

Social media to promote and support crocodylian conservation

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Abstract: Gatorland has been the leader in alligator safety and education since 1949. As the trusted name for alligator information, Gatorland is the “go-to” organization for media inquiries on alligator safety, education, and conservation. In 2016, Gatorland made the strategic decision to expand our communication and educational outreach with the general public. To spread our mission to “protect, educate, and conserve,” Gatorland began investing significant human and financial capital into social media platforms to create and distribute groundbreaking content. Our entertaining and educational social media programs were built on a foundation of conservation through the creation of Gatorland Global, the conservation arm of our business. By sharing the beauty and unique behavior of alligators and crocodiles within the park, our social media content has engendered thousands of people to love and respect these often-misunderstood animals, with the ultimate goal of sparking the desire to learn about, protect, and conserve crocodylians around the world. Social media is people power, and support from the millions of people that have joined our social media family has propelled Gatorland Global’s mission into a new realm of public awareness. Our social media platforms generate significant dollars, where 100% of social media revenues go directly to support Gatorland Global’s conservation projects around the world. These important projects include saving nuisance alligators, *Alligator mississippiensis*, in Florida, research on *Crocodylus acutus* ecology in Florida with Joe Wasilewski, supporting and participating in projects with *Crocodylus rhombifer* in Cuba with Gustavito Sosa and Etiam Perez, relocation work with *Crocodylus acutus* in Jamaica with NEPA and Treya Picking, and supporting *Crocodylus intermedius* with Luis Sigler at the Dallas World Aquarium and Alvaro Velasco of Venezuela. Gatorland’s social media is laser-focused on bridging relationships between animal lovers and academia by teaching people to love crocodylians and the amazing world we share.

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