

## Conservation Corridor Internship

### **Description:**

Gain first-hand experience with conservation in action as Ceiba works to establish a biological corridor and restore coastal dry forests.

### **Project background:**

The Manabí province has more intact coastal dry forest than any other region in Ecuador; however, those forests are highly fragmented. With only 2% of this critically threatened habitat remaining, it is important to maintain and expand these patches in order to preserve biodiversity and facilitate species movement. Ceiba is working on a large-scale reforestation project to connect 100,000 hectares of forest fragments by creating a biological corridor. By working with private landowners, we are reforesting over 5,000 hectares in prioritized areas and planting native species alongside crops such as coffee and cacao, thus creating an “analog forest” that suites the economic needs of landowners as well as maximizing biodiversity. The goal is to collaborate with local landowners to promote sustainable use of natural resources to increase the productivity of their land while improving soil fertility, water quality, and carbon sequestration. Biologically, a forested corridor provides habitat for the native flora and fauna, and migration avenues for movement in response to the annual dry season as well as global climate change.



This is a multi-faceted project, which can suit interns from many different backgrounds, including those interested in reforestation and restoration, agroforestry, wildlife monitoring, and community development. That project can be combined with all other internships.

### **What will you do?**

Internship activities will vary depending on the season, the interns' experiences and skills, and the current priorities of the developing corridor project. Specific activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Assist landowners in site preparation, provisioning trees, technical assistance, planting and maintenance
- Collect baseline data including forest canopy cover, understory, soil infiltration rate, and other abiotic factors
- Collect baseline data on planted trees such as basal diameter and height
- Collect baseline data on presence/absence of terrestrial mammals
- Establish additional protocols for monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity
- Work with local landowners and local experts to research agroforestry methods
- Conduct community meetings to discuss results and identify individuals interested in participating and organize workshops to empower them

- Conduct surveys of landowners and community members to evaluate the social and economic outcomes of the project

#### ***What will you learn?***

- Reforestation planning and implementation techniques
- Standard field methods for research in forestry and fauna and flora community structure
- Establishment and maintenance of long-term research plots
- Identification of common tropical tree species
- Management and analysis of multi-year datasets
- GPS navigation and mapping
- Challenges to education in a rural area of a developing country
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity in communication and collaborating with diverse audiences



#### ***What do we seek?***

- Willingness to learn various protocols and methods for multiple monitoring projects
- Willing to hike and conduct field work in rugged conditions
- Good Spanish language ability (or willingness to learn)
- Cultural sensitivity and enthusiasm for community development
- Self-directed and able to follow protocols carefully