

2008-ANOTHER GROWTH YEAR FOR CONAPAC!

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL 2008 (AAS)

Since 1993, CONAPAC's "Adopt-A-School" and "Environmental Education" programs have been working to provide rural schools and students with school supplies while promoting environmental education in their communities. This year, donors from around the world have provided funding through the Detroit Zoological Institute to provide over 4,500 students and teachers along the Amazon and Napo Rivers with school supplies and educational materials for the year. These donations also provide materials for workshops for teachers and community leaders in the villages. Donations from volunteers who help us deliver school supplies provide funding for a full time biologist and a half time educator to continue CONAPAC's projects after the school supplies are delivered. In Perú, Explorama Lodges provides logistical support to make these activities possible, including room and board for the AAS volunteer delivery crews and evaluation teams.



In April our volunteer group of 16 from the USA distributed school supplies in 77 communities in the 2008 Adopt-A-School program. We were accompanied by representatives from the Iquitos Board of Education and the Indiana Regional Education Office which supervises the schools in this area. We were also accompanied by three of CONAPAC's leaders, Amner Ismodes, Marcos Oversluijs, and Alberto Vela, who make our projects possible during the rest of the year.

Amner, who has been with CONAPAC since its beginnings, has been our greatest promoter of the importance of improving rural education and environmental consciousness in the villages.

Marcos, a biologist who graduated from the University in Iquitos, organizes our service projects and workshops for farmers to improve the use of the precious resources in each village. He is also the designer of a great new smaller fish farming project which we are organizing in pilot communities.

Alberto is our education specialist and to say that he is qualified is definitely an understatement. Alberto has worked as a teacher in rural schools, as a teacher educator, as a member of the Board of Education in Iquitos and as the administrator of the Ministry of Education's Office for Rural Education in Iquitos. As our educational program coordinator, Alberto is responsible for CONAPAC's teacher and community leader workshops and our community evaluations.

Sintia is the latest addition to the team. A previous AAS volunteer for deliveries, Sintia is from the United States. She volunteered for three months earlier this year to help with all things AAS. She has returned to live fulltime in Iquitos, volunteering for CONAPAC for a ½ year commitment.

TEACHER & COMMUNITY LEADER WORKSHOPS

One of the areas of improvement we are most proud of is our on-going teacher and community leader workshops. The ability to bring teachers and community leaders together for an opportunity to learn new techniques and teaching strategies, which focus on environmental education, is an invaluable tool to advance our broader goals of

environmental awareness. This year four, 3-day workshops were held in the following communities: Timicuro I, Yanamono II, Yarina Isle, and Irlanda. Topics included productive projects in the development of lesson plans, inclusive education for all students, health and nutrition in the rainforest, and the importance of including parent's participation in the educational process. Workshops for community leaders from all of the Adopt-A-School communities include topics on the role of community leaders in the village, health and nutrition as the base of a prosperous community, sustainable use of natural resources, productive soil strategies and the exchange of experiences between leaders of neighboring villages.

Once again this year, we facilitated student-teaching opportunities for about 80 college students who will soon graduate and make decisions about their future. The student teachers are placed in various Adopt-A-School sponsored communities along the Amazon in an effort to expose them to the teaching opportunities available in the rainforest. Their stay varies from 3-6 weeks at a time while CONAPAC provides for their food and transportation needs. Our hope is these future teachers will come to understand and appreciate the rainforest communities and what they have to offer as a career choice.



In December, all members of the CONAPAC staff along with educators and representatives of INIA, spent one week visiting each school in the AAS program to complete year end evaluations. They checked on how the year's projects had been implemented and how teachers were using the information given to them at the workshops. The evaluations included teachers, students and community members. While visiting these communities, the winners of the 2008 AAS drawing contest were given their Christmas party treats of hot chocolate,

special bread called "panetones", and candy. This year 12 schools were awarded this special treat: 03 de Mayo, Santa Martha, Centro Unido, Nuevo Paraiso, Sucasari, Santa Rosa Napo, Irlanda, LLachapa, Petrona Isla, Iquique, Palmeras II, and Tamanco. Congratulations to all the winners!!

SERVICE PROJECTS

Again the year, over 500 students and adults visiting Explorama's Lodges on tourist programs took the time (anywhere from 1-5 days) to work in river villages on service projects which included building playgrounds, latrines, community gazebos, painting schools, planting trees, building bridges and fences. Visitors provided funding for supplies and worked hand-in-hand with community members to make these environmentally friendly projects possible. The objective of the service project is to help villagers as they improve their lives and their children's as they live in keeping with their natural surroundings.

Travel guests and community members participated in more than 25 projects, working side by side to achieve these improvements. The experiences were mutually beneficial and fun for all! Working together helps build interest in rural populations and allows for social/cultural exchanges as a unique tourist experience--one that builds cooperation between communities, individuals, families, and tourist enterprises. Prior planning and assessments take place together with CONAPAC, the local authorities, the teachers and the general community in order to agree on activities and projects to run with

the help of the tourists. In total 19 communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers benefited from the 2008 Service Projects.

