



## **2007-ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR CONAPAC**

Greetings from the Peruvian Amazon to all of our Adopt-a-School Friends! As we begin our purchases for the 2008 Adopt-A-School program (and the 15th year of the program), it is appropriate to first remember all the great things we were able to accomplish during 2007. Remember that our work, and fun, only just begins with the delivery of school supplies in April.

### **ADOPT-A-SCHOOL 2007 (AAS)**

We started our school year off during the last week of April and the first week of May delivering school supplies. Once again, a dedicated group of volunteers, coordinated through the Detroit Zoo, returned to help us deliver over 4,200 packets of school supplies to students and teachers in over 120 schools in over 70 river communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers. Every year we break a new record with this program and it's a dream come true. This year we upgraded some of the contents of the student packets and also provided some instructional books for the kindergarten teachers to use in their classroom.

In late November/early December a team of evaluators from CONAPAC, the State Board of Education, and INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agraria) visited each of the AAS communities to evaluate their school's progress in 2007. A written report of the evaluation was given to the Board of Education for their yearly teacher evaluation process. During this last school visit for 2007, we also brought the ingredients for an end-of-year Christmas party for the 15 winning communities in our competition for the best artistic work for the AAS program donor correspondence. Artwork was judged by the Detroit Zoo volunteers and they had quite a task in picking out winners. In the end, although we intended on 10 winning communities, the volunteers convinced us that there had to be at least 15 winners. Congratulations to the communities of Petrona Isla, Nuevo Horizonte, Urco Miraflores, Santa Lucía, Isla Tamanco, Llachapa, Juancho Playa, 3 de Mayo, Nuevo Paraíso, Suni Caño, Manco Capac, Las Palmas, Palmeras II, Sapo Playa, and Timicuro. Ingredients for the party included milk, cocoa, and sugar for the hot chocolate (a real treat for rainforest children), local Christmas bread called "panteones", and candy for the kids.

Explorama Lodges continues to provide, free of charge, logistical support for all of the AAS programs, including room and board for the AAS volunteer delivery crews and evaluation teams. Explorama also provides all of the transport to and from communities for workshop leaders and for the evaluation and monitoring teams.

### **SERVICE PROJECTS**

During the year, students and adults visiting Explorama's Lodges on tourist programs took the time (anywhere from 1-5 days) to work in river villages on service projects which included building playgrounds, latrines, community gazebos, painting schools, planting trees, building bridges and fences. Visitors provided funding for supplies and worked hand-in-hand with community members to make these environmentally friendly projects possible. The objective of the service project is to help villagers as they

improve their lives and their children's to live in keeping with their natural surroundings.

Tourists and community members worked side by side to achieve these improvements. The experiences were mutually beneficial and fun for all! Working together helps build interest in rural populations and allows for social/cultural exchanges as a unique tourist experience—one that builds cooperation between communities, individuals, families, and tourist enterprises. Prior planning and assessments take place together with CONAPAC, the local authorities, the teachers and the general community in order to agree on activities and projects to run with the help of the tourists. In total 19 communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers benefited from the 2007 Service Projects.

Projects and communities were:

- Construction of **community gazebos** in San Pedro de Manati, Tigrillo, Villa Maria, Jorge Chavez, Suni Caño, Pucallpa, 3 de Mayo, Manco Capac, Leon Isla, Juventud Yarina, Santa Isabel, y Sapo Playa.
- Construction of **playgrounds** in the communities of Jorge Chavez, Suni Caño and Canal Pinto.
- **Painting** of the schools in San Pedro de Manati, Tigrillo, Villa Maria, Jorge Chavez, Suni Caño, Nuevo San Juan, Pucallpa, 3 de Mayo, Manco Capac, JC Mariategui, Leon Isla, Puerto Rico, Canal Pinto, Juventud Yarina, Santa Isabel, and Yanamono.
- Construction and painting of **latrines** for the schools in Jorge Chavez, Suni Caño, Manco Capac, Leon Isla, Puerto Rico, Nuevo San Juan and Juventud Yarina.
- Planting of ornamental gardens and construction of **fences** to protect the gardens in Sapo Playa.
- Construction and painting of ecology and conservation **message boards** for the communities of San Pedro de Manati, Tigrillo, Villa Maria, Jorge Chavez, Sunicaño, Nuevo Juan del Amazonas, Pucallpa, 3 de Mayo, JC Mariategui, Leon Isla, Santa Isabel, Yanamono and Sapo Playa.
- **Reforestation** of fruit trees around the perimeter of schools in the communities of San Pedro de Manati, Tigrillo, Jorge Chavez, Suni Caño, Nuevo San Juan del Amazonas, Pucallpa, 3 de Mayo, Manco Capac, JC Mariategui, Canal Pinto, Santa Isabel, Yanamono and Sapo Playa.
- Reforestation of **endangered species** such as mahogany and rosewood trees in the perimeter of schools in the communities of Santa Isabel, Yanamono, and Sapo Playa
- Construction of small **chicken houses** for the raising of chickens in the community of J.C. Mariategui.
- **Roofed the stairway** that leads to the community of Santa Isabel.
- Construction of small **refuges** in the community of Yanamono.
- Construction of a **community women's center** for and artisan groups to create handicrafts from rustic materials in Sapo Playa.
- In the past, fences have been built in several communities to separate where cattle graze and where the children play soccer each day. Review and **repair** of these fences was undertaken where needed.

The tourist's participation and hard work brought many smiles to the children of the rainforest—most thought it was the best part of their trip! With new fruit tree plantings, playground improvements, and freshly painted schools, the children will have much improved school yards in which to enjoy. So, as we move into 2008, there is much to do to strengthen these projects as we work together to improve the lives of those living in river communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers.

