

RETHINKING CONSERVATION: LETTING NATURE LEAD

A women-led initiative protecting sea turtles through community and education





ABOUT OUR INITIATIVE

WHO WE ARE

Proyek Penyu is a local initiative based on the island of Gili Trawangan.

We are dedicated to protecting endangered sea turtles and creating a safer, more sustainable environment for them to survive and thrive. Our work is rooted in community and long-term impact.

OUR MISSION

We protect sea turtles through hands-on conservation and education.

Our work includes safeguarding nesting sites, supporting hatchlings, and raising awareness through community outreach and educational programs.

We focus on practical, responsible solutions that prioritize the well-being of turtles in their natural habitat.

WHY IT MATTERS

Sea turtles face increasing human-induced threats. Without action, their future is at risk. By protecting them today and sharing knowledge with others, we aim to ensure these remarkable creatures continue to exist for generations to come.



THE PROBLEM

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sea turtles in Gili Trawangan face increasing pressure from human activity. Nesting sites are disturbed, hatchlings are often handled or relocated, and natural processes are disrupted. Many well-intentioned practices can unintentionally harm the very species they aim to protect.

THE CONSEQUENCE

When natural cycles are disrupted, survival rates drop. Hatchlings lose their ability to navigate, and long-term population health is affected. Without change, sea turtles face an increasingly uncertain future.

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- Poaching of eggs and turtles
 - Habitat loss from coastal development
 - Plastic pollution in the ocean
 - Human interference with nesting and hatching
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PROGRAM: COMMUNITY TRAINING

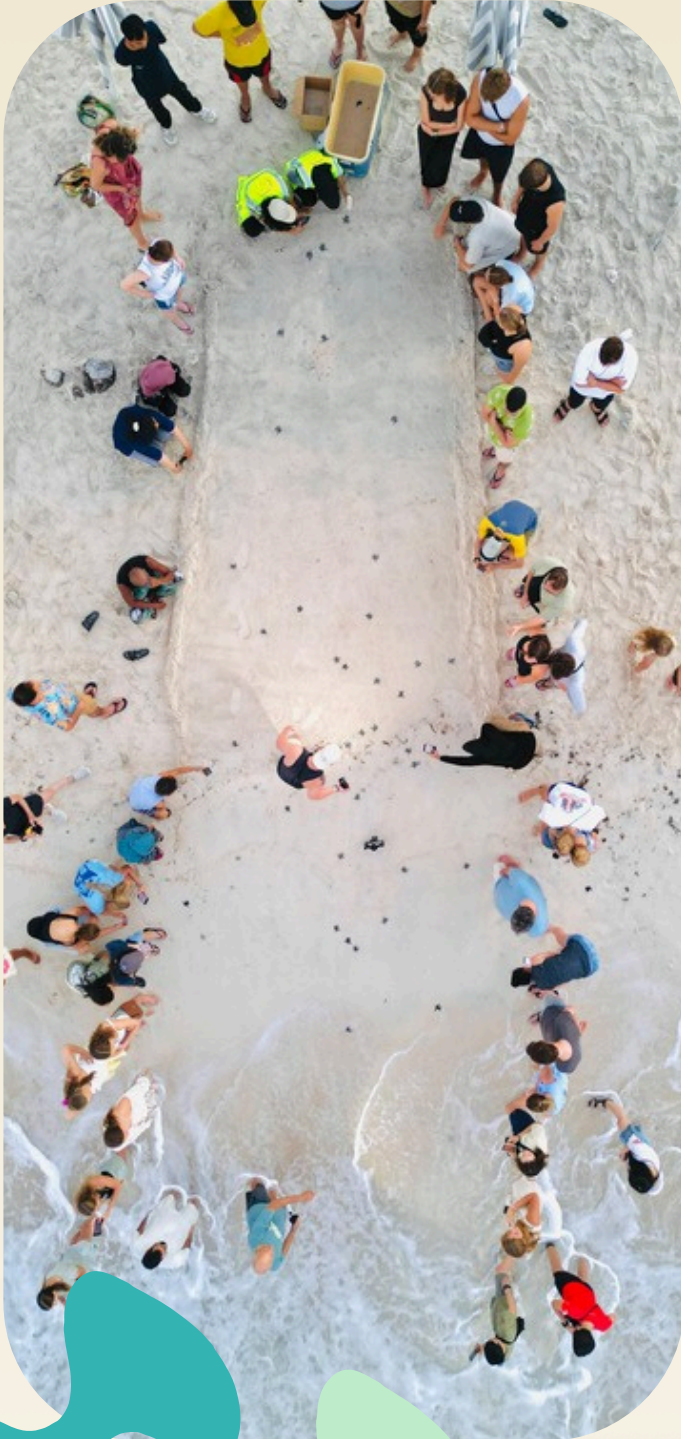
We work with people who are closest to the beaches: locals. This aims to create a shared responsibility for protecting sea turtles. By sharing knowledge and practical guidelines, we help reduce harmful practices and create a network of informed, responsible community.

