

Message from ICFC's founder

It is now fifteen years since Tom and I took the plunge and started ICFC. There has not been a dull moment since. But perhaps it's time to pause and reflect.

Our aim was to provide a way for Canadians—including us—to support conservation in the areas of the world where nature is most threatened. We knew we didn't want to take the path of large international conservation organizations that open country offices and manage from afar. We knew there were some good local conservation groups that we could partner with to carry out conservation work.

What have we learned since?

That there are many local conservation groups, some better than others. That they are often run by exceptionally dedicated, smart people who know their local patch of nature well and are embedded in the local society. That all they lacked was funding, which is hard to come by in developing countries.

We learned that there are many ways to achieve conservation gains depending on the specific threats to nature and on the local social and biogeographic elements. Early on we thought ICFC should leave education and research to others and focus only on direct conservation action. That is still the main focus, but we have learned how effective education and public outreach can be, and that biological monitoring and data collection are things reserve guards and civil society will happily take on, yielding more science that informs conservation work. We already knew that Indigenous people were willing partners in conservation and this has been borne out.

A striking observation has been that local communities in the areas where we work are more attuned to nature than North Americans are. They understand its benefits and are keen to learn more and to be involved. So, we have a sense of comradeship that extends beyond our local partner organizations to the local communities we work with.

That has been inspiring and gratifying, but so have two other very important things: seeing the difference our projects have made and having all of you join us in support of this work.

It is exhilarating to know how much potential is out there. Let's see what more we can accomplish in the decade to come!

— Anne Lambert, May 2022



**ICFC founders Tom Welch
and Anne Lambert**

About ICFC

ICFC conserves nature in the tropics where biodiversity abounds and is most under threat. With our small team and dedicated field partners we are achieving lasting conservation gains and large co-benefits for climate and local communities.