## **WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS & COMMUNITY LEADERS**

During the school year, CONAPAC sponsored 4 workshops in centrally located villages providing transport from Iquitos for leaders at the workshops, food for all the participants and leaders and materials for the workshops. Most workshop had over 100 participants attending for three full days of seminars. In total, 417 people benefited from these instructive seminars. The hosting villages, Manco Capac, San Pedro de Manati, Urco Miraño, and San Alejandro, provided a place for everyone to hang their mosquito net and a group of women to help with the cooking. Leaders for the seminars come from the State Board of Education, the Office of Rural Education in Loreto, CONAPAC and INIA, the Peruvian Institute for Investigation and Agricultural Extensión. Topics included:

- Reflections on the Role of the Teacher in a Rural Community
- Orientation on the Application of the Plan for Reading Development Programs
- Elaboration of a lesson plan using a productive or environmental project such as a fish farm, medicinal plant garden, animal breeding program, etc as a means of teaching curriculum objectives
- The “Glass of Milk” program, Its Benefits and Advantages
- Orientation on How to Elaborate a Community Development Plan
- Food and Nutrition—Factors for Good Health
- What is Sustainable Use of Natural Resources?
- Inclusive Education
- Reflections on the Importance of Tropical Forests
- Ecotourism as a Source of Economic Development
- Administrative Responsibilities of Teachers
- Administrative Responsibilities of Community Leaders
- Importance of Families and Family Relations

One of the best parts of the workshops was the opportunity for the interchange of experiences and ideas between teachers and community leaders from various villages. At the workshops, each representative from a community’s Mother’s Club was presented with a volleyball net for their use as thanks for their participation in the workshops.

## **PRODUCTIVE PROJECTS**

Traditionally, farmers in rural communities along the Amazon and Napo Rivers live by the extraction of natural resources from the surrounding rainforest. As soils are depleted, farmers must clear more and more land to extract the same amount of crops and hunters must go farther and farther into the rainforest to find meat to augment their basic diet of plantains, manioc, rice, beans, and fish. In 2007, CONAPAC and our partners at INIA, sponsored 12 workshops in centrally located AAS villages, inviting farmers from neighboring areas to learn about the following topics:

- Management of food crops and organic fertilizer
- Planting and germination of camu camu seeds
- Planting and control of camu camu seedlings
- Organization and management of crops
- Controlled harvesting of their trees for carpentry to add value to the wood

The following projects were implemented in the Adopt-A-School communities as part of this program:

- Monitoring camu camu nurseries in Timicuro Grande, 03 de Mayo, Yanomono and Suni Caño

- Monitoring of agouti farms in Iquique, Santa Rosa del Amazonas and Yanamono; a peccary farm in Santa Isabel, and capybara farm in Iquique.
- Monitoring fish farms in Pucallpa
- Enlargement of the agouti farm in Santa Rosa del Amazonas
- Collection of fish using an anchovy net to re-populate fish farms in San Luis.
- Construction of 13 family fish farms in Canal Pinto.
- Construction and implementation of the Christine Olsen Carpentry Workshop in Iquique
- Initiated construction of the marmalade fruit factory in Timicuro Grande
- Initiated construction of a mini water treatment plant in Timicuro Grande
- Initiated construction of the oven for a bread factory in Timicuro Grande

**CARPENTRY WORKSHOP**--During school vacation months, young people in the rainforest often lack work and orientation. The lumber industry takes advantage of this labor force to extract trees. Also many young people migrate to Iquitos looking for work but they are quickly disillusioned. In 2006, during the school vacation, we initiated a pilot program to provide alternatives to the lumber industry in the community of Iquique, with 23 young people between the ages of 14 and 25. They formed a youth group to work with productive projects looking for alternatives to help themselves. In 2007, with the implementation of a carpentry workshop, various youths of Iquique learned how to make tables, chairs, and beds. Then they taught the high school students of the community to make shelves for their books. With these positive results in the community of Iquique, we pooled other young people to organize and work together in Timicuro Grande.

**MARMALADE FACTORY & BAKERY**—Before starting, CONAPAC evaluated the village of Timicuro Grande for the possibilities of developing productive projects by transforming natural resources into added value products. In Timicuro Grande they observed a diverse environment with easy access to a wide range of fruits for marmalades, nectors, caramels and bread. This project was installed as a center for transforming fruits and native plants in a place where, if young people have a desire to learn new skills, they can improve their lives.

**WATER TREATMENT PLANT**--Also implemented in Timicuro Grande was a mini water treatment plant that benefits seven communities, a population of 289 families (or about 1611 individuals) where clean water was not previously available. They have also been able to bottle and sell this water to surrounding communities.

**FISH FARMS**--Another project during 2007 is the implementation of a system of small, experimental fish farms. Thirteen families in Canal Pinto organized to work together in a group; applying a system of rotating work where they help each other from 2 to 4 hours a day until they complete the circle, each family helping the other. These fish farms are constructed 20 to 50 meters from their homes where they can care, nurture and manage their fish. This system permits these families a regular supply of fish in a more convenient manner, especially in times of shortages in the river. Support of these projects provides tools for the villagers to build their fish farms while producing their own food source and other economic benefits. These projects can also be used as an educational tool by teachers both in and out of the classroom.

As we close out 2007 we want to thank all those who have "made a difference" in the rainforest of Perú with your time, talent, and treasure!  
And any thanks to our tourist guests who felt that just a "visit" to the rainforest wasn't enough!