



SPRING 2007

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

MAJOR GIFT FOR THE MANU CLOUD FOREST OBSERVATORY!



A major gift has been received from **Alcan**, one of the globe's leading suppliers of aluminum and packaging materials. **Alcan**, headquartered in Montreal, Canada, has contributed \$250,000 Canadian dollars to the canopy walkway project that will be completed this summer in the Andean Cloud Forest of Peru. **Alcan** chose to support this project because it highlights the innovative use of aluminum in a unique environment and because the ACEER has a long history of working with local communities to provide environmental education in schools.

The ACEER, in partnership with the Amazon Conservation Association (ACA), will construct an extensive system of aluminum towers on a magnificent site on the slopes of the Andes, close to the internationally known Manu Biosphere Park. The Manu Cloud Forest Observatory will be the world's largest aluminum canopy walkway, and the only one of its

kind in a cloud forest. Construction will begin in May and the Walkway will open in August 2007. Check our website for regular updates and to see video snippets of the project.

Other partners in the project are the National Geographic Society, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, and the Windhover Foundation.



THE ACEER FOUNDATION RECEIVES A CHALLENGE GRANT!

The ACEER is poised to receive the largest gift ever donated to our Foundation! The donation is a matching gift challenge of \$250,000 from the Windhover Foundation ...ACEER must raise an additional \$250,000 by June 30, 2007 to qualify for the challenge grant. The match requires that all donations come from new donors to the ACEER. Donations must be for \$2,500 or more, up to a total amount of \$25,000. The remaining donations are required to be large donations of over \$25,000. Please help us to raise the funds – individual, corporate, or other foundation gifts are acceptable. Contact Marguerite Gould at 610-738-0477 for more information.

VISIT THE PERUVIAN AMAZON - FUTURE WORKSHOPS

Botanical Medicines from the Amazon – July 30th to August 6th, 2007 from Miami (optional Machu Picchu extension is available).

An exploration of traditional and modern uses of plant based medicines from the Amazon for health promotion, symptom management and disease treatments.

Conservation Medicine - July 30th to August 6th, 2007 from Miami

Epidemiology of tropical and sub-tropical diseases in the Amazon Basin

Birding Trip with the Delaware Nature Society - November 3rd to 13th, 2007

Customized, small group, expert birding guides

Orchids of Peru – March 2008

Travel to the cloud forests of The Andes with experienced guides to see remarkable varieties of orchids.

WCU WORKSHOP TRAVELS TO PERUVIAN RAINFOREST



Roger Mustalish led another group of adventurers from West Chester University to the Amazon rainforest for his workshop entitled “Ecology of the Amazon Rainforest and Andes”, March 10th to 18th. Three West Chester University seniors, four faculty, an administrator, and four professionals not affiliated with the University flew to Lima, Peru to begin their journey. Next stop was Cusco, one of the highest locations in the country, nestled in the Andes mountains. They then spent a day at Machu Picchu, the Lost City of the Incas. Some were brave enough to climb Huyana Picchu, the distinctive peak that overlooks the ruins.

Their next destination was Puerto Maldonado and on to ACEER-Los Amigos, our new center associated with the Los Amigos Biological Station . . . but on the way (a six hour boat ride up the Madre de Dios river), they came upon a captured boa constrictor at a gold mining site, and bought his release. The eight foot snake traveled up river with the group (in a bag, thank goodness) for three hours before being released back to the wild. You could almost see the big smile on his face as he slithered away into the brush.

Back to ACEER-Los Amigos . . . it is a research and education center located at the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Los Amigos rivers, and is a joint project of the ACEER Foundation and the Amazon Conservation Association (ACA). The center is located within the Los Amigos Conservation Concession, a protected area which is owned and operated by ACA. One of our first experiences was a walk through the garden with Antonio Montero, Curator of ACEER’s ethnobotanical gardens and a Peruvian shaman. He performed a ceremony called the Bath of Tranquility, using a diverse collection of aromatic medicinal plants and flowers in a traditional shamanic ceremony. Nigel Pitman, director at the Los Amigos Biological Station spent the evening talking about the area and the types of research conducted at the Station. The next day the group hiked through trails that traverse the mature secondary and primary forest, highland forest and the very different floodplain forest. Later they visited two native communities that live along the river, Vuelta Grande and Boca Amigos. Visiting with the children was the highlight of the day, singing songs and playing soccer. They also visited a nearby gold mining camp, where the owner/operator explained the process of dredging hundreds of pounds of rocks and sand every day, twenty hours a day, to gather very little gold, maybe a quarter of a teaspoon. The gold mining process includes the use of toxic elemental mercury to separate the

gold from the sediment. The mercury is burned off to yield the concentrated gold. This process is a serious threat to the health of the miners and their families, resulting in widespread mercury contamination of soil, water and fish. It is an extremely difficult way of life; the miner’s family lives in Puerto Maldonado while he lives on the dredging raft, sleeping next to an engine that runs almost all night, just to be able to support his family. It is a meager existence, hard work and dangerous.

The following day the group traveled to the ACEER Tambopata at Inkaterra (ATI), a 340 hectare private reserve. They visited the Interpretation Center for an overview of the region, as well as the Gardens at ATI and the Useful Plants trail. Roger and Sue Mustalish gave a talk on traditional uses of medicinal plants as well as uses for new, modern medicines. The following day the group went on a hike to the Canopy Walkway to explore the “Roof of the Rainforest”. Nearly 80% of all living creatures in the rainforest live in the forest canopy. There were seven walkways, one steeper than the next, and slippery, but the view from the top was breathtaking, even in the rain. Huge tropical plants filled the forest floor, surrounded by tall trees, one taller than the next. It was quite a view!

