Putting GA planes to work in Africa

The Atlanta-based non-profit organization Elephants, Rhinos & People (ERP) has launched a campaign to fund its second airplane to be used for anti-poaching and herd monitoring flights in Southern Africa.

In what it calls its "Signature Campaign," the organization is seeking 500 pilots to each donate $1,000 to help buy a CubCrafters NX Cub.

Those participating in the campaign will become an ERP Air Wing Aviator and will have their names added to the NX Cub's fuselage.

Two of the airplanes will be crated together late this year and shipped to Namibia, where they will be flown by rangers over the large preserves ERP has acquired or controls there, according to officials with the non-profit. The airplanes will be equipped with radio tracking systems and infrared cameras to monitor the herds and spot poachers.

"Planet Earth loses two rhinos a day and an elephant every 15 minutes to poaching," said Quintin Smith, an ERP director and private pilot. "It is imperative that we work together to stem the losses and to protect these magnificent creatures and general aviation can play a pivotal role in that."

Pilots understand how capable general aviation airplanes are for conservation and humanitarian missions, he continued.

"These NX Cubs will save lives every day," he said. "As we like to say 'conservation through aviation.'"

In a later phase, donors will be invited to Namibia to utilize the ERP Air Wing aircraft to witness the work ERP does to protect endangered elephants and rhinos while simultaneously providing educational and business opportunities to the local communities, officials noted. The experiences will include game viewing and stays at the luxury lodges near the preserves. Funds from these visits will help support the day-to-day operation of the ERP Air Wing by rangers.

The first ERP NX Cub will be on display at the Redbird Flight Simulations exhibit at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, slated for July 21-27, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

ERP.ngo

ERP's first airplane in flight. (Photo by ERP)