

**DRACULA YOUTH RESERVE
EMERGENCY EXPANSION**
Fundraising Toolkit



How to Get Started as a Fundraiser,
What to Say, and Why This Project Matters

Our Mission

Reserva empowers youth to make a measurable difference for threatened species and habitats through conservation, education, and storytelling.



Dracula Youth Reserve Emergency Expansion | Why this project?

International gold mining companies are currently increasing their activity in this area. Ecuadorian law requires mining companies to get a landowners' permission before exploration can begin on a piece of land. But we discovered that a company had begun exploring for gold on this plot *without permission*, and would likely continue to explore without immediate intervention from our partners, Fundación EcoMinga.

The landowners, a local farmer and his wife, were then pressured by the mining company to sell the land to *them* so they could continue exploring, offering three times the money our partners could afford to pay for the land. The landowners needed the money, but these two brave people did not want to see their forest and water sources destroyed. They decided to sell this large plot of primary forest to EcoMinga on the condition that they could *act quickly*. Reserva joined forces with the [Orchid Conservation Alliance](#) to provide rapid funding to EcoMinga to secure a

downpayment, and Reserva's Youth Council voted to launch this ambitious project to fund the *entire* land purchase—three times the amount we raised in our first project!

The sooner we can accomplish this goal, the sooner this land will be securely out of reach from the gold mining company and the landowners will be safe from the pressure tactics of the miners. We have about *one year* to raise nearly \$300,000. That means we need as many young people as possible to chip in and fundraise toward this goal. Thanks for joining us!

Fact Sheet

Total area: 1,050 acres

Cost: \$273/acre

Type of Protection: Land purchase

Ownership: Currently owned by a local Ecuadorian couple. Ecuadorian NGO Fundación EcoMinga will be the new owner. Reserva has committed to providing the necessary funds.

Threatened Species: at least 11, but very little research has been done! This count will almost certainly go up. We also expect to have numerous new species to science on this plot. Confirmed species include: Brown-headed Spider Monkey (CR), *Pristimantis apiculatus* (EN), Spectacled Bear (VU), Mantled Howler-monkey (VU); *Pristimantis crucifer* (VU), *Pristimantis duellmani* (VU), *Pristimantis hectus* (VU), *Pristimantis laticlavus* (VU), *Pristimantis quinquagesimus* (VU), Elegant Snail-Eater (VU), and *Erythrolamprus vitti* (DD)

Connectivity: This plot is part of the 5,400-acre **Dracula Reserve** corridor and borders several other plots within the Reserve. That means if we can protect this one, it will be part of a protected corridor. It is also part of the “intangible zone” of the Bosque Protector Cerro Golondrinas (Golondrinas Mountain Protected Forest—a local designation that confers effectively zero protection), which is still mostly intact cloud forest. A few kilometers to the west is the Awá Indigenous Territory, which also retains large amounts of intact forest.

The Power of Your Donations

- **\$5** protects **800 square feet** of forest—that's like a huge one-bedroom apartment.
- **\$30** protects a **basketball court-sized area** of forest.
- **\$273** protects an entire **acre**—that's nearly an American football field.
- In fact, we would just need to raise **\$3,580** to protect an area **the size of Windsor Castle!**

Create your Fundraising Page

1. **Click on Become a Fundraiser** and choose your fundraising style from the available choices.



- a. **As an Individual** - Sign up to get started right away and fundraise on your own for the cause you love!
 - b. **Join a Team** - If your school, business, or other group has already created a team, join them to make an even greater impact!
 - c. **Create a Team** - If you plan on recruiting your friends and family to set up fundraising pages in addition to yourself, make sure to create a team so you can work together!
2. **Set your fundraising goal** - there is a pre-populated goal set, but you can change that goal to whatever is right for you. Keep in mind that you can always edit your goal once you get started. Here are a few ideas of how your fundraising goal will impact our mission.
 - a. **\$53 – Help protect three tennis court-sized areas (8424 sq. ft.) of forest:**
Fundraise a few dollars at a time and watch how small donations can add up to make a real impact!
 - b. **\$273 – Help protect 1 acre:** It may sound like a little number, but an acre makes a big difference for the forest's smallest inhabitants. This is a great goal to start with!
 - c. **\$1,365 – Help protect 5 acres:** That's nearly 50 basketball court-sized areas of this largely unexplored cloud forest, each full of species still unknown to scientists!

