



INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

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MARCH 21 - BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

LED BY CONSERVATION CAUCUS, COLOMBIAN CONGRESS APPROVES MERCURY TREATY

Thanks in part to leadership by members of the Colombian Conservation Caucus, a bill approving the 2013 Minamata Convention on Mercury has passed in both chambers of the Colombian Congress. Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos is expected to sign into law the bill approving the convention - an international treaty that seeks to protect human health and the environment from emissions of mercury and its compounds. Members of the Caucus, particularly Caucus Co-Chair and President of the Senate, Efraín Cepeda Sarabia, and President of the House, Rodrigo Lara Restrepo, led action in the Colombian Congress. By ratifying the Minamata Convention, Colombia can increase the control of importation and sale of mercury, take action to reduce emissions, strengthen capacity for cleanup

of contaminated sites, and facilitate international financial and technical cooperation on the issue.

In November, ICCF Colombia hosted a roundtable briefing, led by members of the Colombian Conservation Caucus and the Oceans Caucus, in conjunction with

the Minister of Environment, to discuss Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including the Minamata Convention. ICCF Colombia has worked over the past several years to increase awareness of the dangers of use of mercury in mining and to promote a multisectoral approach to addressing this challenge.



SENATE PRESIDENT EFRAÍN CEPEDA (CENTER) AND COLOMBIAN MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT LUIS GILBERTO MURILLO (LEFT)



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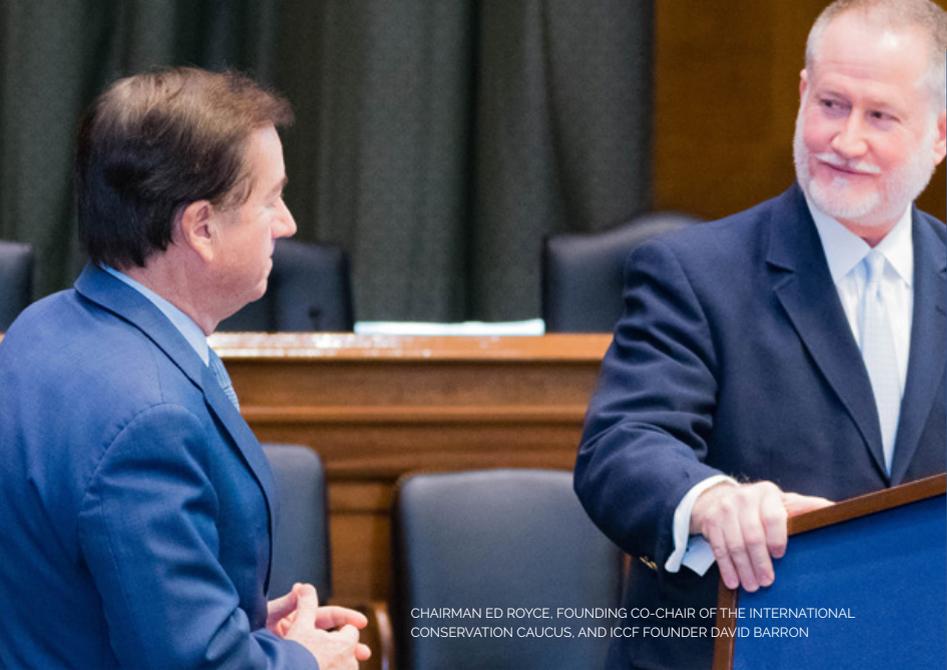
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CHAIRMAN ED ROYCE, FOUNDING CO-CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS, AND ICCF FOUNDER DAVID BARRON

IN CAPITALS

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION, OCEANS CAUCUS CO-CHAIRS SET 2018 PRIORITIES

The U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus and the Oceans Caucus have been rare examples of bipartisanship in recent years, successfully building support to combat wildlife trafficking and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. In February, Co-Chairs of each caucus addressed the ICCF Conservation Council to share their priorities for the remainder of the year.

For 2018, in addition to stressing the continued importance of maintaining budgets for global conservation programs, Co-Chairs of the International Conservation Caucus identified one area, in particular, in which U.S. leadership is needed: transfrontier conservation in the Okavango River Basin. House International Conservation Caucus Co-Chairs have recently introduced legislation aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth through trans-boundary conservation programs in this southern African region.

