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Conservation Program of Hotel Belmar

Help us preserve the resources of Monteverde!

This program aims to provide information to the guests of Hotel Belmar, on some of the major projects of environmental protection and social welfare developing in the surrounding town and area. The purpose of this program is to invite guests to learn more about each initiative and take the opportunity to participate in assisting in their development. The program additionally contains some specific projects that are prepared by the Sustainability Department of Hotel Belmar.

In Monteverde you can find a wide range of programs that work towards the conservation of the natural and social resources of the locality. These programs require ongoing support for the development of labors such as: maintenance and reforestation of the natural areas, working with native plants, environmental education, English language teaching, and others. In the case of Monteverde's protected areas, which collectively constitute one of the largest networks of private reserves in Central America, they protect some of the world's most fragile ecosystems. The organizations that protect these areas have resources that are very limited, therefore they also need permanent cooperation.

For this reason we invite you to enjoy the natural and cultural beauty that this region offers, and at the same time to contribute to its maintenance and to the improvement of the quality of life of its inhabitants; by supporting projects such as those presented in this document. Contributions are requested through monetary, in-kind donations, or even exploring the possibility of volunteering!.

The financial support that this program can collect from Hotel Belmar's guests will be invested in various sustainability projects to improve environmental performance, together with the staff, guests and the community in general. Also this program contributes to the development of social and environmental advocacy activities that the hotel performs with different stakeholders of the locality. Finally, an important part of these funds will also be allocated for financial support towards regularly provides environmental and social projects conducted by the Hotel Belmar, such as those mentioned in this document.

If you have skills in any particular field, for example: computer, construction or any other; you may share them to support forest protection or social welfare projects that are being developed within the area. This is a great way to make your experience in Monteverde much

more than tourism. So we encourage you to communicate with our reception staff if you are interested to collaborating with any particular program. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

Monteverde Reserves

Monteverde Biological Cloud Forest Reserve

In 1972, after witnessing the various environmental threats impacting the Monteverde forests, George Powell and his wife joined resident Wilford Guidon to establish a natural reserve. The Tropical Science Center was receptive of these efforts and accepted institutional responsibility for the foundation, possession and administration of the future reserve. When it was founded, the reserve had only 328 hectares, but in 1975 under an administrative agreement, the hydrographic reserve Bosque Eterno S.A which had 554 hectares and founded in the mid-60s by members of the Quaker community was also combined with the original reserve.

After the creation of the reserve, the Tropical Science Center (CCT, in Spanish) continued searching for the economic and human resources needed to protect, expand, and consolidate the Reserve. The Reserve today has an extension of more than 10,500 hectares. Profits made from the Natural History Walks help their environmental education program which benefits both local and national residents and also educational institutions. Because of continued support by visitors worldwide, the reserve has succeeded in transforming their perspective on nature.

The reserve receives volunteers for maintenance, repair and construction of the trails in the forest; and also for projects in environmental education and research, which enhance the visitor experience.

The Monteverde Conservation League and the Children's Eternal Rain Forest

The Monteverde Conservation League is a non –profit organization which is devoted to the conservation of the tropical forest. Its mission is to preserve and rehabilitate tropical ecosystems and their biodiversity. It was founded in 1986 in Monteverde to accomplish this mission. It began a campaign of land purchase for the conservation of the tropical forest and succeeded in establishing the largest private reserve in Costa Rica: the Children's Eternal Rainforest. This was all made possible with the help of the children, adults, schools, and organizations around the world.

Since its development, the Children's Eternal Rainforest caught the attention of people around the world, especially children and teachers, due to its very special foundation story. In 1987, a group of children in Sweden, concerned about the loss of tropical forests, asked

themselves what could be done to save the forest. They came up with activities, raised money, and sent the Monteverde Conservation League the funds to purchase and protect land near Monteverde.

The ACM is open to receiving both financial donations and volunteer work., The volunteering department has grown increasingly large, which including tasks that last 1-3 months, as well as other odd jobs.

Santa Elena Reserve

The Santa Elena Reserve has a unique philosophy. Its goal is to protect the cloud forest AND to provide funds for quality education for the Santa Elena public high school, with a strong focus environment. This, they believe, will ensure the wellbeing of the cloud forest in the long term. Proceeds from entrance fees, guided tours and the souvenir shop are either reinvested in the management of the reserve or are channeled to the high school for technology, and to fund courses in environmental education, biology, agriculture, language and tourism. In using the Reserve as a natural classroom, students and teachers harness an unlimited educational resource that can be used for anything from studying tropical plants ecology to leading tours.

The Santa Elena Preserve comprises an area of 310 hectare or 765 acres, and together with the Children's Eternal Rainforest, the Arenal Conservation Area and the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, constitutes a contiguous conservation area of approximately 28000 hectares or 69000 acres. Plans are underway to raise funds to buy and restore adjacent farmlands for future inclusion into the Santa Elena Reserve.

Conservation efforts in the area are concentrating on establishing forest corridors radiating from the central conservation area down to the lower altitudes as many of the forest fauna, such as the Resplendent Quetzal, American Pumas, Jaguars, Ocelots, and Red Brocket Deer require large territories in which to forage and breed.

Santa Elena Reserve welcomes volunteers of any age and experience for any length of time. Volunteers are needed for trail construction and maintenance, sign construction, interpretation, biological research, and teaching English.

Other Institutions

The Monteverde Institute

Established in 1986 as a non-profit educational association by Monteverde residents, the Monteverde Institute blends international study and research with educational and cultural opportunities for the local Monteverde communities.

The Monteverde Institute partners with schools and universities from around the world to provide programs in tropical biology and conservation; sustainable development; political economy; sustainable design (architecture, landscape architecture, resource management and community planning);public health; and Spanish and Costa Rican culture.

