

## Bob Whitley Memorial Fund

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For the first Bob Whitley Memorial Fund grant in 2011, the Board of Directors of Tourism Cares selected [Amigos de Sian Ka'an](#), a nonprofit organization which works to protect and enhance a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve in the state of Quintana Roo, on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.

Bob Whitley and his family were so fond of the Playa del Carmen region of Mexico and Bob wanted to make sure that families for generations to come will have the opportunity to see and experience this rich world in their own way. Over a 27 year period, their efforts have promoted decrees for 10 federal protected areas, three state reserves, and two private reserves, totaling more than 2.7 million acres.



In 2013 the Bob Whitley Memorial Fund supported the [Honorary Rangers Program](#) at [Table Mountain National Park](#) in South Africa. In his own words, Bob Whitley always said that South Africa was a place you "just have to see and experience." The \$5,000 grant allowed the Rangers Program to continue to expand its dog patrol program at Table Mountain, a World Heritage site visited by 4.2 million visitors each year.

2016 grant funds were contributed to the [Bruce Beckham NTA Mentoring Program](#). These funds allowed 17 academic scholarships award recipients to attend the [NTA Convention](#) in Atlanta. These recipients shadowed mentors through business appointments, in turn mentors made introductions and provided insight into the industry.

*"It was an experience I know I wouldn't be able to get anywhere else, even in my classes. I left Atlanta with many new connections with people from the industry and a much deeper understanding of all that goes into tour operations." – Erin Leege, scholarship award recipient at NTA Convention.*