Co-Chairs of the Oceans Caucus remain focused in 2018 on addressing the global and domestic challenge of marine debris. Introduced by Senate Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs, legislation aimed at addressing this challenge unanimously passed the Senate last year. A companion bill has been referred to committee in the House.

TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION IN THE OKAVANGO WATERSHED

The Okavango River Basin is Africa's most expansive inland water system, extending from its source in the highlands of Angola, through Namibia, and into the Okavango Delta in northern Botswana. These waters support over one million people, as well as Africa's largest remaining population of elephants and a wealth of biodiversity.



THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF MARINE DEBRIS

The challenge of marine debris is the culmination of years of global mismanagement. Ocean currents move discarded trash incredible distances, placing the burden for its removal on the country in which it washes up. It has been estimated that tens of millions of metric tons of waste enter the ocean each year, and that trend is expected to continue if waste management infrastructure improvements are not implemented.



FORESTS TOP MALAWI CONSERVATION CAUCUS PRIORITIES FOR 2018

CAUCUS ENGAGES WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER POLICY REFORMS

The Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus (MPCC) in February identified forestry as a key focus through 2018 and 2019. The MPCC played a key role in 2016 to voice support for legislation that strengthened penalties for wildlife crimes and hopes to take a similar leadership role on forestry crime issues.

Organized forest crime is a significant threat to natural resources in Malawi, a country which has the highest rate of deforestation among Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries and ranks as one of the poorest countries in the world. As the country looks to address this threat, The ICCF Group in March facilitated a briefing for the MPCC with Malawi's Department of Forestry

and the Inter-Agency Committee on Combating Wildlife Crime (IACCWC) to discuss opportunities for legal reforms. Discussions centered on challenges in wildlife and forestry law enforcement, including corruption, and opportunities for collaboration on enforcement in combatting wildlife and forestry crimes.

Members of the MPCC have also engaged with the private sector to discuss forestry reforms, including in the tobacco industry, as well as challenges relating to forestry and tobacco production.

Strengthening forestry policies will be a key step toward reducing environmental and economic impacts of forest crime.



“Once the forests are gone, we cannot bring them back. That's lost revenue from sustainable timber sales, loss of fuel wood for many community members, even the loss of soil stability. More droughts, maybe even desertification, ironically more floods.”

-- Rt. Hon. Richard Msowoya
Speaker of Parliament, National Assembly of Malawi

ICCF NATIONAL WORKSHOP IN GABON PREPARES JUDGES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME CASES

In Gabon, The ICCF Group is working to improve the judiciary's understanding of issues surrounding the illegal wildlife trade and give them the necessary tools to effectively handle cases involving wildlife and environmental crimes. On March 23, 2018, The ICCF Group organized a national workshop for magistrates

from nine Gabonese provinces to strengthen their capacity to handle these cases.

The March 23 workshop is a continuation of efforts that began in February 2017 to raise awareness and identify gaps in enforcement of wildlife laws and to train those

judges in Gabon most often faced with wildlife crime cases. Local magistrate courts in Gabon are courts of first instance when it comes to criminal prosecutions, which means they play a significant role in administering justice for wildlife crimes.



REP. BETTY MCCOLLUM (LEFT) & REP. JEFF FORTENBERRY (RIGHT) ADDRESS THE ICCF CONSERVATION COUNCIL

CAUCUS CO-CHAIRS INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN BILL FOR CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA'S OKAVANGO

Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Co-Chair of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus, introduced legislation on January 18th aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth through trans-boundary conservation programs in the Okavango River Basin.

The bipartisan DELTA Act (Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act) provides for the development of a coordinated strategy and the prioritization of international conservation resources to that end. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA), a founding Co-Chair of the International Conservation Caucus, and Representatives Henry Cuellar (D-TX) and Betty McCollum (D-MN),

also Co-Chairs of the International Conservation Caucus, are original co-sponsors of the DELTA Act. The Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY), and a former chairperson of the committee, Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), are also original co-sponsors. Both are members of the International Conservation Caucus.

The aim of the DELTA Act is to combat threats and provide opportunities for growth by enhancing cooperation and coordination between governments, leveraging the experience and expertise of private sector and non-governmental stakeholders.

“

This transnational conservation initiative marks a new approach to protecting majestic species such as the African elephant, and rhinoceros, while creating dynamic new benefits for the surrounding countries and indigenous people. Through innovation, creativity, and conservation, we can save and enhance one of the most beautiful and delicate ecosystems in the world.”

