



Images for Conservation Fund Executive Summary

In the past 30 years, the world's major wildlife conservation organizations have discovered that people living with wildlife must have an economic stake in preserving it. "Sustainable development" programs, especially business enterprises that associate wildlife with income benefits for the local people, are now successfully protecting wildlife habitats in developing nations. The **Images for Conservation Fund (ICF)** believes that sustainable economics for conservation are equally important for the biodiverse regions of North America.

Conservation must become more efficient from now on, and resources must be leveraged to their maximum effectiveness. As human populations increase, and countries become more affluent, the costs of protecting individual preserves or entire ecosystems through land purchase has become prohibitive. ICF can leverage the protection of more habitats for an investment of far less dollars. Nature photography offers the perfect method for generating sustainable income to protect biodiversity and benefit rural communities.

The Nature Photo Tourism Industry is the most cost-efficient method to conserve wildlife habitat:

- For example: the Texas Hill Country is approximately 20,000 square miles, nearly 13,000,000 acres.
- To protect 10% of this land through purchase would cost \$2,600,000,000 (1,300,000 acres x \$2,000 per acre), with additional costs of annual management and maintenance
- The economics of the nature photo tourism industry will make wildlife valuable to landowners. This will protect habitat and lead landowners to restore, protect, and improve the lands wildlife habitat.
- All types of wildlife and habitats will become economically valuable and "worth preserving." Revenue potential is directly tied to the prosperity and diversity of the land's wildlife.
- The industry also will create jobs: i.e. photographic site design and construction, guide services, etc.
- Rural communities (hotels, restaurants, etc.) will benefit from increased tourism

ICF has developed several catalysts to stimulate the growth of this new conservation industry:

The Pro-Tour of Nature Photography is ICF's flagship event, the world's first all-professional nature photo tournament. Photographers and landowners are paired into teams to promote conservation, create outstanding natural images and promote the nature photo tourism industry on the most beautiful and biodiverse lands of North America. The **Inaugural Event** will be held in the **Texas Hill Country in April 2006**.

Legacy Competitions are planned for each Pro-Tour destination. These tournaments are open to all landowners and photographers and will perpetuate the development and promotion of conservation.

Photo Books & Museum Exhibits will share winning images of nature with people of all ages and create long-term, widespread exposure for Pro-Tour Sponsors.

The Nature Photo Tourism Industry is the tool for the future of conservation. It leverages existing ownership of habitat through the cooperative spirit of photographers, landowners, conservation groups, corporate America, and the general public: to work together for the long-term preservation of nature. ICF has received several endorsements from leading conservation and photographic organizations.

For more information, visit www.imagesforconservation.org or call (956) 381-1264.