Local Businesses Training

This training is designed for individuals who work along the beach and beachfront business owners who may have sea turtle nesting on their beach side premises. The aim is to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively manage and educate others on proper protocols in case of turtle landings.



PROGRAM: VISITOR ENGAGEMENT



In 2025, we had unprecedented interest from tourists to join releases and witness this. Seeing is believing, and this always helps to push protection and education into those who can really make a difference, not visiting headstarting practices.

Whilst we want to welcome every tourist to this bucket list experience, the Gili Islands have become increasingly popular and this can put great pressure on good ethical measures for witnessing turtle activity.

Regular Tourist Talks

This short and engaging training is designed for visitors to the Gilis who enjoy swimming, snorkelling or diving with turtles.

Spectating a release

These talks are intended for guests who arrive to Gilis at a lucky time when we are releasing a clutch of turtles. This semi-natural process has been set up to prioritise and protect the turtles over the people who want to see this event.

Without proper procedures and crowd management, there are simply too many people on the Gilis for turtles to be safely released

PROGRAM: FIELD CONSERVATION

TURTLE LANDINGS AND NEST PROTECTION

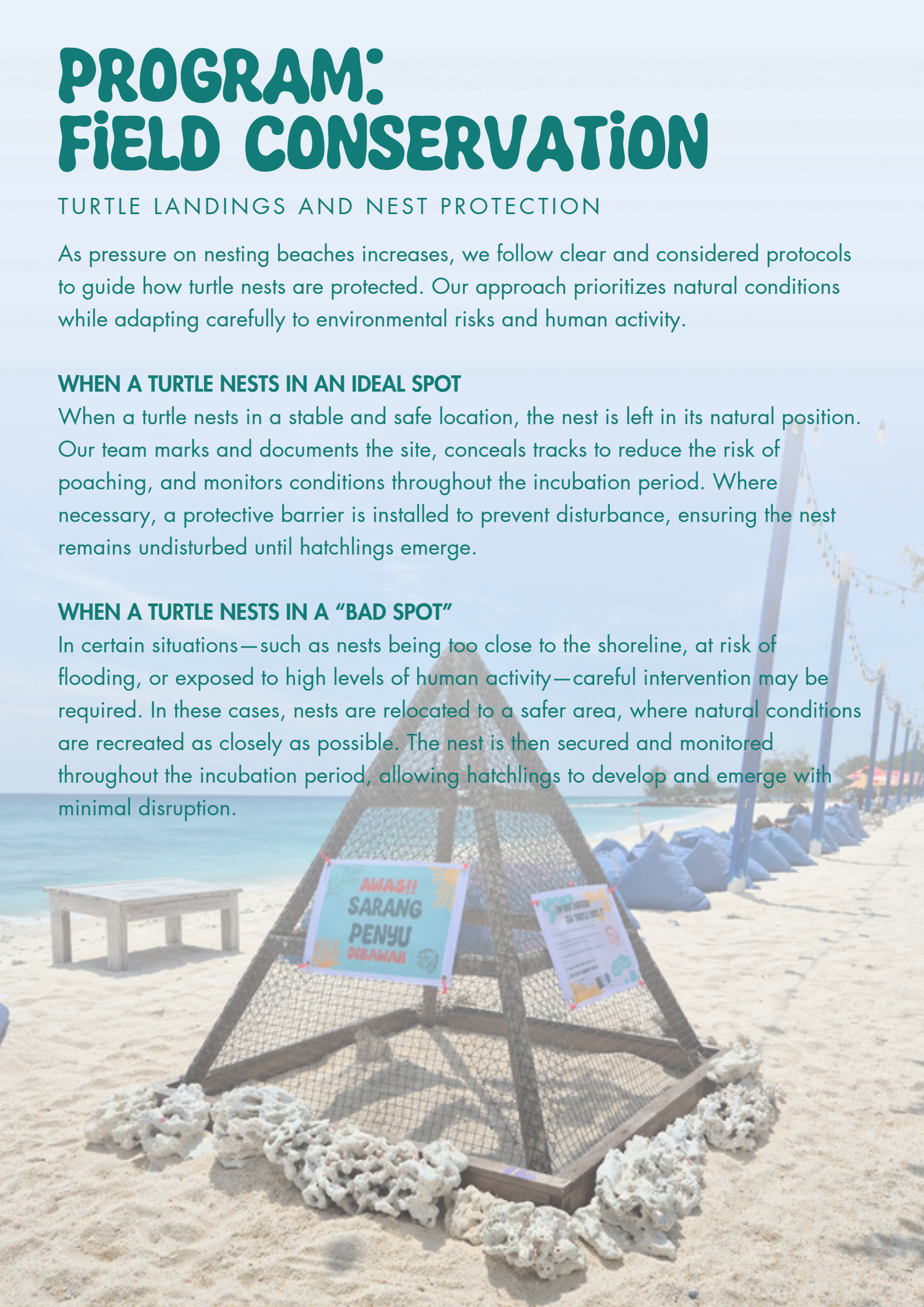
As pressure on nesting beaches increases, we follow clear and considered protocols to guide how turtle nests are protected. Our approach prioritizes natural conditions while adapting carefully to environmental risks and human activity.

