

**Grant Progress Report
Alex C. Walker Foundation**



Prepared by:

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Date: December 4, 2025

Project name: Creating Connections: Mapping biological corridors and facilitating ecological connectivity of the Children's Eternal Rainforest

Project description: This project aims to gather remaining information necessary to implement the creation of successful biological corridors between the Children's Eternal Rainforest, at the heart of the protected Monteverde-Arenal Bioregion, and vital conservation lands more distantly located. We will accomplish this by mapping land ownership, current conservation efforts, and likely future land-use changes within two potential biological corridors. We will develop a long-term plan to protect and enhance the corridors, most likely involving consultation and advisement with landowners and direct purchase of select properties. This effort will contribute to meaningful ecological connections to land that has been successfully protected thus far, helping ensure long-term conservation of forests, biodiversity and ecosystem services. This work will continue to support and enhance the economic well-being, human health, and community strength that has been created in this region through conservation.

Project budget:

Total cost: \$57,485

Walker grant: \$42,886 for 2-year period (June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2027)

MCL counterpart: \$14,599

Project update:

The original proposed timeline for this project was June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2027. Due to a series of unexpected events in the organization (unrelated to this grant), we have adjusted the timeline to begin in January 2026. The new overall timeline will run from January 2026 to December 2027.

We are currently in the process of contracting the GIS specialist to begin the first phase of land ownership maps.

Related to the overarching goals of this project, the Monteverde Conservation League has recently helped to found the Monteverde Conservation Collective, an alliance between the Monteverde Conservation Association, the Monteverde Institute, and the Costa Rican Conservation Foundation. The Collective was formed in 2024 to support conservation in the Monteverde area through informed planning, promotion of a conservation easement model, and cultivation of a next generation of local leaders. The Collective's work expands each organization's efforts in a) habitat protection and restoration, b) facilitating landscape connectivity, and c) supporting and implementing community and educational initiatives to increase the region's well-being. As a collective, each conservation action represents a joint effort among the organizations, thus providing greater collaboration, goal achievement, and long-term commitment.

One of the Collective's unique actions is the creation of a robust conservation easement option. The conservation easement model offers a conservation tool in perpetuity under which the owner can stipulate permitted and prohibited uses in different areas of the property, regardless of future ownership. The organizations in the Collective own a property (“dominant estate”) that anchors the conservation easements, with the responsibility of monitoring compliance on properties that have easements with the Collective (“servient estates”). The Collective supports and accompanies property owners who wish to conserve their properties for activities aligned with conservation, from the procedures for establishing conservation easements, recognition and celebration of these efforts, monitoring, and even legal enforcement in cases of non-compliance. The Collective can also help guide owners on complementary possibilities such as economic incentives for conservation.