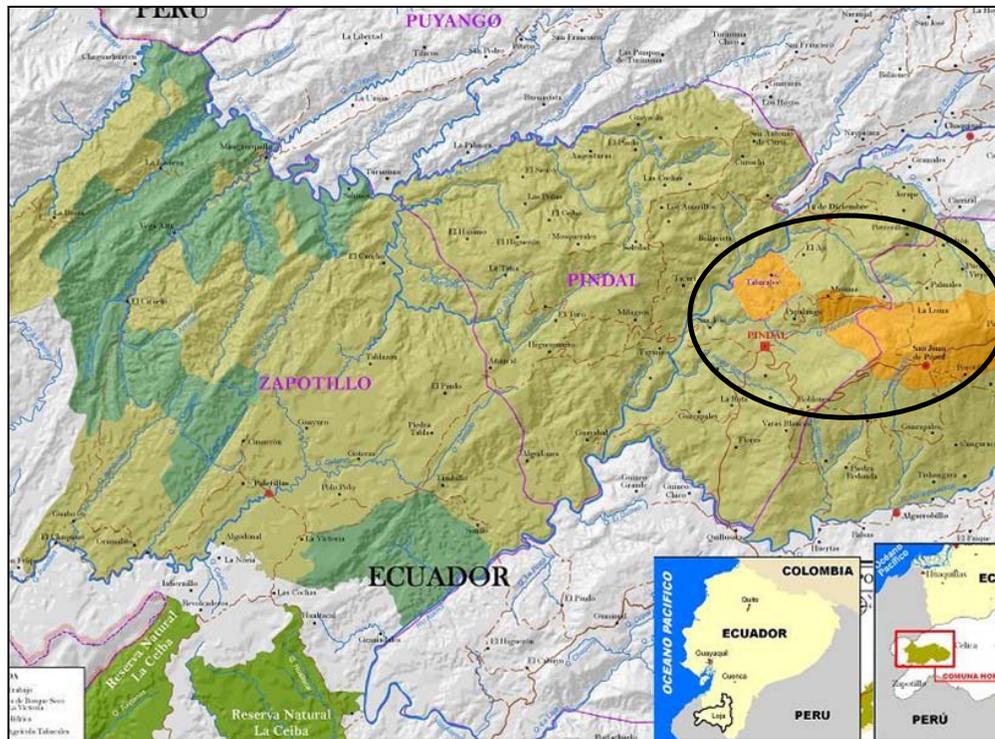


## Ecuador

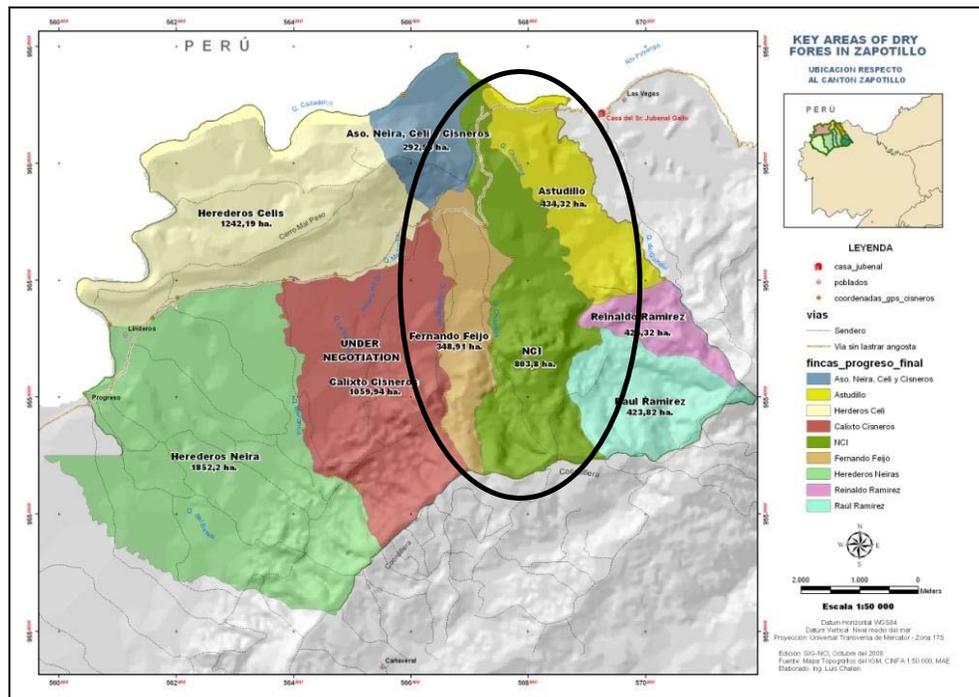
### Commune Declares 30,150 Acres as a Reserve in Celica, Pindal and Zapotillo

