2021 Annual Impact Report
“The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.”

E.O. Wilson
June 10, 1929 - December 26, 2021
Nature and Culture International
Honorary Board Member
Nature and Culture International partners with local cultures to connect and efficiently protect biodiverse hotspots in Latin America for the resilience of our planet.

In our 25 years, we have protected 22 million acres across 7 ecoregions, supporting 300 Indigenous communities and sequestering 3.4 billion tons of carbon.
As you read through this report on the impact we have made in 2021, please remember that none of this would be possible without the generous support we've received from so many of you!

We invite our supporters, partners, and donors to join us in celebrating these achievements and the lasting impact you have made in creating a more sustainable planet.

We value your friendship, support, guidance, and donations, and want to send a heartfelt thank you for all that you do for conservation!
Dear friend,

Nature and Culture International has always taken a holistic approach to our work. It’s embodied in our very name - nature and culture - two equal parts so intertwined as to always be mentioned in the same breath. It’s why we partner with rural and Indigenous communities. To try to conserve nature without them makes no sense. It wouldn’t work.

To drive this point home, note the accomplishments we’ve highlighted in this report, almost all of which depended as much on strong Indigenous partners as on our very capable staff. This isn’t a coincidence. In aggregate, Indigenous territories in the Amazon show lower rates of deforestation, and have lost less carbon to deforestation, even than protected areas.

*Indigenous peoples are very successful conservationists and have been for centuries.*

We focus on whole ecosystems for the same reason: we believe in an integrated approach. In our Five-Year Strategic Plan written in 2019, we selected 13 landscape mosaics as our areas of geographic focus.

It is through the thoughtful placement of individual pieces - thinking about their relationship to each other and to the whole - that a meaningful pattern emerges in a tile mosaic. It is the same with a landscape mosaic.

*It is in their relationship to each other that the component parts combine into a functioning whole.*

That’s true whether the individual pieces are national parks, Indigenous territories, protected municipal watersheds, or some combination of all.
So, what does this mean for Nature and Culture International looking forward? Well, we have big dreams.

**We continue to look for smart ways to put the pieces together in order to protect even larger landscapes.**

That’s why we are creating the framework for an Andean Corridor, stretching almost 3.3 million acres, from the Andes of central Ecuador to northern Peru that will be managed as connected habitat within a single mountain ecosystem. And that’s why we are supporting an Amazonian Platform to coordinate the management of three massive provincial protected areas of lowland Amazon rainforest in southeastern Ecuador. The challenge will be to scale up without losing our local roots, which, to return to my initial point, is why our community partnerships are so important.

While reading the impact report, I hope you enjoy learning how we track the health of protected areas through vital signs. Ensuring the long-term viability of existing conservation areas is as important as establishing new ones. In our 25 years, we haven’t had a single protected area reversed. That’s because we are committed to holistic management. When you support Nature and Culture, you are supporting the long-term protection of ecosystems. Our conservation areas are here to stay.

Sincerely,

Matt Clark
President and CEO
FINANCIAL HEALTH

Statement of Financial Position

Assets
- Cash & Cash Equivalents
  2021: 6,130,244
  2020: 4,074,945
  Change: 2,055,300
- Pledges & Grants Receivable
  2021: 164,076
  2020: 75,783
  Change: 88,293
- Prepaid expenses and deposits
  2021: 20,016
  2020: 20,993
  Change: (977)
- Property and Equipment
  - Land (Conservation)
    2021: 2,749,373
    2020: 2,687,373
    Change: 62,000
  - Buildings & improvements (net of depreciation)
    2021: 173,471
    2020: 180,454
    Change: (6,982)
  - Vehicles (net of depreciation)
    2021: 14,080
    2020: 23,174
    Change: (9,095)
  - Furniture & equipment (net of depreciation)
    2021: 231,677
    2020: 101,562
    Change: 130,115
- Total Assets
  2021: $9,482,937
  2020: $7,164,283
  Change: $2,318,654

Liabilities
- Accounts Payable
  2021: 101,125
  2020: 94,386
  Change: 6,739
- Loans Payable
  2021: -
  2020: (9,095)
  Change: (9,095)
- Payroll Related Liabilities
  2021: 375,979
  2020: 310,306
  Change: 65,673
- Deferred Revenues
  2021: 1,580,184
  2020: 909,751
  Change: 670,432
- Total Liabilities
  2021: $2,057,287
  2020: $1,416,878
  Change: $639,409

