

UN Foundation Launches Thomas Lovejoy Memorial Press Fellowship

Selected reporters will travel to the Amazon's longest-running biodiversity research project to examine the effects of climate change firsthand

The United Nations Foundation today announced a press fellowship that will bring a select group of journalists to the heart of the Amazon to explore issues of biodiversity, deforestation, and sustainable development. The trip will take place the week of October 17, 2022 against the backdrop of a national election to determine Brazil's next president, just three weeks ahead of COP27, and two months before the Biodiversity COP in December.

The Fellowship is named after the late Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, the renowned ecologist and Senior Fellow for the UN Foundation who first popularized the term "biodiversity." Ten journalists will travel to Manaus, Brazil before spending three days at the remote research station in the Amazon, known as [Camp 41](#), where they will have the opportunity to take guided tours of the world's largest rainforest.

The Amazon rainforest is one of just five mega-forests left on the planet. Protecting and preserving this natural resource is crucial to safeguarding biodiversity, indigenous culture, and a stable global climate. Brazil holds roughly one-third of the world's remaining rainforests, including a majority of the Amazon. As a result, it is the most biodiverse country on the planet, containing some 56,000 species of plants, 1,700 species of birds, 695 amphibians, 578 mammals, and 651 reptiles.

Yet deforestation in Brazil broke a new record in April, prompting renewed calls from scientists, activists, and indigenous communities alike to defend this unique ecosystem. Destroying the Amazon's intact rainforest will not only release massive amounts of carbon into the air, it could represent a terrifying [tipping point](#) in our global ecosystem. When a biologically rich and diverse forest becomes too fragmented, it degrades into a tropical savannah – a process that is irreversible. As Dr. Lovejoy co-wrote in his final book, "[Ever Green: Saving Big Forests to Save the Planet](#)," "If we lose too many trees, everything changes."

Eligibility & Application Requirements

This press fellowship is intended for journalists interested in covering climate change, sustainable development, biological science, and environmental issues, including biodiversity, deforestation, agriculture, nature-based climate solutions, and land use.

Journalists from all countries are welcome to apply. Participating journalists will be expected to publish between two to four stories on the topics covered within six months of the fellowship's conclusion.

Participants' roundtrip airfare, visa fees, accommodations, and local travel in Brazil will be covered, along with most meals. Other expenses incurred during the trip may be eligible for reimbursement. Funding for this press fellowship was made possible by a grant from the McGovern Foundation.

Click here to apply.

The application deadline is **11:59PM EST** on Friday, August 5, 2022. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview. For more information, please contact Megan Rabbit (mrabbit@unfoundation.org) or MJ Altman (maltman@unfoundation.org).

About the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragment Project (BDFFP)

In 1979, Dr. Thomas Lovejoy founded the [Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragment Project](#) (BDFFP) as a lab for scientists, a school for students, and an exposition to those in power about why we must preserve the world's largest rainforest. In 2018, he created a sister institution, the [Amazon Biodiversity Center](#), to help carry on this vital work. The project's research sites comprise forest fragments and adjacent continuous areas across a 620-square-mile [protected reserve](#) north of Manaus, Brazil. There are seven working camps, including facilities that support field research on biological diversity and the impact of forest fragmentation. Its best-known field camp — Camp 41 — is located at the 41st-kilometer marker on the access road to the reserve.

About Dr. Thomas Lovejoy

Dr. Lovejoy was a valued member of the UN Foundation, where he advised leaders on biodiversity and environmental science, initially as an adviser to the Foundation's founding president, former U.S. Senator Tim Wirth, and later as a Senior Fellow. He is widely credited with putting the threat of tropical deforestation and biodiversity loss at the top of the global agenda. As early as 1980, he produced the first study of global extinction rates, correctly predicting the mass species loss we are seeing today.

Throughout his career as one of the world's leading ecologists, Dr. Thomas Lovejoy recognized the impact of seeing one of our most precious resources in person and welcomed dozens of visitors to Camp 41, once explaining: "There is no better classroom than the reality of being in the heart of a living planet." He earned the nickname the "[Godfather of Biodiversity](#)" for his passion and dedication for understanding and preserving our ecosystem. During his acceptance speech for the prestigious [Blue Planet Prize](#) at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, he said: "I accept this on behalf of, and in deference to, the diversity of life in all its wondrous glory: every living thing — plant, animal, and microorganism. We are all related, and each the product of 4 billion years of evolution. Together we constitute the living part of the planet — what science calls the biosphere. Collectively, we are why the Earth functions as a living planet — the one we call our home."

About The UN Foundation

The UN Foundation is an independent charitable organization created to work closely with the United Nations to address humanity's greatest challenges, build initiatives across sectors to solve problems at scale, and drive global progress. Learn more at www.unfoundation.org