

Come this Summer to Loja - Ecuador!

The Incorporation of Volunteering in the ARCOIRIS RESERVE, CLOUD FOREST SECTOR OF SAN FRANCISCO *National Park of Podocarpus*

Time Period June – September 2007



Where are you going to volunteer?

The Podocarpus National Park (PNP) is found in the south of Ecuador, between the provinces of Loja and Zamora Chinchipe. Its limits pertain more to the Andean Zone than to the Amazonian region. The altitude is from 1000 to 3600 metres, with a warm, comfortable climate and a temperature between 12 and 28°C. Podocarpus is located in the region of Numbala and the crux of Sabanilla, in the cantons of Loja, Zamora, Nangaritzza and Palanda.

One of the characteristics of the area is its high levels of endemic species. You find species like Romerillo, (higueron) and the famous Cascarilla of which you obtain the property quinine which is used to fend against malaria. The fauna is also exotic and abundant. Visitors are able to observe: the tapir, the Andean spectacled bear, cock of the mountain top, hummingbirds, parrots, toucans, carpenter birds and more.

The PNP has 150 thousand hectares and you can enter from four entrances: Cajanuma, Vilcabamba, Bombuscaro and San Francisco.

The last, in the sector of the Cloud Forest of San Francisco is where you find the reserve of Arcoiris, which is another interesting area to access the park. This reserve, found inside the PNP, but the house is the property of the Ecological Foundation Arcoiris which is located at 2180 metres above sea level, and is 23 km on the Loja Zamora highway, with a wide display of natural forest, where you can find colorful orchids and a high diversity of birds.

The Arcoiris Reserve is found in the northern part of PNP, and is located approximately 2180 metres above sea level in the province of Zamora Chinchipe. It constitutes a special area with special characteristics, located very close to the city of Loja; just 23km. Its average temperature is 12 to 18 ° C, its moist and has frequent rains.

The reserve is located in a cloud forest ecosystem, in an area of transition between the sierra and the oriente. This is the reason that it possesses unique characteristics and contributes to the large quantity of plants and animals that live in the area. La Reserva se encuentra dentro del ecosistema de Bosque Nublado, en una franja de transición entre la sierra y el oriente, razón por la cual posee características únicas que contribuyen a que gran cantidad de animales y plantas habiten en el lugar. In this sector you can also find **"arañazos de tigre"** or **deslaves naturales**.

The Reserve offers the opportunity to learn more about the Southern Region of Ecuador. The fauna is very diverse and we invite you look closely into the world of plants and animals. There exists a great variety of birds (more than 300 species), but we have mammals too (the Andean spectacled bear for example). Also diverse herpetofauna and beautiful and varied insects, especially butterflies. In this area you can easily observe large plants like the Romerillo (centuries old trees), that are unique conifers to Ecuador, such as the Cinchona which is considered the national tree of Ecuador.

The Reserve has accommodations for 30 people, with 3 bedrooms and an ample attic dorm to sleep as well. There is a spacious kitchen, living room with fireplace, bathroom with hot shower, educational area and parking. Also there are specialized guides, who can offer tours of each of the trails: "Los Romerillos", "Las Golondrinas" and "Bosque Nublado," which is all an adventure.

General Objective

Contribute to the work and projects that we are developing.

Specific Objectives

1. Rely on the support of personnel national and foreign with assistance from the university, conducting our activities with sensitivity to nature in the development of projects through Arcoiris.
2. Offer the opportunity to volunteers to learn about the cloud forest ecosystem of San Francisco in the PNP.
3. Share with those interested the experiences that Arcoiris generates, which that can make you part of just the same.
4. Offer the capability and training necessary to participants which will be useful in their future endeavours.

Volunteer Profile for the Arcoiris Reserve

1. Academic Requirements: For the program you can have a **formal or informal education**, for example, being in similar or affiliated careers to natural science, or related to conservation activities in the past, or research or other related activities related to these fields. The priority is to have a large interest in the conservation of nature and the want to involve you in this area.

2. Duration of Volunteer Work: The time required is 1 to 3 months in the area.

3. Applicant Profile: must possess the physical and mental aptitude to work in the countryside and in conditions which can be straining. You must be able to adapt and work with other people.

5. **Costs:** (For this information contact: info@arcoiris.org.ec)

The Reserve is responsible for the accommodation and transportation to the city of Loja for the Volunteer. Upon completion, the volunteer will receive a certificate of collaboration and participation rendered by the Ecological Foundation of Arcoiris.

Those interested must cover initial travel expense to Ecuador, food and other unrelated costs which take place outside of the reserve. In the agreement, the weekends are offered as free time to the volunteer, and they can stay at the reserve or outside if they prefer.

The activities that you will be involved in...

The reserve is dedicated to integrated activities of recreation (tourism without a footprint), such as capacity building, education and environmental interpretation, as well as investigative studies all based on these two components:

RESEARCH COMPONENT: in this area we are monitoring flora and fauna counts and need a lot of help, but also work proposals.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COMPONENT: this is directed to children in grade school and high school, as well as university that visit the area, and with them we work. We can incorporate you into this job, we need dynamic personalities, with a lot of ideas that can contribute to the process of educating visitors, but also new staff of the reserve.

In this component we are training natural guides, and/or environmental interpreters that work with visitors who arrive to the area within the program of "Visitantes sin Huellas" (Visitors without a Footprint). You can help us with this work and acquire knowledge and experience.

The Importance of the Program and Final Observations

This program acts as an alternative means to raise funds for the reserve in the median and long term, which contributes to the same activities of conservation and education in the area.

The volunteer will be subject to an organized schedule, but will also follow the conditions of the place and the dynamic of the project at the time, and are will be creating new programs and activities based on the proposals of the volunteers (depending on their importance to the area).

The most important thing is that we have made contact and organize your visit, you must confirm your stay within 15 days of arrival in the city of Loja, and agree to an allotted period to volunteer. This is important for the coordination of your arrival, and to coordinate you into a work schedule.

Get in contact with us to organize your volunteer activities!

info@arcoiris.org.ec or reservas@arcoiris.org.ec

or communicate by phone (+ + 593) 7 2 572926 (Loja-Ecuador)