Net Assets
- Without Donor Restrictions
  2021: 5,232,180
  2020: 4,078,539
  Change: 1,154,642
- With Donor Restrictions
  2021: 2,193,470
  2020: 1,668,866
  Change: 524,604
- Total Net Assets
  2021: $7,425,650
  2020: $5,747,405
  Change: $1,678,245
- Total Liabilities & Net Assets
  2021: $9,482,937
  2020: $7,164,283
  Change: $2,318,654

Statement of Activities

Revenue & Support
- Grants & Contributions
  2021: 3,890,419
  2020: 3,450,101
  Change: 440,318
- Grants
  2021: 3,106,964
  2020: 2,575,048
  Change: 531,916
- Fees & other
  2021: 159,672
  2020: 147,947
  Change: 11,725
- Forgiveness of PPP advance
  2021: 204,672
  2020: 204,672
  Change: 0
- Total Revenue & Support
  2021: $7,361,727
  2020: $6,173,096
  Change: $1,188,631

Expenses
- Conservation Program Services
  2021: 4,821,898
  2020: 3,820,984
  Change: 1,000,914
- Fundraising
  2021: 335,126
  2020: 358,853
  Change: (23,727)
- General & Administrative
  2021: 526,457
  2020: 676,318
  Change: (149,861)
- Total Expenses
  2021: $5,683,481
  2020: $4,856,156
  Change: $827,326

Net Change
- Change in Net Assets
  2021: $1,678,245
  2020: $1,316,940
  Change: $361,305
- Net Assets Beginning of Year
  2021: 5,747,405
  2020: 4,430,465
  Change: 1,316,940
- Net Assets End of Year
  2021: 7,425,650
  2020: 5,747,405
  Change: 1,678,245
We employ a ‘funds to the field’ approach

We work ethically, transparently, and efficiently to ensure our donors’ dollars go as far as possible. Our aim is to achieve the greatest results by putting financial and logistical resources where they are needed most – on the ground.

Experts in the field

Our staff members live in the places they protect. As trusted neighbors, they have strong relationships within their communities to better understand and protect the surrounding ecosystems. When Nature and Culture contemplates a new protected area, we think through its whole life cycle: from legal creation to long-term financing, governance and management by local community associations. In our 25 years, we have not had a single protected area reversed.

Efficiency and transparency

Nature and Culture International is an officially Accredited Charity with the Better Business Bureau®, a Platinum Level organization according to GuideStar®, and is registered nationwide as a licensed United States charitable solicitor. Nature and Culture is also proudly featured as a top Highly Rated Environmental Nonprofit by Charity Navigator.

Nature and Culture International’s financial records are audited annually by an independent CPA. Financials for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021 were unaudited at the time of this report. Past years’ full and audited financials are available at https://www.natureandculture.org/financials-and-publications/. To receive Nature and Culture’s 2021 audited financials when they become available, contact dogood@natureandculture.org.
2021 IMPACT SUMMARY

It's been a big year...

21 New Reserves Declared & 60 Reserves Managed

941,895 New Acres Conserved

82 Species Studied

1,186,398 People with Newly Protected Water Supplies

122 Local Communities & 26 Indigenous Nationalities Supported

153,271,047 Tons of Carbon Stored in Newly Protected Acres
OUR MOSAIC STRATEGY

Conserving large, integrated landscapes: In the last 25 years, we've protected 22,056,968 acres!

We are truly proud of the impacts we’ve made in 2021, but where our work really comes to life is in the interconnectedness of these component parts. Each acre of land protected, each relationship built with a local community or municipal government, each new species discovered is part of a greater, integrated whole.

Nature and Culture International is concentrating our efforts in 13 large-scale eco-regional landscapes, or mosaics. Collectively these mosaics cover about 30 million acres of wild places – including some of the largest carbon reserves and the most species-rich ecosystems in the world.

This concept of creating large-scale mosaics that provide connection between protected areas is central to Nature and Culture’s strategy. Protected areas are vital for the survival of nature and all that it provides us with – clean water, food, medicine, and a stable climate. Local communities rely on these natural resources and many of these areas are sacred to Indigenous peoples.
OUR CONSERVATION MOSAICS

Connect & Protect

- **México**
  1. Southern Sonora Mosaic
- **Colombia**
  2. Southern Chocó Mosaic
- **Ecuador**
  3. Podocarpus - El Cóndor Mosaic
  4. Dry Forest Mosaic
  5. Corredor Sangay- Podocarpus Mosaic
  6. Morona Santiago Mosaic
  7. Pastaza Mosaic
- **Perú**
  8. North Andes Mosaic
  9. Caripish - Rio Abiseo Mosaic
  10. Dry Forest of the Marañon Mosaic
  11. Nanay - Tigre Mosaic
- **Bolivia**
  12. Guarani Mosaic
  13. Iñao - Tariquía Water Corridor Mosaic
MEASURING OUR IMPACT LONG-TERM

Vital Signs

Working in mosaics is a long-term commitment, requiring continuous monitoring and evaluation. That’s why we track each area we protect to make sure its “vital signs” are in good health.

