



NOTE TO MEDIA | SEPTEMBER 2024

PERPETUAL PLANET INITIATIVE ROLEX CELEBRATES OUR PLANET'S POLES, MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS

FROM EQUIPPING THE FIRST ADVENTURERS TO REACH THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST TO ENABLING VITAL DISCOVERIES IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST, ROLEX HAS SUPPORTED THE WORLD'S TRAILBLAZING EXPLORERS FOR ALMOST A CENTURY. TODAY, THIS NETWORK OF PIONEERS IS SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE CHALLENGES WE ALL FACE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE. SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD, THE EXPLORERS AND RESEARCHERS ARE SHOWING BOTH HOW FUNDAMENTALLY LINKED THE EARTH'S MYRIAD LANDSCAPES ARE, AND HOW VULNERABLE THEY HAVE BECOME. ROLEX IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THIS INVALUABLE WORK, NOT ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF THE PLANET'S FUTURE, BUT FOR OUR OWN AS WELL.



The all-female team of the Before it's Gone (BIG) Expedition who skied across three Arctic locations to collect crucial sea ice data that will contribute to our understanding of climate and environmental change in the Arctic. The team pull sledges loaded with equipment including tents, food, scientific equipment and sleeping bags.

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Climate scientists Baker Perry, Tom Matthews and a team of Sherpa guides build an automated weather station on the South Col on Mount Everest at 7,945 meters as part of the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Everest Expedition.

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National Geographic Explorer Angelo Bernardino and his team working in the mangrove forest of Curuçá, at the mouth of the Amazon River, to better understand the interaction between the local communities and the mangrove ecosystems they depend on to make a living. This project is part of the Rolex and National Geographic Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition.

© Pablo Albarenga/National Geographic

Today, the Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative supports a diverse variety of projects aimed at protecting the planet. It is with this spirit that the company has established key Moments throughout the year, and the Poles, Mountains and Forests Moment is a chance to shine a light on its partners, Testimonees and Rolex Awards Laureates - all pioneers leading the charge in preserving some of the Earth's most striking yet vulnerable landscapes and those that inhabit them.

Rolex is proud to support and highlight the extraordinary work of its global network of explorers, who are dedicated to protecting our planet, and to recognize them through the Rolex Poles, Mountains and Forests Moment.





ROLEX CELEBRATES OUR PLANET'S POLES, MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

With the first triumphant climb to the summit of Mount Everest in 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay demonstrated to the world that anything is possible. Since then, the farthest reaches of the terrestrial world have all been conquered – but exploration continues to be more crucial than ever. The peaks of the Himalayas, the underground ice caves of Greenland and the depths of the Amazon rainforest still have many secrets to share. By studying under-threat environments, pioneering explorers are alerting us to the fragility of the planet, uncovering the climate change challenges we are facing, and remaining at the forefront of campaigns for protection.

Through the Perpetual Planet Initiative, Rolex is supporting explorers, scientists and conservationists working to preserve our poles, mountains and forests, and their inextricable interconnectedness, across the globe. Among the explorers in this field that Rolex supports is, for example, renowned South African conservationist Steve Boyes. A Perpetual Planet Initiative partner and conservationist, Boyes is documenting Africa's waterways along what he calls "the Great Spine of Africa", which includes the Angolan highlands, where he found what is arguably Africa's largest water source.

GROUNDBREAKING EXPEDITIONS

The work being done to preserve Earth's natural landscapes still requires bold expeditions that venture to the furthest reaches of our planet to better understand it and therefore protect it.

One of the most significant projects spearheaded by the Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative and its partner, the National Geographic Society, is a two-year study of one of the earth's most critical ecosystems: The Amazon.

The National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Amazon Expedition has seen 7 teams of researchers travel across the Amazon River Basin to evaluate the health of the river basin's entire water system, all the way from the water source on the Andes to the rushing river mouth at the Atlantic.