WHEN A TURTLE NESTS IN AN IDEAL SPOT

When a turtle nests in a stable and safe location, the nest is left in its natural position. Our team marks and documents the site, conceals tracks to reduce the risk of poaching, and monitors conditions throughout the incubation period. Where necessary, a protective barrier is installed to prevent disturbance, ensuring the nest remains undisturbed until hatchlings emerge.

WHEN A TURTLE NESTS IN A “BAD SPOT”

In certain situations—such as nests being too close to the shoreline, at risk of flooding, or exposed to high levels of human activity—careful intervention may be required. In these cases, nests are relocated to a safer area, where natural conditions are recreated as closely as possible. The nest is then secured and monitored throughout the incubation period, allowing hatchlings to develop and emerge with minimal disruption.



PROGRAM: FIELD CONSERVATION

HATCHING PROTOCOLS

With increasing pressure on nesting beaches, we have developed clear, ethical protocols to guide how hatchlings are supported during their journey from nest to sea. These approaches prioritise natural behaviour while adapting to environmental conditions and human activity.

DURING IDEAL CONDITIONS

When conditions are favourable, hatchlings are allowed to make their journey to the ocean with minimal intervention. In collaboration with nearby visitors and resorts, we construct a simple sand channel leading from the nest to the shoreline. This helps guide hatchlings safely while still allowing them to crawl across the sand and imprint on their surroundings: an essential process that supports their ability to return to the same beach as adults to nest.

DURING CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

In certain conditions—such as poor weather, extreme tides, or excessive human presence—our team may adjust the timing and approach of hatchling releases to ensure their safety. Hatchlings may be temporarily held in a controlled environment, allowing them to rest and conserve energy until conditions improve.

Large crowds, especially during evening releases, can cause stress and interfere with their journey to the sea. In these cases, releases may be rescheduled to quieter times, such as early morning, to reduce disturbance. When releases do proceed, our team actively manages the surroundings and encourages responsible behavior, ensuring hatchlings have the safest possible path to the ocean while minimizing disruption to their natural development.



PROGRAM: DATA TRACKING

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH COMMUNITY MONITORING

TURTLE TRACKER TRAINING

Our Turtle Tracker Training programme invites community members and longer-term visitors to actively participate in sea turtle conservation through a structured citizen science initiative. This training equips participants with the skills needed to patrol the island, identify turtle tracks, report sightings, and locate potential nesting sites. By involving trained community members and long-term visitors, we expand our ability to observe, document, and respond to changes in real time.

Through our Turtle Tracker training programme, participants learn how to identify tracks, recognise nesting signs, and accurately record sightings. These daily observations contribute to a growing body of data that helps us monitor patterns, detect risks early, and adapt our approach as needed.

All tracking activities are carried out under the guidance of our trained rangers, ensuring that data collection remains consistent, responsible, and aligned with our conservation principles.



PROGRAM: EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

ENABLING FAST, COORDINATED ACTION

Our Emergency Response Network is designed to ensure that no turtle nesting or hatching event goes unnoticed. By building strong connections across the Gili Trawangan community, we've created a wide-reaching, real-time alert system that supports rapid response and protection efforts.