Designating a protected area is not enough. To thrive, it needs oversight, planning, and funding, which we monitor as Vital Signs. In the same way, a doctor checks a person’s vital signs to ensure they are alive and well, we check a protected area’s vital signs to ensure it is thriving.

To demonstrate that the mosaics are in good standing, the protected areas in each mosaic must have the following:

1. **Official recognition of the Mosaic** by a state entity or international body.

2. **Clear and recognized legal status of the conservation areas** by the corresponding state, through its different levels of government.

3. **Governance Mechanism and Natural Resource Plans** ensures that there is an entity responsible for the management of the conservation areas, those entities could be public, community, Indigenous and/or private.

4. **Action Plan** is a multi-year plan, aimed at guaranteeing conservation of the mosaic’s reserve areas.

5. **Financial Mechanism**, such as conservation funds or water funds, that guarantees economic resources for the conservation and management of its protected areas.

6. **Monitoring and Control Mechanism** tracks the conservation status of natural ecosystems and assesses the effectiveness of the conservation measures that are implemented.
Impact Summary

- **325,097** NEW ACRES PROTECTED
- **14** RESERVES CREATED, EXPANDED OR UPGRADED
- **13** RESERVES MANAGED
- **10** SPECIES STUDIED
- **61,574,748** TONS OF CARBON STORED IN NEWLY PROTECTED AREAS
- **29** LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED
- **11** INDIGENOUS NATIONS SUPPORTED
- **500,000** PEOPLE WITH NEWLY PROTECTED WATER SUPPLIES
- **275** PARK GUARDS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED

Map Legend

- **Green** AREAS NATURE AND CULTURE IS HELPING TO PROTECT
- **Light Green** OTHER PROTECTED AREAS
- **White** CONSERVATION MOSAIC
Pastaza, Ecuador

With Nature and Culture’s support, the province of Pastaza and seven Indigenous nationalities created a comprehensive plan to reduce deforestation. When the plan was approved in May of 2021, Pastaza became the first province in Ecuador to obtain an Implementation Plan approved by REDD+ (a framework created by the Conference of the Parties (COP) that focuses on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation). This "opened the faucet" for climate funding. This groundbreaking achievement is the result of successful collaboration between the Provincial Government of Pastaza, several municipal governments, seven Indigenous nationalities of Pastaza, Minister of Environment and Water (MAEE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Nature and Culture International. Government and Indigenous nationalities can now access this funding to implement their sustainability plans.

The REDD+ United Nations-backed framework is an example of the kind of jurisdictional climate funding that is truly impactful. It specifically helps to create a conservation action plan and sets up funding mechanisms to ensure sustainable implementation of practices. There are clear, attainable conservation goals, and climate funds are given directly to the local peoples who implement conservation plans and protect key ecosystems. We hope this successful project will serve as a roadmap for other provinces in Ecuador and beyond.

2020 Update: The Shuar achieve land titling of ancestral territory!

In 2020, we reported on the challenges that the Shuar Kiim community faced during the pandemic. This year we are thrilled to share that they achieved their long-held goal to declare 14,021 acres of their Tiwi Nunka Forest as a community conservation area.

Hooray for perseverance! This is a great victory for the Shuar people and an important win for Indigenous land rights. It will protect their forest from threats, such as mining, clearing land for cattle ranching, and other detrimental extractive activities.
Loreto, Peru

The buriti, the superfruit of the Amazon, is driving large-scale rainforest conservation and securing a sustainable source of income for Indigenous Amazonian communities.

In the Amazon Rainforest, in northeast Peru, Nature and Culture has embarked on a sustainable livelihoods project alongside the Indigenous people of Loreto with the goal of developing a sustainable market for the buriti fruit. This fruit from the Moriche palm has powerful health benefits. Global demand is increasing for buruti for use in skin and hair care products.