Communities, Service Groups and Their Activities:

- ❖ **Ramón Castilla/Saugatuck School:** Painting of community meeting building, construction of a play ground, two gazebos, a latrine and replanting of trees in the village.
- ❖ **Puerto Rico/Global Explorers (Noblesville School):** Painting of the kindergarten, bleachers for the soccer field, replanting of trees, and construction of two latrines
- ❖ **Irlanda/Global Explorers (Noblesville School):** Built and painted a watchtower, constructed two gazebos, replanted palm trees and built a walkway of wood.
- ❖ **Yanamono II/Sacred Heart Academy:** Painted the community building, desks and fences. Constructed a composting shed, planted coconut trees and constructed a gazebo and swings for the children.
- ❖ **Petrona Isla/Travel Planners:** Painting of the school, replanting of trees, construction of a playground and a gazebo, and regeneration of an orchid farm.
- ❖ **Nuevo Progreso/International Expeditions:** Construction of a gazebo, hand rails, a playground, painting of the school, 16 student desks, replanting of trees.
- ❖ **Timicurillo II/West High School:** Painting of the school, planting of trees, construction of a gazebo and railings on the perimeter of the school.
- ❖ **Santa Isabel/Assumption Central:** Roofing of the stairway entrance to the village, painting the community building, painting of 2 classrooms and construction of a swing set for the children.
- ❖ **Santa Teresa/Honey Creek:** Painting the outside of the school, planting of crops, construction of a gazebo and swing set, painting of the teacher's house, and installation of communal trash receptacles
- ❖ **Nuevo San Juan/Rustic Pathways:** Construction of a gazebo and playground, painting of desks, planting of crops, and construction of a latrine
- ❖ **Santa Martha/Global Explorers (Netherland):** Construction of grandstands, renovation of gazebo seating, crop planting, improvements to a mini gazebo and swings for the children.
- ❖ **Sapo Playa/Global Explorer (Sun Prairie):** Construction of a playground, reforestation, fencing of the school, painting the outside of the primary school and kindergarten, and painting of desks.
- ❖ **Ramón Castilla/Rustic Pathways:** Painting the interior of the community building, painting of desks, fencing around the kindergarten, reforestation, construction of balcony roofs around the playground.
- ❖ **Petrona Isla/Travel Planners:** Construction of a stairway at the main port of entry to the village, reforestation, construction of roofing and railing around the school walkway, installation of around the front of the school.
- ❖ **San Antonio de Marupa/Global Explorers(Sound of the Amazon):** This group of volunteers helped to repaint the school, replant trees, and re-roof two latrines, as well as, renovation and painting of desks and construction of a relaxation patio for the school.
- ❖ **Santa Victoria/Spring Field School:** Re-facing, painting and upgrading the local community building for classroom. Replanting of palms trees and construction of a new community gazebo.
- ❖ **Timicuro Grande/Field School:** Painting of the water production plant, planting, construction of two latrines, construction of wooden steps leading to the latrine, and construction of a gazebo.
- ❖ **Puerto Rico/Sacred Heart Academy:** Construction of a teacher house, painting of the kindergarten, planting of palm tress and other ornamental plants, and construction of a gazebo at the entrance of the village at the water.

- ❖ **Santa Teresa/Global Explorers:** Painting of the kindergarten, planting, construction of a bridge, new roof for a gazebo and rejuvenation of the children's playground swings.
- ❖ **Nuevo Trifunfo/Rustic Pathways:** Construction of the roof for the community bridge and planting of corps.
- ❖ **Centro Unido/International Expeditions:** Painting of school tables, construction of a gazebo and construction of stairs to soccer field.
- ❖ **Santa Rosa-Amazona/Roosevelt School:** Painting of houses, planting of camu camu crops, roofed small grandstand area for viewing soccer.
- ❖ **Nuevo Uchiza/Roosevelt School:** Painting of school, construction of railings and roof over walkway, planting of camu camu, construction and roofing of communal trash area.
- ❖ **Canal Pinto/International Expeditions:** Painting of 15 houses, planting of cocoanut trees, building and roofing a new playground with small gazebo at the top.

The guest participation and hard work brought many smiles to the children of the rainforest—most visitors thought it was the best part of their trip! With new fruit tree plantings, playground improvements, and freshly painted schools, the children will have much improved school yards in which to enjoy. So, as we move into 2008, there is much to do to strengthen these projects as we work together to improve the lives of those living in river communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers.

PRODUCTIVE PROJECTS

In 2007, we initiated three new projects. This year they were completed, they are up and running, and showing great success. We hope to start more projects like this next year when time and money allow. In fact, two new water plants have just been started in the communities of Tamanco and Santa Teresa with donations from International Expeditions. They will be completed and operational in 2009.

Also during the year, six agricultural workshops were presented to interested community members, hosted by INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Extensión Agraria). They included information about proper systems of planting, seed management, crop rotation, cultivation of camu camu and various other fruit bearing species. These workshops were hosted in the villages of Yarina Isla (twice), Irlanda (twice), Suni Caño, and Timicuro I

Mini Water Treatment Plant

Water is the medium of transport for many parasites that cause children to become ill and malnourished. Most children in the villages along the Amazon and Napo Rivers consume water directly from rivers, streams and ponds. During low water season, the

water supply in some villages becomes very limited because beaches form separating them from the main flow of the rivers. Mini water treatment plants can produce potable water for small villages and significantly improve their quality of life.



