



For Immediate Release
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Newly Identified Orchid Species Named in Honor of Mark Gruin, Former Rainforest Trust Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

(Warrenton, VA)—Rainforest Trust and Fundación EcoMinga are honoring the memory of [Mark Gruin](#), former Rainforest Trust Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, by naming a [newly identified orchid species, *Pleurothallis mark-gruinii*](#), in Ecuador. This orchid symbolizes Mark’s lifelong commitment to conservation and his advocacy for empowering local organizations, including EcoMinga, in the protection of biodiversity. Mark’s passion for plants and birds was evident in his work, and he was always eager to mentor young conservationists, helping them grow into future leaders.

Mark dedicated his life to protecting nature. He first joined Rainforest Trust in 2008, and his work spanned roles at Rainforest Trust and World Land Trust (UK), where he tirelessly supported efforts to safeguard vital ecosystems and nurture the people involved in conservation. Mark had a knack for inspiring others to appreciate wildlife, starting as a horticulturist and curator at ZooAmerica, and continuing through his years at Rainforest Trust, where he played a key role in establishing protected areas across the tropics. His dedication, warmth, and enthusiasm left a mark on everyone he worked with.

Speaking about Mark, Dr. James C. Deutsch, CEO of Rainforest Trust, stated:

“Mark Gruin devoted his life to building partnerships to save nature and support humanitarian relief. He helped to build the NGO Rainforest Trust into a driving force to expand Indigenous Territories and other protected areas for people and nature. It is fitting that this commemoration comes as the world meets in Colombia to review progress toward protecting 30% of the globe.”

Mark passed away in 2022, but his legacy lives on in the landscapes he helped protect and the budding conservationists he mentored. The orchid named in his honor, *Pleurothallis mark-gruinii*, serves as a lasting tribute to his work and a reminder of his dedication to preserving nature’s wonders.

To learn more about Rainforest Trust, visit www.rainforesttrust.org.

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About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been working with partners to safeguard imperiled tropical habitats and endangered species by helping to establish protected areas in partnership with Indigenous and local organizations and communities. To date, Rainforest Trust has helped protect more than 53 million acres of vital habitat across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region. Rainforest Trust is a nonprofit organization that relies upon the generous support of the public to successfully implement its important conservation action. The organization is proud of earning a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Learn more about the work of Rainforest Trust by visiting [RainforestTrust.org](https://www.rainforesttrust.org), [X \(Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

