

YOUTH ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

How a youth-led organization has mobilized thousands of international youth conservationists to make a measurable difference for threatened species and habitats:



OUR MISSION

Reserva's mission is to empower young people to make a measurable difference for threatened species and habitats through conservation, education, and storytelling.

We work to conserve biodiversity hotspots entirely through the lens of youth empowerment through projects like these:

ABOUT RESERVA

Reserva: The Youth Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Washington, DC, USA, currently led by about 90 youth from 30 countries. We are a diverse group of solution-oriented optimists who believe that young people have the financial and organizational capacity to make a measurable difference for threatened species and habitats in Earth's most biodiverse places. We created the world's first entirely youth-funded nature reserve in 2021, with youth leading every phase of the conservation process—from grassroots fundraising to exploration, documentation, and impactful storytelling. As we grow, we aim to support a network of reserves around the world through creative, barrier-breaking youth empowerment projects.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

It's a fact of nature that diversity makes us stronger. It's what we fight for in conservation, and it's what we embody as an organization. We actively listen and change course thanks to feedback from youth of varying cultures, nationalities, time zones, socioeconomic backgrounds, language proficiencies, and other perspectives. We are grateful for the diversity of our team, and we are committed to fostering a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds while continually pursuing ways to make our programs more equitable and inclusive.

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RESERVA
THE YOUTH LAND TRUST

CONSERVATION PROJECT

DRACULA YOUTH RESERVE | Carchi Province, Ecuador
Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot

The Dracula Reserve corridor protects dozens of endemic and threatened species, e.g.:

- Ateles fusciceps fusciceps* (CR)
- Atelopus coaynei* (CR)
- Phragmipedium fischeri* (CR)
- Rhaebo colomai* (EN)
- Osornophryne occidentalis* (EN)
- Pristimantis apiculatus* (EN)
- Spizaetus isidori* (EN)

Find out more!



Creating the World's First Entirely Youth-funded Nature Reserve

Launched in Sept 2019, hundreds of young people donated and fundraised \$180,000* to establish Dracula Youth Reserve—a 244-acre expansion to the Dracula Reserve ecological corridor in Ecuador. They held bake sales, trivia events, virtual "Run for the Rainforest 5Ks," Instagram LIVE "Concerts for Conservation," sold plants, mushrooms, and second-hand clothes, and even bioblitzed neighbor's yards to raise funds. From 2022-2023, we did it again to expand the reserve by 1,050 acres with partners Orchid Conservation Alliance, after youth researchers discovered illegal gold mining exploration on an expedition. *Includes a match from partners Rainforest Trust.



CONSERVATION + EDUCATION PROJECT



Read the report:



Youth & Community Empowerment to Save Ecuador's Orchids

Two local and Indigenous youth from the Dracula Reserve area were hired to train as parabiologists and monitor 10 target species of orchids at Dracula Reserve, collecting data for assessment under IUCN Red List Criteria. New orchid species were also discovered. This project was supported by the Indiana Zoological Society.

EDUCATION PROJECT



Hyloscirtus conscentia

Read on PEERJ:



Youth Species Naming Competition: A Novel Method for Community Engagement

A free global youth species naming competition received 622 entries from 36 countries via an educational website in EN/SP. Names were published as Supplemental Information with the species description. Competition methodology was described in the paper's Discussion. This project was conducted with INABIO and Fundación EcoMinga.

EDUCATION + CONSERVATION + STORYTELLING PROJECT

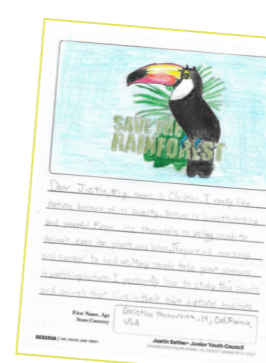


Find out more!



1 Million Letters #ForNature

Youth of all backgrounds can save nature through this campaign. We match each child's letter about nature, written to world leaders, with \$3 toward our active conservation project. Open to youth 26 & under.



STORYTELLING PROJECT



WILD HOPE: Does Nature Have Rights?

This 28-minute documentary on American Public Television tells our story of how youth conservationists and scientists are working with our local partners to defend Dracula Reserve from illegal gold mining. Watch for free online now.

Watch online:

