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Racing Against Extinction: Leading Expert Makes the Case for Saving the Cheetah on US Tour, April 10 – May 19

March 20, 2014 (Alexandria, VA) -- Dr. Laurie Marker, Founder and Executive Director of the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), and widely considered the world's leading expert on the cheetah, will be touring the United States to raise awareness about the cheetah's race against extinction and discuss her new book, "A Future For Cheetahs" with photos by Suzi Eszterhas. Dr. Marker has confirmed public appearances in the following cities: **San Jose, CA, San Francisco, CA, Mission Hills, CA, Beverly Hills, CA, San Diego, CA, Portland, OR, Seattle, WA, Santa Barbara, CA, Dallas, TX, Houston, TX, St. Louis, MO, New York, NY and Washington, DC.**

The cheetah is Africa's oldest big cat and also its most endangered. With over 90% of the population of cheetahs decimated in the last 100 years, if we don't act now, we could lose the cheetah from this planet in our lifetimes. Dr. Marker, an American, is recognized as a leading expert on cheetahs – their biology, genetics, ecology, breeding, and issues related to their conservation. After conducting research on cheetahs since 1974, in 1990, Dr. Marker left her position with the Smithsonian, and moved to Namibia to found CCF so that she could work directly with cheetahs in the wild and the communities on whose land the cheetah lives.

From humble beginnings interviewing local farmers for field research, Marker has built a world renowned International Research and Conservation Centre that comprises 100,000 acres, a vet clinic, genetics lab, model farm with goats, sheep and cows, livestock guarding dogs, and approximately 42 orphaned or injured cheetahs.

Dr. Marker's new book, "A Future For Cheetahs" which features photos by noted wildlife photographer Suzi Eszterhas, shares for the first time in a popular book Dr. Marker's story of the cheetah's race against extinction, illustrated with some of the rarest and most beautiful images yet of the wild cheetah.

Dr. Marker has built her programs by addressing all aspects of the cheetah's ecosystem, including human populations. "Saving the cheetah requires that we address everything that's needed to sustain the cheetah as a species in the wild. That means caring about farmers who view cheetahs a threat to their livelihoods. That means proper management of livestock and being concerned with the health of prey species populations and with habitat loss caused by climate change and aggravated by poor farming techniques. Saving the cheetah is really about making a world that people and wildlife can live in together," says Dr. Marker.

Dr. Marker pioneered the use of livestock guarding dogs in Africa, breeding and training Anatolian shepherd and Kangal dogs to protect local herds so that farmers are not threatened by cheetahs on their land. CCF has placed nearly 500 dogs since 1994, with about 150 dogs in service at any given time, and placing over 40 dogs last year alone. Farmers who use a CCF dog to guard their livestock report a drop in livestock loss of between 80 to 100 percent, and these farmers now are far less likely to kill or trap cheetah on their lands.

Dr. Marker will be available for media appearances and interviews at every stop along her tour. Please contact Paula Martin at (703) 615-8293 to schedule an interview.

Dr. Laurie Marker is a recipient of the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, which is equivalent to the noble prize for the environment, The Tech Museum's Intel Environmental Prize, and a two-time finalist for the prestigious Indianapolis Prize. She was named a Hero for the Planet by *Time* magazine and has been featured in *Smithsonian* magazine as well as on numerous television shows, including The Tonight Show, Good Morning America and the Today Show.

Founded in Namibia (Africa) in 1990, **Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF)** is the global leader in research and conservation of cheetahs. CCF is dedicated to saving the cheetah in the wild. CCF's Founder and Executive Director, Dr. Laurie Marker, an American biologist, is considered one of the world's foremost experts on cheetah biology, ecology and conservation and has developed CCF's conservation strategy, which has contributed to increasing the wild cheetah population in Namibia by ~50%. CCF's long-term studies analyze and monitor the factors affecting the cheetah's survival in the wild, and results are used to develop conservation policies and education programs that have reached over 300,000 people in Namibia alone. CCF is a registered non-profit in Namibia, Canada, UK and the US, where it is listed as a "Four Star Charity" by Charity Navigator, which recognizes sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. People can learn more about CCF or make a donation to the organization by visiting www.cheetah.org.

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