Our first mini water treatment plant has been built in the village of Timicuro Grande. We're excited about this sustainable project as we've recently heard that a nearby lodge is purchasing their water from Timicuro Grande and they also have requests from the town of Indiana. Starting in December, two water new plants were started with completion to be in 2009--one at Tamanco and one in Santa Teresa. These two water plants were funded through International Expeditions.

Mini Bakery

Communities along the river only have access to baked goods like bread when boats bring them from Iquitos. This nutritional complement to their regular diet of fish, boiled plantains and boiled manioc is quite a treat. Our first communal bakery just opened in Timicuro Grande and it's not only a hit in the village but has also become a source of income for the community as they are producing different types of breads and selling them to neighboring communities. They are currently making bread from plantain, corn and manioc flour which is readily available in the village as well as wheat flour purchased in Iquitos. The start of another bakery has begun in the community of Irlanda.



Donations for this project are being solicited at this time for completion in 2009.

Family Fish Farms

Undoubtedly raising fish is a sustainable project. All rural farmers use some technique for fishing and keeping fish for later use. Traditionally fish are kept for various days by salting and drying them which diminishes their levels of protein and alters the taste significantly. Large fish farms are expensive and more difficult to maintain and harvest.

Rather than constructing the traditional large fish ponds, we are trying a new system of individual family ponds we are calling "pisciposas" or little fish wells. These small ponds allow individual families to maintain fish alive to grow, conserve or sell at their convenience. These small ponds are approximately 12m x 7m x 1m and have a capacity of up to 750 medium size fish. The ponds also provide a perfect place to use family's organic garbage and just a stone's throw from the kitchen.

To start a group of families making their individual fish wells, we purchase shovels, wheelbarrows, fiber bags to move soil and a large fish net to catch fry. The group of families share supplies although each makes their own family pond. In the town of Canal Pinto the families had "mingas" which are similar to barn raisings in rural United States where everyone took turns building each family's pond together. As we close out 2008, currently there are four large fish farms (Llachapa, Palmeras II, Nuevo Triunfo, C.A. and Urco Miraflo). Our first pisciposas are located in the community of Canal Pinto and just beginning in December are 10 pisciposas in Irlanda with completion in the Spring of 2009.

Christine Olsen Carpentry Workshop

This past winter, Guy and Penny LaTour, from Wakefield, Rhode Island, came to stay at Ceiba Tops for one month. Each day they traveled to the carpentry workshop in



Iquique where Penny taught English classes and Guy helped teach woodworking and furniture building skills. Guy and Penny made a financial donation along with their time donation that allowed a number of new tools and equipment to be added during their visit. During this one month stay, despite limited tools, the shop produced 11 chairs, 8 tables, 8 beds including 2 cribs, 2 cabinets, 3 absolutely beautiful paneled doors and 2 board games. Recently, Explorama Lodge purchased several chairs and tables made at the workshop to be used by its guests at the lodge. The shop appears to be up and

running well. We look forward to more positive results by the carpenters in Iquique. By using their nature resources they are adding value without the need for clear-cutting or questionable logging.

Before the LaTours departed, Guy took the time to make an extensive wish list for tools and supplies to help expand and improve the workshop. As soon as they returned to the States they started fundraising. Shortly, we will be purchasing a new table saw and motor for the workshop. We plan to add this wish list to our "new and improved" web site so that other interested people can help Iquique purchase more equipment.

Through special project donators, the following improvements were made:

- ❖ **Nuevo Progreso/Donor:** Mary Knauer, South Lyon, Michigan. Painting of the kindergarten and latrines, construction of one new latrine.
- ❖ **Bagazan/Nuevo San Juan de Amazonas/Donor:** Cindy Snyder, Ocqueoc, Michigan, Construction of two new latrines in each community
- ❖ **Timicuro Grande/Trinity Lutheran Church:** Construction of the new water treatment plant, bread and marmalade factory. Also, a new latrine was installed and funded by Daimler/Chrysler Corporation.
- ❖ **Iquique/ Susan Olsteen, San Diego California:** Additional tools for the carpentry workshop
- ❖ **Irlanda/ Fidelity Charitable Foundation/Silverdale, Washington:** Construction of a family fish farm
- ❖ **Tamanco/Susan Galliher, Virginia:** Funded the construction of a girls' dorm to compliment the boys' dorm she has funded previously, along with support of beds, mattresses and food for the students.
- ❖ **Las Malvinas School/CONAPAC/International Expeditions, USA,** provided funding to start an environmental pilot project in Iquitos for a working garden and fish farm. IE also made it possible for Conapac to purchase a new boat and motor to use for all the many projects we are facilitating in the rainforest.

Many, many thanks to our CONAPAC staff, volunteers, donors, and Explorama Lodges who helped make this year's programs a success!