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Cougar Conservation Groups Partner to Promote Education and Community Stewardship at Spring Event!

The Rocky Mountain Cat Conservancy and the Cougar Fund will be hosting an exciting evening event to promote understanding about cougars and provide information on how to live with cougars in your own community on May 2, 2009 at 6 p.m.

This free event is open to the public and will take place at the Giusepee Palumbo gallery in Eldorado Springs, CO. The evening's guests will include world-renowned wildlife photographer Thomas D. Mangelsen—an expert in natural history photography whose work has been featured in National Geographic, Smithsonian, and Time Magazine—as well as writers Marc Bekoff and Cara Blessley Lowe who will read excerpts from their recently published book *“Listening to Cougar.”* In addition, students participating in the “Communities, Cameras, and Conservation” outreach program from the Estes Park School District will give presentations.

This event is an opportunity to educate the public about respecting and learning to live in harmony with wildlife, especially carnivores (cougars)—an essential part of any human's education,” says Dr. Marc Bekoff. There will be a raffle and silent auction, as well as live music throughout the night provided by Kelly Kay. “The evening will offer something for everyone,” adds Tom Mangelsen.

A portion of the proceeds generated from the fundraiser, and in partnership with Cougar Fund, will be used by the RMCC to more fully launch “Communities, Cameras, and Conservation”, a new program aimed at engaging communities in monitoring local mountain lion populations. “Understanding cougar behavior greatly minimizes the risk of problematic encounters with them,” says Cara Blessley Lowe, writer and co-founder of the Cougar Fund. She adds, “Clarifying the many misconceptions surrounding the cat is key to this species' prospects for long-term survival.”

Both organizations share a primary goal of reaching out and educating communities about the complex issues facing cougars, and in turn, conserving the cat for future generations. The Cougar Fund protects the cougar throughout the Americas' by educating children and adults on the value of cougars, by funding and promoting the use of sound science, and by monitoring state policies to assure a lasting place for this graceful creature. The Rocky Mountain Cat Conservancy (RMCC) is dedicated to promoting wild cat conservation through research and community stewardship. The RMCC was founded on the belief that a higher degree of coexistence can be achieved through proactive, strategic research, education and community involvement.

For more information please visit www.cougarfund.org or www.catconservancy.org.