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**“Addressing Barriers to Best Conservation Practices in Colombia and Kenya”
Conservation Council of Nations (CCN) and International Conservation Corps (ICC)
*Affiliated with International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF)***

Annual Report for Colombia Projects

Highlights

In Colombia, stakeholder engagement has progressed very well with parliament and government agencies, the private sector and NGO’s. The parliamentary caucus took up priorities with fresh water, mining, and has put national parks on the agenda for 2016 and facilitated meetings between national parks leadership and caucus co-chairs. Technical Assistance – the relationship and work between the Conservation Corps and the Colombian national park service was slow to get initiated but during the last half of the year steadily progressed to a deeper, more substantial engagement that looks very promising in terms of being able to work together to tackle substantial issues, making good use of ICC capabilities. The combination of stakeholder engagement especially with government, in combination with the technical assistance leveraging capacity from the U.S. national park system holds solid potential to strengthen the Colombian park service. While most of the volunteer experts have come from U.S. National Park Service background, two top level experts have committed from U.S. Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Bureau of Land Management, to be deployed during the first quarter of FY 2016 focusing on development of a national training strategy. Most of the ICC experts so far engaged in Colombia are among the most respected in their fields.

Overview

The major objectives of the project are to improve the enabling conditions for conservation and good natural resources management in Colombia and Kenya by strengthening management capacities of Colombia’s National Natural Park System and Kenya’s Naibunga Conservancy, a community managed area in the northern rangelands. Another major goal is to demonstrate the value of combining policy and practice in both countries.

CCN and its regional affiliates (ICCF Colombia, ICCF Kenya) aim to add value, fill gaps in capacity, and help develop capacity in efforts to conserve and sustainably utilize biodiversity and other natural resources. Our approach broadly consists of two elements:

1. Engagement of high level stakeholders in partner nations from the political, private, and non-governmental sectors in order to facilitate priority setting, and educate stakeholders on subjects pertaining to identified priorities, and
2. Provision of highly experienced conservation professionals who contribute pro bono services to assist governmental and NGO partners in achieving conservation and development priorities.

In Colombia, CCN with staff from the National Parks Department and partners will focus work in four areas in the near term:

1. Strengthen Interpretation in Parks
2. Improve Management of Commercial Services
3. Strengthen Park Planning Capacity
4. Improve Quality of and Conditions for Training

CCN will also convene high level stakeholders to identify and agree upon priorities related to the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, followed by educational briefings designed to increase knowledge of the identified priorities, and allow informed actions by stakeholders.

Colombia site(s) and context

Colombia is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of biological and cultural diversity. This diversity is represented in 59 natural areas that belong to the Systems of National Natural Parks, which represent 14,268,224 hectares (142,682 km²) of the country's total surface area; 27% of this is terrestrial and 1.5% of it is marine area. Of the 59 areas, 26 are inhabited by indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

The National System of Protected Areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas) (PNN) is the Colombian national park administrator. It is a department under the Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Regional Development responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. PNN was established after Colombia signed the Convention on Biological Diversity through Law 165 of 1994, and has been the primary activity of the Colombian Government regarding the conservation of biodiversity. The park system protects areas which supply 25 million people with water. In addition to the direct responsibility of managing the 59 areas, PNN has the additional responsibility for coordinating the management of regional and local protected areas.

Tourism, and especially ecotourism, represents an activity which, if well planned and managed, enables the sustainable use of natural resources to add value to local, national, and international communities while serving visitors who are made aware of the importance of using natural resources in a rational manner. PNN has adopted tourism / ecotourism as a strategy for conservation, to maintain the natural and cultural values of the protected areas, sharing these responsibilities with local communities and indigenous peoples; providing sustainable financial and conservation benefits to the local communities and the regions.

Based on consultations in March, May and June 2015, and findings of a team from the U.S. National Park Service, CCN's International Conservation Corps (ICC) and PNN will focus together on a number of individual parks which are good examples of issues facing the national system, including Tayrona, Amacayacu, Corales de Rosario, Gorgona, or Chingaza. ICC will work together with park management and staff in one park to initially assess the capacity to

manage and expand tourism activities and to implement the newly developed tourism strategy which has been developed and partly implemented in two other national parks.

