



A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN CONSERVATION THE LALO LOOR DRY FOREST RESERVE

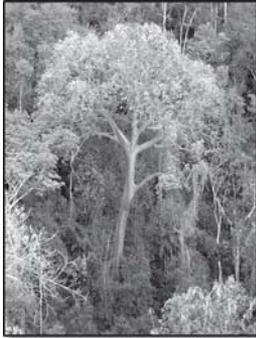
In January, CFTC established a new reserve to protect the highly threatened dry tropical forest of Ecuador's Pacific coast. In partnership with local landowner, Eudaldo (Lalo) Loor and the Jatun Sacha Foundation, CFTC signed a conservation agreement to protect the "finest remaining example" of coastal dry forest, and inaugurate a region-wide reforestation plan.

Packed with rare species, the reserve is situated between wetter forests to the north and drier forests to the south, so the flora is remarkably diverse. The unique fauna includes 19 species of threatened birds such as the Little Woodstar hummingbird, Red-masked Parakeet, and Gray-backed Hawk.

CFTC and Jatun Sacha will establish a research station at the reserve, where biologists and volunteers will help construct trails, build a native tree nursery and conduct plant and animal inventories. Central to the project will be the development of community outreach and environmental education programs in regional schools.

The 500 acre reserve is part of a chain of forest remnants scattered along a 40 mile stretch of coastline. This chain forms the basis for a dry forest corridor project CFTC is spearheading in the region. Habitat loss and forest fragmentation continue to threaten species in the area, but through land protection, reforestation and environmental education CFTC aims to reverse this trend. Improving pasture productivity and encouraging ecotourism enterprises will be key components of our conservation program.

With its unspoiled beaches, rocky cliffs and unique plant and animal life, this coastal province holds great potential as an ecotourism destination and promises many benefits to local people who protect its wilderness and participate in sensible development. Come and take a look for yourself!



Ceiba trichastandra, a dry forest icon

CLOUD FOREST OR CATTLE PASTURE?

750 acres of pristine cloud forest adjacent to the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve is in immediate danger, and CFTC is trying to save it from the axe. Due to economic pressure, the owner plans to convert much of this lush forest into cattle pasture. The property extends from a clear mountain stream up to a lofty 9,000 foot ridgeline whose forest protects a unique flora that includes several newly discovered plant species.

Cloud forests are incredibly diverse, and may harbor as much as half of all South American biodiversity in an area only one-twentieth that of the Amazon rainforest. These numbers tell us that protecting even small parcels of cloud forest can provide a safe home for countless species, many of them unknown to science!

Many rare animals rely on this forest, including the Spectacled Bear, a species that requires large expanses of mountainous forest to maintain viable populations. Birds of note include the stunning Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Giant Antpitta, and the endangered Black-breasted Puffleg hummingbird.

ONE TINY BIRD CAN SAVE A WHOLE FOREST

Flitting from flower to flower, the Black-breasted Puffleg (*Eriocnemis nigrirostris*) nourishes itself on cloud forest nectar. CFTC has teamed up with ornithologists from BirdLife International to search the property for this endangered hummingbird, whose presence could decide this forest's fate. While field teams venture out over the next few months to find the Puffleg, our campaign has begun to raise the \$125,000 needed to purchase the property. This land combined with El Pahuma will amount to more than 1,400 acres of cloud forest protected by CFTC.



Cloud forest targeted by CFTC's conservation campaign



EL PAHUMA

EL PAHUMA ORCHID RESERVE WELCOMES THE WORLD

In January 2003, the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve celebrated its official Grand Opening! The event was attended by over 250 orchid and nature enthusiasts from around the globe, including CFTC supporters and conservationists, area families, and local media and politicians. The two-day event featured guided tours of the reserve, a breathtaking orchid display by the Quito Orchid Association, internationally renowned guest speakers, and the presentation of a congratulatory plaque to the Lima family, owners of El Pahuma. José Manzanares (author of *Bromeliads of Ecuador*) gave an informative talk about Ecuador's bromeliad diversity, while Alex Hirtz (noted author on orchids) spoke compellingly about current challenges to conservation in the country.

