

Fundacion EcoMinga (Ecuador)

Background

The foundation was started in 2005 by a group of 11 Ecuadorian and international biologists, educators, and environmentalists. Our main purpose is to identify and protect Ecuadorian forests that have exceptional concentrations of unique and endangered species. Our focus is on endemic plants, which often have very small ranges in Ecuador, but our reserves also protect several endangered mammals and birds, and probably protect species of many lesser-known groups. A second objective of the foundation is environmental education and training of local people, and also foreign students and visitors. This mission to educate includes efforts to educate working scientists, as we develop new methods for measuring and analyzing areas of high biodiversity (such as those we are protecting).

Major events:

Nov 2005: A failed fundraiser. Forty famous Ecuadorian artists and photographers donated work for us to sell. Attendance was excellent but sales were few. Personal loans cover our costs and we hire a Director to start up the Foundation.

Nov. 2005: At a scientific conference in Ecuador I gave a talk which generated a donation of \$20000 from an orchid expert, Malli Rao; this donation enabled us to start our land purchases.

Feb 2006: We became a legally registered Ecuadorian foundation.

Early 2006: With funding from the German and British embassies of Ecuador, we took up an ongoing project involving environmental education for poor children in northwestern Ecuador.

April 2006: We bought possession rights for three 50 hectare properties in the Rio Zunac area of eastern Ecuador, where my colleagues and I had discovered many new species of orchids and other plants.

Mid 2006: We stop paying a director, so we can buy more land.

2006-7: Publication of several scientific articles to teach biologists how to analyze biodiversity.

Feb 2007: Using funds from a variety of small sources, we bought a 45 ha reserve, the Rio Anzu Reserve, to protect an unusual lowland forest on limestone.

April 2007: With funding from WLT-UK we bought a 2150 ha reserve called Candelaria, home of many plant species found nowhere else in the world, and also home to Spectacled Bear, Mountain Tapir, and other endangered animals.

April 2007- Jan 2008: Continued expansion of our Rio Zunac reserve, with funding from WLT-US and private donors. Current extent of reserve is 550 ha.

May 2007: We hire a reserve manager.

Aug 2007: Expansion of our Rio Anzu reserve to double its size.

Nov-Dec 2007: Extension of our Candelaria Reserve by about 100 ha

Nov 2007: Hiring of two additional reserve caretakers for Candelaria, and a foundation coordinator.

Feb 2008: We sign a carbon sequestration agreement with WLT-UK and begin reforestation of some small pastures on our Candelaria reserve.

For photos and more information see www.ecominga.net

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