– Rep. Jeff Fortenberry
Co-Chair, International Conservation Caucus



CONSERVATION CORPS PROJECT UPDATE: *GRENADA*

Four members of the ICCF International Conservation Corps recently visited Grenada to prepare a management plan for Mt. St. Catherine and to undertake an environmental and socioeconomic site inventory and analysis for the forest reserve and its surrounding communities. Their visit was in conjunction with the Global Environment Facility's Ridge to Reef (R2R) program, which aims to support the implementation of several key aspects of the Grenada System Plan for Parks and Protected Areas and the Grenada Declaration to effectively conserve at least 25% of its marine and territorial ecosystems by the year 2020.

MEXICAN CAUCUS MISSION TO DURANGO LOOKS AT COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group (GPCM) carried out a field mission from January 17th-19th that enabled legislators to learn first-hand the importance of community-owned and managed forestry for biodiversity and sustainable development.



In a busy three-day agenda, members of the caucus had the opportunity to see how Durango local land-owning communities (ejidos) have built biodiversity and sustainability into the management of their forest resources. Local communities own 60% of Mexico's forest territories. As a result of the mission, legislators have expressed a heightened appreciation for the importance of strengthening the legal framework to promote sustainable forest management in these communities.

PERUVIAN CAUCUS EXPLORES "GREEN GROWTH" AROUND RAINFORESTS

ICCF Peru, on March 15-17, led a multi-party delegation of members of the Peruvian Conservation Caucus on a field mission to the Amazonian city of Tarapoto to observe conditions and meet with local experts on issues related to national parks and sustainable "green growth" initiatives in buffer zones around the park.

The delegation visited the Center for Research in Tropical Crops, whose major focus is on breeding better varieties of cacao, a key local product, and met with senior park officials from Peru's National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SERNANP) for extensive briefings on two large parks near Tarapoto. These parks are home to some of the best original Amazonian

forests in Peru, having remained in good condition despite past issues with drug traffickers. Economic development in buffer areas around parks has brought with it new challenges, but increased access for local law enforcement has forced narcotics traffickers to shift operations elsewhere. As a result, many coca growers have switched to legal, sustainable crops.



IN MEMORIAM

RUSSEL FRIEDMAN (1950-2018)

FOUNDING PARTNER, WILDERNESS SAFARIS

The following is an excerpt of an interview conducted by International Conservation Caucus Co-Chairs, Rep. Jeff Fortenberry and Rep. Henry Cuellar, with Russel Friedman while at a camp in the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Friedman describes the wonders of the Okavango Delta, highlighting its thriving biodiversity, unique geology, and pristine beauty.

JF: So this is Russel with Wilderness Safaris, who's been one of our friends on the trip. We just saw something incredible, and I asked Russel to describe.

RF: So out here in the Abu Concession in Botswana, we came across a breeding herd of elephants, numbering probably around about 30-40. A whole lot of matriarchs, and lots of babies. They were just really coming out of the bush. The vehicle was stationary, engine turned off. And the elephants were surrounding us, there were elephants in front of us and in the back of us. And this big bull elephant just came up behind us, walked around, and then turned and faced us. And just put his ears up to say I'm here, it's me, don't worry about it. And he was only about 15 feet away from us. . . . And really for the last probably 10 years, I don't think I've had such incredible elephant encounters in the bush here. Everyday there's something different, and that's what drives us to do what we do.

JF: And it's in the middle of the Okavango Delta, which in totality covers how much of the country?

RF: It's about 13% of the land use in Botswana is actually designated to conservation. It's a very, very unique area. It's a Ramsar Wetland site, protected World Heritage Site, one of the most pristine deltas

in the world with incredible biodiversity.

HC: Tell us how the water comes from Angola and eventually, what part of the year? How long does it take to get over here? It's an amazing site.

RF: So the catchment for the Okavango is in the Highlands, the Northeastern Highlands of Angola, which is approximately 2,000 kilometers away from here. And those rains start around about November in the Angolan Highlands. It's the same season that we have - we also have a rainy season here. But the catchment area, it takes around about 5 months for that water to reach the headwaters of Botswana which is up at Shakawe. So we are actually around about beginning of May, end of April, the first parts of that flood starts coming in. And that flood will continue right through to around about the end of July and then it starts receding. So we have this dual wet season. We have the rainy season - October, November, December, January. And then we get the second flood season coming through, which makes the Okavango such a unique and biodiverse thing. The other thing is that when those waters are coming in, they're bringing lots of nutrients - that's, you know, normal river systems - but the actual nutrients are coming in from salt and things like that.

