

PASO PACÍFICO

10 Years MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR CONSERVATION

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





Founded in 2005, Paso Pacífico's mission is to restore and conserve the natural ecosystems of Central America's Pacific slope by collaborating with landowners, local communities and involved organizations to promote ecosystem conservation.

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Nicaragua Country Director

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Dear Friends,

Thanks to your friendship and support, we saw many successes in our conservation programs in 2015. A pair of threatened yellow-naped Amazon parrots successfully reared three chicks in one of our artificial parrot boxes, which were set up (left) two years ago to provide habitat for this threatened species. We saw over one hundred children graduate from our Junior Ranger program, and thanks to new partnerships with the private sector we were able to expand sea turtle protection efforts to more beaches. We also made a major step towards building the Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor by placing a financial deposit on the purchase of a forest property located at the core of the corridor in southwest Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, the 2015 year was also marked by hardship due to the El Niño climate phenomenon that led to a severe drought, impacting hundreds of the tree seedlings we planted earlier in the year and leaving both wildlife and local communities without water. By the year's end, we were witnessing an unprecedented monkey die-off where dozens of howler monkeys were found sick or dead. Our conservation science director, Dr. Kim Williams-Guillén, put together an international emergency response team to identify the cause of mortality while we worked with our Junior Rangers to alleviate the suffering of wildlife by providing water and food for the animals. This sort of crisis reminds us that we are needed in Nicaragua, which is the largest country in Central America but has the lowest level of conservation programs in the region.

As we reflect on the 2015 year, we are also taking a moment to pause and consider that it is the year we celebrate our ten-year mark as an organization. It is hard to believe that a whole decade has passed! It is so humbling to look back and think of all the people who have made this milestone possible. From the beginning, volunteers and friends stepped up to help design projects, write grants, and give time. Our active Board of Directors has provided direction and helped us determine the path forward, and committed staff such as Liza González joined the organization in Nicaragua from early on. Finally, generous donors have provided us with the trust and resources to propel us through the years. We are sincerely grateful to you all.

Time really does fly when you are having fun.

Gratefully,



Sarah Otterstrom
Executive Director



Follow us on social media:



**3939 birds,
163 species**

birds observed at Christmas Bird Count



17,397

sea turtle hatchlings released
thanks to our protection



229

number of yellow-naped
Amazon parrots in long-term
bird monitoring program



30,200

native trees planted



49,040

hours that rangers protected
forests and beaches



22,080

hours spent by Junior Rangers
monitoring wildlife (citizen science)



60%

percent increase in
spider monkey densities



Paso Pacífico's Executive Director Recognized as A Changemaker



Paso Pacífico founder and Executive Director Sarah Otterstrom was elected an Ashoka Fellow and received this award at a ceremony in Mexico City in November 2015. This recognition is for the groundbreaking work that Paso Pacífico is doing to connect government, private and citizen sectors in Nicaragua to the natural world. The Ashoka organization was started in 1980 as a way to connect and empower innovative social entrepreneurs.

An Ashoka Fellowship is a lifetime award and enables both Dr. Otterstrom and Paso Pacífico to link with a global network of Ashoka Fellows who are developing cutting-edge approaches to society's biggest problems. As a part of the Ashoka network, Paso Pacífico will have opportunities to participate in trainings to strengthen our organization and work with experts in the field of social entrepreneurship to build strategies for scaling our programs.

What Ashoka Fellows Share



Potential
to Change
Patterns
Across Society



Commitment
to Bold
New Ideas



Innovative
Solutions

Proving Compassion,
Creativity, and Collaboration
Are Tremendous Forces for Change



OUR HISTORY

from 2005 to 2015

Our Founding

As a grad student studying fire ecology in Nicaragua, Sarah Otterstrom watches poverty and globalization combine to increase the stress and degradation of the dry tropical forest. She identifies an urgent need to preserve and restore this ecosystem by working in close partnership with communities and the private sector. In 2004, she completes her doctorate in ecology with an emphasis in human ecology at University of California, Davis, and dreams of responding to the need for dry forest conservation. Later that year, she meets Liza González during the World Parks Congress in South Africa and the two discuss this dream and agree to work together for this cause.

In 2005, Sarah and nonprofit expert Christine Schmidt travel to Nicaragua to refine the organization's design. In August, Paso Pacífico's Articles of Incorporation are filed with the State of California. Scientist Dr. Kim Williams-Guillén wins first grant for Paso Pacífico to initiate study of the endangered black-handed spider monkey.



