-October: Great egret and wood storks are two of 650 bird species that bask in the dry season.

Utah—August: Wildflowers are ablaze, wildlife abounds along Snake Creek Canyon.

To learn about natural events in your area, please visit the Conservancy's Natural Events Almanac: nature.org/legacy.php?almanac.



Great egret, roseate spoonbill and woodstork in Brazil's Pantanal
© Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures

planning matters

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Legacy Club member Mary Clashman
© Heather Bacher

heaven, it took little imagination to touch the base of a tree and visualize God at the top.

As a child of eight or nine, I would follow my father along the rutted paths as he ran interference through spiderwebs ahead ... at 29 I was alone in the forest, confronting spider webs on my own.

At age 74, I turned my pickup truck into my familiar forest and slowly drove the rutted road. At the center of the forest I stopped. I opened the door of the truck and leaned against the base of a tall tulip tree.

Pipe Dream (continued from page 5)

country for its success in sustaining profitable ranching while preserving biodiversity. Al Steuter, director of conservation programs for the Conservancy's Nebraska chapter, says

“Attention everybody, I have an announcement to make.” My voice was as clear as I could make it from a throat that seemed to choke. “I am transferring ownership of these woods to The Nature Conservancy so all of you can continue to have the safety you have always enjoyed from my father and me. You will never know the terror of a developer’s bulldozer. You will always have comfort in the habitat where you belong. And your future and the future of your progeny will be secure.”

It seemed proper to stop before leaving the forest ... to whisper a prayer of thanks for The Nature Conservancy and the thousands of members everywhere who had conserved my forest cathedral.

If you choose to include The Nature Conservancy in your will or estate plan, we should be named as: The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the District of Columbia, and with principal business address of 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, Virginia 22203-1606. Our tax identification number is 53-0242652.

the partnership provides proof that conservation and commerce can find—and create—common ground. “If you talk to each other long enough,” he says, “you share a language.”

inside the Conservancy

Two Rivers (continued from page 4)



Ocelot, Pantanal, Brazil
© Frans Lanting/Minden Pictures

Brazilian scientists will have information to compare with year-to-year data so they'll know if extensive fishing, agricultural development or industrial factors are damaging the ecosystem. For the U.S.' part, receiving data from Brazil will allow scientists to better reconstruct the natural state of large tracts of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

The partnership was prompted by similarities between the two regions. For example, runoff of farm topsoil was a major factor in the decline of the Mississippi ecosystem, while more and more land is now being cleared for farming along the Cuiabá. The future of the Pantanal, famous for its 650 species of birds, 1,800 species of plants and 260 types of fish—not to mention animals from jaguars to otters—is riding on the Brazilians' ability to balance ecosystems and economics. “Brazil wants economic development,” says Christine Pendzich, director of the Brazil Program. “We're helping them develop the tools to make good decisions.”