Colombia Conservation Threats

Major challenges facing the Colombian National Natural Park System, which is the primary national mechanism designed to protect biodiversity include:

1. Lack of public support and knowledge of parks
2. Insufficient level of funding
3. Lack of sustainable sources of revenue
4. Lack of institutional capacity to support substantial increases in domestic and international tourism

DIRECT THREATS

The expected large, rapid, unsustainable increase in tourism to many national parks, and associated poor planning and execution of commercial services in parks, is anticipated to:

1. Degrade habitat from trail damage, infrastructure, and pollution
2. Fragment or destroy habitat from upgrading or building roads and accommodations
3. Introduce invasive species or disease from other areas in the country
4. Facilitate illegal exploitation of plants and animals by visitors and employees
5. Increased mortality of wildlife due to increased vehicular traffic and speeds

INDIRECT THREATS

1. Insufficient interpretive services to engage the general public and increase support and interest from the general public for the national system of protected areas
2. Lack of institutional capacity and experience related to planning to inform future actions related to conservation and development actions (e.g. commercial services)
3. Lack of economic opportunities for communities living both in and around national parks
4. Lack of available capacity in the Colombia's national protected areas system to manage increases in tourism
5. Insufficient and unsustainable financial resources

Colombia Conservation Targets

The conservation target is the National Natural Park System of Colombia, managed by PNN, which was designed to protect the country's biodiversity. Colombia's is the fourth most biodiverse country in the world according to Conservation International.

Actions will build capacity of specific park units, to enhance conservation of the species and ecosystems for which units were established to protect, while also improving practices across units.

Objective 1 – STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF COLOMBIA'S NATIONAL NATURAL PARK SYSTEM

Activity A: DEVELOP MODEL PLAN FOR COLOMBIA'S NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND USE THIS TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR 1 OR 2 NATIONAL PARKS

During our first year, CCN responded to PNN's request for assistance in reviewing the institutional planning framework towards improving it, followed by an effort to develop a new version. It is a critical element for PNN, which informs the headquarters as well as Colombian government agency(s). The current version of the institutional planning system is not performing as desired and there was a strong need to quickly evaluate and improve it.

Terry Moore, Conservation Corps Program, co-running workshop for Colombian Park Service officials



At the national park planning level, CCN teams identified the likely future role of incorporating sub plans related to visitor services, especially interpretation and commercial services, into the existing park planning model.

Activity B: ESTABLISH COMMERCIAL SERVICES NATIONAL POLICY / STRATEGY, AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES PLAN FOR 1 OR 2 NATIONAL PARKS

CCN developed a team of former executives retired from the US National Park Service, specializing in commercial services in and around national parks, and worked with PNN to develop the workplan and itinerary for their initial working visit scheduled for later in 2015. CCN staff in the US and Colombia provided a variety of orientation discussions and material prior to the first working visit which was scheduled for early in the 2016 fiscal year.

Activity C: INTERPRETIVE PLANNING, VISITOR CENTER AND EXHIBIT DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT OF BROCHURES AND OTHER WRITTEN MATERIALS AT 1 OR 2 NATIONAL PARKS

The interpretive team was developed and was composed of retired experts from the US National Park Service. The team was provided with detailed orientation, CCN designed the workplan and itinerary for the team with PNN and the parks that were visited. The team spent three weeks in Colombia working with various members of PNN in parks and headquarters and developed a comprehensive report that was delivered to PNN and CCN, which contained detailed next steps.

The objective of this visit was to begin strengthening technical skills of staff and collaborators in Colombia's PNN (Parques Nacionales Naturales) and to move forward in interpretative planning and implementation. The central office staff was developing a new methodology for improving interpretation services in parks. Their goal was to create a model process to use for developing a park interpretive plan that could be applied in each of their national natural parks. The US team participated in this planning effort both at the central office and in the three national parks visited. The CCN team contributed suggestions as to how to modify and streamline the complex interpretive design process for easier implementation in parks.

The CCN team recommended simplifying the interpretive process. Park staff were receptive to revision, so the group worked to create a more streamlined process that met planning needs and reduced overall complexity. The central office planners recognize that there are still challenges to resolve as part of the process of developing an effective and efficient interpretive planning process for Colombian parks.

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Conservation Corps Interpretive Team at National Parks and Headquarters





Activity D: NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COLOMBIA’S NATIONAL PARKS: DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Conservation Corps conducted the planning and development of the team which will undertake the first mission to work with PNN on developing a strategic plan for a national training program, and specific elements of training especially related to rangers. The retired managers of national training programs for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Bureau of Land Management agreed to lead this component of CCN’s work with PNN in this area, and at the time of this report the team is developing their report detailing next steps. Orientation discussions and materials were provided in preparation for an early 2016 fiscal year working visit. CCN managers also met with PNN headquarters staff several times earlier in the year to discuss background and proposed initial steps to pursue.

ACTIVITY E – Bring Colombian Park Personnel to the United States to Gain Experience in U.S. National Parks

CCN sent Salome from Amacayacu National Natural Park in Colombia to spend 5 weeks in Everglades National Park (South Florida, USA). The goal was to strengthen the performance of conservation actions of both countries by having her work with Everglades National Park staff in a variety of activities carried out daily by Everglades National Park: interpretation, environmental education, planning, commercial services, research, monitoring, and volunteering.