[url:youtu.be/4_D1f6X9lgA](https://youtu.be/4_D1f6X9lgA)



Watch the full interview with Russel Friedman on our YouTube page.



RECENT BRIEFINGS & WORKSHOPS

NATIONAL JUDICIARY WORKSHOP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WIDLIFE LAWS IN GABON

MARCH 23, 2018

Workshop to provide judges the tools necessary for handling cases related to international wildlife trafficking

CONSERVATION CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ANGOLA

MARCH 14, 2018

Congressional staff briefing on challenges to safely and sustainably developing the Okavango watershed region

ZAMBIA CAUCUS ORIENTATION AND WILDLIFE WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 26, 2018

2018 orientation meeting for members of the ZPCC and day-long workshop on wildlife-conservation-related issues

PICTURED ABOVE

FORUM ON FOREST CONSERVATION IN MEXICO

MARCH 21, 2018

Stakeholder dialogue with members of the GPCM on the importance of forest conservation

MALAWI CAUCUS WORKSHOP ON ENFORCEMENT OF FORESTRY LAWS

MARCH 9, 2018

Workshop with the MPCC and executive law enforcement agencies (IACCWC) to discuss the Forestry Act Amendment

2018 CONSERVATION COUNCIL LUNCHEON

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

Annual meeting of ICCF's business, NGO, and institutional partners with the Co-Chairs of the International Conservation Caucus

WELCOME NEW CONSERVATION CAUCUS MEMBERS

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL OCEANS CAUCUS

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) (*Honorary Co-Chair*)

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)

PERUVIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS

Hon. Congresista Edwin Vergara Pinto (FP)

Hon. Congresista Miguel Ángel Torres Morales (FP)

Hon. Congresista María Ursula Letona Pereyra (FP)

Hon. Congresista Gilmer Trujillo Zegarra (FP)

Hon. Congresista Rolando Reátegui Flores (FP)

MEXICAN CONSERVATION PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (GPCM)

Sen. Ismael Hernández Deras (PRI)

Dip. Cecilia Guadalupe Soto González (PRD)

Dip. Teresa de Jesús Lizárraga Figueroa (PAN)

Dip. María Chávez García (MORENA)

Dip. Christian Carrillo Fregoso (PAN)

Dip. Gabriela Hernández López (PRI)

ZAMBIAN PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION CAUCUS (ZPCC)

Hon. Philila Jere (Ind.)

Hon. George Mwamba (PF)





GEN. SURASAK KARNJANARAT, THAILAND'S MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT RECEIVES ICCF PRESIDENT JOHN GANTT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The ICCF Group is off to a great start in 2018. In the first quarter we hosted a number of programs to educate and inspire policymakers and members of the judiciary on issues of natural resource management and sustainable development.

assist developing countries to better manage their parks and protected areas. Already this year, teams have visited Kenya, Grenada, St. Kitts, and Palau, and team members are preparing for a visit to Thailand in the coming weeks.

As always, we rely on our many friends and partners to enable us to achieve our conservation mission, and we remain grateful for your continued support.

The caucuses that we support have been busy as well. In the United States, new bipartisan legislation was introduced by the co-chairs of the International Conservation Caucus to promote sustainable economic growth through transboundary conservation programs in Africa's Okavango River Basin. Members of the Colombian Conservation Caucus have led efforts to ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and members of several other caucuses continue to work toward improved forest, protected area, and wildlife policy.

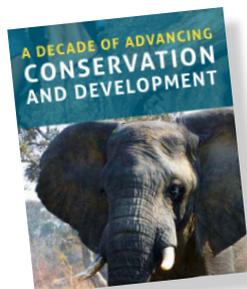
We are working hard to prepare for a number of upcoming briefings and events focusing on priorities identified by caucus leaders for 2018, including transboundary conservation programs and marine debris. On September 25th we will host our annual U.S. Congressional International Conservation Gala in Washington, so be sure to mark your calendars.

We also continue to build caucus membership and expand our caucus network, with particular focus this year on Asia. Our International Conservation Corps continues to deploy top-level conservation experts from the U.S. and Canada to

Best Wishes,

John B. Gantt, Jr.
President, ICCF U.S.

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BECOME AN ICCF GLOBAL PARTNER

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