

making a difference

Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC)



Photo by Robin Moore



Baird's tapir (Photo by Chris Jordan)



Analyzing water beetles in Guyana (Photo by Liz Condo)



From right to left: Cindy Sechrest with her son and daughter, Wes and Marisa Sechrest



Saola conservation program coordinator Bill Robichaud with Saola horns (Photo by Bill Robichaud)

An Interview with Cindy Sechrest, GWC Plant Conservation Officer and Travis Heights Resident, and GWC Founder/CEO, Wes Sechrest

Mission Statement

Global Wildlife Conservation protects endangered species and habitats through science-based field action. GWC envisions a world with diverse and abundant wildlife and is dedicated to ensuring that species on the verge of extinction are not lost. The global organization brings together scientists, conservationists, policymakers and industry leaders to ensure a truly collaborative approach to species conservation. Learn more at www.globalwildlife.org

Tell me about the work your organization does and the results you strive to achieve.

[Cindy] GWC is an Austin-based organization that works to save endangered species and their habitats around the world, using the best science and working with local in-country partners.

[Wes] We view biodiversity as the core environmental issue of our time. Our focus is protecting the fabric of life, which is species biodiversity, but conserving species and their habitat.

How did you become involved with this organization?

[Cindy] My son, Wes. In 2007 Wes said he wanted to start a non-profit, and I told him not to do it because I knew what it took. But he was committed.

I was GWC's accountant and CFO through 2016. Now I'm planning biological plant initiatives – concentrating on animal/plant interactions. Plants are the foundation of all life on Earth.

[Wes] Early on, I think all of us are entrusted with a love of nature, which E.O. Wilson defines as "Biophilia." This connection with nature is something that people tend to lose as they grow into adults and become more conditioned by modern society. For me, having a biologist for a mother who took me out to the mangroves in southern Florida and educated me in the forests of New England afforded me the opportunity to sustain a love and appreciation for

"Biophilia." From a young age, I understood nature to be the place where humans evolved. I understood incredible plants, animals, and their habits, but I also began to understand the destruction of those habitats, which is what inspired me to action.

We've reached a critical time in our planet's history. It's not just about studying nature; it's about taking action to preserve life on this planet.

What differentiates you from other non-profit organizations?

[Cindy] A lot of the non-profits in the conservation area are very heavy in administration or on the money side. GWC has made a mission to be "boots on the ground," and that is exactly what GWC does all around the world.

GWC looks for areas in the world that have a large concentration of really unique species that could easily become extinct. We work to conserve those areas by purchasing them, protecting them, and working with local in-country partners to secure them for the future.

Tell us about GWC's largest or most recent achievements.

In recent years, Global Wildlife Conservation has created new

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wildlife sanctuaries from Colombia to Congo, Borneo to Brazil, and is currently building the first network of private wildlife sanctuaries in Haiti. Most recently GWC has activated a new ranger corps in Nicaragua to combat illegal activity as part of GWC's anti-poaching efforts. GWC is working with Devil Ark in Australia to reintroduce Tasmanian Devils to the mainland, and is working to protect and recover the Sumatran Rhino with local in-country partners. GWC is also working with the Saola Working Group to conserve the elusive and majestic "Asian unicorn" in the Annamite Mountains of Vietnam and Laos.

How can someone get involved with this organization?

There are a number of ways Austin residents can make a difference for global wildlife. If they're interested in volunteering in some capacity for the organization, they should send an e-mail to info@globalwildlife.org. On Earth Day this year we hosted an event called Wild Night for Wildlife in Austin and all of the proceeds raised at that event go straight to conservation. Individuals can help by funding one of our many unique projects, from helping us find the "Asian Unicorn," to paying the veterinary bill for Tasmanian Devils. You can fund a need here: <http://globalwildlife.org/wildnightfundaneed>

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