We actively engage local residents, businesses, and visitors to keep our work visible and top of mind. **With a network of over 500 contacts**, many of whom are highly active on social media, we are often alerted quickly to nesting activity, hatchling emergencies, or any disturbances that may put turtles at risk.

Participants from our business trainings, tourist workshops, and Turtle Tracker programme all become part of this network. This ensures that a broad cross-section of the community is equipped and motivated to report sightings or concerns directly to our ranger team.

By prioritising awareness and accessibility, the Emergency Response Network enables fast, coordinated action—helping us protect turtles more effectively, even beyond our immediate patrol coverage.



PROGRAM: THE TINIEST TIDE

EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Tiniest Tide is our education program for young children, designed to nurture curiosity, empathy, and respect for the natural world from an early age. Rather than instructing, we engage children directly: inviting them to observe, think, and connect with sea turtles as part of a shared environment.

Through this initiative, we address the growing issue of “headstarting” practices to empower the next generation to make informed, responsible choices. By teaching children why they should avoid visiting or supporting headstarting facilities, we encourage them to influence family decisions as well. We also promote respectful behaviour on nesting beaches—such as keeping a safe distance from turtles, avoiding flash photography, and discouraging others from disturbing nesting animals.

We deliver tailored, age-appropriate workshops for children aged 18 months to 18 years. Each session is carefully designed to suit developmental stages and learning styles, using a mix of interactive games, creative crafts, engaging videos, and music. These workshops can be held in a variety of settings, including schools, beaches, and community play areas, making conservation education accessible, memorable, and fun.

Conservation is not only about protecting what exists today, but shaping how future generations relate to the natural world. By building awareness early, we support a generation that sees itself not as separate from nature, but as part of it.



COLLABORATION: GILI ECO TRUST

Our work is made possible through collaborations with organisations that share our commitment to ethical and sustainable conservation.

GILI ECO TRUST

Operating for over 20 years on Gili Trawangan, Gili Eco Trust focuses on protecting the marine and island environment through coral restoration, waste management, and environmental education. Proyek Penyu operates under Gili Eco Trust, working specifically on turtle nest protection and public awareness, with the goal of creating ethical and effective conservation practices.



GILI ECO TRUST



COLLABORATION



THE TURTLE FOUNDATION

The Turtle Foundation works globally to protect sea turtles and their habitats from threats such as pollution and habitat destruction.

Our collaboration includes educational initiatives, training programmes, and ongoing knowledge exchange to strengthen conservation efforts on the ground.

YAYASAN PENYU INDONESIA (YPI)

YPI works across Indonesia and internationally to protect sea turtles during nesting and in coastal waters.

They focus on education against harmful practices such as headstarting, aligning closely with our approach to ethical conservation.



Source: <https://www.turtle-foundation.org/>

SUPPORT AND FUNDING

A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN, GLOBALLY SUPPORTED EFFORT

Our work is supported through a combination of local initiatives and global contributions, allowing us to remain both community-driven and sustainable over time.

GLOBAL SUPPORT

Through platforms such as **GlobalGiving**, we share transparent updates, impact reports, and clear funding priorities.

This allows our global community to stay connected to our work and directly support ongoing conservation efforts.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

On the island, we organise workshops, community events, and grassroots initiatives that not only generate support but also strengthen awareness and involvement.

Alongside these efforts, we continuously seek funding through grants, donor partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. By building relationships with aligned organisations and individuals, we aim to secure consistent support that enables us to expand and adapt our programmes over time.

Through this blended approach, we ensure that our work remains both community-driven and globally supported.





AS A BUSINESS OWNER

You can support Proyek Penyu by scheduling a free consultation and training to learn more about turtle landings and hatchlings on your beachside property. Another way to help is by sponsoring our cause and helping us spread the word.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

There are various ways you can support us. From sharing our posts on social media, purchasing our T-shirts to help us raise funds for the project, to becoming one of our on-site turtle trackers. Feel free to contact us directly to learn more about how you can contribute and make a difference!

AS A FELLOW NGO

You can support Proyek Penyu by collaborating with us on projects, campaigns, or initiatives that align with our shared goals. We are willing to share resources and provide training, as long as our values align. Cross-platform sharing of information and resources would also greatly benefit both organizations.

AS A SCHOOL / EDUCATION CENTER

You can invite us to do workshops or seminars. We have experience running these events with participants from 18 months to over 50 years old, everything catered to the age group — anyone can join!

LET NATURE LEAD

And let us protect what cannot ask for help.





CONNECT WITH US

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