

Great Wilderness Blog Video

Hi Volunteers,

You Can Make a Difference:

Each of the volunteers Great Wilderness sends to Ecuador receives individual attention, materials, training and the benefits of our considerable personal experience. Our goal is to support, strengthen and enhance our partner's conservation programs by sending people who share our passion for supporting the protection of native forests and ecosystems.

Join a diverse group of volunteers who have experienced firsthand the challenges of environmental conservation in the tropics as well as celebrated the results of their work. Many volunteers earn course credit for their internships while continuing to work in their area of study, and others come from backgrounds like international studies, business and the law. Our volunteers often return to the reserves and the friends they have made year after year and serve as conservation ambassadors in their home countries.

Volunteer Placements are from 1-12 months. You could volunteer as part of a Gap Year, during summer break from school, or as part of a career break or sabbatical. And just to mention; have you thought about what you are going to do with your retirement?

About Ecuador

Ecuador, despite its small size, is one of the most bio-diverse countries on Earth. Ecuador has over 1,600 species of birds, more than 840 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 341 species of mammals. Of these, 14.2% are endemic, meaning they exist in no other country, of which 10.2% of these are threatened. Ecuador is also home to over 19,000 species of vascular plants, of which 20.7% are endemic.

Unfortunately, Ecuador has the distinction of having the highest deforestation rate and worst environmental record in South America. Oil exploration, logging and road building have had a disastrous impact on Ecuador's primary rainforests, which now cover less than 18 percent of the country's land mass. From 1990 to 2000, Ecuador lost an average of 197,600 hectares (487,000 acres) of forest per year. Between 1990 and 2005, measuring the rate of habitat conversion (defined as change in forest area plus change in woodland area minus net plantation expansion), Ecuador lost 19.2% of its forest and woodland habitat.

Help People Help Nature

As hard as it is to hear these facts and figures we know that with the proper education and tools the people that live in and near these threatened areas will protect and renew them. This is not a casual statement and the challenges are many but those of us who believe in the power of local solutions to global problems, and have seen the positive results of well designed and run conservation programs there is reason for hope. It takes a lot of drops of water to fill a bucket and each volunteer that commits to conservation work brings the level closer to the brim.

In order to take full advantage of the resources each individual brings to the effort we match people to the following projects:

- Conservation of biodiversity
- Reforestation
- Organic gardening
- Aqua culture in mangroves ecosystems
- Organic cacao production

Carbon fixation
Plant phenology research
Health and nutrition
Handicraft commercialization
Exotic plant eradication
And more.....

Join us for what many people describe as a life changing experience and make a genuine contribution to the preservation of one of the World's most diverse, vulnerable and beautiful ecosystems.

100% of the fees you pay go directly to support the volunteer program (food, accommodations, infrastructure and equipment maintenance, projects).