The reserve itself was a bustle of activity, as tours of curious visitors departed into the misty forest, returning with wide, contented smiles on their faces! Former CFTC field course students Susana Cardenas and Javier Robayo volunteered their time as guides for the weekend, passing on their knowledge and enthusiasm for the forest. Best of all were the young children of the Lima family, who threw themselves wholeheartedly into the event, and soon were leading groups through the garden, pointing out favorite orchid flowers.

VISITORS SING PRAISES

To date, we have received countless letters of inquiry about El Pahuma from folks around the world interested in seeing the reserve, and messages of support from past visitors. "Truly lovely," and "the most peaceful place I've ever been" are among the responses sent in by visitors from Germany, Holland, Japan and the United States. The Lima family is intensely proud of the positive impact their years of hard work have made on so many people.

Since the opening, El Pahuma has experienced a surge of interest, drawing over 6000 visitors in 2003. Many were attracted by a full page article about the reserve published in *El Comercio*, Quito's largest newspaper, and several television spots covering the grand opening. CFTC and the El Pahuma reserve also are to be featured in an upcoming issue of the *Welcome Ecuador* magazine. It's clear, word is getting out

about the reserve and the ground-breaking conservation easement that protects its forest.

CUTTING THE APRON STRINGS

The El Pahuma project has entered its final stages, and we at CFTC are pleased to report on the reserve's progress. The owners are receiving a steady income from visitors, and have dedicated themselves to improving the experience those visitors enjoy. Rene Lima has become an excellent guide and a true expert on orchids, Marixa Lima is managing the café in the Nature Center, and Ruth Lima is preparing to assume the role of reserve manager.

CFTC plans to continue our involvement at El Pahuma, but the time has come to begin cutting the apron strings! This year we will provide six months of intensive training for Ruth, who

will learn the accounting, personnel, and management skills needed to run the reserve. By year's end we expect El Pahuma will become financially self-sufficient, a testament to our approach to conservation: encourage local people to value the natural world, help them identify sustainable forms of income to support conservation, and train them in the skills required to carry out the vision. We invite you to visit El Pahuma personally, and see the great things happening in the clouds!



Children play by tables set for El Pahuma's grand opening

NEW ORCHID GUIDE BOOK

CFTC recently was awarded a grant from the San Diego Orchid Society, a long-time supporter of El Pahuma, to publish a guide to the orchids of the reserve. Building on an inventory and photography project undertaken in 1999, the book will include pictures and descriptions of more than 100 species. Part field guide, part educational volume, the book will review basic orchid biology, highlight the diversity of this group, and address pressing issues in the conservation of these stunning plants. It is our hope that publication of this book will encourage a broader interest in orchids and their protection, part of our mission to promote conservation through environmental education. To request a copy of the guide book, please write us to add your name to our mailing list.

CEIBA FIELD COURSES: ANACONDAS, PARROTS AND A BARREL FULL OF MONKEYS!

This summer CFTC offers our fifth annual Tropical Ecology Field Course, introducing students to the array of habitats found in Ecuador. Our courses focus on key tropical ecosystems and species, train students in field research methods, and explore the causes of deforestation. We start in the mountains of El Pahuma, then descend to the dry forest at



Course participants amid buttresses of an enormous fig tree

the new Lalo Loor reserve, passing commercial tropical crops such as bananas, oil palms and pineapples. Next, the classroom shifts to the chilly heights of the Andes, where we explore the high páramo (tropical tundra). From these lofty heights, we descend by bus and canoe until we arrive at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station in the Amazon Basin.

