

The Orchid Conservation Alliance: Conserving Orchids by Conserving Habitat

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ABSTRACT

The Orchid Conservation Alliance (OCA) was established in 2004 as a California corporation with federal tax-exempt status. Founded by Peter Tobias, Ron Kaufmann and Steve Beckendorf, the organization was based on developing a membership of orchid growers concerned about orchid conservation and the ongoing destruction and degradation of orchid rich habitats around the world. The focus of the OCA is to work with local partners to purchase and conserve land in orchid rich regions of the world. We raise funds through annual membership dues, direct appeals to our members (over 700 individuals and 25 orchid societies), broad based funding campaigns directed to orchid lovers worldwide, and new species naming opportunities, as well as merchandise sales at local orchid shows and our Orchids in the Wild Ecotours. Our model is to partner with foundations and organizations based in countries where desirable habitat is located and to help them purchase land and obtain permanent, legal conservation status. We also partner with other organizations (e.g. the Rainforest Trust, Reserva: The Youth Land Trust and the University of Basel) to raise sufficient funds for land purchase and protection. As of April 2023, we have raised and contributed nearly \$660,000 to conserve approximately 4,600 acres of orchid rich habitat. To date, we have supported reserves in Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil. In Ecuador, these include Reserva Rio Anzu, founded in 2007, Reserva Dracula, founded in 2015, and the *Phragmipedium fischeri* Reserve, founded in 2017, all managed by Fundación EcoMinga. In Colombia, we have helped to acquire Reserva Yumartán (founded in 2013, managed by Fundación Yumartán), La Esperanza and Los Magnolios Reserves (founded in 2017 and managed by Corporación SalvaMontes), and La Palma Reserve (founded in 2019, managed by the Biodiversitatis Foundation). We also provided funds to expand Reserva Serra Bonita (2014, managed by Instituto Uiraçu in Brazil), and in June 2023, completed a fundraising campaign to purchase a relatively large tract of rich primary forest to expand the Dracula Reserve in northern Ecuador. Our donors have directed additional funding (over \$200,000) through the OCA to support these reserves, helping to pay for guard salaries, small equipment and construction of scientific research cabins, among other expenses. Detailed information about the activities of the OCA including fundraising initiatives, applications for project support, Orchids in the Wild Ecotours, publications, newsletters, seminars, and information about our board of directors and tax filings can be found on our website.

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Fig. 1. Map showing the locations of reserves that were established with support from the OCA. Information about the reserves is in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the reserves that were established with support from the OCA from 2007 through April 2023.

OCA Supported Reserves – Apr 2023

Name/Location/Oversight	Year	Area	Our Contribution
 Reserva Rio Anzu Located near Baños, Tungurahua, Ecuador Managed by Fundación EcoMinga	2007 2022	220 acres 89 acres	\$ 30,000 *\$ 55,000
 Reserva Yumartán Located near Colón, Putumayo, Colombia Managed by Fundación Yumartán	2013	101 acres	\$ 22,000
 Reserva Serra Bonita Located near Camacã, Bahia, Brasil Managed by Instituto Uiraçu	2014	250 acres	*\$ 52,000
 Reserva Dracula Located near Chical, Carchi, Ecuador Managed by Fundación EcoMinga	2015 2017 2019-20 2023	324 acres 510 acres 1221 acres 1050 acres	*\$ 44,000 *\$111,342 %*\$110,000 *#\$135,000
 <i>Phragmipedium fischeri</i> Reserve Located near Chical, Carchi, Ecuador Managed by Fundación EcoMinga	2017	18 acres	\$ 12,000
 La Esperanza, Los Magnolios Located near Yárumal, Colombia Managed by Corporación SalvaMontes	2017 2018	343 acres 401 acres	*\$ 13,500 *\$ 35,000
 La Palma Located near Sibundoy, Putumayo, Colombia Managed by the Biodiversitatis Foundation	2019	72 acres	\$ 40,000
TOTAL		4599 acres	\$659,842

* In partnership with the Rainforest Trust
 % In partnership with the University of Basel
 # In partnership with Reserva: The Youth Land Trust