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Seneca Park Zoo Society brings One Cubic Foot to Madagascar

Allendale Columbia School students to assist project in unique educational opportunity

Rochester, NY—May 11, 2016—The Seneca Park Zoo Society is pleased to announce the continuation of its conservation science initiative One Cubic Foot in Madagascar this month, building on the success of the project here in Rochester, which culminated earlier this year in the installations *Airigami: Journey on the Genesee* at the Sibley Building and *One Cubic Foot: The Genesee River* at Rochester Contemporary Art Center (RoCo).

The One Cubic Foot team is comprised of photographer and environmentalist David Liittschwager and his team; Zoo Society directors; and Smithsonian Institution scientists. They will begin arriving on the African island by May 21, and most will stay for two weeks. This multi-discipline, collaborative team will document the unique biodiversity of Madagascar, an ecosystem home to thousands of animal species found nowhere else in the world, using the same technique Liittschwager has used everywhere from Costa Rica to Central Park during the last decade. Last summer, he replicated One Cubic Foot in Rochester's Genesee River in partnership with the Zoo Society.

As featured in his book *A World in One Cubic Foot: Portraits of Biodiversity* and by National Geographic, Liittschwager records every plant and animal species that moves in and out of a one cubic foot frame set into nature throughout the course of a day. He then creates a photographic portrait of the rich biodiversity found there, highlighting the ecosystem's resilience, challenges and beauty.

The privately funded trip to Madagascar will create a unique educational experience for students from Rochester's Allendale Columbia School. 15 students selected through a rigorous application process will assist the One Cubic Foot team with field work, data collection, and research in an area of federally protected land in Ranomafana National Park.

For two decades, the Zoo Society has supported the conservation work of Ranomafana's Institute for the Conservation of Tropical Environments, led by world-renowned Madagascar conservation expert Dr. Patricia Wright. Dr. Wright has been a driving force of the conservation of many endangered species in Madagascar, including ring-tailed lemurs, a species currently represented at the Zoo.

Pamela Reed Sanchez, Executive Director of the Seneca Park Zoo Society, will join the team in Madagascar and understands the trip as integral to the Zoo's conservation mission. "A major part of the Zoo's mission

is to connect people to animals and the environment,” she says. “This project is an extension of that mission, making the connection between individual action and environmental sustainability.”

Like One Cubic Foot in the Genesee River, which contributed meaningful data to the scientific record and 28 newly-documented species to an international DNA barcoding database, the project in Madagascar is expected to yield important insights about the biodiversity in Ranomafana National Park. An estimated 30% of the DNA barcodes collected could be new to the database.

Along with Chris Meyer, Research Zoologist and Curator at the Smithsonian Institution, Liittschwager, Reed Sanchez, and Zoo Society Director of Programming and Conservation Action Tom Snyder will monitor the primary cube while Allendale Columbia School students monitor their own supplemental cubes.

“The group of students traveling to Madagascar with the Zoo Society is excited to participate in true experiential learning, a core value of Allendale Columbia School,” says Beth Guzzetta, Life Science and Mathematics teacher at Allendale Columbia School. Guzzetta will serve as student leader during the trip to Madagascar.

Snyder looks forward to utilizing what is learned in Madagascar to inform future programming, exhibits and interpretive information at the Zoo. “It is part of the Zoo’s mission to bring this type of programming back to the community, and the process will provide helpful perspectives as we seek to enhance or programming and educational offerings,” he says.

Results from One Cubic Foot in Madagascar, in addition to those from last summer’s replication of One Cubic Foot in the Genesee River, will be incorporated into plans for a new Center for Biodiversity Exploration at the Zoo. This interactive space will encourage guests to consider the impact of human behavior on ecosystems and the ways in which species are related as parts of these environments. Information gathered during the trip will also inform the Zoo’s ongoing Master Plan development, which includes plans for a new exhibit featuring the ecosystem of Madagascar.

Follow the new account @SPZConserve on Twitter for detailed updates on the conservation science taking place in Madagascar. Follow @SenecaParkZoo and #OneCubicFoot on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and visit senecaparkzoo.org for updates and exclusive content from Madagascar.

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.

Now well into its second century, Allendale Columbia is a leading independent coed college prep school for students in nursery through grade 12. Here, learning goes far beyond books and tests. We have the freedom to dig deeper so students can question more, discuss, debate and question again. As a result, our students develop critical thinking skills and become effective problem solvers. Our faculty members use their independence and experience to connect knowledge to real life so our students can make more sense of the world—and their place in it. It all adds up to a different school of thought: high expectations and relevant experiences that prepare students to succeed in a global community. Visit the school’s 33-acre campus at 519 Allens Creek Road in Pittsford or online at www.AllendaleColumbia.org. For more information about Allendale Columbia’s tradition of excellence, contact 585-381-4560. Allendale Columbia School. ***First here, then anywhere.***