



THE 1ST YEAR OF
CONSERVATION
ATLAS



DEAR FRIENDS:

This first year in the life of our project and organization has helped shape our vision and better understand our goals. We had the chance to interview inspiring people working to protect and restore ecosystems in seven different countries, and to explore some truly beautiful, wild corners of the planet.

The next year will take us to seven more countries. We'll be in the South Pacific and Indonesia to document successful marine conservation initiatives, learn about long-distance trails on the Te Araroa in New Zealand, and focus on wildlife protection and ecosystem restoration projects in Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Romania. The most painful issue to document this year will be the destruction of rainforests due to palm oil plantations in Indonesia.

As we finish this two-year learning journey, Conservation Atlas will evolve into an established organization focused on educating and inspiring people to better understand their power as travelers to help conservation. Establishing an annual event celebrating the preservation of nature and connecting people with incredible projects worldwide, writing a book, expanding our team, hosting speaking events and exhibits are all part of the future steps we'll take to turn Conservation Atlas into an established organization. Thank you for being by our side from our humble beginnings!

Best Wishes & Happy Holidays,
Andreea & Justin Lotak
Founders of Conservation Atlas



OUR MISSION:

To support the protection of wildlands and biodiversity by expanding the public's awareness of conservation efforts around the world. We promote responsible travel, which we see as one of the greatest methods of connecting humans with the natural world, ensuring that the long-term value of conservation will benefit local communities, biodiversity, and future generations.



We envision Conservation Atlas as a resource to inspire and connect travelers with important projects supporting conservation efforts. We want to continue to: make the case for sustainable tourism as an important tool for local economic development; explore the ways in which organizations and governments are working to protect the world's natural heritage; and to create materials and events that inspire and educate audiences of all ages.

OUR PARTNERS IN 2017

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This year we had the honor and chance to document the outstanding conservation work of various organizations. With many of them we established a long-lasting relationship.

In addition, we're grateful for sponsorships and pro-deals from the private sector.

We are especially thankful for our first two volunteers, **Jeff Owen**, GIS expert, and **Brian Gruber**, grant research.

Conservation Atlas joined the "Leave No Trace" and "Nature Needs Half" initiatives:



We couldn't have done our work without them:



Special thanks for hosting our events:



Corporate partners:



NUMBERS IN 2017:

7 COUNTRIES VISITED

52 CONSERVATION LANDS
& PROJECTS

36 INTERVIEWS

1,500 NEW FRIENDS ON
FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM &
BLOG

OVER 15,000 PEOPLE
REACHED THROUGH OUR
CONTENT

42 STORIES ON THE BLOG

2 NEW VOLUNTEERS



PANAMA & GALAPAGOS

Panama introduced us to one of the most surprising examples of nature conservation within a large city, as well as to the country's new direction toward sustainable and nature-based tourism.

In Galapagos we learned about a sustainable conservation plan for the national park's management which gives us a lot of hope for the survival of this truly unique ecosystem. The highlight was the interview with Christian Sevilla, responsible for the Conservation and Restoration of Island Ecosystems Department within the park.

Galapagos Land Iguana, North Seymour Island, Galapagos National Park

CHILE

Chile is becoming a conservation model for the world. While we were there the government added 10 million acres to their national parks. Tompkins Conservation, the organization that triggered a change of paradigm for Chile's nature protection, donated 1 million acres of their private lands to become national parks. A new tourism destination was also created: the Route of Parks - 17 national parks in Chilean Patagonia. We visited 11 of the 17, spent many weeks at the various Tompkins Conservation projects, and visited several other remarkable private efforts by international and Chilean organizations.



MEXICO

South of Tulum, on the Riviera Maya, lies Mexico's largest biosphere reserve in the Caribbean: Sian Ka'an. This is the core area for conservation work coordinated by Amigos de Sian Ka'an. One of their goals is to expand protections inland to maintain animal migration corridors through the jungle. One of the main current projects is establishing a new tourist destination called Maya Ka'an. This is a prime example of community-based sustainable tourism. The Mayan villages within the jungle work together to create unique experiences for visitors. This helps them develop economically while protecting their forests and cultural identities.

