

Project Update: November 2009

Activity 1 *Workshops for building environmental consciousness and the collection of primary information on jaguars with local peasants and aborigines.*

Objective Introducing the Conservation Plan for Felines in the Caribbean, the importance of the jaguar in the maintenance of environmental goods and services and the cultural role of jaguars, as well as of recollecting the local knowledge (cultural and natural) regarding the jaguar, and acknowledging the perspectives and needs of the community within the Conservation Plan.

Results

1. Four meetings held, one with local hunters, two with indigenous tribes (Wiwa and Arhuaco people) and a fourth one with local institutions (National Park Service officers of both Tayrona National Park and Sierra Nevada National Park, and members of the NGO's Defensores de la Naturaleza, Fundación Nativa, ProCATS and the field workers associated to Conservation International Colombia).
2. 82 people participated.

Comments These meetings were planned to be developed during the first and second month of the project. However, it was decided that the work with the indigenous tribes should be approved by their traditional leaders and this demanded additional time (the tribe leaders live in very remote regions), expanding the time frame by two additional months.

Activity 2 *Training course of field personnel.*

Objective The team and National Park System biologists will train 5 community members in the activities associated with the collection of jaguar evidence: collecting footprints, setting up and using specialized equipment such as the camera traps, the digital cameras and the GPS. The monitoring strategy for jaguars will be devised by the biologists in conjunction with the field personnel (their knowledge of jaguars as former hunters) and the information collected during the environmental education workshops.

Results

1. 7 community members trained in the collection of jaguar evidence (3 former hunters, 2 Wiwa members and 2 Arhuaco members) and 14 national park rangers trained to accompany the community members.
2. Monitoring strategy devised in conjunction with the national park officials and the community members.

Comments The indigenous leaders of both the Wiwa and Arhuaco people expressed their interest in participating in the monitoring strategy by including new sites to be monitored,

within the Sierra Nevada National Park but not necessarily within the IBA originally comprising the study site. Thus, the project's scope was expanded to fulfill the communities' needs.

Additional park rangers were trained from the Tayrona National Park in exchange of holding the course in that park at no cost and getting the food service at the cost for the park's rangers.