Create your page

Set your fundraising goal *

USD ▼ \$ 500.00 ✓

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled 'Create your page'. Below the title is a label 'Set your fundraising goal *'. There is a dropdown menu set to 'USD' and a text input field containing '\$ 500.00'. A red checkmark icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the input field.

3. Choose a fundraising end date (if you want one)

Fundraising end date *



4. Add your headline - share a short blurb about why you are fundraising for our organization. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- a. I'm supporting the Emergency Expansion of Dracula Youth Reserve: A youth-led project to save 1,050 acres of Ecuadorian cloud forest from illegal gold mining. A donation of any size is a huge help!
- b. Hi! I'm running my first marathon (42.2km) on July 31st to help raise funds for the expansion of Dracula Youth Reserve: a youth-led project to save 1,050 acres of Ecuadorian cloud forest from illegal gold mining. I run the miles, together we save the Chocó!
- c. Hi! I'm going vegan for the summer to raise funds for conservation in the Chocó, one of the most biodiverse and threatened places in the world. Here's my challenge to you: Join me as a summer vegan or make a donation!
- d. I found out my favorite animal, the spider monkey, lives in this threatened forest. I set a goal to protect an entire acre of habitat with Reserva: The Youth Land Trust. Please help me save monkeys by making a donation today!

Your Page's Headline *

0/255

5. Choose what you're fundraising for - it should automatically say Dracula Youth Reserve here!

6. **Set an optional short URL** - so you can easily share it with your friends and family!
 - a. Example: give.reservaylt.org/lilyslemonadestand



Set your Fundraising Page's Short URL (optional)

<https://give.classy.org/ExampleShortUrl>

7. **Upload a photo** - Make your page more personalized and recognizable for your friends and family! You can always come back and change it if you'd like.

Our fundraising platform is powered by Classy. To learn more about editing and personalizing your page, access Classy's support article [here](#).

Tell Your Fundraising Story

People love giving to people they know!

Adding personal touches to your fundraising page, like why you are fundraising, your connection to Reserva or Ecuador, personal photos and stories, helps your friends and family connect more with the mission. Your personal supporters will feel more compelled to give because they understand your personal relationship and what our organization means to you. So don't be shy to make edits to your page and share updates as your progress grows!

Pro Tip - Don't forget to be the first to donate to show how dedicated you are to the project! You're bubbling up your own progress bar and removing any fear of donors being the first to "join the party"!

Key Messages

Here are a few key messages that can help you get started. They're also great to share with your friends and family if they ever ask you what our organization does in the community!

- Species are going extinct at 1000 times the natural rate!
- Only **2%** of global philanthropy goes to mitigating climate change. *Of that*, only **7%** goes toward protecting forests like this one.

- Your donation today will help *quintuple* the world's first entirely youth-funded nature reserve!
- The Chocó cloud forest is one of the most threatened, biodiverse, and *endemic* places in the world—that means many of the species that live here live *nowhere else*.

Spread the Word

You're on your way to fundraising success - now it's time to spread the word and reach your goal!

We suggest starting by creating a list of people you plan to reach out to.

1. **Start with your closest inner circle** - They're the most likely to make the first few donations, as they are more accountable to your personal outreach. It's always nice to get some quick wins in the beginning too!
2. **Cast a wider net** - Don't be afraid to push yourself and expand your list - some people in your wider network may have a personal connection to our mission, and it could spark some great conversations on top of a donation towards your goal!

Example Emails

Email is one of the easiest and most effective ways to fundraise! This may be the first place you start in your outreach strategy.

Pro Tip - Keep it clear, direct, and urgent! Don't be shy about adding some visual and personal elements to keep your messaging more engaging!

Example 1 - Closest inner circle

Subject: Personal favor!

Dear [Name],

I just launched a fundraiser to help protect a pristine piece of cloud forest from gold mining with Reserva: The Youth Land Trust, and I'm hoping my closest friends will help me get the momentum going by making a donation! Whether you can donate \$5 or \$500, I'd really appreciate your help getting my fundraiser off the ground.

