

For Immediate Release

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WILDLIFE CONSERVATION NETWORK RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GIFT FOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Scholarship Invests in Local People as Future Leaders of Wildlife Conservation Around the World

LOS ALTOS, CALIF. – September 12, 2006 - The Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN), a nonprofit organization focused on supporting field-based wildlife conservationists, today announced a \$1 million gift from the Sidney Byers Charitable Trust to endow a scholarship program for host country nationals. The Sidney Byers Scholarship for Wildlife Conservation will fund the graduate education and field-based training of recipients, preparing them for work within their local communities to resolve human-wildlife conflicts.

“We believe that the future of wildlife conservation depends on local people working with local communities to resolve wildlife conflicts,” said Charles Knowles, WCN Executive Director. “The Byers Scholarship will identify, invest in, and help develop the future leaders of wildlife conservation around the world.”

WCN provides critical assistance to its Partner conservationists in Central and South America, Africa and Asia who are pursuing innovative solutions to protect endangered species and their habitats. WCN’s Partners will help identify candidates for the Scholarship. “The Scholarship will both benefit from and contribute to the work of WCN Partners,” said Knowles. “It presents a wonderful opportunity for Scholarship recipients to participate in hands-on internships with our Partner projects, where they will be mentored by world class conservationists and gain international exposure through the WCN network. At the same time, Sidney Byers Scholars will expand upon the ground-breaking work of our Partners, gaining the skills they will need to pioneer conservation projects of their own.”

Northern California resident Sidney Byers established the Sidney Byers Charitable Trust in 1981. “Sidney Byers was a woman of vision and commitment far ahead of her time,” said trustee Patricia Nelson. “She foresaw the urgency of protecting endangered species and dedicated her trust to creating a better future for animals, women and children.” The Trust has funded many successful wildlife projects, including the reintroduction of the peregrine falcon to the Western U.S., the release of the California condor back into the wild, and a sea otter rescue program.

Nelson selected WCN as the recipient of the gift because of her own deep commitment to wildlife conservation, which she developed growing up in the Pacific Northwest. Nelson said, “I apply skills from my career in the business world to select and support projects that will make a great impact on the future of our planet.”

WCN will formally unveil the Scholarship program at its 5th Annual Wildlife Conservation Expo on **October 7th, 2006**. At this year’s event, 14 of the world’s leading animal conservationists will give presentations on their cutting-edge conservation work in remote regions throughout the world. The Expo, which is open to

the public, will be held on the campus of Foothill College located at 12345 El Monte Road in Los Altos Hills, California. Expo hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The conservation organizations represented at the Expo include: Andean Cat Alliance, Cheetah Conservation Botswana, Cheetah Conservation Fund, Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program, Laikipia Predator Project, Painted Dog Conservation, Proyecto Titi (Cotton-top Tamarin), Saiga Conservation Alliance, Save the Elephants, Snow Leopard Conservancy, and special guest Dr. Russell Mittermeier, President of Conservation International.

In addition to presentations from WCN supported conservationists, the Expo will feature displays from other local wildlife and animal welfare organizations. Wildlife gifts and art also will be on sale. Admission to the entire event is \$35. All proceeds go to support WCN conservation programs. For advance tickets and more information please call **(650) 949-3533** or email info@wildnet.org.

About Wildlife Conservation Network

WCN (www.WildNet.org) was founded in 2002 to fund and foster individual conservationists focused on implementing community-based conservation programs in Central and South America, Asia and Africa. WCN provides back office support—fundraising, marketing, administrative and technical expertise—to individual conservationists, enabling them to work more effectively and spend more time in the field. WCN uses a venture capital (VC) fundraising model based on the relationships that have evolved between high-technology entrepreneurs, investors and corporations. Acting as a very efficient VC, WCN identifies high-potential individual conservationists and projects, ensuring due diligence is completed up-front, providing ongoing advisory services, and forging alliances between donor-"investors" and individual conservationists. WCN is the first to use this approach to fund and support worldwide conservation efforts.

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