

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



**Prepared by:**

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Monteverde Conservation League

**Date:** March 8, 2026

**Project name:** Symbiosis: A forest that creates markets; markets that safeguard the forest

**Project description:** The Children's Eternal Rainforest, owned by the Costa Rican nonprofit Monteverde Conservation League, provides diverse and massive benefits to people on local, national, and international scales. To date, however, recognition of those services – particularly in the financial realm – has been inadequate. This project creates a new staff position, the exclusive purpose of which is to (a) reach out to diverse stakeholders and stimulate reflection about why they are stakeholders, (b) explore and implement mechanisms through which stakeholders are incentivized to contribute reciprocal financial support, and (c) produce a publication that summarizes the lessons obtained from this initiative as a useful reference for others. In 2025, the Monteverde Conservation League received a grant from the Alex C. Walker Foundation for the amount of \$52,752, to cover two years of salary for the new staff position.

**Project budget:**

\$73,423 total

Walker Foundation: \$52,752 for 2-year period (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027)

MCL counterpart: \$20,671

**Project update:**

The original proposed timeline for this project was July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027. However, we were not able to announce the position until mid-September 2025. We carried out a search for the new position (Communications Coordinator) and received 45 applications, of which 15 met the basic requirements for the position. In October, we interviewed 6 candidates, and the selection committee unanimously agreed to offer the position to **Claire Hassler**. Claire has a journalism and photography background. She is bilingual and bicultural, having completed three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Monteverde.

Claire began work on February 2, 2026. Over the past month, she has immersed herself in the operations and mission of MCL, getting to know the staff and the different areas of the BEN. She has already taken over our social media account, begun to organize organizational photographs, and is helping to organize our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Together with Lindsay, Claire is working on a timeline with milestones for reaching project goals. We are thrilled to have Claire on board and are looking forward to seeing more advances of this project!

The new timeline for this grant is projected as February 1, 2026 to January 31, 2028.