



THE BODHI TREE FOUNDATION LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING CAMPAIGN TO UNITE TOURISM INDUSTRY TO SAVE AFRICA'S ELEPHANTS

S.A.F.E: Safeguarding a Future for Africa's Elephants

NEW YORK (January 9, 2014) – [The Bodhi Tree Foundation](#) (TBTF) launches S.A.F.E, an anti-poaching campaign aimed at galvanizing and uniting the tourism industry to elevate awareness of the current elephant poaching crisis. Developed in response to the plea of tour operators working in Africa who have been watching the crisis unfold firsthand, the campaign also provides support to field-based organizations working tirelessly to combat poaching and protect African Elephant populations.

Poaching levels of elephants have continued to escalate, with tens of thousands killed annually in Africa due to the demand for ivory. In 2012, an estimated 35,000 elephants were killed, accounting for ten percent of the population, or about 100 per day. More than 90% of the African Elephant population has been slaughtered in the past 50 years alone. These staggering statistics are reason alone for TBTF to take action, launching the S.A.F.E campaign within the tourism industry to build awareness and provide support to local field organizations working hard to conserve elephant populations, curb poaching and stem the demand for ivory.

With its primary goal to educate and raise awareness about the poaching crisis within the tourism industry and to travelers, S.A.F.E. also supports organizations that are currently making a big difference on the ground, but benefit from global exposure and funds. All donations to S.A.F.E. will fund beneficiaries' fieldwork and projects specifically designed to preserve the African Elephant. S.A.F.E. is currently partnering with the following esteemed organizations: [African Wildlife Foundation](#), [The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust](#), [Save The Elephants](#), and [WildAid](#), chosen for their pioneering work in conservation. The Bodhi Tree Foundation has already committed and distributed the first \$20,000 in grants to these organizations as part of the campaign launch.

With 33.8 million tourists traveling to Africa in 2012, the loss of elephants has a tremendous impact on the global tourism industry and Africa's economy. In countries such as Kenya and South Africa, where tourism is vital, millions of people employed directly or indirectly in tourism risk losing their livelihoods. With no wildlife to view, travelers will disappear and subsequently, safari lodges and African tour operators will not be able to survive. Local communities, many who are reliant on funds from lodges, will suffer and be unable to protect whatever wildlife is remaining. "Wildlife and tourism in Africa are interdependent. If not our industry to unite and help prevent this," says TBTF Co-Founder Jena Gardner, "then who? With so much vested and with a strong global voice, let us be the industry to be the first to take a stand, show we care and inspire other industries to follow."

At the current poaching levels, elephants in many countries risk extinction as early as 2025. The environments in which they live will become unsustainable. Travel leaders all over the world recognize the implications of this crisis and need to take action immediately. S.A.F.E. urges all to get involved.

"We are excited that The Bodhi Tree Foundation is embarking on such an important and time-critical initiative with the S.A.F.E. Campaign. Singita, like many safari lodges throughout Africa, are distraught over the surge in poaching of these majestic animals in the last few years – if it continues, our children could be the last generation to view an elephant in the African wild. The tourism industry, by uniting to build awareness and provide support, can help ensure this doesn't happen," said Luke Bailes, CEO of Singita.

The Bodhi Tree Foundation is asking the travel industry and travelers to visit the [S.A.F.E.](#) website to learn about ways to get involved and actively join the campaign. Our growing list of Partners and Supporters already includes such names as Absolute Travel, ProTravel, Uncharted Outposts, Wilderness Safaris and Singita. The integrated campaign incorporates a website, social media, forums, industry events and advertising to support the cause. The second phase of the website, ready in the first quarter of 2014, will include resources for the industry and travelers alike.

Established by travelers for travelers, The Bodhi Tree Foundation is a leading non-profit organization that harnesses the power of the travel industry by using its significant resources to help people in need, protect cultural heritage and conserve our planet's biodiversity. For more information on The Bodhi Tree Foundation, please visit www.thebodhitreefoundation.org.

For more information on S.A.F.E. and to learn ways the tourism industry can help, please visit <http://www.saveafricaselephants.com/> or email info@saveafricaselephants.com.



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About The Bodhi Tree Foundation

The Bodhi Tree Foundation is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to mobilizing travelers and the travel and tourism industry to support underserved communities and endangered places, saving them for future generations to experience. Founded in 2008, The Bodhi Tree Foundation identifies and nurtures the most effective grassroots charitable initiatives around the world. Deserving charities are carefully vetted by The Bodhi Tree Foundation's executive board, comprised of travel industry professionals and global humanitarians. Known as travel industry professionals and experienced, recreational travelers, the Board of Directors strives for The Bodhi Tree Foundation to present a unique opportunity that ensures future generations experience the power of travel as we do today.

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