



GRASP Blog Winner Goes 'APP'

A mobile phone application that allows consumers to tell instantly whether products they might purchase contain materials harmful to great apes and their habitat was the winning entry in the Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP) Blog Competition that posed the question, “How Can Technology Save Great Apes?”

The winning entry was submitted by Adriana Klompus, a graduate of Columbia University in the U.S. with a life-long interest in conservation and the great apes. Her blog – “Barcode Activism: Use Your Wallet and Smartphone in a Wired Marketplace to Help Great Apes” – received 36 percent of the votes cast in an on-line voting competition that closed September 30.

Klompus will present her proposal during the “Great Apes & Technology” plenary of the 2nd GRASP Council, which will be held November 6-8 in Paris. The GRASP Blog Competition received 5,689 on-line votes and was presented in association with Brussels Airlines.

“It has been wonderful to see how much interest there is in the ‘app’ I am working on,” Klompus said. “The response to my blog really affirmed the idea behind this project: that people want to do something good, as long as doing so is straightforward and they have all the tools and information they need in order to do so.”

Klompus' proposal calls for the creation of a mobile phone application that would permit consumers to make informed choices with the push of a button. For instance, if an item contains palm oil -- a common household ingredient that has prompted widespread conversion of great ape forests in Southeast Asia and Africa into agricultural plantations -- the application warns the user and offers alternatives that are ape-friendly.

"This proposal is exactly the sort of fresh, innovative idea that we were searching for when we launched the GRASP Blog Competition," said GRASP coordinator Doug Cress. "We wanted ideas that bring energy and creative solutions."

Klompus narrowly defeated Prateek Mathur of India, who received 34 percent of the votes for a blog that proposed using GPS tracking devices to monitor logging trucks.

Brussels Airlines is the flag carrier airline of Belgium and is backed by more than 80 years of aviation experience. Brussels Airlines flies to over 65 destinations in Europe, Africa, and North America. For more information, visit <http://company.brusselsairlines.com> .

GRASP is a unique alliance comprised of partner nations, United Nations agencies, conservation organizations, and private supporters working to conserve great apes and their habitat in Africa and Asia. For more information, please visit www.un-grasp.org .

October 2012