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**STOPPING SLAUGHTER OF SHARKS OFF COCOS ISLAND AMONG
CONSERVATION GOALS OF MALIBU-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Imaging Foundation seeks public support after chosen among 25 finalists in national American Express philanthropy competition

Malibu, CA (September 24, 2008) – The non-profit Imaging Foundation (www.imagingfoundation.org) is poised to establish a precedent-setting, global conservation initiative aimed at protecting the marine mega fauna of Cocos Island National Park, a United Nations World Heritage Site 300 miles off the coast of Costa Rica, it was announced today.

Georgienne Bradley, the foundation's Executive Director, said "*Virtual Cocos Island*", the proposed multi-media, educational-advocacy program, has taken a significant step closer to reality after being selected among the top 25 non-profit groups vying for a \$1.5 million grant as part of the American Express Members Project. Cardholders have only five more days to cast their ballots at www.membersproject.com/project/view/WXKZ1S

"This is an extraordinary opportunity – with just the click of a mouse - to help save one of earth's ecological treasures and put a halt to the horrific and inhumane practice of finning," said Bradley, describing how the effort would build awareness throughout Costa Rica and globally of the need to end the rampant, illegal mutilation practice of finning in the waters of Cocos. It is estimated that industrial finning claims upwards of 40 million sharks annually worldwide.

IF and its highly-acclaimed team of scientists, filmmakers, educators and grassroots volunteers, has been instrumental for many years in championing the cause of sharks and Cocos Island, including working to secure its designation by the U.N. as a World Heritage Site. But, explained Bradley, much more needs to be done to stop finning, and that the key is wide-scale, compelling conservation education.

"This project recognizes that media is one of the most potent tools for change on the planet," noted award-winning film producer and Imaging Foundation advisor James Holt. "We will demonstrate how a carefully-planned, professional production can simultaneously educate, inspire, entertain and stimulate advocacy," added Holt, whose executive producer credits include George Clooney's *Michael Clayton* and Tommy Lee Jones' *In the Valley of Elah*.

The scientific advisors on the project include Marie Levine, Executive Director of the Shark Research Institute. "If sharks continue to decline at their current rate, fish populations will suffer and healthy marine ecosystems will cease to exist. This is beginning to happen so we must act urgently."

Bradley said, "Here is an opportunity for AmEx cardholders to cast a vote to make a difference, to help stop shark poaching and to protect one of the world's last wild places. Through spectacular, advanced cinematic and interactive technology, we will take citizens on an unforgettable journey on, above, and thousands of feet below this extraordinary corner of our

planet.” She added, “We believe the images and the narrative will move people to engage and take positive actions.”

Bradley noted that Costa Rican school children and their families will enjoy the exhibit first, promoting environmental stewardship within the community.

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