ARGENTINA

We spent over a month in the Iberá wetlands of northern Argentina. This is where the creation of a reserve in the 80s helped partially restore the ecosystem. Then, starting in the 90s and up until today, Tompkins Conservation under the banner of CLT Argentina have been buying and restoring lands and working to bring back species like giant anteaters, tapirs, collared peccaries and jaguars. In the coming years they will donate all these lands to form the Iberá National Park, which together with the reserve and a provincial park, will form a 1.7 million acre parkland, the largest in the country.





USA

Between August and November 2017 we took a road trip to twenty national monuments under review by the presidential administration. We met and interviewed over a dozen people coordinating grassroots efforts to protect the monuments, spoke with locals and took numerous photos. Along the way we hosted presentations at Patagonia and REI stores to share the lessons we learned.

While in Montana we also had the chance to visit a remarkable private initiative: the American Prairie Reserve, working to bring back the bison on what will become the largest reserve in the continental US.

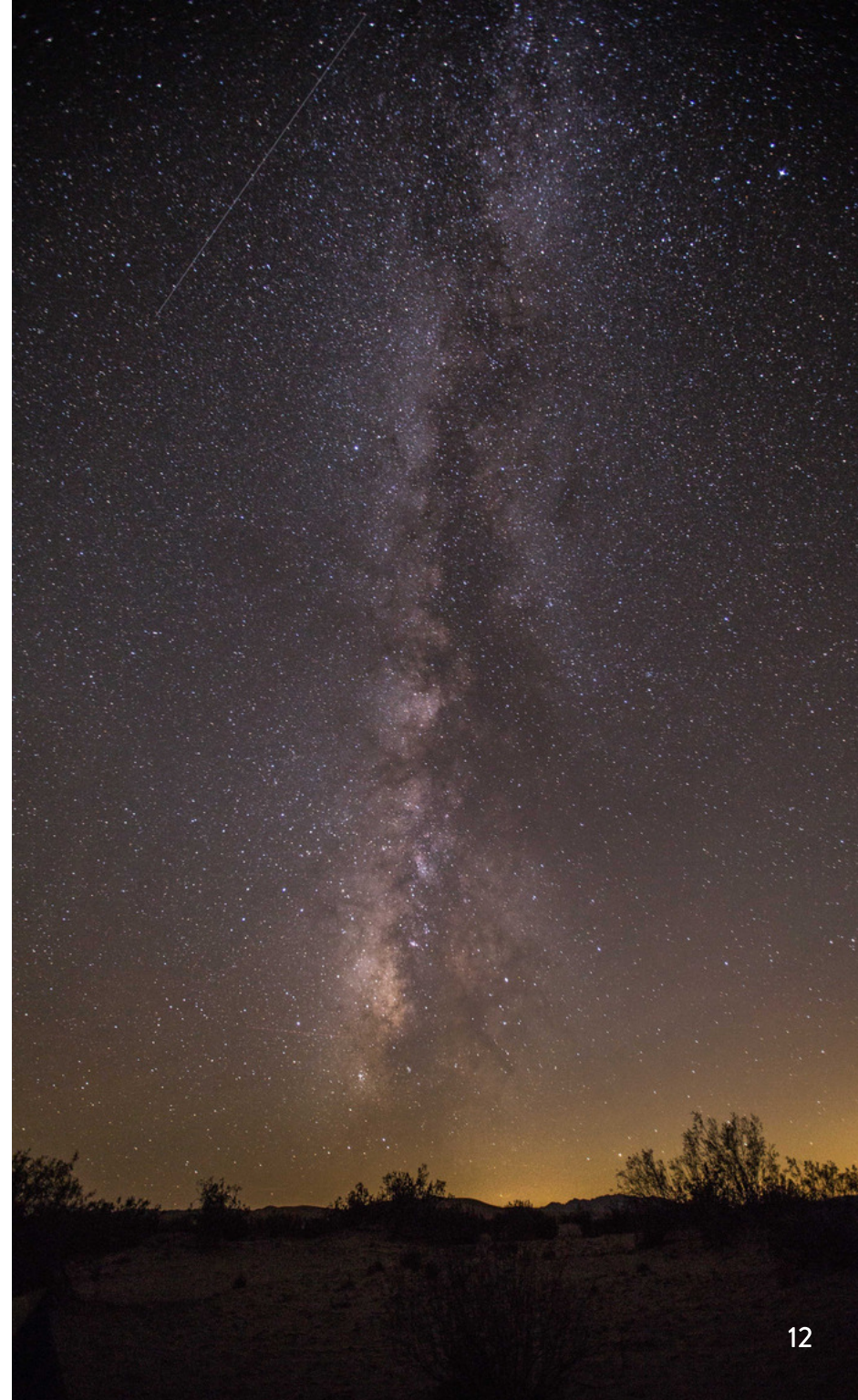
FIJI

Fiji is one of the places at the forefront of climate change, with people relocated from villages, flooded fields and intensified storms. It's a country that is starting to find its conservation consciousness in the recent years, working with traditional land-owning families, tribes and governmental authorities to protect sharks, rays, coral reefs and forests. One remarkable project is the Upper Navua Conservation Area, Fiji's first land protection and only RAMSAR site. This was created at the initiative of a whitewater rafting company, Rivers Fiji, in 2000 to protect the ecosystem of the Navua River Gorge, and represents a perfect example of how sustainable tourism can support conservation.



NEXT ON THE ITINERARY IN 2018:

- **New Zealand** - importance of long-distance trails to connect conservation lands; case study on the Te Araroa trail
- **Australia** - Great Barrier reef destruction & meeting the professor who pioneered the concept of "conservation tourism"
- **Palau** - one of the most inspiring marine conservation models in the world
- **Indonesia** - conservation tourism in the pristine marine ecosystem of Raja Ampat & Orangutans and rainforest destruction in Borneo and Sumatra
- **Mongolia** - snow leopard and khulan conservation in the Gobi region; national parks
- **Kazakhstan** - saiga antelope conservation as part of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative in one of the largest grasslands in the world
