

LEMUR CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT – Immediate

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The Lemur Conservation Foundation (LCF) in Myakka City, Florida will have a new Executive Director at the helm beginning February 1st. Michael Stern will take over from Penelope Bodry-Sanders, LCF's founder, who is retiring. Bodry-Sanders started the foundation in 1996 to save endangered lemurs from extinction with an inheritance of \$35,000 and built it into the thriving conservation organization it is today with assets of \$4M. The six-building AZA certified Myakka City Lemur Reserve sits on a 100 acre campus with two forested animal enclosures and a growing population of 40+ lemurs. The site includes teaching and living facilities for researchers and scholars, active education programs, and the Mianatra Center for Lemur Studies, including the Anne and Walter Bladstrom Library. Equally significant has been the development of LCF's partnership with Tampolo Forest Station, a sister reserve in Madagascar, along with collaborations with leading zoos, colleges and universities.

The incoming Executive Director, Michael Stern, was selected from a field of 109 applicants. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard in biological anthropology. Having done his thesis research in the Kibale forest in Uganda, he saw first hand the negative effects of deforestation on the environment. Following graduation, in lieu of furthering his academic career, he opted to work on the front lines of conservation in Africa. There, he and his wife, Rebecca Goldstone, started the Kibale Fuel Wood Project which works with local communities to find alternative methods for cooking rather than cutting down their forests for fuel. The project has been very successful and is now almost entirely run by Ugandans. Michael also has experience caring for captive animals at six zoological facilities.

According to John Alexander, Chairman of the LCF Board, "Stern has vision, energy, clarity and authenticity as well as experience - attributes we sought through our search." Bodry-Sanders will remain active on the Board and is thrilled with Michael Stern's appointment: "Michael's youth will serve us well not only because of the vitality it takes to run LCF, but because we are a foundation for the future and we believe that Michael embodies our hopes and dreams."

For Stern's part, he is "ready to embrace the challenge of helping LCF move solidly into the future and to creatively fulfill and expand LCF's mission." He noted that "Our goals are not uncommon to those of other conservation organizations – but the way we achieve them is quite unique. With multi-acre forests for the lemurs to roam in and a serious commitment to research and in situ conservation, the LCF is tackling the crises facing wild lemurs from every angle, and doing so in a forward-thinking manner." John Alexander commented that, "Penelope's inspiring leadership will be missed but, we have the utmost confidence that Michael can continue the remarkable project that Penelope started, making us the premier lemur conservation organization in the world."