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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A mammalian dinosaur on the brink of extinction

The rhino is indigenous to Zambia, yet there are only 5 individuals left in the country.

The plight of the rhino has long been known. Maybe, in our sensationalist society, that's a good reason to no longer talk about it. But even though some might consider it old news, the extinction of the rhino is far more imminent today than it was a few years ago. Of the dozens of species of rhino that once roamed the Earth, only five remain. Of the remaining five, three are threatened and two critically endangered. And unless immediate and sustained action is taken, the black rhino will disappear from the wild during our lifetime.

A rhinoceros encounter is a humbling experience, even with the smallest of the species. The black rhino can weigh up to 1.7 tones or the equivalent of almost seventy 50-lbs domestic dogs! The black rhino can live up to 40 years, but the species has the highest incidence among mammals of fatal intra-species fighting: almost 50% of males and 33% of females die from wounds inflicted when they jab at one another with upward thrusts of their horns. When external threats are compounded with such high fatal injury rates, black rhino populations can rapidly destabilize.

The black rhino's solitary and fiercely territorial behavior complicates attempts to breed them in the wild. Research has shown that in order to sustain a **protected** population of black rhinos, at least 60 animals are required in any one region for males and females to pair up.

In 1960 there were approximately 100,000 black rhinos on the African savannahs; there are now fewer than 2,600. This huge decline of the species is partly due to habitat destruction, but more significantly to poaching for rhino horn, which is still used in traditional Asian remedies. In Zambia, where the black rhino was indigenous, the species was extinct years ago, and today, the country boasts only five individuals, all of which were imported from South Africa.

The African Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving African wildlife and cultures, is developing a program to protect and rehabilitate the rhino population in Zambia. The program's centerpiece is a rhino breed and release project. Adjunct projects are planned to mitigate threats to the program's success. They include an environmental/wildlife education project; an anti-poaching project; a subsistence ranching project and several small-scale economic development initiatives.

Corinne Waldenmayer, African Conservancy co-founder and Executive Director, is African and highly sensitive to the cultural issues that surround African wildlife and cultural preservation. She lives



in Africa part of the year where she assesses situations and trends, and deepens the Conservancy's relationships with the political, business, and rural communities. One of her goals is to ensure that the rhino program is undertaken with complete local buy-in. "For wildlife conservation to succeed in Africa," says Waldenmayer "programs must be born from within the community where they are to be delivered. We can act as educators and facilitators but the Africans must make the determinant choices. And when the Africans choose the path of conservation, our mission has become their goal, and our programs will succeed."

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Photographs available on request

About African Conservancy

The African Conservancy is a non-profit organization with a mission to preserve African wildlife and traditional cultures through environmental and cultural conservation programs in both Africa and the U.S. The African Conservancy provides educational opportunities, travel programs and art acquisition services to its members. For more information about the organization and its offerings, please visit <http://www.africanconservancy.org>.

Founders of African Conservancy

Corinne Waldenmayer

Born and raised in Africa, Corinne is a consummate world traveler who never lost her strong attachment to the continent. After being educated in Europe and the United States, she retired from an executive position after nearly twenty-years in the US corporate world, and returned home, determined to make a difference. As the African Conservancy's President and Executive Director, she is committed to applying her business and technical skills, her knowledge of philanthropy, and her love and understanding of Africa to promote the preservation of African wildlife and traditional cultures, which she believes are our global heritage, the last true instance of the divine design, a portal to human spirituality, and the key to some of life's most profound mysteries.

Norbert Waldenmayer

Also an expatriate, Norbert Waldenmayer left his native Germany at the age of five to grow up in the San Fernando Valley, a suburb of Los Angeles, CA. With an advanced degree in development and city planning and management, Norbert is a visionary who has spent the best part of his professional life re-developing blighted city areas, and developing rural and suburban areas in an eco-friendly fashion. A lover of animals and open-spaces and a champion of the underprivileged, Norbert lost his heart to Africa the first time he set foot on the continent. As the African Conservancy Chairman and Founder, he is determined to apply his very significant resources to its preservation and enhancement.

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