



ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION REVIEW

NATURAL RESERVE

La Pedregoza

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**Corporación
Ambiental
La Pedregoza**

NIT: 900.519.019-3

OUR MISSION IS THE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION
OF THE AMAZING BIO-DIVERSITY TO BE FOUND IN THE
ORINOCO RIVER BASIN, BASED ON SCIENCE, EDUCATION,
ECO-TOURISM AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.

The Reserva Natural La Pedregoza was founded by the Dombro family from Canada in 2010. It was formally registered with Resnatour as a natural reserve in January 2011. La Pedregoza is now affiliated with the national parks system of Colombia and is managed by a non-profit organization called the Corporación Ambiental La Pedregoza (the La Pedregoza Environmental Corporation). Dexter Dombro, one of the founders, is a member of the IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, bringing their high standards to this unique conservation area.

The natural reserve is some 1,000 hectares or 2,500 acres in size, and borders the Rio el Bitá, a river which flows into the mighty Orinoco River. It is located some 60 km or 36 miles from the Orinoco port city of Puerto Carreño, in the departamento of Vichada, with access by road or boat. The reserve is adjacent to a large tropical tree reforestation project.

The natural reserve features several distinct eco-systems, including inundation forest, gallery forest, morichals or heavily-treed savannah drainage creeks and grasslands. The astonishing bio-diversity has led the founders to identify a number of environmental, conservation and educational programs that are designed to enhance the area and ensure the long-term success of the Reserva Natural La Pedregoza. This brochure describes in more detail what are those various programs and how people around the planet can participate and help.

www.pedregoza.org



IT'S WHAT WE DO:

La Pedregoza has a long term vision for t

La Pedregoza Interpretive Center ...

A fundamental component of conservation is education. If children, local people and international visitors to the region do not understand the importance of Orinoco River basin bio-diversity, it will be very hard to prevent continued environmental degradation, deforestation and species extinction. One answer is to have a facility that provides focused environmental education to the public.

We intend to construct a 750 square meter (8,000 square feet) facility that has exhibit spaces, 2 class rooms, a lab, washrooms, office and a small kitchen / café area. The Interpretive Center will provide displays, exhibits and education dealing with the importance of the inundation forest, the gallery forest, the morichals, the savannah and the bio-diversity that depends on them. The Interpretive Center will also feature afforestation and reforestation information. The facility will allow universities and schools to provide classes on relevant environmental and ecological topics with the possibility of hands-on activities in the natural reserve.

We are looking for sponsors and patrons to help us build, furnish and operate this Interpretive Center on a long term basis. To the best of our knowledge it would be the only such facility in Vichada, and in fact in the entire Orinoco River basin of Colombia. Our sponsors are welcome to name the facility or certain exhibits for advertising purposes, as our objective is strictly educational.

If you would like to help with this exciting project, please contact us. There are numerous ways in which you can participate, be it donations of cash, financing, technical advice, materials, furnishings or publicity. E-mail us at center@pedregoza.org

SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS Research and Internships

LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT MUCH OF THE FLORA AND FAUNA IN VICHADA. LA PEDREGOZA HAS SOUGHT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH UNIVERSITIES, INSTITUTIONS, & ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

La Pedregoza has agreements with the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, with the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, with the Facultad de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales of the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá, Colombia, and with the renowned Omacha Foundation. Other agreements are pending.

The purpose of these agreements is to assist and support studies by university researchers and grad students, as well as to assist young people who are required to perform an internship or practicum in a relevant field of study.

It also means that we have hosted studies by groups such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) that recently did an intensive biological characterization at La Pedregoza. We have established biological and forestry measuring stations, and we have participated in hands-on conservation projects based on scientific objectives or concerns. We believe that good conservation efforts must be based in science.

Some researchers who have come to La Pedregoza have expressed an interest in offering courses on site once we have established our Interpretive Center.

Our support for students includes local students from the Universidad a Distancia in Puerto Carreño, students from Eberswalde University based in Germany, as well as students from across the Americas. While we do not pay a salary, we do provide accommodations, food, and local transportation.

We are looking for sponsors and donors wishing to assist with bursaries and grants for students and for research projects. There are many deserving students who require funding and your support could make a big difference in the life of a young person. Please contact us to find out more about



ADELBERT LAZAY, INTERN

how you can help us to do science and research at La Pedregoza. E-mail us at:

research@pedregoza.org



NATIVE TREES: Ethical Reforestation

NATIVE TREES ARE CUT FROM THE RAINFOREST FOR HUMAN USE, BUT ALMOST NEVER REPLACED. AT LA PEDREGOZA WE COLLECT SEEDS AND PROPAGATE NATIVE TREE SPECIES

As in other parts of the world Colombia has suffered from uncontrolled deforestation. While the wood of native trees is greatly prized, the effort to better understand how to propagate native tree species has been poor at best. Most plantations find it convenient to plant introduced tree species for their reputed quicker growth and industrial markets. This means that in many instances natural forests are in decline and bio-diversity is threatened.

In fact, the problem is so serious that some native tree species face extinction. For example, the Sassafras (*Ocotea cymbarum*) has been recklessly logged for its beautiful, aromatic wood, its safrole oil, and as an ingredient in root beer. No effort has been made to cultivate this popular tree.

The problem is compounded by natural forces, such as the seeds ripening in the wet season and falling into inundation waters, while macaws and parrots love the seeds as a food source, making seed collection difficult and even dangerous. La Pedregoza and Tree-Nation in Europe have started a program for the collection of native tree seeds and their propagation in

plantation settings. The idea is that if there is a commercial source for popular trees, then that will reduce the pressure

"Our long term goal is to become a seed bank for native tree species, especially the endangered species, so that others will be encouraged to plant them!"

