

Final Report for the Rufford Small Grant - May 2006

Parque Ecologico Nueva Juventud, Natural History Museum and Education Project, sponsored by Volunteer Peten.

Background

The *Parque Ecologico Nueva Juventud* is a public park measuring 150 acres in size in San Andres, Peten, Guatemala and was founded and created by Matthew R. Peters in January 2002. In February of that year, Matthew received his first Rufford Small Grant to help start up a large environmental education program associated with the park. The donation went largely to establishing the park as an education center, providing employment to a full-time environmental educator, and introducing the park to over 1500 local school children. Since 2002, the park and its projects have been managed by Volunteer Peten, also created by Matthew R. Peters in 2004, to help generate funds for the project by hosting international volunteers to help with community projects. Since 2003, over 90% of all funds are generated through volunteer contributions, and about 10% through grants and private donations. In order to help promote the park and increase the number of local community members that visit the park, we began construction of a Natural History Museum of the Peten in early 2005. Shortly after we commenced construction of the museum, we received word of receiving a second Rufford Small Grant to help with this project.

The Natural History Museum of the Peten

The building for the museum is 7meters x 12 meters, and was built from scratch. Digging the foundation for the museum took about 2 months, as only international volunteers and one full time worker worked on the project.



The first stage of the project, the foundation, and cost Q7,500 for materials which included cement, iron, sand, pebbles, large rocks, wood, metal wire, nails, and some tools.



The second stage of the project was the roof, which cost Q2,500 for materials which included, wood, nails, bolts, tin roofing, paint, and insulation.



The third stage of the project was the walls, which cost Q6,500 for materials which included cement, sand, pebbles, iron, metal wire, wood, and some tools.

The fourth stage was the windows and doors. Total cost for 20 windows and a glass sliding door, and two wooden doors cost Q8,000.



The fifth stage was the ceiling, divisions, tiled floor and painting which cost Q4000 for plywood, lamps, and wood for the ceiling, Q2000 for the paint, and Q7,000 for the tiled floor.

The final stage of the project was putting together the exhibits. In all, there are 7 exhibit rooms which include Earth and Rocks, Insects, Reptiles and Amphibians, Birds, Mammals, Night Life, and Fish and Water. Materials for this final stage cost Q20,000. The materials include glass exhibit cases, posters, and specialty items to fill displays, display lights, aquarium, and terrarium.



The Earth and rocks exhibit has information on the solar system, rocks and minerals, volcanoes, local soils, and Mayan artifacts.



The insect exhibit includes information and preserved examples on coleoptera, Lepidoptera, hymoptera, hemioptera, othoptera, homoptera, isopteran and diptera insect groups as well as spiders.



The reptile and amphibian exhibit includes a terrarium with turtles and a cage with a live boa constrictor, and information and preserved examples of local frogs, snakes, lizards, turtles, and crocodiles.



The bird exhibit includes information and all 165 species of birds that can be seen in the park, and information on aquatic birds, parrots, humming birds, and birds of prey. It also includes nests and eggs.



The mammal exhibit contains information of 47 types of mammal species in the area including deer, jaguar, monkeys, anteaters, etc.



The Nocturnal Animal exhibit contains information on bats, owls, rats, possums, scorpions, tarantulas, kinkajous, and a number of other nocturnal animals. The exhibits also has a ceiling with lights displaying 10 popular constellations and a glass box with a black light and live scorpions.



The water exhibit contains an aquarium with local fish, an aquarium with lobsters, and an aquarium with crabs. A glass case exhibit has various sea items including all types of shells, sand dollars, sea horses, and shark parts.



We officially inaugurated the natural history museum on Earth Day 2006, April 22. We invited all the local junior highs to come and participate in activities in the park and to see the new museum. Over 300 students participated in the event. Since this date, local schools and local community have begun to receive guided tours of the park. To date, over 200 local community members and 700 students have visited the museum. We hope to have all the students in the area (over 1500) visit the museum by the end of July.

Total Cost for the Project

Item	Cost in Quetzals	Cost in Dollars
Foundation	7500	1075
Roof	2500	360
Walls	6500	930
Windows and doors	8000	1145
Plywood ceiling and divisions	6000	860
Tiled floor	7000	1000
Exhibits	20000	2860
Workers Salaries	20000	2860
Architect Salary	10000	1430
Transportation of children to museum	3000	430
Materials for activities	2000	285
TOTAL	92500	13235

In total, Q57, 500 of the Q67,400 Rufford Small Grant was spent on materials for the museum. Q9,900 was spent of technical assistance to Inoky Cameros for her design of the museum and work on putting the museum together.

Additional money was donated by the US Fish and Wildlife service to help with additional labor costs, and to develop and implement an education program associated with the museum. These funds are being used to transport children to the museum and educational activities.

On behalf of all of us here working with Volunteer Peten and the communities of San Andres, Peten, we thank you and your foundation for its continued support of this small but important project in northern Guatemala.