*Please Click Here **[Add Your Fundraising Page]** to give.*

Here are some quick facts about the cause I'm supporting:

The Dracula Youth Reserve Emergency Expansion is a youth-led call to save 1,050 acres of cloud forest from gold mining in Ecuador. Dracula Youth Reserve is the world's first entirely youth-funded nature reserve, established in 2021 as part of the Dracula Reserve Corridor, but it is under threat from international gold mining companies. We're working with Ecuadorian partners to secure this pristine land, home to over 11 highly threatened species, before it is lost forever.

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- **\$273** protects an entire **acre**—that's nearly an American football field!

Thank you so much for your support! Please feel free to share!

[Name]

Example 2 - Wider net

Subject - Help me save 1,050 acres of Ecuadorian cloud forest from gold mining

Hey [Name],

I'm fundraising for Reserva: The Youth Land Trust's new project in Ecuador, a youth-led, emergency appeal to protect pristine cloud forest from gold mining. The money raised will fund the purchase of land to expand Dracula Youth Reserve, the world's first entirely youth-funded nature reserve!

*I'm trying to raise [**\$ FUNDRAISING GOAL**] by [**DEADLINE**]. If I can get 5 people to each give me [**\$ FUNDRAISING GOAL/5**] or more, I'm there. Species are currently going extinct at 1000 times the natural rate, and protecting forests like this one will help secure a biodiverse future for my generation and generations to come. I hope you'll support me and Reserva by making a gift to my fundraising page below!*

Thanks so much for your support!

[Name]

Example Social Posts

In addition to emails, you can use social media to expand your communication outreach. You can reach people who fall outside of your inner circle. Take advantage of the built-in social sharing options on your fundraising page!

Pro Tip - All social channels are good social channels. Your network on Instagram will be vastly different from your network on Facebook or LinkedIn, so don't be shy about sharing on all social media platforms!

Photo Resources - We have photos for you to use! You may use images off our [website](#) or photos from [this folder](#), but *please always* include **credit to the photographer**. You will always find the photographer noted on our page.

Example 1 - Instagram

Hey guys! Nature needs our help now more than ever, and that's why I've decided to try to help protect this threatened area in Ecuador with @ReservaYLT. If you can spare a few bucks, please help pitch in by making a donation at the link in my bio!

Example 2 - Twitter

I'm trying to raise \$**XXX** to protect [**amount of land**] in Ecuador with @ReservaYLT! Calling on all my friends to do something good for the planet and donate what you can! [**LINK**]

Example 3 - Facebook

We are in a biodiversity crisis, and that's why I've decided to [**INSERT YOUR FUNDRAISING EFFORT**] to fundraise for the protection of this threatened cloud forest in Ecuador with @ReservaYLT. This project is entirely youth-led and provides critical funds to Reserva's in-country partner to purchase and protect land currently threatened by mining. If you can spare a few bucks, please help pitch in by making a donation at the link below!

This project is really important to me because [**INSERT SOMETHING PERSONAL**]. If you can donate, it would mean a lot! Thank you! [**LINK**]

Example Thank You Note

Make sure to thank *every one* of your donors - it wouldn't have been possible without them! You can send a personalized email, acknowledge them directly on your fundraising page by leaving a comment, or even give them a shout out on social media! Reserva will send an automatic email thanking your donors, including their tax receipt, but donors always appreciate the personal touch of an extra note from YOU!

Thank you for supporting my fundraiser!

Dear [Name],

My fundraising page has wrapped, but the impact of your contribution will continue! I am very grateful for the support you have shown for Reserva and for my effort to make a difference for this incredible cloud forest.

*With your support, I have raised [**\$X**] toward a youth-led project to protect 1,050 acres of threatened cloud forest in Ecuador. I encourage you to follow Reserva on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up to date on this project and their work!*

Thank you again for your generosity,

[Name]

Pro Tip - Don't underestimate the power of an old-fashioned handwritten card! It only takes a few minutes to do and can make an incredible impact on those you send it to.