Leaving Peru was difficult, but everyone left with a new appreciation and respect for the Amazon rainforest and the people of the region, with a renewed mission to do what they could to keep this area pristine and secure. Some attendees share their experience:

“My trip to Peru was, without a doubt, one of the most amazing and inspirational experiences of my life! I never thought I would have a

chance to see so many wonderful sights or explore such diverse areas in one trip. The whole experience, the landscape, the culture, the people, and the travel, was more than I could have ever imagined. I am so grateful for the

opportunity to have participated, and I highly recommend anyone with a passion to travel and a desire to experience new thrills to go! You will not be disappointed.” Jennifer Sieg, a WCU senior majoring in Biology.

“The trip was absolutely one of the best things I’ve ever spent my money and vacation time doing. It was a long time awaited life experience that proved to be all I could have hoped for and more. . . .adventurous, educational, physical, enlightening, and incredibly amazing.” Renee Jackson, Nashville, TN.

“The entire trip was a fantastic experience. As much as I thought Machu Picchu would be my highlight, it was when I realized in the rainforest that I had the opportunity to see something that very few people get to experience that this portion of the trip became the highlight of the trip for me. I realized that even if I’d planned the trip myself, I never would have been able to afford myself the opportunities that ACEER offered me – from the time at Los Amigos, to capturing and freeing a boa, from interacting with a shaman, to interacting with the villagers at Boca Amigo. These experiences were priceless. Thank you so much.” Denise Polk, WCU Professor, Communication Studies.

For more information on our workshops, please visit our website at www.aceer.org.



STROUD WATER RESEARCH CENTER AT ATI, PERU



In August 2006, funded by a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, a team of 12 scientists and educators from the Stroud Water Research Center, along with collaborators from Florida A&M University and from Peru, traveled to Madre de Dios, Peru. Over the course of 18 days the group sampled 31 sites on the Madre de Dios and Tambopata rivers and their tributaries. The sites ranged from pristine to severely polluted.

The team had two main goals: (1) to establish a baseline of scientific data on water quality, stream biodiversity, and stream health that would serve as the foundation for understanding and sustaining on-going conservation efforts; and (2) to create, test, and implement a series of education programs for the people of the region. While at ATI, the educators gave a workshop to two dozen school students from Puerto Maldonado.

In October, scientific and education staff members returned to Madre de Dios to give a series of full-day workshops on water-quality monitoring and the ecology of streams and rivers to local public- and private-sector decision makers, teachers, conservation planners and eco-tourism guides. The workshops bolstered the conservation efforts of core preserved areas in the neo-tropics, discussed the latest scientific and educational knowledge on issues affecting fresh water, offered practical and affordable methods for monitoring streams and rivers, taught stewardship practices that the participants can both use themselves and transmit to others, and encouraged appropriate conservation policies in the region - particularly the importance of maintaining forest cover.

ACEER staff in the U.S.A. and Peru provided invaluable support in organizing the research expedition and in coordinating the education workshops. The streams and laboratory at ACEER's ATI station served as a living laboratory for scientists and workshop participants alike.

A TEACHER FOR THE VILLAGE OF BALTIMORE

On a tributary of the Amazon, in the rainforests of Peru, the village of Baltimore will finally have a teacher. During the



rubber boom early in the 20th century, rubber was harvested along the Tambopata River and shipped in large crates to Baltimore, MD in the USA. A community grew up along the banks of the river and when the rubber boom ended, villagers remained and called their community Baltimore.

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In the Peruvian rainforest, indigenous communities must raise the funds for the first two years of a teacher's salary. After this time, the government will cover their salary.

Through the generosity of two anonymous donors from Pennsylvania, ACEER was able to provide the funding for the school for 2007 and 2008. Through our ¡Amigos! Program, the ACEER will conduct ongoing education programs in the village of Baltimore, and will provide school supplies for the teacher and the children. Help us to support more teachers and children in the Peruvian Amazon by making a donation to the ACEER ¡Amigos! Program.

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY INVITES ACEER TO JOIN EdNet

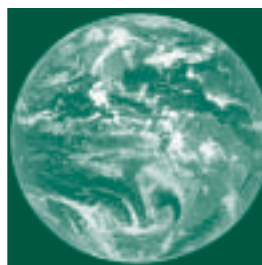


NGS will host ACEER on their Education Network, a new online service from their Education & Children's Programs department. ACEER will join the vibrant online communities of EdNet, starting in April. EdNet provides ACEER with great visibility, fantastic education resources, discussion forums, news, and much more. In the Online Communities, ACEER members will be able to share ideas with a committed group of dedicated educators.

Visit ACEER at EdNet: www.ngsednet.org/ACEER

EARTH DAY 2007

GIVE THE EARTH A BIRTHDAY PRESENT!



Help the ACEER grow our environmental education programs. Sponsor a school in the Peruvian Amazon, or help our gardens grow – send a

donation for the ethnobotanical gardens at ACEER-Tambopata-Inkaterra, or our new garden at ACEER-Los Amigos.

Visit ACEER at www.aceer.org!

YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT THE ACEER FOUNDATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: ____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

___ Friend (Individual) \$50 ___ Patron \$500

___ Friend (Family) \$100 ___ Benefactor \$1,000

___ Sponsor \$250 ___ Corporate \$5,000

___ ¡Amigos! School Sponsor \$375

Enclosed is a total of \$ _____ as my contribution to support the ACEER Foundation.

Please make checks payable to the ACEER Foundation and mail to:

The ACEER Foundation.
P.O Box 2549 WCU
West Chester, PA 19383

THANK YOU!

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