



E - N E W S

Edition: December 2011



Team member spotlight

Paso Pacifico's executive director Sarah Otterstrom, mother of three, is a PhD ecologist who studied the effects of agricultural burning on the dry tropical forests of southern Nicaragua.

She grew up in the woods at the edge of high desert country in eastern Washington, did her undergraduate work in Costa Rica, where she led tourism expeditions through the rainforest canopy, and completed her graduate studies at the University of California at Davis.

Her passion for wildlife, forests, and the people of Central America led her to found Paso Pacifico in 2005.

[Read the Paso Pacifico backstory.](#)

Conservation in ACTION

Launched earlier this year, the Proyecto Tesoros de Nicaragua ([Proyecto TESÓN](#)), a joint effort to clean up the San Juan River catchment, has already demonstrated how public-private partnerships can work to build a more pristine and sustainable Nicaragua.

There are now three Ambassadors of the Environment working around the clock to clean up garbage near the estuary and along the beach, and to monitor the volume and make up of debris. Proyecto TESÓN's Ambassadors also lead seminars for local students on the importance of environmental stewardship, and recruit young people to participate in cleaning up local waterways.

Additionally, Proyecto TESÓN installed state-of-the-art trash and recycling bins in San Juan del Sur, where they're currently hauling in between 8500 and 17,000 pounds of garbage **each week** across just 2 km of beach in the San Juan del Sur harbor.

With Proyecto TESÓN, [Café Las Flores](#) is creating a national model for private sector collaboration to benefit the environment and the local economy. Recently other companies have joined in support of this project including the [Centro Empresarial Las Pellas](#) and the Ferreteria Richardson.

Visit he Tesoros de Nicaragua web pages for [data](#) and [photos](#) which show the impact of this important work.

Proyecto TESÓN is a collaborative effort pooling resources and expertise from Café Las Flores, the non-profit [Comunidad Connect](#), the

ACT NOW!

San Juan del Sur school district, and the San Juan del Sur municipal government. We are especially grateful to Gian Marco Palazio for designing and spearheading this coalition.

Paso Pacífico in the News

This month, Nicaragua's most widely read newspaper, El Mundo, ran an [in-depth piece on our turtle rangers](#), sharing the story of Marco Pizarro, one of a handful of former poachers who now earn more money protecting turtle nests than they used to earn harvesting their eggs for sale in the local market.

Not only were we pleased with the media attention, and the recognition of our rangers, we were thrilled with the article's clear explanation of our approach to [sea turtle conservation efforts](#) and our commitment to both protect endangered species and economically empower local communities.

The El Mundo piece provides a good overview of how payments for ecosystem services work, and also highlights the benefits of community outreach and educational programs for this and future generations.

We are grateful to the Danish International Cooperation Agency ([DANIDA](#)), which has provided generous financial and technical support to Paso Pacifico's [Coastal-Marine Research Project](#). Through this program we are training local marine biologists, strengthening our turtle ranger program, mapping reefs and turtle habitats, and ensuring the protection of newly discovered turtle nesting beaches, thereby allowing more critically endangered sea turtles to safely nest than ever before.

Partnerships make it possible

We're pleased to honor the network of private reserves known as the Red de Reservas Silvestres Privadas de Nicaragua ([Red RSP](#)) on their tenth anniversary. During its first decade, the organization and its members have arguably been the vanguard for conservation in the country.

For Paso Pacifico, the reserves supported by the Red RSP are the building blocks for successful corridors such as the [Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor](#). Paso Pacifico has benefited from the strength of the Red RSP in other ways. The long-time president to the Red RSP, Claudi Belli owner of [Montibelli Reserve](#), was also a founding board member for Paso Pacifico and helped us build our visions for landowner participation in conservation. You can learn about Claudia and many other inspiring members and reserves in this network through [this video](#) (in Spanish).



Please keep Paso Pacifico in mind this holiday season as you ponder Christmas gifts and charitable donations.

Do your holiday shopping online with the [GoodSearch toolbar](#), and a percentage of your purchases will automatically be donated to our conservation efforts.

Donate \$25 and [Light up the Night](#) for a Nicaraguan student with a solar-paneled portable light bag.

[Donate \\$100](#) and replace a fishing boat's gill net with turtle-friendly fishing gear.

IN GRATITUDE



Paso Pacifico is grateful to the Guanacaste Conservation Area ([GCA](#)) and its staff in Costa Rica for helping to build our capacity for marine conservation.

Last month, our Country Director Liza González and a group of Nicaraguan students and fishermen traveled to northwestern Costa Rica for PADI dive training. Dr. Frank Joyce of Monteverde, Costa Rica and a Board member for



[Vienen días de amar la Tierra](#) from [Erik Flakoll Alegría](#) on [Vimeo](#).

We are also thrilled that a new reserve has been added to the network and that it is located in a critical dry forest area of the Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor. Landowners Donn Wilson and Juan Manuael Caldera have worked with Paso Pacifico over the past five years to reforest, protect, and monitor the [Las Fincas Reserve](#). The official private reserve designation was handed down from the Nicaraguan Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources ([MARENA](#)) just this past month.

Congratulations to Las Fincas on their new status and to Red RSP on ten years of good work.

the [Guanacaste Dry Forest Fund](#) helped to make logistical arrangements and connect us with Minor Lara an experienced diver and fisherman. Training took place at Guajiniquil beach and other submarine locations within GCA marine protected area. Six Nicaraguans received dive training to better our capacity to study and protect marine ecosystems.

The Guanacaste Conservation Area is a friend, neighbor and model for conservation and we are fortunate to learn from their experience and look forward to further exchanges.

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