

Workshops and informational seminars, discussion and carrying out proposals for solutions to the diverse environmental problems that confront Ecuador and their repercussions in the local and global social environment.

In 1998, the Foundation organized 8 informational workshops and discussions about different forms of mineral exploitation. These workshops were conducted by the major universities of Quito.

In the same year, the Foundation initiated a pilot plan of environmental education for the high schools in the capital. In accordance with an analysis of the target audiences, a private high school of average size was chosen, and work with its primary and secondary sectors began. Through this program, the Foundation has participated in educational talks, workshops, and site visits with said high school. This collaboration continues to date.

We now have a proposal to implement a plan on a larger scale to include at least 15 High Schools in the Urban District of Quito.

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PROJECTS OF RESEARCH, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR BIODIVERSITY

In 1999 members of the Foundation, the Ornithological Foundation of Ecuador (CECIA), and the grassroots organization Ecological Defense and Conservation of Intag (DECOIN), designed "Toisán Project, and alternative for conservation and community development". This pilot plan won an award from the British Petroleum Program of Conservation. The project was developed near the Toisan Corridor and in the community of Cerro Pelado, Intag Zone, Imbabura Province. It included the following elements:

Ornithology- the study of native species, endemic and endangered in three distinct altitudinal levels, with an emphasis on finding three species of scientific interest: the loro orejiamarillo (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*), gralaria gigante (*Grallaria gigantea*), hummingbird zamarrillo escamoso (*Haplophaedia lugens*) and tangara pinzón (*Oreothraupis arremonops*);

Botanical - study of local flora with emphasis on palm and epiphytes in three altitudinal levels and listing of plants used with their diverse uses;

Environmental Education and Community Development - we focused on meeting with mothers, children, and the general public, holding workshops to compile and diffuse information about local socio-organizational and environmental problems and discuss realistic forms of mitigation. We also held environmental education workshops with children, created and disseminated alternative educational tools, such as puppets and masks, and conducted field trips with sports and environmental games.

With direct participation of the community, the project resulted in organic orchards at various homes and also a group of women were trained in creating artesanía with local resources.

Environmental Education, Tree nurseries, and Reforestation in the Alto Chocó Reserve

In May of 2000, the World Fund for Nature and Wildlife (WWF), Finland, together with the Department of Environment of that country, approved this project making Ecuador the first on the continent to gain the support of the WWF-Finland.

This project includes the creation of a tree nursery of 100,000 plants, with training and reforestation activities. The environmental education activities were strengthened by the creation of local youth park guards and the formation of future local facilitators, and in the identification of alternatives for community development. The elementary school children of the area participated in ecology clubs. This project has conducted a community participatory diagnostic plan.

The Tatabrera Reserve

Since January of 2000, the Foundation has administered the Island of Tatabrera, situated in the Cantón of San Lorenzo, Province of Esmeraldas. This island covers 1800 hectares, of which 600 hectares is firm ground and 1200 hectares is mangroves. Foundation staff is presently developing a management plan for this location.

Rehabilitation and Liberation of Andean Bears on the Alto Choco Reserve

In 1999, with partial support from the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), the Foundation began a project to bring three captive Andean Bears to the Reserve. For eight months the delicate process of rehabilitating these individuals was carried out, resulting in their liberation on the Reserve. At the same time, genetic analysis of 25 captive bears in various parts of Ecuador was carried out, in collaboration with the Department of Genetics of the Javeriana University in Columbia

The Foundation currently hosts research into the ecology of wild bears. As part of this project six wild bears have been marked with radio collars, which can be monitored with a system of telemetry.

[LINK TO BACKGROUND Document](#)

The Foundation supervises and coordinates the work of volunteers with the Biologist and professional staff conducting this research.

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Botanical Garden

On the Alto Choco Reserve a Botanical Garden has been built, which displays representative flora of the zone, with special emphasis on the extraordinary orchids. The goal of this area is:

- Construct a center for in-situ and ex-situ conservation of plants native and endemic to the region, especially those with economic potential and endangered species;

- Create a Center for Botanic Research to conduct a floral inventory and to study native and endemic plants of the Northeast Region of Ecuador;

- Maintain an Environmental Education Center to interpret the relationships and interdependence of these organisms and the environment, to change the attitudes of the people of the area and increase their regard for nature;

- Construct a Center for assessing the need for forest, reforestation, and beautification of farms, communities, and other sites;

-Create a Center for the organization and execution of practical and theoretical workshops and courses in eco-tourism, ecology, botany, citizenship, etc.

-Tourism, Recreational, and Cultural Center - these activities will be carried out using the infrastructure and facilities developed for this project, in harmony with the Garden and collection of native and exotic plants.

Management Plan for the Alto Choco Reserve and Surrounding Areas

With the participation of the communities of Santa Rosa, Cazarpamba and Irubí, A Management Plan for the Alto Choco Reserve has been developed. This plan is intended to guide the management action of the Reserve with priority on economic development for the communities.