



CHILDREN'S TROPICAL FORESTS NEWS

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CTF hits target to save Jatun Sacha road corridor

A splendid response from our supporters in the UK to the Appeal in our January Newsletter and another large contribution from CTF Groups in the United States has raised the balance of \$30,000 required to purchase the forest corridor which will bridge the gap between the Western and Eastern sectors of the Jatun Sacha Biological Station.

The proposed construction of a road threatened the destruction of a privately-owned, kilometre-wide strip of primary forest between the two sectors. Although the road, which will

link 12 isolated forest communities with the outside world, will still be built, forest clearance will now be limited to the width of the road, which will not threaten the biological integrity of the Reserve.

The Jatun Sacha Foundation has already started to buy the forest corridor, which is owned by five local farmers. *Contd p 2*

Our Front Page Picture shows Jatun Sacha's glorious primary rainforest towering over the Rio Napo with the foothills of the Ecuadorian Andes in the background.

So a big thankyou to everybody who made our Appeal such an instant success. Further news in future Newsletters as the consolidation of the Reserve progresses.

The Jatun Sacha Biological Station is a 5,000 acre primary rainforest reserve in Amazonian

Ecuador and has been the principal focus of CTF UK's rainforest preservation efforts for the last two years. Located where the foothills of the Andes overlook the vastness of the Amazon basin, it is one of the most biologically diverse areas on Earth.

COSTA RICA

American academic sells his home to help link rainforest reserves supporting 2.4% of the world's biodiversity

Well, you've heard of giving till it hurts, but this is something else!

In our last Newsletter, we reported the success of a plan to rebuild a rainforest bridge across the Continental Divide between two existing rainforest reserves in Northern Costa Rica.

The completion of negotiations to buy a 533 hectare farm on the Divide closed the last gap between Guanacasta National Park on the drier Pacific slope and Rincon de la Vieja National Park on the wet Atlantic slope.

The total cost of the vital building block to the Area de Conservacion Guanacasta, which is masterminding the whole project, is around \$530,000. A downpayment of \$150,000 was followed in January 1998 by a further \$83,000, with CTF UK making its first contribution to the "Bridge" at this point.

Cue Bill Oddie

Just about now (15th June 1998) a further \$150,000 is due with a final payment of another \$150,000 on 15th January 1999. On April 20th, \$92,000 had been raised towards the June target with \$30,000 coming from Barnens Regnskog (Children's Tropical Forests, Sweden). The other \$62,000 has come from an academic in the Department of Biology at the University of Pennsylvania who sold his house to raise the money. This benefactor is a colleague of Professor Dan Janzen, who is the driving force behind the "Bridge" project!

CTF UK has now decided to make a contribution of \$1,000 towards this June target. Further help from our supporters in the UK will obviously be vital in meeting the final payment. Cue Bill Oddie in our letter to supporters accompanying this Newsletter.

Which is perhaps also the cue for some detailed information on the biological value of the

Guanacasta Conservation Area as a whole - and the significance of the "Bridge".

First, the total area of the complex of Reserves comprising the GCA is 110,000 hectares (272,000 acres), representing 2% of the total land area of Costa Rica. It is situated in the North-Western corner of the country.

The GCA encompasses three major forest types - tropical dry forest; cloud forest; rainforest; and the transitional zones between them. According to Professor Janzen, these varied habitats are home to about 300,000 species of organisms - estimated at an astonishing 2.4% of all the World's land-based biodiversity.

Extremely beautiful

The fully Costa Rican 87-member staff manage this complex of Reserves, which is integrated with the other 7 Costa Rican conservation areas in the National Park Service.

The significance of the "Bridge", linking the drier Pacific slope forests to the wet Atlantic slope forests, is that, as climates warm up because of the expected impact of global warming, it will simply be too hot and dry for many creatures to survive in the West. The "Bridge" will allow them to migrate east into the 14,000 hectares of upper-elevation cloud and rainforest in Rincon de la Vieja National Park.

The actual "Bridge" land - at 400-600 metres elevation - is a mosaic of beautiful original rainforest, some damaged forest and dairy pasture (which will now regrow its forest cover). This vegetation type - rainforest at 400-600 metres - is amongst the most diverse of all tropical land habitats.

The area is also extremely beautiful, with full views of Volcan Cacao and Volcan Rincon de la Vieja. It is a sobering thought that you can save quite a chunk of it by selling one house in the United States. God Bless You, Sir!

ECUADOR

Torrential rain aids reforestation as the Lottery considers our Bilsa Communities Support bid

El Niño, it seems, means different weather phenomena in different places. In North-Western Ecuador, the location of the Jatun Sacha Foundation's Bilsa Biological Station, extreme rainfall amounts associated with the offshore El Niño current have ensured very high survival rates for 25,000 native tree saplings recently planted both inside the Bilsa Reserve and on nearby community farms.

