

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

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

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. 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. 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole**

**Grants Director**

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#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Miguel Andres Suarez Gomez
<b>Project title</b>	The conservation value of private owned reserves in three departments of the Orinoco basin
<b>RSG reference</b>	14.01.10
<b>Reporting period</b>	August 2010 August 2011
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£6000
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:masuarez03@gmail.com">masuarez03@gmail.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	March 22 2012

**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
GIS Analysis of elements of biodiversity			X	The analysis was made at ecosystems level, unfortunately there was not enough and accurate information at species level to do this analysis.
GIS Mapping of areas			X	For the first time a complete georeferenced shape until January 2011 is available for private reserves owners and for government institutions
Ornithological Training	X			The achievement of this objective was not possible for several reasons. i) The costs of transport was to expensive for stakeholders ii) They were not particularly interested in ornithological training. Instead We develop a management effectiveness workshop, , with 17 Private Nature Reserves PNRS involved and an ecosystems services identification assessment.

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

The first difficulty were the availability of the GIS information, the limitations for it use and the bureaucracy to get it. Mainly because the GIS information for this area has been obtained by different projects by different Institutions and some of them were not finished for the initial date of this project. These problems expanded the Information gathering period up to approximately 5 months with a lobby that required several personal meetings with numerous phone calls explaining the importance of the project to gather the necessary information. Consolidated information was only available at ecosystem level.

Finally, the information was kindly given by these institutions: Parques Nacional Naturales de Colombia (National, Natural Parks of Colombia (PNNCOL)), Asociación Red de Reservas Naturales de Colombia, Instituto de Investigacion sobre recursos biologicos Alexander Von Humboldt (IAvH), Fundacion Omacha, Fundacion Horizonte Verde, The Nature Conservancy and by other scientists.

The study area of the project increase up to 188.349 km<sup>2</sup>. This involves enormous distances between Private Nature Reserves located in this area and expensive costs for my transportation as well as for

Reserve Owners which was a serious difficulty to develop ornithological training. Also the current context of big miner companies threatening this PNRS, and the little visibility and ignorance of local regional and national authorities about the presence of PNRS and their work required urgent information about their importance and how they have managed, that is why we reoriented our work to develop the first regional *Management effectiveness workshop for Private Nature Reserves* with the participation of 17 PNRS and with an ecosystem services identification study (**Annex1**).

The divulgation of results period extent more than it was expected specially with the publication of the IV Binational Orinoco basin workshop book due to some printing mistakes that delay the final product and made the pdf version only available up to February 2012 (**Annex2**).

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

One of the most important outcomes of this project is the **visibility gain** for the PNRs figure for both Private and government sectors. For the first time for the Orinoco region we construct a map and a GIS layer that include all the PNRS and National Parks until July 2010 and this information will soon be officially recognized by PNNCOL (**Annex 3,4 See director`s letter attached**). With this information officially recognized and available, any person or company must consult it before they develop any project in the study area and therefore they cannot dismiss the presence of PNRS. As a result this will partially safeguard this PNRS and their owners against any development projects (especially those of mining companies).

In 1994 Colombia agreed to the Convention of Biological Diversity, in which one of the commitments was to create a Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (National System of protected areas) – SINAP. One of the most ambitious set of goals is to consolidate system that must be: i)Complete: When all the parts exists and are articulated interacting in the different scales of the system (Including PNRS).ii)Ecologically representative: It Includes a “samples” of Colombian biodiversity at different levels such as genes, species, communities and ecosystems and iii) Effectively managed: when the systems and the protected areas accomplished of conservation objectives. **The second most important outcome** was for the first in Colombia a comprehensive study at a regional level that analyses how PNRS contribute to biodiversity conservation specially in ecosystem representativeness and how they have been effectively managed for biodiversity conservation wich are an important contribution **for the ii and iii of the SINAP in the Orinoco basin** This is also an important contribution on how PNRS can contribute to Convention of Biological Diversity and to create a more complete, Ecologically representative Effectively managed SINAP. In the past PNRS were often ignored by environmental authorities, academic studies and left outside national statistics this study is a significant contribution that will help environmental authorities to understand about the importance of PNRS for biodiversity conservation especially for the Orinoco region and the current threat to this private conservation initiative. It is intended to recognize officially part of the information produced by this project. (**See National Natural Parks director`s letter attached**).

The third main achievement is that for the first time GIS maps were made for more than 8 PNRs thanks to verification in the field and that is a major contribution for the PNR management and the first step to develop a GIS system for their areas. **(Annex 5)**

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

The PNR's owners were beneficiaries of this project first because the awareness and visibility gained of PNRs figure in the Orinoco region and at national level, also because they learn about the importance in the use of new technologies such as GIS as a way to plan their territories and as a tool against miner companies land requirements that are currently frequent in the Orinoco region. A direct product of this GIS exercise is to provide for the first time a georeferenced map that includes Statutory conservation areas and Private Conservation areas **(Annex 6)**.

