

Educational safaris launched

COAST CITIES - The African Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of African wildlife and traditional cultures, announced the launch of its educational safari program.

This unusual and locally headquartered program allows participants to travel with a cause and receive an in-depth look at the people and animals of Southern Africa.

The safari program is critical to the Conservancy's success because it provides an additional revenue stream beyond fundraising and donations.

The program was created in partnership with African communities, and all proceeds are channeled back into economic development, wildlife protection and species reintroduction programs taking place on the ground in Africa.

"We're opening a window for anyone concerned about the health of our global environment," said Corinne Waldenmayer, president and co-founder of the African Conservancy.

"The safari program is vital to our mission of increasing education and awareness about wildlife and cultural conservation issues and making them relevant to our everyday lives.

"It's a good way for people to contribute to the organization, and it supplements our other fundraising activities."

During the course of the 14-day program, participants will explore remote locations in Africa by private plane, 4-by-4, canoe, motorboat, and on foot.

They will encounter indigenous and often endangered wildlife such as cheetahs, zebras, antelope, monkeys, leopards, lions, and many bird species.

In Zambia, 39 percent of the land is reserved for national parks and Game Management Areas (GMAs).

Tourism is still exclusive here, and safari participants can immerse themselves in the surrounding environment without encountering hordes of other travelers.

The African Conservancy's tour size is limited to eight, which contributes to the already intimate setting.

Other highlights of the safari program include the chance to paddle the waters of Lake Tanganyika, the second deepest freshwater lake in the world, admire falcons nesting along Songwe Gorge, and feel the mist from the famed Victoria Falls.

In addition to the wildlife agenda, the safaris provide insight into the life and nature of rural Africa through educational sessions on ecology, archeology and geology.

Interactive cultural activities range from museum and artist studio visits to traditional history and folklore with dance and storytelling around evening campfires.

"Our goal with the safari program was to create an experience of Africa that leaves an indelible mark on the heart," Waldenmayer said.

"We're providing a unique opportunity for people to combine an education and luxury vacation, while observing firsthand the extraordinary impact that members' contributions have made in many African communities."

About the African Conservancy:

The African Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to preserve African wildlife and traditional cultures through environmental and cultural conservation programs in both Africa and the United States.

The African Conservancy provides educational opportunities, travel programs and art acquisition services to its members.

The organization has headquarters in Vista and a base of operations in Lusaka, Zambia.

Its administrative offices are 100 percent volunteer-run, and its paid project staff is composed primarily of African locals.

For more information about the African Conservancy organization, please visit its Web site at www.africanconservancy.org.