The Moriche palm thrives in the swamps of the Peruvian Amazon, covering 7.5 million acres in the western Loreto region of Peru, which is also home to the highest density of Indigenous people in the country. Using techniques that ensure a sustainable and controlled harvest, we’ve partnered with thousands of local producers and we are working with market research firms to explore opportunities for selling this super fruit in the U.S. in oil, flake, and powder form. By securing a sustainable source of income for the Indigenous people of Loreto, this super fruit can become a powerful tool for conservation – catalyzing the protection of millions of acres to secure this natural resource.
Impact Summary

- **523,778** NEW ACRES PROTECTED
- **4** RESERVES CREATED, EXPANDED OR UPGRADED
- **24** RESERVES MANAGED
- **11** SPECIES STUDIED
- **86,520,488** TONS OF CARBON STORED IN NEWLY PROTECTED AREAS
- **49** LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED
- **7** INDIGENOUS NATIONS SUPPORTED
- **593,542** PEOPLE WITH NEWLY PROTECTED WATER SUPPLIES
- **755** PARK GUARDS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED

Map Legend

- **Blue** AREAS NATURE AND CULTURE IS HELPING TO PROTECT
- **Light Blue** OTHER PROTECTED AREAS
- **Empty Box** CONSERVATION MOSAIC
Impact Summary

- **3** Reserves Managed
- **4** Species Studied
- **6** Park Guards & Community Members Trained
- **4** Local Communities Supported
- **1** Indigenous Nation Supported
- **36,800** People with Newly Protected Water Supplies
Sinaloa, Mexico

The Nature and Culture team in Mexico directed the first BioBlitz in State Reserve Sierra de Tacuichamona, which spans 110,394 acres and conserves oak forest, tropical dry forest, and river ecosystems in the state of Sinaloa. **A BioBlitz is a rapid inventory of the species within a given area.** We already know the reserve is home to unique and threatened species, including the margay (*Leopardus wiedii*), jaguar (*Panthera onca*), northern potoo bird (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*), and orange-fronted parakeet (*Eupsittula canicularis*), but with the help of eight experts in the areas of plants, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals, over eight days of continuous work, we were able to register a total of **353 species.**

The team noted two species in danger of extinction, the margay and the Military macaw (*Ara militaris*), and threatened species including the Mexican mud turtle (*Kinosternon integrum*), the Forrer’s grass frog (*Lithobates forreri*), and the pink trumpet tree (*Handroanthus impetiginosus*).

**Overall, we documented 198 species of plants, 108 species of birds, 14 species of amphibians, 20 species of reptiles, and 13 species of mammals.**

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**2020 Update: Mexican government to fund management of Sierra de Tacuichamona**

Sierra de Tacuichamona was declared a protected state reserve in 2020 and now the Mexican government has offered to begin paying for the long-term management of this protected reserve!
In December, the protected area Ñembi Guasu in southern Bolivia, was upgraded to a nationally recognized protected area. This is a big step forward for safeguarding some of the best remaining Chaco Forest habitats threatened by agricultural development. As a nationally recognized protected area, no agricultural or extractive activities, like mining or deforestation, will be allowed.

Ñembi Guasu is located next to national parks, Kaa Iya and Otuquis, creating a large conservation corridor including both Gran Chaco lowland semi-arid forest and Pantanal wetland ecosystems. This consolidation of a continuous conservation area will mitigate the effects of climate change and provide safe, connected habitat for Ñembi Guasu’s abundant biodiversity, including armadillos, giant anteaters, jaguars, and guanaco (Lama guanicoe).

Nature and Culture worked in collaboration with the indigenous Guaraní peoples of Charagua and local organizations to establish Ñembi Guasu in 2019. Charagua is the first autonomous indigenous government created within Bolivia. Charagua is being explored as a potential recipient of REDD+ climate funding, similar to the carbon funding that was implemented in Pastaza in 2021.
BOLIVIA

Impact Summary

- **93,020** new acres protected
- **3** reserves created, expanded or upgraded
- **10** reserves managed
- **55** species studied
- **5,175,810** tons of carbon stored in newly protected areas
- **26** local communities supported
- **1** indigenous nation supported
- **5,966** people with newly protected water supplies
- **49** park guards & community members trained

Map Legend

- **AREAS NATURE AND CULTURE IS HELPING TO PROTECT**
- **OTHER PROTECTED AREAS**
- **CONSERVATION MOSAIC**
Impact Summary

3 RESERVES MANAGED
2 SPECIES STUDIED
9 LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED
2 INDIGENOUS NATIONS SUPPORTED
90 PEOPLE WITH NEWLY PROTECTED WATER SUPPLIES

Map Legend

- Dark Green: Areas Nature and Culture is helping to protect
- Light Green: Other protected areas
- White: Conservation mosaic
Vichada, Colombia

The Aliwa forest of eastern Colombia, home to the Sikwani Indigenous nationality, formed when a crater hit the earth 30 million years ago. When researchers studied the area, they found at least **1,500 species of animals and about 1,100 species of plants**, although initial investigations have led researchers to believe there is much more to discover. They believe there are **144 species of butterflies, 331 fish, 64 amphibians, 163 reptiles, 684 birds, and 183 mammals**.

