

La Hesperia Project

ABOUT THE STATION AND THE RESERVE

La Hesperia is a nature reserve located in the western range of the Ecuadorian Andes at an altitude of 1100 – 2040 meters (3,600-6,900 feet) above sea level. With an area of 814 hectares, it is located in the center of the Rio Toachi-Chiriboga

IBA (Important Bird Area, declared by Bird Life International and Conservation International) and it is part of two important bioregions: The Tropical Andes and the Chocó Darien –

Western Ecuador, considered within the top five biodiversity hotspots on earth.

The station works in natural conservation, combating deforestation, protecting existing forest, restoring degraded areas and searching for sustainable farming and commercial activities that enable us to support the reserve and to offer a better way of life for the local community as well as those who work and live at the reserve. (See map)

GOALS

The work we do at La Hesperia preserves the biodiversity of the cloud forest and protects local watersheds. Our work focuses on protecting existing forests through reforestation, monitoring human activity and its impact and conducting environmental education. La Hesperia is also striving to become a model of integrated farming where agricultural practices complement our primary objective of preserving the natural forest. Combining conservation and agriculture will enable us to sustain the reserve and promote economic activities that are environmentally friendly and beneficial for the local inhabitants.

La Hesperia's main goals are:

Protecting existing forest

Maintaining the reserve as an
IBA (Important Bird Area)

Working toward self-sustainability as a model for the region

Creating programs to foster community development

Restoring degraded areas within and outside the reserve

Educating the public about conservation and ecology

Conducting research

Sharing our rich history and the beauty of the forest with our countrymen and visitors from around the world.

LOCATION

La Hesperia is located in

Ecuador in the Pichincha province, 90 kilometers from

Quito and is located up the hill from the community of La Esperie. The community is on the Aloag-Santo Domingo road, eleven kilometers past the town of

Tandapi (sometimes called Cornejo Astorga on maps). Once in the village, you will see a stone arch that is directly across the road from the school and this marks the entrance to the reserve. Volunteer accommodations and the other buildings of the reserve are ten minutes from the entrance by jeep (or thirty minutes on foot), about 1.5 km up a cobblestone road.

FLORA AND FAUNA

La Hesperia encompasses three types of forest: pre-montane evergreen, low montane and high montane (cloud forest). Within the boundaries of the reserve there are 296 species of birds, 40 species of mammals, and 63 genera of butterflies (we have several lists available). The vegetation is typical of the cloud forest, which has the highest diversity of epiphyte plants. In the nursery several endangered tree species are reproduced.

Some of the common animals are: White-fronted capuchin monkey, Tayra, Agouti, Paca, Peccary, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Wattled Guan, Pale-mandible Araçari, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, and Lineated Woodpecker. There are also records of some of the Chocó endemic birds like: Dark-backed Wood-Quail, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Empress Brilliant, Violet-tailed Sylph, Tucan barbet, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Chocó Toucan and Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager.

PROJECTS

Description of recent projects

PROJECT

DESCRIPTION

Reforestation

Restoring Degraded Areas

The station is working to restore several areas through natural regeneration and by reforesting them with tree species important to the natural environment.

Sustainable Wood Production

Agroforestry

We are planting several species of trees for sustainable use, including mahogany, cedar, colorado and tangaré, Pachaco, among others. As we research the best methods for sustainable development, we share our knowledge of agro-forestry with local communities to encourage and enable them to adopt a similar approach.

Guadúa production

Bamboo plantation for four years

Medicinal plants garden

At the station we have a medicinal plant garden, especially for education and interpretative aims. In the future, the idea is to extend the garden and to produce teas.

RESEARCH

Birds inventory

There are 296 species of birds recorded at the reserve. The highest elevations still need a deeper inventory.

Mammal sight-frequency research

The staff and the volunteers record any mammal sighting for establishing frequency

Phenology Study

Phenology study of ten timber species of the cloud forest

Reproductive behavior of the Pacific Hornero

Analysis of the nest construction by the Pacific Hornero (*Furnarius cinnamomeus*)

Scientific Project: Variabilidad del proceso de subducción y potencial sísmico a lo largo del margen de los Andes del Norte

The Geophysics department of the

Politécnica
Nacional

University and The French Instituto de investigación para el desarrollo (IRD) installed a station for data collection at the reserve.

Weather Study

We record temperature, rainfall and humidity on a daily bases.

Sustainable Production

Production of quality organic fruit and vegetables for consumption on the reserve and for sale.

The station has an organic vegetable garden and also banana, plantain, sugar cane, coffee, papaya, cacao, arasha and guayaba crops

Alternative Animal Production

Currently the station has pigs, cows, chickens, goats, pheasants and fish.

Production of organic coffee

Phase 1: Production for internal use

Phase 2 Production for selling

Production of vanilla

Experimental production of vanilla at the middle altitude zone

Bio food production

Preparation of home-made cheese, butter, yogurt, chocolate, coffee, pasta, bread, pizza, dry fruits and vinegar

Social Development and education

Second hand cloths store

Community pharmacy

School tree Nursery

Phase 1. 2007 Finance by Earth Restoration Service

Children Nursery Establishment

2008. The station team helped in the establishment of the "Semillitas de Luz" Children Nursery.

2007 The station bought a house in town for social projects

Ecology Club

Together with the Tangaré Foundation and ERS we establish an Ecology Club with twenty children of three communities.