The MVI also sponsors and supports research that can be applied to local, national and international issues of environmental degradation and decline of biodiversity, rapid social and demographic change, and community health.

The MVI additionally runs the Monteverde Traveler's Philanthropy program with the help of some hotels and restaurants in the area, managed to raise funds to rebuild Montverde's multi-use community center. Currently, this program has evolved to become a philanthropic organization called "Monteverde Community Fund," which operates to promote sustainability initiatives in the Monteverde region and its communities.

The MVI is open to receive financial donations as volunteer work, primarily in research.

Cloud Forest School

The Cloud Forest School was co-founded by Vera Zeledón in 1991. This educational institution has become a crucial entity in ensuring social mobility in Monteverde; offering quality, creative, innovative and bilingual education to local children. Also, its strong environmental factor is helping raise residents who appreciate and respect the environment in Monteverde. This is perhaps the most effective way to ensure the continuation of all the conservations efforts taking place in the area.

The Mission of the Cloud Forest School, is to nurture generations of ecologically aware, academically well-rounded bilingual individuals. We will work to provide students with the knowledge, values and skills needed to make environmentally and socially conscious decisions on a local, national and global scale. All this with the Vision of a sustainable future for the Earth through educating individuals to love, respect and protect the natural environment, to strive for justice and peace as well as academic excellence and to work towards conserving biodiversity and enriching community life.

The Cloud Forest School, welcomes those who are interested in learning more about its labor, and those who want to participate in volunteer and internship programs that this center offers.

Projects of the Hotel Belmar Sustainability Department

Reforestation of Mother Earth

Mother Earth, is the Belmar organic farm located 15 km away from Monteverde, in the Abangares protection zone. The Belmar family, with the help of Hotel staff members and other local stakeholders, has taken the initiative to reforest large sectors of this property. The purpose of this project is to contribute to strengthening the biological corridors in the area, through inclusive reforestation activities that help to the awareness of the involved social groups.

Also, the project seeks to obtain other benefits associated with reforestation processes, such as the protection of water sources, erosion control and carbon fixation.

If you want to contribute to this project, and thus also contribute to offset the environmental damage caused by our carbon footprint, you can do it any of the following ways:

through credit card via the internet, or directly participating in reforestation efforts regularly scheduled by the Department of Sustainability.

Battery Recycling Project

This initiative aims to contribute to the reduction of environmental pollution, while opening the way to a process of environmental awareness in the community, and encouraging the monitoring of these practices by local organized groups. Currently, we have established several battery collection points and we assume responsibility for storage, transportation and appropriate disposal of them. In a similar way, we are taking action to expand the scope of the project to the collection of other special handled waste, such as fluorescent and electronic equipment.

Strengthening communities on sustainability criteria

The program's overall objective is to contribute to strengthening local capacities on sustainability criteria, through a participatory approach, to help the comprehensive development in communities near Monteverde.

Strengthening communities on sustainability criteria, begins with the development of skills oriented towards the analysis of the local needs or problems in the environmental, socio-economic or institutional areas. All this with is done with an emphasis on the identification of causes, involved actors, and possible solutions as well as prevention. Thus, this project intends to carry out the construction of knowledge concerning sustainability in a participatory way, through joint work meetings and some other scheduled activities in which each person can contribute from their own experience.

The general idea is to provide technical support towards the project's beneficiary communities, which contribute to strengthening the autonomy and local empowerment, rather than create relationships of dependency between the parties. All this is based on activities conducted to identify the main needs and ways to satisfy them through contributions towards the enhancement of the organizational capabilities in the community. Throughout this process, the issue of sustainability constitutes a transverse axis, as a concept of continuous discussion and analysis, in support of local development.

As a result of this initiative, we have developed environmental education workshops in local schools, among other activities with organized groups of the zone.

Pack for a purpose

The implementation of the Pack for a Purpose project emerged with the aim of contributing to the solving of the important needs of the communities near Monteverde, and also as a way to contribute to the processes of development in the area.

Pack for a Purpose is a globally recognized initiative, which allows travelers to positively impact in the communities near their travel destination, in this case Monteverde. This consists of saving just a few kilos of space in the traveler's suitcase to bring supplies for schools, medical clinics and other organized groups that work for the community welfare. This allows tourists to generate a truly positive impact on the quality of life for the project beneficiaries.

Hotel Belmar utilizes the Pack for a Purpose Program to contribute towards the following projects: "Maintaining the Children's Eternal Forest Reserve," "The Ranger Club Youths of Monteverde" and the "Medical Cadet Corps." This is a way to contribute to the maintenance of the private reserves in the area, as well as the comprehensive training of youth in the community of Monteverde. It is designed to protect not only the environment but also society cohabiting in it. Soon we hope to continue adding more projects, that may to continue to involve our guests and also contribute towards Monteverde's environment and society.

If you are interested in contributing towards any of our conservation programs please contact our sustainability department at sostenibilidad@hotelbelmar.net.

Contact List

Monteverde Conservation Area and Children's Eternal Forest

Phone Number: (506) 2645 5003

Website: <http://www.acmcr.org>

Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve

Phone Number: (506) 2645 5122

Website: <http://www.cct.or.cr>

Santa Elena Cloud Forest Preserve

Phone Number: (506) 2645 5693

Website: <http://www.reservasantaelena.org>

Monteverde Institute

Phone Number: (506) 2645 5053

Website: <http://www.monteverde-institute.org>

Cloud Forest School

Phone Number: (506) 2645-5161

Website: <http://cloudforestschool.org>

Hotel Belmar Sustainability Department

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