Of these, it is estimated that 33 species are in danger of extinction, including the Orinoco crocodile, the morrocoy turtle, the spider monkey, the giant armadillo, the pink dolphin, the jaguar, and the Chestnut tree. This crater, approximately 30 miles in diameter, contains an ecosystem of both the savannas of Orinoquia and the tropical rainforest of the Amazon. It is located within the region Vichada, in the Cumaribo municipality of eastern Colombia.

Nature and Culture, along with the governing body of the Sikwani and other international organizations, is in the initial research stages to generate the data needed to protect this sacred place. Safeguarding the Aliwa forests and their biocultural heritage will protect the diverse wildlife and traditional knowledge of the region. The team is continuing to strengthen participatory planning for the **90 Indigenous families that live in the region** to mitigate the threats of colonization and mining.

**This project addresses these Vital Signs:**

*Monitoring*

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**The endangered pink river dolphin.**

**Field expedition to the Aliwa-Cupepe Forest.**
Indigenous youth share web stories that feature their perspective on the indigenous environmental movement

Roraima, Brazil

Indigenous youth from Roraima, the northernmost state in Brazil, produced and launched a series of web stories that have allowed them to share their unique worldview, focusing on issues of Indigenous policy and local customs. The web series is the result of a 2020 meeting of Indigenous Journalists from the Wakywai Network, at the Center for Indigenous Formation and Culture. Nature and Culture worked alongside local organizations to carry out this project that culminated in a showcase of work on International Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The youth journalists from the Macuxi, Wapichana and Sapará peoples developed the storyboards and scripts with themes like Indigenous fish farming and traditional medicine and how these two themes relate to Indigenous land rights in Brazil. "This work showed how we can work as a team, developing our capabilities and improving our knowledge. It was not a challenge just for our group, but for ourselves [as individuals]," said Elivanilda Valerio of the Raposa 2 community in the Raposa region.

The Bem Viver project is carried out in Roraima by CIR Conselho Indígena de Roraima with the International Institute of Education of Brazil (IEB) and Nature and Culture International (NCI) with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).
Impact Summary

- **5** LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED
- **4** INDIGENOUS NATIONS SUPPORTED
- **50,000** PEOPLE WITH NEWLY PROTECTED WATER SUPPLIES
- **241** PARK GUARDS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS TRAINED
RECOGNIZING OUR CORE CONTRIBUTORS

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Re:wild
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Support Our Work

We want our donors to be able to support us in the most feasible way possible and leave a legacy for nature. If you would like to discuss making a gift that isn’t cash or check, or to explore your options, please reach out to our Director of Individual Giving, Laura Meagher.

Ways to Give: Online | By Check | Gift of Securities | Retirement Required Minimum Distributions | Making us the %H Q H F L D U \R I your IRA or Life Insurance Policy | Donor Advised Fund | Charitable Trust | Estate Plan Bequest Intention

*Make checks payable to Nature and Culture International. Contact us for wire transfer information. Email lmeagher@natureandculture.org for questions.
Looking Forward

Thanks to the incredible commitment and support of our Board and donors, Nature and Culture International is at an exciting point of institutional maturity to tackle even bigger conservation projects. We’re growing as an organization, which means our ability to protect larger landscapes is growing too. Over our 25 years in conservation, our strategy of protecting large, integrated landscapes, in concert with local cultures, has really proven its value. We’re already seeing the return on those investments as protected areas continue to be expanded or upgraded, as local communities have come to rely, once again on their own natural ecosystem services, as indigenous people are being included in key conversations and recognized at governmental levels, and as whole ecosystems begin to thrive and operate in harmony. It’s these types of victories that sustain us.

In 2022, we’re going to push ourselves to do even more. We have some exciting projects lined up that span ecoregions and even countries.

Nature and Culture protects habitats that are essential to the well-being, and indeed existence, not just of local species and people, but to us all. We hope you will continue to support us on this journey.