The Honor and Labor Commune is an ancient territory that was purchased from the Spanish by the indigenous people in 1763. These people possess a vast territory that due to lack of support from the government and decades of neglect, has been invaded and colonized. Starting three years ago, about 500 community members began to take action to improve the management of their land. The principal water source for approximately 10,000 people initiates in the high altitude part of the commune, and the large area of dry forest in the lower altitude region provides continuity to the La Ceiba Reserve. For these reasons, NCI has been working with the Communal Government to protect these wonderful areas of natural vegetation. Four Community Reserves have been formed including the Pircas Watershed Reserve (6,265 acres), the Mangahurquillo and La Victoria Dry Forest Reserves (22,848 acres), and the Tabacales Agricultural Reserve (1,035 acres). In these areas, NCI will continue working in the areas of land use planning, legalization of land rights, and the recovery of traditional agricultural practices. Additionally, these reserve declarations have been endorsed by the Municipality of Celica, who has directed funding from its environmental services program to support the management and protection of the reserves.



## Conservation of a Key Piece of Dry Forest in Zapotillo

Through the purchase of a 2000 acre property in the Cazaderos sector of Ecuador, NCI will initiate conservation activities in the most pristine dry forest of Ecuador. This sector forms a forest corridor between the La Ceiba Reserve and the Biosphere Reserve of Northwestern Peru. The endemic fauna and flora here have survived thanks to the isolated location and small population in the area, but the situation is changing due to the increased cultivation of corn. The critically threatened crocodile – Grandes Cocodrilos de Tumbes (*Crocodylus acutus*) – can even be seen in this area. This first purchase is located within an area of approximately 12, 400 acres of intact forest where other potential purchase are possible.



## The Netherlands Committee of IUCN Supports NCI Watersheds Conservation Program

Thanks to the kind support of NCI's board members for the purchase of several key properties to protect the City of Loja's biodiversity and water supply, the Municipality and citizens of the city have an increased willingness and commitment to invest local funds for watershed conservation through the implementation of a water tax and ordinance. In one year, more than \$300,000 has been collected locally, and these funds have been invested in the conservation, management, and natural restoration of the habitat. Approximately \$120,000 will be invested in new priority purchases, and through a proposal accepted in September 2008 the Netherlands Committee for IUCN will match these funds through their Small grants for the Purchase of Nature (SPN) program. With these funds, at least 12,500

acres of critical forested areas protecting the buffer zone on the west side of Podocarpus National Park will be purchased.

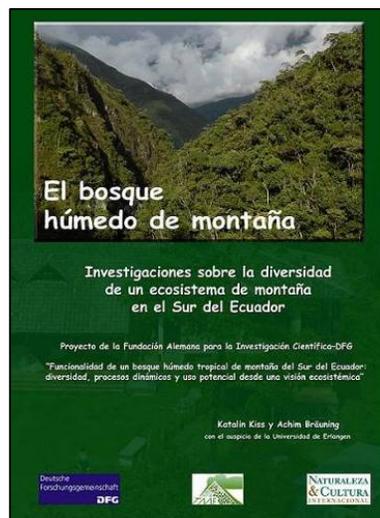


### **German Research Foundation Symposium Held in Loja**

The Tropical Mountain Forests (TMF) program of the German Research Foundation (DFG) held its annual symposium in Loja from September 11 – 12. More than 300 guests from Germany and Ecuador attended the conference, which included 38 presentations in English and Spanish and 35 poster presentations highlighting current scientific work in the region. The DFG program is conducted at NCI's San Francisco Scientific Station located in a section of well-preserved cloud forest about one hour from the City of Loja.

The first project term of the DFG at the San Francisco Scientific Station lasted from 1997 to 2007, and the current project term started in 2007 and is planned for two periods of three years each (2007 – 2010; 2010 – 2013). The current projects will place more emphasis on seeking potential applications of the results of the basic research.

