

For Immediate Release

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JRS Announces New Grant Award to Study Biodiversity and Public Policy

SEATTLE, Washington – August 5, 2015 -- The JRS Biodiversity Foundation today announced a new \$94,000 grant to study the role of biodiversity information on national policy cycles in Latin America. The research will be led by [NatureServe](#) researcher Dr. Carmen Josse, a conservation ecologist with deep roots in the region whose previous work has informed conservation investments throughout Latin America.

Sound public policy should preserve the ecosystems upon which economies depend. The ability to achieve such sustainable development relies on policy makers having timely access to accurate biodiversity information. Yet ensuring the link between scientific data and policy formulation, implementation and monitoring is not well understood because few studies have examined environmental policy through the lens of data access. NatureServe is addressing this challenge by documenting how biodiversity information is incorporated into policy development and implementation in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

The case for using biodiversity data to inform public policy is clear and compelling, so it is important to identify and remove barriers that interfere with data access and use. Do policy makers have access to the most current data on species distributions and threats to ecosystems? Is policy actually motivating researchers to gather and publish biodiversity information? These questions highlight the need for a systematic understanding of the relationship between researchers as producers of biodiversity data, and policy makers as data consumers.

The countries covered by this study share a wealth of natural diversity, but they have very different political contexts. Comparative policy analysis is an opportunity to identify both common challenges and unique approaches to effectively using biodiversity data in policy development. The lessons learned in Latin America can inform efforts to strengthen conservation and land use policies in other biodiverse countries.

“We are thrilled to address the important connection between biodiversity data and effective national policies,” said Mary L. Klein, President of NatureServe. “We expect that our findings will help to bridge the gaps between policy needs and available biodiversity information in these four countries—some of the most biodiverse regions of the world.”

See “[NatureServe](#) – How Biodiversity Information Informs National Policy in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia”

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About the JRS Biodiversity Foundation – The mission of the JRS Biodiversity Foundation is to enhance knowledge and promote the understanding of biological diversity for the benefit and sustainability of life on earth. Founded in 2004, the JRS Biodiversity Foundation supports biodiversity data and knowledge tools that are used to preserve biodiversity in developing economies where biodiversity is most threatened. The foundation has awarded \$13.5M in grants since 2007. Visit online at <http://jrsbiodiversity.org>

About NatureServe – NatureServe is a non-profit conservation group dedicated to providing the scientific basis for effective conservation action. Its network of more than 80 member organizations from the United States, Canada, and Latin America collects and maintains a unique body of knowledge about the species and ecosystems of the Western Hemisphere. Its scientists, technologists, and other professionals build on this scientific information to provide information products, data management tools, and biodiversity expertise to meet local, national, and global conservation needs. Visit online at <http://www.natureserve.org>

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