



RAINFOREST TRUST®

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Press Release

Rainforest Trust Appoints James Deutsch CEO

Mark Gruin named Vice President, Strategic Initiatives

Warrenton, VA, April 3, 2020 – Rainforest Trust, a global leader in the protection of tropical ecosystems and endangered wildlife, announced today that James C. Deutsch has been appointed Chief Executive Officer. In this role, he will build on Rainforest Trust’s 32 years of conservation success and lead the next phase of the organization’s growth and conservation impact. Dr. Deutsch, a strategic leader in global conservation with a passion for saving wildlife and wild lands, joins Rainforest Trust from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, where he served as Director of Wildlife and Biodiversity. The appointment is effective April 6, 2020.

“James is a conservation leader with outstanding experience, vision, energy, and a commitment to Rainforest Trust’s mission to protect the most threatened tropical forests through partnerships and community engagement,” said Dr. Eric Veach, Chairman of the Board of Directors. “Throughout his distinguished career, James has demonstrated a talent for translating cutting-edge science into groundbreaking strategies and effective field conservation projects. His leadership, enthusiasm and dedication have inspired colleagues, partners, teams and donors alike. We have full confidence that James is the right leader for Rainforest Trust at this urgent time as we continue our efforts to save species, care for communities and protect our planet.”

Dr. Deutsch succeeds Mark Gruin, who has served as Acting CEO since May 2019. Mr. Gruin has been named Vice President, Strategic Initiatives.

“As Acting CEO, Mark provided strong and steady leadership. With his dedication, skill and insight, he earned the trust of employees and the confidence of partners and donors,” Dr. Veach continued. “We are delighted he will continue to have an impact in his new role at Rainforest Trust.”

“Rainforest Trust’s mission is critical to scaling up global efforts to save nature, and I am inspired and excited to have the opportunity to advance that mission as CEO,” said Dr. Deutsch. “It is remarkable that Rainforest Trust is the only U.S. nonprofit focused exclusively on supporting land purchase, protected area creation, and the establishment of indigenous nature reserves in the biodiverse tropics. Building on that strategy, while staying true to the mission, can have an extraordinary impact on the future of life on Earth. I am looking forward to working with the board, my new colleagues, our partner organizations and all of the donors who make this important work possible.”

Dr. Deutsch has more than 20 years of conservation experience. At the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, he oversaw the Great Elephant Census; worked with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to close ivory markets and save sharks; and launched programs to support the Convention on Biological Diversity, to dismantle wildlife trafficking networks, and to save coral reefs.

Previously, he was Africa Director and then Vice President for Conservation Strategy at the Wildlife Conservation Society, where he helped design and implement the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and launched new programs in Nigeria, Mozambique and South Sudan. He also helped launch the Tropical Biology Association, taught secondary school in Kenya, and was founding chair of the boards of Aidspan and Community Markets for Conservation. For six years, Dr. Deutsch was CEO of the U.K.'s national fundraiser for HIV/AIDS, Crusaid, helping make life-saving treatments available in the U.K. and Africa.

A New Yorker, Dr. Deutsch was educated at Harvard (AB Philosophy) and Cambridge (MPhil Anthropology and PhD Zoology) and taught ecology and conservation biology at Imperial College and the University of East Anglia. His research career included fieldwork on the Uganda Kob antelope and Malawi cichlid fishes with papers in *Nature*, *Evolution*, and other journals and books.

About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been safeguarding imperiled tropical habitats and saving endangered species by establishing protected areas in partnership with local organizations and communities. In that time, the organization has helped protect over 23 million acres of critically important rainforest and other key habitats at more than 125 project sites around the world. Learn more about and support this important work by visiting www.RainforestTrust.org, [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [Facebook](#).

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