### **New Book Presents Scientific Results of the DFG Tropical Mountain Forests Program**



During the recent TMF symposium, a new book was released presenting the scientific results of the first 10 years of the DFG Tropical Mountain Forests program. The book is an initiative of Professor Bräuning of the University of Erlangen and his colleagues, who compiled the data from 28 working groups from the first phase of the DFG project (1997 – 2007). Although written in simple language the book provides solid scientific information and explains many aspects of the complex tropical mountain forest ecosystem. Many of the researchers surprising discoveries are presented as well. The book is an excellent source of basic information for students studying environmental sciences and is interesting reading for anyone interested in ecology.

NCI supported this initiative through its San Francisco Scientific Station, and by translating the book to Spanish and printing 1,500 copies. The first 500 books will be distributed for free, and the rest of the books will be offered at cost for \$5.00 each.

NCI will also propose the use of these books within Loja's universities, and with their support it is hoped that an interactive CD of the book can be produced that could be used by students in their basic study.

The book is currently available in Spanish, and should be available in English and German later this year.

### **Dry Forest Palo Santo Project Receives Certification of Ecological Operation**

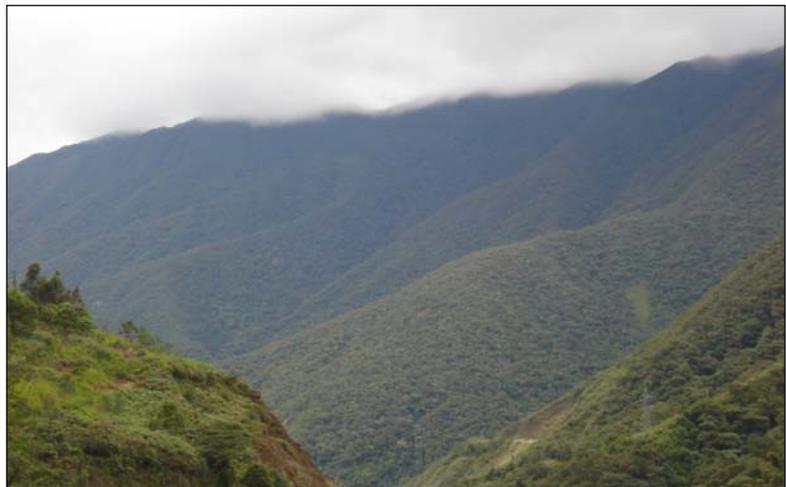
For many years, the dry forests of Zapotillo in southern Ecuador harbored a resource that would offer an excellent source of income for the poor people of the region. In 2007 and 2008, Nature and Culture assisted the communities of Malvas, Chaquito, Paletillas de Malvas, and Totumos (80 families in all), by developing a program to benefit from the fruit of the Palo Santo tree. The essential oils of the fruit are extracted and are currently sold to Natura, a Brazilian cosmetics company that develops fine perfumes for the international market. On October 17, NCI



received a *Certification of Ecological Operation* from the certifying company Ecocert for the development and commercialization of the Palo Santo fruit. With this achievement, we are guaranteeing that the environment will not be contaminated, that the functionality of the dry forest will not be affected, and that the people who live in these natural ecosystems will benefit economically such that there will be an improvement in their standard and quality of life.

### **Loja Authorities to Conserve Natural Ecosystems in the Hacienda Romerillos**

The Hacienda Romerillos is an area owned by the Municipality of Loja that covers an area of 185,000 acres in the Ecuadorian Amazon, within the Province of Zamora Chinchipe. The municipality acquired the area in 1934 to build settlements and support agricultural development. Seven decades later, however, there are now a series of conflicts over the illegal occupation and disorganized management of the territory. For this reason, the municipal



authorities solicited NCI to determine basic information about the current state of the area in order to define appropriate management strategies. NCI's studies revealed important natural ecosystems that are vital to protect the water supply for more than 20,000 people in Zamora County. Based on this information, the City Council of Loja decided unanimously to accept NCI's proposal to ensure the preservation of more than 138,000 acres for their ecological and environmental values. A commission was formed between technicians in the municipality and NCI in order to study the legal mechanisms for the management and conservation of this area in the coming months.