For those PNRs owners that participate in the *First Management effectiveness workshop for Private Nature Reserves in the Orinoco region* this methodology is an invaluable tool that will help them to focus their management efforts and raise the alarms for many threats that require urgent management measures (Annex 11). They also benefitted understanding the importance of an effectiveness management of PNRs to succeed in their conservation and sustainable production objectives. They also learn from ecosystem services in their areas.

#### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Indeed. This is the first step that helps to understand the importance contribution to conservation in private lands and their current threats in the Orinoco region but certainly is not enough. The private conservation initiative is under a high risk in Colombia specially because the oil companies and big scale agricultural industries develop their new exploration and extraction projects in the Orinoco basin, it is sad to say that at least three Private Nature Reserves have been sold to these projects, mainly because the real rule government incentives toward conservation in private lands. However, in an effort to contribute to highlight their importance one of the next plans which is an unexpected result of this research is an editorial book that will be called :

***"Private Nature Reserves and their conservation role in Colombian Orinoco basin"***. This book's main objective is to highlight the importance of Private Nature Reserves in Conservation sustainable production, environmental education in the Colombian Orinoco basin. Furthermore, we will provide to the government and private sector with technical and GIS official up to date information (shapes in an additional dvd include) for all the reserves, and we will communicate the importance of PNRs and their complementarity to strengthen the SINAP, their importance as ecosystem services providers and regional and local conservation actors, that will enhance the PNRs figure as a key strategy for the Conservation of Orinoco basin. I will like to highlight that this project has opened **an space for PNR's Owners to tell what they have done in their areas in the format of study case as a way to visualize their conservation effort**. I am glad to announce that this initiative has now the official support of Conservation International, IAVH the Omacha Foundation (which is a co-partner in this project) and most important of all Parques Nacionales Naturales (Annex 7,12).

I am also planning to develop an Ecosystem services research project in both PNRs as well and National Natural Parks, in an effort to have a better understanding of how these conservation areas contribute not only to conserve biodiversity but also to sustain local livelihoods.

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

Preliminary results were presented in the III National Congress of Zoology, Medellin, Colombia (**Annex 8**). Also since 2009 the IAVH from Colombia in Cooperation with Fundacion La Salle (Venezuela) made a workshop called “Binational Orinoco basin workshop”. In this event scientist from both nations reunited by invitation to participate. Although I did not attend to the IV Binational workshop due I was in the UK this project was invited to be published as part of the memories of the workshop and I was invited to the next workshop. See IAVH letter attached (**Annex 9**). also Results were presented in Bogota at the PNRs workshop in 2011 (**Annex 10**)

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

It expanded more than expected initially. I received the Rufford’s grant mid’s 2010. The field part start end of 2010 and extent up to July 2011, the paper was accepted for publication in August 17 of 2011. I received the final Pdf and book from IAVH in February 2012.

**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.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Travel Two way Flight ticket Bogota COL- Birmighan U.K	£700	£698.30	1.7	
Two way Train Tick Birmighan- Falmouth	£100	£142.6	42.6	
Petrol	£500	£500		
Car	Self provided			
Spare parts	£200	£200		
Laptop Toshiba L500 128	£400	£400		

GPS Garmin Nuvi350	£200	£200	
Boots	2 persons x£4= £8	£8	
Flagging tape	£10	£10	
Satellite images (10)	£300	£280	
Aerial photographs (30)	£300	£300	
Machetes	£10	£10	
Books "Birds of Colombia"	5x£50=£250	£50	
Field notebooks	4x £5=£20	£20	
Digital camera	£200	£300	
Compass	£10	£10	
GPS Garmin	£130	£130	
First aid Kit	£10	£20	
Motorola radio Talks	£100	£100	
Food	£500	£580	
Lodging	45 days x 2 x2 persons = £750	£750	
Insurance	2x£300=£600	£600	
Legal permits	£100	£100	
Contingencies	£600	£600	

Total	£6000	£6008	
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**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

I think that the idea to produce *“Private Nature Reserves and Their conservation role in Colombian Orinoco basin”* is an important step to consolidate the information from PNR’s and make it official with the support of Parques Nacionales Naturales of Colombia. I think that further research must be done about Ecosystem services in PNR’s also research must be done in mechanisms to enhance conservation in private areas such as Payments for Ecosystem services and research in strategies to complement with National Natural Parks.

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

Yes and yes It receive it in several occasions. In National Zoology Congress, Santa Marta Colombia were more than 6000 people attend and in the IV Binational Orinoco Basin Workshop. I also did use the logo in the effectiveness workshop and PNRs workshop.

**11. Any other comments?**

The Rufford’s small grants, help me to achieved my Masters in Conservation and Biodiversity with dean’s commendation at Exeter’s University in the UK, helps to be recognized as an Orinoco basin researcher in Colombia, and most important of all open the gate for the recognition of PNRs as an important conservation figure for Orinoco region future. I am glad to say that not only PNNCOL is sponsoring the PNRs the book but also is promoting the creation of PNRs in Casanare wetlands in the Orinoco basin. I think this project make an important contribution to this huge step.

**12. I agree to this report being published on the Rufford Small Grants website**

Signed (or print name) Miguel Andrés Suarez  \_\_\_\_\_