Dr. KOCHURANI DOMBRO, FOUNDER

the tree is experiencing in the wild. This kind of cultivation also allows us at La Pedregoza to build up a seed bank and a pool of knowledge regarding propagation and growth, which others can use for tree planting. We can use your help.

Rescuing trees might not seem as much fun as cute animals, but remember that these trees provide habitat, food and nesting places for many animals that are also endangered. Habitat preservation is a huge part of conservation.

Your donation can make a big difference. E-mail us at: trees@pedregoza.org



Rescuing Giant Podocnemis Turtles

LIKE THEIR MARINE COUNTERPARTS, THE GIANT RIVER TURTLES OF THE ORINOCO RIVER BASIN ARE FACING EXTINCTION AND NEED A HELPING HAND. WE ARE ACTING NOW...

The Orinoco River basin is blessed with a number of large river turtle species, two of which are in danger of extinction due to egg poaching, hunting, other traditional uses and habitat loss. Unfortunately, human traditional uses are no longer sustainable, but that hasn't stopped people from severely impacting the two largest river turtle species, the Charapa (*Podocnemis expansa*) and the Terecay (*Podocnemis unifilis*).

Our NGO, the La Pedregoza Environmental Corporation, has worked with the Omacha Foundation, the Palmarito Foundation and Colombia's Ecopetrol oil company to collect turtle eggs before poachers can get to them, incubate the eggs in artificial nests and then raise the baby turtles until their shells are hard and they can be released into the wild with a better chance of survival. We now have two dedicated turtle pools at La Pedregoza where turtles can be raised prior to release. However, this process is costly, requiring boats to collect eggs, beach guards, monitors, biologists, food gatherers, pumps, pools, artificial nests and more.

We know that dedicated programs can make a huge difference to turtle numbers. We also know that community education is a necessary component of any turtle rescue program. We have to be active not just in the field, but also in the schools and in local communities, so that people start to understand the important role these magnificent creatures play in the amazing bio-diversity of the Orinoco River basin.

Our objectives include continued turtle rescue efforts, targeted exhibits in our proposed Interpretive Center and educational outreach in local schools and communities. This effort includes conservation agreements with local people and scientific research to better understand how we can save and grow turtle populations.

We are looking for ongoing sponsors, donors and patrons who can assist with these programs and become part of the solution. It is a wonderful feeling. E-mail us at:

turtles@pedregoza.org



How to Help

Our Sacred Seeds Garden

Together with the Missouri Botanical Garden we are actively establishing a Sacred Seeds Garden at the Reserva Natural La Pedregoza. The idea is to collect, plant and conserve traditional medicinal and alimentary plants

TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS

used by indigenous peoples in the Orinoco

River basin. This ethnobotanical program will not just propagate the trees and plants used in traditional medicines and foods, but will also record and preserve the plants' names in indigenous languages, together with the recipes and other anthropological data relevant to each plant. The site we have chosen is 16 hectares or 40 acres in size. We have completed topographies of the site, and in 2013 a landscape designer, Arinna Grittani, will begin laying out this unique botanical garden together with a group of volunteers. We are very excited about this conservation program.



PLANTING A SACRED SEEDS GARDEN AT LA PEDREGOZA IS A MULTI-YEAR PROJECT. MUCH OF THE ANCIENT AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICINAL PLANTS IS BEING LOST. WE WOULD REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT PROGRAM, WHICH WILL LEAVE A LEGACY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. VISIT US AT: SEMILLASAGRADAS.ORG YOU CAN E-MAIL US AT: GARDEN@PEDREGOZA.ORG

TO CONTACT **CORPORACIÓN AMBIENTAL LA PEDREGOZA**
CALL **+57-1-704-6852** OR **+1-780-628-7281**
PLEASE VISIT US AT **WWW.PEDREGOZA.ORG**
FOR MORE INFORMATION.



*We are a
non-profit NGO*

**CRA. 57B NO. 137 - 88
BOGOTÁ, D.C., COLOMBIA**



Eco-Tourism at La Pedregoza

We welcome visitors to the Reserva Natural La Pedregoza. It is our belief that the more people who visit the Orinoco River basin, the more pressure there will be to conserve and preserve this amazing part of our planet with its astonishing bio-diversity. The eco-tourist and adventure tourist looking for something off the beaten track will find that our natural reserve is exactly what you have been looking for.

Don't expect 4 star accommodations or fancy meals, but if you want to experience the real Vichada, then look no further. In the dry season we have amazing rain forests, beautiful beaches, morichal swimming holes and savannah hikes that will take your breath away. Or you can go bird watching or sports fishing on the Rio el Bitá and catch your own dinner. In the wet season you can kayak in the inundation forest, paint pictures or take photos of a world bathed in the purest of waters, or watch some magnificent thunder storms roll across endless llanos skies.

Eco-Tourists are an important way of helping to preserve natural areas, because local people soon realize that there is greater value in eco-tourism than there is in destroying the rainforest and trying to plant a subsistence crop. Visiting new places is also a valuable way of educating yourself about the issues and challenges facing conservation areas, and what is required to make them become environmentally sustainable. We want you to be part of the solution!

The Corporación Ambiental La Pedregoza is proud to be affiliated with Colombia Eco Travel. They visit all of the places they recommend and they specialize in off the beaten track, so please feel free to contact them at www.colombiaecotravel.com or drop us a note at:

visitors@pedregoza.org