The contact between the two national parks was born out of a visit to Colombia by the technical team of CCN, which recommended this experience in part because Amacayacu National Park is rethinking its ecotourism strategy. To make the exchange work well, it was essential that the person had: 1) An intermediate level of English both spoken and written; 2) Work experience in protected areas; and 3) Availability of at least one month to understand the cultural context of the USA. The Everglades National Park provided accommodation and transportation within the park, as well as logistical support and disposition of staff to share their daily lives. CCN facilitated the airfare, food and prior logistics to complete the exchange. The cost was relatively low amount compared to the benefits in improving the performance of conservation actions or participation in events with similar purposes as conferences and seminars. In return, as a beneficiary of the exchange, she provided a document with key learnings and intends to share what she learned with her team in Colombia.

Commented [2]: Does Salome work in Amacayacu, or is Everglades representative of the ecosystem and mgmt challenges of Amacayacu? Please rewrite to clarify.ok the situation is clarified by captions and text below, but still needs more clarity here.

Salome from Amacayacu National Park (Colombia) at Everglades National Park (USA)



ACTIVITY F – Facilitate the Provision of Satellite or Other Imagery Needed by PNN to Address Illegal Activities in Protected Areas, and confirm Land Tenure

Conservation Corps identified a partner specializing in drone and related technology and facilitated several conference calls between the partner organization and PNN resulting in preliminary agreement for the partner to scope out several national parks and assess the potential for drone technologies to assist in both delineating park boundaries and also in identifying illegal activities in national parks. Additionally, we identified several members of USGS who might be able to either provide or help identify others in USGS who could provide desired satellite imagery.

CCN has similarly acted as a facilitator to connect another partner organization with PNN to potentially provide sustainable power and fresh water solutions to local communities near parks, and to provide equipment and training to park rangers.

Objective 2 - SUPPORT COLOMBIAN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Activity A: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WORKSHOP: THE COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS AND NATIONAL NATURAL PARKS OF COLOMBIA - FIRST STEP TO GENERATE A VISION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

The Colombian Conservation Caucus -CCC- first meeting focusing on Colombia’s National Parks was carried out, with the aim of introducing the great challenges that the natural parks and protected areas in Colombia face. The presentation was made by Dr. Julia Miranda, Director of National Parks to the Co-Chairs of the Colombian Conservation Caucus, which included the chairman of the Senate Commission Fifth Dr. Milton Rodriguez Sarmiento, Senator Juan Diego Gomez, H.R. Jack Houisni, H.R. German Blanco, H. R. Mauricio Gómez, H. R Fabio Amin, R. H. Lina María Barrera, H.R. Olga Lucia Velasquez and H.R. Juan Carlos de Lozada. This was the start of a process to develop an in-depth understanding of the situation of Colombia’s National Natural Parks and the Protected Areas in each region, its importance for regional development, and to hear the proposals of National Parks to improve the financial situation of the agency.

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WORKSHOP: IMPROVING WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA

ICCF Colombia held a workshop in Medellín to address the issue regarding Water Services, Ecosystems, and Urban Development. Participants included the congressional Co-chairs of the Colombian Conservation Caucus -CCC-, including H. S. Juan Diego Gomez, H.R. German Blanco and H.R Jack Housni, together with the participation of EPM's management team, headed by the Vice President of Water and Sanitation, Mr. Santiago Ochoa, Executive Vice President of Business, Ms. Ana Mercedes Villegas, Manager of Wastewater, Mr. Carlos Eduardo Quijano, Mr. Juan Carlos Caiza, adviser to the Director of the National Planning Department, Mr. Steve Crout, Vice President of Corporate Affairs Qualcomm United States, President of Gran Colombia Gold Ms. María Consuelo Araujo, Executive Director of the Center for Water Studies and Mining and Energy Sector of the ANDI Mr. Eduardo Chaparro, Vice President of Environmental Affairs of Cordoba Minerals Mr. Darney Ceballos, Manager of Special Projects Argos Group Mr. Hernando Gómez, advisers to the General Director of National Natural Parks Mrs Mónica María Rodríguez, Head of the National Natural Park The Orchids Mr Héctor Velásquez, Environmental Coordinator of ANDI – Antioquia, Mr. Juan Andres Estrada, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Mines and Energy; and Congressman Connie Mack, President ICCF Colombia and board member of ICCF Group

A field mission then went to observe the Valley of Aburra to experience the management of water in public services such as aqueducts and sewers, witnessed the construction and operation of urban infrastructure used for the conservation and sanitation of water, and identified alternatives to the implementation of recollection and treatment systems, and other related activities that demonstrated how these types of initiatives have allowed the recovery of the Rio Medellín's banks, which can be used for recreation and urban development. Also discussed were proposals for wastewater management, options for economic instruments, alternatives to the supply of water for the collective supply and wastewater disposal as "Public Batteries", and how to connect the cities of today, inventing the intelligent city of tomorrow, through the Smart Cities Model.