With 1,100 tributaries, the system can be considered the lifeblood of our planet. Led by National Geographic Explorers, scientists, storytellers and local community members, the teams are answering critical questions about the impacts of climate change in order to protect the world's largest rainforest.

From installing the highest weather station in the tropical Andes, to sampling microbes in the waters of deforested areas, the work being done by the teams is crucial in understanding the impact mankind has had on the Amazon and the consequences it will have for us as a worldwide population.



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MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS

**“THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND ROLEX PERPETUAL PLANET
AMAZON EXPEDITION HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH
DIFFERENT SPECIALTIES, WITH DIFFERENT RESEARCH AREAS,
AND THAT MADE OUR TRIP SO MUCH RICHER.”**

Angelo Bernardino, Marine Ecologist and National Geographic Explorer

A GLOBAL LEGACY

Throughout the decades, Rolex's dedication to protecting our poles, mountains and forests has reached far and wide, supporting 55 expeditions across 28 countries – from the North Pole to the heart of the Amazon.

Rolex Awards for Enterprise Laureate Francesco Sauro led an expedition deep into the unexplored caves located in the Colombian Amazon. Together with a team of scientists and members of the local indigenous Monochoa community, Sauro navigated white-water rapids and dense jungle to reach caves that have not been explored in living memory. Sauro, who also collaborates with the European Space Agency on exploring caves on the Moon, believes that the bacteria they found thriving in the total darkness of the caves could tell us more about the potential existence of extra-terrestrial life: “Underground, without light, in a very quiet environment over very long geological times, with very low nutrients – those are exactly the conditions we would expect to find on the subsurface of Mars,” he explains. “The caves are like a small planet,”.

They also offer a living laboratory to which he brings the latest scientific field equipment to analyse both the rocks and the life in their hidden places. “When you go in a cave, you are entering a kind of archive of time, so everything is preserved and you can dig into the past to see how life evolved, how minerals formed, how the climate has changed.” This data is crucial for understanding the Planet's future climate and the impact it will have on every eco-system.

Over 8,000 kilometres away lies Mount Logan, the highest mountain in Canada. Due to its altitude and unique weather conditions, it is one of only a handful of places outside the polar regions where the ice does not melt in the summer months, thereby ensuring a long climate record is preserved in the ice. Climate scientist Alison Criscitiello recently led the National Geographic and Rolex Perpetual Planet Mount Logan Expedition, a 10-day expedition to the mountain's ice-covered plateau 6,000 metres above sea-level. Once there, she and her team of world-leading specialists collected ice cores down to 327 metres, a record depth for a high-altitude mountain glacier core, which may contain as much as 30,000 years of climate history. Such data had previously only been collected in the polar regions. Criscitiello's expedition has expanded this research to more latitudes and, once the ice cores have been analysed and the data collected, will help to paint a more complete picture of the global climate through time.





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Almost 100 years on from equipping explorers in the Himalayas, some of the first trailblazing expeditions of the time, Rolex continues to support and encourage those venturing into the unknown for the sake of our Planet's uncertain future

ABOUT THE PERPETUAL PLANET INITIATIVE

For nearly a century, Rolex has supported pioneering explorers pushing back the boundaries of human endeavour. The company has moved from championing exploration for the sake of discovery to protecting the planet, committing for the long term to support individuals and organizations using science to understand and devise solutions to today's environmental challenges.

This engagement was reinforced with the launch of the Perpetual Planet Initiative in 2019, which initially focused on the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, as well as long-standing partnerships with Mission Blue and National Geographic Society.

The Initiative now has more than 30 other partnerships in an expanding portfolio such as: Cristina Mittermeier and Paul Nicklen; the Under The Pole expeditions; the Monaco Blue Initiative; Coral Gardeners; Rewilding Argentina and Rewilding Chile, offspring organizations of Tompkins Conservation; and many Rolex Award for Enterprise Laureates.

Rolex also supports future generations of explorers, scientists and conservationists through education with scholarships and grants, such as Our World-Underwater Scholarship Society and The Rolex Explorers Club Grants.

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