Education Program

On a regular base we organize field trips and courses for educational institutions. The aim is to educate and to make aware the public of the importance of conservation.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Expanded visitor opportunities,
Reforestation,
Coffee Production,
Vanilla Production,
Dairy Products Production,
Wood Production and wood handcrafts,
Alternative energy projects,
Mushroom Production,
Ecology Club,
Educational Programs,
Center Interpretation.

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FACILITIES

Accommodation

Volunteer House: It has a capacity for 25 volunteers or students in seven rooms. The house has running water, electricity, four bathrooms and hot showers, telephone for emergencies and excellent views of the forest.

Hacienda House: The house is used for visitors, researchers, families and student groups. It has a capacity for 21 people.

San Antonio House: It has three rooms with private bathroom.

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SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

The station offers three different programs for volunteers: (A) Conservation in the Cloud Forest; (B) On the Way to Sustainability, and (C) Social Development.

Conservation in the Cloud Forest Program: activities include reforestation, research, trails and botanical gardens maintenance, nursery work, collecting seeds from the forest, transplanting seedlings and opening reforestation lines with a machete. On the Way to Sustainability Program: activities include sustainable wood production, alternative animal production, organic agriculture, bio-food production, alternative energy and eco-construction.

Social Development Program: activities include teaching in the local Children Nursery or Elementary School, helping in the Medical Centre and helping writing proposals for social projects and fundraising.

INTERNSHIP AVAILABLE

Assistant Reserve Manager: Position available for a minimum of three months and six months is recommended. Qualified and motivated person will assist the reserve manager with her duties and with compliment the volunteer coordinator in his work. Room/ board and a stipend are offered. Call or write for details. This position may qualify as study abroad for credit.

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TRAVELING-VOLUNTEERING-LEARNING PROGRAM

The Traveling, Volunteering and Learning Program (TVL) is ideal for those who do not have much time to travel (two weeks), but still want to do something worthwhile.

In our TVL program, participants will have the opportunity to learn about the conservation efforts that are being made at La Hesperia, as well as about the ecology of the cloud forest and the wildlife of the area. Not only will they be able to learn and ask questions, they'll also have the chance to experience conservation hands on through reforestation and eco-construction projects. In the forest, hiking and observing, they'll develop an understanding of the importance of conservation and the problems that we are working against. Trips to the town and to a local indigenous community will round out their time at La Hesperia, giving them a chance to experience the culture and traditions of

Ecuador. They will leave with new perspectives and a better understanding of life and conservation in the Ecuadorian cloud forest. This program is an amazing opportunity for individuals of all ages and groups. School groups welcome.

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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

At La Hesperia we design educational programs according to the interest and needs of schools and universities. We work on a regular basis with the

Boston
University,

San Francisco
University, Universidad Católica, International World Learning, La Condamine School (classe verte), British School Quito,

Cotopaxi
Academy, several

Ecuadorian
Public Schools and several

USA
High Schools.

SPANISH CLASSES

To improve the experience of our visitors and volunteers we offer Spanish classes at a reasonable cost.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The station has with limited resources, therefore, volunteers must pay their own expenses, including airfare to Ecuador and living costs while in the country.

The cost for volunteering is:

2 weeks: \$ 255 USD

3 weeks: \$ 360 USD

4 weeks: \$ 475 USD

5 weeks: \$ 570 USD

6 weeks: \$ 680 USD

7 weeks: \$ 770 USD

8 weeks: \$ 855 USD

9 weeks: \$ 960 USD

10 weeks: \$ 1050 USD

11 weeks: \$ 1155 USD

12 weeks: \$ 1240 USD

NOTE: If you have been recommended by an ex La Hesperia volunteer you will receive 5 % of discount.

* Fees include: 3 meals a day plus lodging in cabins that are shared with other volunteers and researchers. Also includes permanent coordination. Volunteer fees must be paid in advance. Fees are non-refundable.

Application fee: USD \$ 47.

Payments: Volunteer's fees can be paid in cash or traveller's checks

ALL PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE DURING THE INTRODUCTORY MEETING AT OUR OFFICES IN QUITO.
PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY PAYMENT BY
AIR
MAIL.

AGREEMENTS

AND PARTNERS

2003 Cooperation Agreement with the Jatun Sacha Foundation

2005 Fundraising with the GVN Foundation

2007 Agreement with Earth Restoration Service (

UK)

2008 Instituto Nacional de la Niñez y la Familia INNFA

2009 Cooperation Agreement with the Tangaré Foundation

2009 Agreement with the Geophysics department of the

Politécnica

Nacional

University and The French Instituto de investigación para el desarrollo (IRD)

2009 Agreement with the Municipio de Mejía for tourism development

2009 Agreement with Great Wilderness

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