WORKSHOP: PRINCIPLES FOR THE COLOMBIAN FRIENDLY AND RESPONSIBLE MINING DEVELOPMENT

During June, 2015 at the Congress of the Republic, the Senators and Representatives members of the Colombian Conservation Caucus -CCC-, leaders of the business sector, and environmental NGO's partners of ICCF Colombia met to carry out the Mining Consensus Table: The Principles of a Colombian Vision for the Development of Friendly and Responsible Mining.

Participants included Honorable Senator Juan Diego Gomez, Senate Vice President, Teresita Garcia Romero, Senator Rosmery Martinez, the Honorable Representatives Alfredo Deluque, Santiago Valencia, Armando Zabarain, Arturo Yepes, Eloy Chichi Quintero, Maria Margarita Restrepo and Wilson Cordoba; Dr. Maria Consuelo Araujo, President of Gran Colombia Gold, Dr. Santiago Angel, president of the Colombian Mining Association, Dr. Hernán Linares, General Manager of Eco-Oro , Dr. Mauricio Cuesta, General Counsel of CNR, Dr. Jaime Alberto Alvarez, Manager of sustainability of AUX, Dr. Carlos Mario, Director of the Environmental Division of Mineros S.A. , Dr Paula Bernal, Regulatory Affairs Manager of AngloGold Ashanti, Ivan Trujillo, Director of Corporate Affairs of Cementos Argos, Dr.Carlos Tamayo Sustainability Sub - director of National Parks of Colombia, Dr. Jose Leibovich of the Institute of Political Science, Dr. Abraham Korman of Javeriana University Faculty of Environmental Studies, Eng. Oswaldo Bustamante institutes Director of the Mines Faculty of the National University, representatives of the Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the National Mining Agency, UPME, Colombian Geological Service and ANLA, with the moderation of lawyer and environmental expert José Younis.

COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Work was continuously undertaken to maintain the conservation caucus in parliament which includes:

COLOMBIAN CAUCUS: MEMBER LIST

SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC COLOMBIA

Sen. José Name (Unity National Party)
Sen. Jaime Duran (Liberal Party)
Sen. Teresita García (Citizen Option Party)
Sen. Juan Diego Gómez (Conservative Party) (Co-Founder CCC)
Sen. Rosmery Martínez (Radical Change Party)
Sen. Maritza Martínez (Unity National Party)
Sen. Antonio Guerra (Radical Change Party)
Sen. Juan Manuel Corzo Roman (Conservative Party)

FORMER MEMBERS

Sen. Juan Fernando Cristo (Current Interior Minister)
Sen. Roy Barreras
Sen. Juan Francisco Lozano

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COLOMBIA

CO – CHAIRS

Rep. Alfredo Deluque Zuleta (Unity National Party)
Rep. Fabio Amín (Liberal Party)
Rep. Sandra Ortiz (Green Party)
Rep. German Blanco (Conservative Party)
Rep. Jack Housni (Liberal Party)
Rep. Mauricio Gómez (Liberal Party)

FORMER CO – CHAIRS

Rep. Augusto Posada (Current President of the National Savings Fund)
Rep. Simon Gaviria Muñoz (Current Director of Planning National Department)

CONGRESS MEMBERS

Rep. Luis Urrego	Rep. Hernán Penagos
Rep. Wilson Córdoba	Rep. Jorge Rozo
Rep. Eduardo Crissien	Rep. Christian Moreno
Rep. Fabián Castillo	Rep. Pedro Jesús Orjuela
Rep. Ángela Robledo	Rep. Efraín Torres
Rep. Cristina Paz	Rep. Aida Merlano
Rep. Margarita Restrepo	Rep. Luis Diazgranados
Rep. Eloy Quintero	Rep. Alfredo Molina
Rep. Karen Cure	
Rep. Eduardo José Tous	
Rep. Kelyn González	
Rep. Arturo Restrepo Salazar	
Rep. Ciro Fernández	
Rep. Franklin Lozano	
Rep. José Pérez	
Rep. Carlos Jiménez	
Rep. Eduardo Díaz Granados	
Rep. Armando Zabaráin	
Rep. Santiago Valencia	

MAP OF THE NATURAL NATIONAL PARKS OF COLOMBIA



CCN PRIORITY PLACES IN COLOMBIA