- **Romania** - eco and adventure tourism in the Carpathian Mountains, home to bears, wolves, lynxes, bison and some of Europe's oldest forests that are now being threatened by logging; the Carpathia private initiative to create Europe's first wilderness for large carnivores; conservation tourism in the Danube Delta.



"We each do what we can and don't worry about whether it is enough. The future will take care of itself if we use the present to its best advantage."

– Albert R. Lyman

For conservationists this is an odd quote to use, as it belongs to a rancher who founded the community of Blanding, Utah in the early 1900s. Blanding is now a gateway town to the Bears Ears National Monument, which the current US presidential administration proclaimed to be reduced in size by 85%. We thought it was symbolic to use a quote from a time when new-comers to North America were working to subdue nature, and apply it toward a future when we'll hopefully find the wisdom to place ourselves again within nature, as equal members in the community of life on Earth.

In front of hardships and a barrage of negativity we tend to lose hope that any of our actions is big enough to create change. But each individual step taken on the path toward a natural world in balance will take us all, even if only by an inch, closer to that goal. It's one of the most valuable lessons that we, a small and new nonprofit, had to learn in order to keep going with our mission.

POSITIVE CONSERVATION FACTS:

- Did you know that Chilean Patagonia's wildlands represent more than 50% of the region's total land mass? Truly a model for the "Nature Needs Half" movement;
- Did you know that Argentina created two new national parks this year, is set to declare several more soon and has committed to the protection of 10% of their territorial seas by 2020?
- Did you know that Mexico in 2016-2017 set aside 160 million acres for conservation on land and at sea? The largest marine protected area in North America, Revillagigedo Reserve, was created this November.
- Did you know that in Utah's Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument scientists have discovered 20 new species of dinosaur in the past 15 years, making it one of the best places on the planet for paleontology?

This year has been one full of lessons. We loved sharing them with you.

We are now a **501(c)(3) tax-deductible non-profit**. If you wish to support us you can add us as a charity when you shop on Smile.amazon.com. It won't cost you anything extra, but Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to us. We also now take donations via Paypal on our website and blog. The best support that won't cost you anything is to follow and share our content on Facebook and Instagram (@conservationatlas). Thank you!



You are part of the early days of our story



THANK YOU!



www.conservationatlas.org