The list of wildlife seen by the course over the years is truly impressive, over 250 species of animals! We were

extraordinarily fortunate to observe at length a rare Harpy Eagle, the world's most powerful bird of prey: these birds feed primarily on adult monkeys, weighing some 50 pounds, that they snatch from the treetops! Our last course witnessed an enormous anaconda snake, 18 feet in length, sunning itself along the Tiputini River! While on the winding river we have



Longer than a canoe, a giant anaconda basks in the sun

encountered rare pink river dolphins, macaws and parrots, and prehistoric-looking Tapirs. On dry land, students have seen and studied 13 of Tiputini's 15 kinds of monkeys.

Each year, we offer full scholarships for Ecuadorian students. After the course, these students share their experiences with their local peers, and educate them about conservation. Please consider making a contribution to our scholarship fund and help Ecuadorians experience their own country!



THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Our work would not be possible without the generous efforts of many volunteers, who also benefit from the opportunity to live and work in a foreign country. We thank the following dedicated individuals for their help over the past year:

- Catherine Schloegel, a volunteer at El Pahuma in 2000, continues to provide invaluable assistance in coordinating our volunteer program!
- Stephanie Baumann, Caroline Douglas, Ben Bruzzese & Hartmuth Uhlmann each committed a month or more to improve El Pahuma's botanical garden.
- Ben Skolnik compiled data and images in the US for Ceiba's soon-to-be-published guide book of orchids.

Greg Hunt, who spent 3 months in El Pahuma in 2001, summed up volunteers' reactions to their stay: "My time spent was very rewarding ... I came home with a great love of the forest and for the genuinely friendly people of Ecuador."



EVEN SPINY BUGS NEED LOVE!

JOIN CFTC'S DONORS IN HELPING US PROTECT TROPICAL CRITTERS!

Please mail contributions to:
Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation
2319 North Cleveland, Chicago, IL 60614

KNOWLEDGE-FOR-NATURE FUND

In the search for new conservation incentives for landowners, CFTC is launching a new initiative to establish a "Knowledge-for-Nature Fund". The fund will provide grants for college tuition to the children of landowners who sign agreements to protect critical habitat on their lands. This innovative idea was originally proposed by an Ecuadorian farmer who recognized that conservation depends on educating future landowners about the value of their forest. High quality habitat can still be found in rural areas where education has the greatest potential to impact how people view the environment.

A NEW WAY TO DONATE: SHOP FOR CFTC!

CFTC is a member of Wellspend.org, an online shopping network where up to 10% of every purchase is donated to your favorite charity! Thousands of brand-name items and even long-distance service are available. Next time you need to buy a gift or personal item, visit www.wellspend.org where you donate to conservation with every purchase you make!

STAY IN TOUCH WITH OUR PROJECTS!

Visit CFTC's website at www.ceiba.org for updates on all our projects, species lists for each reserve, volunteer and field course opportunities, natural history articles, breaking news and more!

CFTC IS PLEASED TO THANK OUR SUPPORTERS & CONTRIBUTORS

American Orchid Society
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Fauna and Flora International
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and especially our generous individual donors!

RESEARCHERS STUDY CLOUD FOREST

El Pahuma also has been host to a number of scientific researchers who are contributing to the understanding of cloud forest diversity and ecology:

Morley Read (England) conducted surveys of El Pahuma's frogs, using microphones to record the frog calls at night. Among his finds were two rare species of Eleutherodactylus, small terrestrial frogs.

Nilsmagnus Skold (Sweden) documented the forest climate with extraordinary precision, in order to recreate ideal orchid growing conditions in his research lab.

John Clark (USA) studied the reproduction of Gesneriads, plants characteristic of the montane forest. John discovered three plant species new to science at El Pahuma, one of which will be named for the reserve!

Nathan Muchhala (USA) examined the nocturnal pollination of cloud forest flowers by bats.

The new Lalo Loor Dry Forest Reserve is now open to researchers! Apply online at www.ceiba.org/research.htm



Eleutherodactylus duellmani, found at El Pahuma

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