



E - N E W S

December 2013



### Team member spotlight

Marcela Gutierrez recently joined the Paso Pacífico team. She is a talented agronomist who received her training at the EARTH University of Costa Rica. Marcela is passionate about sustainable and organic food production in her native Nicaragua and enjoys working closely with farmers. She now heads up Paso Pacífico's reforestation project where we are restoring two major watersheds with native vegetation. This project is funded by [Man and Nature](#) and is benefiting the local economy and helping increase the biodiversity of this unique landscape.

## Conservation in ACTION

Frogs are in decline throughout Central America. One cause of this decline is the chytrid fungus, which is a lethal skin disease found throughout much of the region's moist forest. Through the [Amphibians in Decline](#) program, Paso Pacífico together with its scientific partners [Dr. Joe Townsend and Melissa Medina](#) has been working to identify the amphibians in the Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor and to determine if chytrid fungus is a present threat. Thus far, we have documented at least eighteen species that are being validated through genetic analysis, and tissue samples are currently being tested for the fungus.

The most important component of this project has been the educational workshops imparted to eighty-five of our Junior Rangers who have also been enlisted to help monitor frogs in their nearby streams. The project has relied on the expertise of Nicaraguan biologists Milton Namendy and Marlon Sotelo (pictured above) and has also benefited from support from the [US Forest Service International Institute for Tropical Forestry](#), the Nicaraguan Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Nicaragua CITES office.

## ACT NOW!



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## Paso Pacífico in the News

In early November of this year a large amount -possibly hundreds- of Eastern Pacific sea turtles were found dead off the coast of northern Costa Rica and southern Nicaragua. On one patrol Paso Pacifico rangers found 28 dead turtles. What is unusual about this mass mortality event is that it is affecting green turtles specifically. Paso Pacifico, along with Nicaragua's Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources [MARENA](#), has been working to understand the cause of this turtle loss. Two recent articles in the [Tico Times](#) and [El Nuevo Diario](#) mention the challenge and the efforts of Paso Pacifico and others to understand these recent deaths. Unfortunately, the results are still inconclusive, but signs are pointing towards a toxic dinoflagellate (i.e., marine plankton).

## Partnerships make it possible

Paso Pacífico and its partners from the [Mult-Lateral Investment Fund](#) at the Inter-American Development Bank are thrilled to be at work with the program "Empowerment and Leadership for a Sustainable Geotourism". This three year project is promoting tourism centered on sea turtles by strengthening women entrepreneurs and developing community-based forest and coastal conservation programs. Early progress has been made in the area of environmental education. In the coming months, efforts will focus on building stakeholder collaboration around marine turtle conservation.

During this season of giving, let us remember the plants that give us air to breathe and the birds and bats that grace the air. Give thanks through a gift to help us protect them.

**DONATE**

**IN GRATITUDE**



We are especially grateful to Dick and Nancy Noble, who have spent the year working to address the needs of rural communities across the Paso del Istmo. From supporting the health outposts to working on clean-water technologies for the local schools, the Nobles have been hard at work. They believe that conservation and community well-being are closely tied and are funding projects that make this connection. The team at the Managua office were thrilled to celebrate Dick's birthday this past month, when the Nobles visited Nicaragua for the fifth time this year.

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