

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Pascual Rafael Escobar
Project title	Conservation of a Humid Subtropical Ecosystem through Ecotourism in the Finca Loma Linda
RSG reference	75.08.09
Reporting period	January 2010 to June 2011
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	Luisa.ditmars@gmail.com , pascualrafael060868@hotmail.com .
Date of this report	April 2011

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
- Identify and research the flora and fauna of the tour area. Create a database with photos. Highlight at-risk species RATIONALE: Confirm scientific names, ecosystem characteristics			X	Luisa Ditmars created the database in English and Spanish, including photos and local names. Scientific names were used when information was available. Plant websites and the San Carlos University Botanical Garden in Guatemala City were useful. The guides and Luisa had no field guides for Guatemala except Peterson's <i>Birds of Mexico</i> , although a guide to Loma Linda birds has now been published by birding expert Knut Eisermann. There are numerous plant and animal species at risk requiring protection.
-Promote Ecotour RATIONALE: a. Seek participants for tour b. Create sustainable employment for villagers		X	X	a. Luisa, Pascual and volunteers advertised the tours in Quetzaltenango by email, posters and personal visits. They contacted Spanish schools, EntreMundos www.entremundos.org and other NGOs such as K'uchubal, www.kuchubal.org/english . Good results were also obtained by registering with Conexiones at www.contact@ecoconexiones-unidas.com . and Cayaya Birding, an international birding tour company, www.cayaya-birding.com . The latter will bring groups of 20-60 for tours. b. The hotel construction required the bulk of the grant, so there was only enough remaining for the subsistence payments to the coordinator, electrician and gardener.
-Secure internet connection to correspond with organisations, volunteers, Spanish schools and funders	X			The cost of the connection proved to be a barrier. An internet cafe run by another village at Loma Linda was used, however, for all important communications.
-Create website RATIONALE: - Stimulate interest in the ecotour and		X		A new website created in 2010 at www.aldealomalinda.com is now dormant, but is to be revived in the future.

provide information for volunteers and others				
-Develop ecotour			X	There are now four separate tour routes. A group of guides attended five workshops on tourism and program development that improved their knowledge. These were conducted by three NGOs in Guatemala: K'uchubal, EntreMundos and FUNDAP.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

One unforeseen difficulty was the unexpectedly large cost for an internet connection which would have been impossible for the village to afford. However, Pascual uses the internet cafe in the village once a week or more to promote the ecotour too many organisations and individuals. B. Another challenge has been the need for a camera and binoculars and more information for the guides. Luisa and other volunteers take and share photos by email. Guides need binoculars, especially for the birding tours, and now that the guides are leading larger tour groups, they will be seeking information to train themselves. Luisa's database, which contains photos, was created for this purpose in Spanish and English. It details local and scientific names; food, medicinal and other uses for plants and woody plants. It includes 41 herbs, 20 woody plants and 21 species of animals, of which 14 are birds. An excerpt from this database follows:

Local name: Higuerio/Iguerio

English name: Castor bean

Scientific Name: *Ricinus communis*. Family EUPHORIACIAC (Spurge)

Size: to 12 m.

Comments: Fast growing. Red or green leaves. Very toxic seeds contain ricin. Seeds have warty appendage called the caruncle which promotes the dispersal by ants. People in India used the bean oil in lamps and as laxative and for arthritis. Fungicide. Oil is now being used for biodiesel in Brasil. Seeds used for jewelry. India, China and Brasil export the oil. Native to Mediterranean basin, E. Africa and India.

Sources of information: (named)



3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

The three most important outcomes of the project are:

- The completion of the tourist hotel;
- the further training of the guides;
- The increased interest in the ecotour area by various groups. In 2010, Loma Linda was identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) through the international conservation group Birdlife International. It is now part of the Santiaguito Volcano Important Bird Area (GT014.)

IBA status is only conferred when a region contains threatened bird species: the resplendent quetzal, the azure-rumped tanager, highland guan, and many other threatened birds are found there. (See full text and photos of species in the Loma Linda tour through the tour company Cayaya birding www.cayaya-birding.com.) Interested scientists like prominent ornithologist Knut Eisermann www.knut-eisermann.info also photographs and researches bird species for the IBA. He has visited three times since 2009.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

The 20-member Asociacion ASODILL and their families have benefited most, but the whole village of Loma Linda has benefited financially and environmentally from this project. It provided badly needed income for ecotour guides, families who provided meals or overflow accommodation for tour groups, and a few individuals who received subsistence payments. However, one of the most significant benefits has been the intense interest shown in the Loma Linda lands by birders and scientists who estimate there are 300 species living in or passing through the ecotour area. This interest is leading to conservation of the ecotour area by government and international agencies.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, this is a very successful project, which has the support of the community and will continue to expand in scope over many years. The Asociacion has plans to accommodate more visitors, send the guides for specialised training, and provide more ecotourism amenities. In Luisa's continuing connection with the village, she will seek more funds, which include those for a simple guide to the most common flora and fauna of the ecotour area.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

Luisa, the Asociacion and other volunteers are publicising the work done at Loma Linda locally and internationally. Pascual works to invite international students to the area for tours and study. He advertises tours and volunteer opportunities within Guatemala and is also in communication with Clark University in the USA. He has shared his work with development organizations such as EntreMundos, FUNDAP, K'uchubal and Manos Campesinos. The Guatemalan government organization CONAP sent an agent to Loma Linda in January 2011 to view a part of their lands which will be studied become one of the system of national Protected Areas. Loma Linda now has a listing in *Lonely Planet* guide to Guatemala to attract travellers.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The funding period was from January 2010 to June 2011, but all the funds except subsistence payments had been used within twelve months.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Exchange rate April 2011: 1 Pound Sterling = 12.47 Guatemalan quetzals

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
1.Tourist Hotel – (Construction Materials)	£5651	£6027	+£1376	Materials were more expensive than anticipated
2.Tourist Hotel - Equipment (beds, linens, furniture)	£1591	£1697	+£106	As above
3. Transportation of construction materials	£37	£39	+£2	As above
4.ASODILL Office Equipment (desk, file cabinet, paper, safe) and internet connection	£108	£115	+£7	The office equipment required all the funds. The internet was not connected.
5.Subsistence Payments (coordinator, guides, hotel staff, electrician, and gardener)	£3962	£1948	-£2014	Only the coordinator, electrician and gardener were paid. The guides were paid directly by tour participants, and hotel staff work free.
6. Overhead costs - (electricity and internet monthly)	£636	£678	+£42	Electricity was more expensive than anticipated, although there were no internet costs.
Total	£11985	£10504	-£1481	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

1. It is most important that hotel facilities be enlarged and improved, now that large groups are booking tours. This will include upgrading the kitchen and finishing the fifth room, which will be furnished as a dormitory with six bunk beds.
2. The guides require more training
3. A guide to the ecotour would include an expanded

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any material produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes, the Rufford logo is being used on posters and will appear on the revived website. The large meeting area in the hotel is named the Rufford Room in honour of your contribution.