And while this well-watered planting was taking place - in November and December of 1997 - Robin Jolliffe and Vicky Porter of Children's Tropical Forests UK were preparing a £29,000 bid to the International Grants Programme of the National Lottery Charities Board to support the Jatun Sacha Foundation's work with communities living on the edge of the Bilsa Rainforest.

Local people reforesting

If the bid is successful, eight communities will each have the lasting benefit of three skilled forestry technicians, chosen from within the communities themselves and trained at the Bilsa Biological Station. These foresters will promote and assist in the development of home nurseries, agroforestry projects and micro-timber plantations.

240 hectares (approx 600 acres) of degraded farmland will be reforested by the Project creating a productive and, in natural history terms, a species-rich buffer zone to complement the primary rainforest in the Bilsa Biological Station.

5 hectares will be reforested on each farm; 2.5 hectares with a mix of fruit and nut tree species; 2 hectares with mixed stands of rapid and slower growing native timber species; and 0.5 hectares with a mix of suitable tropical vegetables.

Family health benefits

This mix will ensure initial production of nutritious vegetables within months and a sustainable production of fruit, nut and timber products during the medium and long term.

Family diets and health will benefit from the addition of nutritious fruits and nuts.

Community members, especially women and girls, will benefit from the production of these saleable products and this will in turn help to establish reforestation as a social norm in the Bilsa area.

The success of pilot schemes established over the last 3 years led to so many requests from local people to reforest on their farms during the months leading up to November 1997 that the Jatun Sacha Foundation ran out of fruit trees in the Bilsa nursery and in the community and family nurseries as well.

The majority of the reforestation will take place on degraded farmland not capable of producing short cycle crops. And it is judged that creating species-rich micro-timber stands with native species will come near to providing the quality of habitat for wildlife which exists in the core primary forest in the Bilsa Reserve.

Meanwhile, these plantations will produce their first saleable products within 8 to 10 years.

In the top three on Earth

And what of the Bilsa Biological Station itself? In 1995, Norman Myers, the eminent American ecologist, labelled Ecuador's Western coastal forests as one of the top three conservation priorities on Earth. Since then, the Jatun Sacha Foundation, with help from around the world, including sizeable donations from British rainforest charities, has established the largest private primary rainforest reserve in Western Ecuador, now up to 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) with further expansion due in the coming months.

A final footnote. In the Summer 1997 issue of CTF News we wrote a profile of the exotic and vulnerable Long-Wattled Umbrellabird, which is confined to the forests of Western Ecuador and South-West Colombia. In a letter to CTF UK from Dr Michael McColm of the Jatun Sacha Foundation received in March of this year, Dr McColm says that bird researchers at Bilsa, in addition to adding new species to the Reserve's list, have found that this supposedly rare bird is one of Bilsa's more abundant inhabitants.

We are on the “Net”

Children’s Tropical Forests UK is proud to announce the launch of its new World Wide Web Site. The site is intended to help promote the various conservation projects sponsored by CTF, as well as raising awareness of the problems and threats facing the World’s rainforests.

The site is still in its infancy and will be constantly evolving. But please come and visit us at:

<http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/ctf>

and send us your feedback using the on-line form you’ll find there.

(The low technology, ink-stained wretch who produces the CTF Newsletter fervently hopes that all the dots and dashes are in the right place).

As you might guess, CTF’s newest and youngest Trustee, Sean Newell, has been responsible for achieving, in a very short time, something that the more “mature” Trustees have been talking round for some time.

We are grateful to Rebecca and Jessica for their donation to CTF UK in memory of their dearly beloved brother Matthew.



Angela Yule, a student from Dorking in Surrey, sent us some photographs of a special exhibition project in which she promoted CTF using information provided by us. She also donated £25 to the Jatun Sacha Appeal.

Free entry for CTF Supporters’ children to Berkshire’s Wyld Court Rainforest

One of our fellow UK rainforest charities, the World Land Trust was the recent beneficiary of a British rainforest - all under glass in the depths of the Berkshire countryside but with the lush, humid look and feel of the real thing.

At the invitation of John Burton of WLT, two trustees of CTF UK visited the tropical splendours of Wyld Court earlier this year.

The visit resulted in an offer from the World Land Trust for CTF UK to display information about its rainforest project work at Wyld Court - and an invitation to CTF supporters. (See our “Special Offer” box below).

Wyld Court is particularly renowned for its lily pool, where you can see the Giant Water Lily (*Victoria amazonica*) found, in the wild, only in the Amazon basin. The lilies at Wyld Court are at their best from mid-June to mid-November.

SPECIAL OFFER

Bring this Newsletter with you when you visit Wyld Court Rainforest and each child accompanied by an adult will be able to enter free. Wyld Court is open to the public seven days a week from 10am - 5pm. It is located in Hampstead Norreys, Nr Newbury (follow signs on the B4009).



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

The First International Children’s Rainforest - fascinating insights into the workings of a World Class Reserve.