### **General Assembly of the Shuar Federation of Zamora-Chinchipec Holds Second Annual Meeting**

The Shuar Federation of the Province of Zamora-Chinchipec (FEPNASH-ZCH) held its second annual meeting from October 9 – 11 in the Shuar Center of Uwents, where recent accomplishments and future projects were discussed. Through the support and assistance of Nature and Culture's Zamora office, a number of endeavors were made possible including the production and marketing of traditional fruits in the Center of El Kiim, support for the declaration of a Community Natural Area in the Shuar Center of Tayunts, elaboration of a



plan of government for the Federation, and collaboration with the German Development Service (DED) for economic and technical support. Future projects are likely to include the legalization and zoning of ancestral territories, the design and maintenance of a website for the Federation to easily spread information to a wider audience, and obtaining legal recognition by CODENPE, the Council for the Development of the Nationalities and Indigenous Settlements of Ecuador.

## **Mexico**

### **Conservation Activities in the Dry Forests of Mexico**

At the Rancho Ecológico – Monte Mojino, the northernmost tropical dry forest in the Americas, NCI's partner Pronatura Mexico received a forest purchase grant from the National Committee of The Netherlands - The World Conservation Union (NC-IUCN) for the purchase of 800 additional acres along the Cuchujaqui River. This purchase protects some of the most biologically diverse and ecologically sensitive habitats in the region. Native endemic catfish will receive additional protection through this purchase in addition to the Mouse Opossum and the Violet-fronted Parrot. The funds will enhance current reserve design as NCI moves towards conserving 10,000 hectares of this New World tropical deciduous forest.





Also in this region, the Overbrook Foundation is supporting an analysis of watershed service options and NCI is working with its partner ProNatura to seek additional financing for watershed management. These watersheds are the most biodiverse and sensitive ecosystems in the area, but past misguided water pumping projects have left graveyards of dead cypress and other tropical dry forest species. The town of Alamos (population ~12,000) depends on water from the Chuchajaqui River, in addition to the community of Sabanito, named for the majestic Cypress species that line the riverbanks. Families scattered throughout the region are also keenly aware of the importance of maintaining the local forest which guarantees their water supply.

NCI has also received several generous donations from private donors in the San Diego region, which will enable project leaders to meet with ranchers in the Rancho Ecológico area who control tens of thousands of hectares of tropical dry forest. The project leaders will discuss best practices for the management of the land, and will also use the funds for publicity and to develop and print a management brochure. Since ranchers control 75% of federally protected lands, it is imperative that they practice environmentally-sensitive management techniques. Poorly managed areas can damage the local ecosystem and lead to water pollution problems.

Finally, The CRES group at the San Diego Zoo will be carrying out conservation related research on Palm species at NCI sites in Mexico and Peru. The focus in Mexico will be on developing best practices for sustainable management of a blue palm species along small streams, which can be used for roofing material for the local tourism industry, and for baskets which we plan to sell at the zoo.

## Peru

### **Wax Palm Mountain Forest / Huamanpata Watershed Conservation in Amazonas Region**

In the Amazonas region of Peru near the city of Mendez, NCI staff members are diligently working to gain protected area status for the 150,000 acre Wax Palm-Huamanpata Mountain Tropical Forest. This area is approximately 150,000 acres, or about the size of Zion National Park, and funding has recently been received from a private donor to aid in the conservation of the area. Funds will be used primarily for reserve management including trail construction and signage, and for producing television spot advertisements promoting the conservation of the area. In addition, city groups and students of all ages will be able to participate in reforestation and conservation activities within the reserve, and political activities promoting conservation will take place within the city as well. Recent school and media events have brought a great deal of local attention to conservation here.



### **Conservation of Forests in Piura Region**

In the Piura region of Peru, NCI is involved in a very competitive proposal process to receive funding from the KfW Bankengruppe of Germany for the analysis and creation of six significant regional conservation areas, including the last remaining species-rich Seasonal



Tropical Dry Forests and a unique wet mangrove forest in the middle of the quite dry Piura region. The proposal includes a management plan for the area, ecological justification, a land title boundary analysis, and the formation of a regional protected area. The NCI Piura office will be the lead conservation group proposing and later managing these vitally important protected areas.

Funding from the Nature Conservancy will also allow for NCI-Piura to propose four additional seasonal dry forest protected areas, filling in important conservation gaps not included in the KfW proposed reserve network.

Also in Piura, NCI Staff working in Ayabaca are collaborating with local communities to help conserve vital mountain tropical forest. Protection of the local communal forest is encouraged through collaborative production of local fruits including improved and grafted cherimoya, Capuli cherry and the locally-prized native walnut. School production projects are focused on producing Achira tubers to produce flour for breads and cakes.