Sandra Pearson joins the Board of Directors as founding Board President and the organization hires Liza González as Country Director. Projects expand to include agroforestry with farmers and environmental education with children. Spider monkey project concludes that the population is nearing local extinction. First reforestation project begins with 25,000 native trees in partnership with landowner. The Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor is given its name and given first priority.

2006

The US Forest Service International Institute of International Forestry (USFS-IITF) invites Paso Pacífico to join watershed and sustainable tourism projects. Paso Pacífico begins training local community members in bird tourism and sea kayak guiding. Paso Pacífico launches the Return to Forest project in partnership with CarbonFund.org to restore dry tropical forests and to offset 150,000 tons of CO₂. Tree nurseries managed by local women successfully grow 200,000 seedlings of 25 native species. Sea turtle program launches with community surveys and awareness campaigns.

2007

Paso Pacífico hires its first community rangers to protect the Brasilon sea turtle nesting beach, an important site for green sea turtles. The Return to Forest project receives third-party audit to document extent of reforestation and the project is awarded Gold-Level Validation under the CCB Standard, the first in Latin America to achieve such status. This achievement is celebrated at the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, D.C. with participation of diplomats and partners from across the city. Study of threatened yellow-naped Amazon parrot nesting finds low population of parrots and high nest failure due to poaching and loss of large trees. Paso Pacífico leads widespread cleanups and becomes Nicaragua country coordinator for the International Coastal Cleanup.

2008

Satellite transmitters are placed on endangered hawksbill sea turtles during board retreat, tracking turtles as far as Oaxaca, Mexico. Sea turtle rangers protect 147 sea turtle nests. Paso Pacífico helps two properties, Las Fincas and La Conga, become private reserves, thus expanding the protected land in the Paso del Istmo Corridor. Dr. Wayne Arendt of USFS-IITF and Dr. Jean-Michel Maes of the National Entomological Museum launch long-term bird and butterfly monitoring programs in partnership with Paso Pacífico, sustained by USFS-IITF. Paso Pacífico commits to empowering women as environmental leaders and becomes a member of the Clinton Global Initiative. Sarah attends COP15 in Copenhagen and accepts award for the Return to Forest carbon project. Other award recipients have included Jane Goodall.

2009

The environmental education program launches a bird education program that includes a slingshot-for-binocular exchange; more than 100 children are equipped with binoculars. Karen Warren and Susan White visit Nicaragua and establish a spider monkey sanctuary for animals rescued from the pet trade. The sanctuary introduces hundreds of local children to the complex behavior of forest primates. The community ranger program expands to include forest rangers who work to protect and monitor wildlife. A migratory bird conservation strategy is designed for the Paso del Istmo. An inventory of local bats identifies species never before found in Nicaragua. Paso Pacífico joins USAID-funded biodiversity and tourism project.

2010



Dr. Kim Williams-Guillén joins as Director of Conservation Science. Paso Pacifico launches a primate monitoring program with focus on the critically-endangered black-handed spider monkey. Community rangers are hired and trained to carry out the monitoring. The yellow-naped Amazon parrot program begins using artificial nest boxes to increase the availability of nest sites. The sea turtle program is strengthened by a new boat and additional monitoring equipment. Volunteer researchers identify a jaguar at eastern extreme of the Paso del Istmo. The species was thought to have been locally extinct for more than two decades. Paso Pacifico begins an ocean conservation outreach and education effort targeting the local surf community. Paso Pacifico's annual budget exceeds half a million dollars.

2011

Environmental education modules are consolidated and the Junior Ranger program is launched. Over 100 students graduate by the end of the year. Coral reef monitoring begins through support from international scientists; local biologists receive scuba and marine monitoring training. Researchers validate satellite imagery on the ground and develop a detailed land use map for the Paso del Istmo, enabling modeling of connectivity and prioritization of forest fragments. Efforts to build local economies and restore watersheds in the Paso del Istmo begin with Man & Nature as partner. Reforestation begins with 30,000 trees, including species like the native balsam tree that possess high-value botanical properties. Farmers form watershed management committees to plan for land use across the watershed and to protect newly planted areas from livestock.

2012

Meliponiculture program begins supporting local farmers in keeping native stingless bees for wild honey. Paso Pacifico initiates herpetological studies aimed at identifying threats and distribution for the endangered five-keeled spiny-tailed iguana, the painted wood turtle, and several endangered frog species. Results indicate that hunting and the pet trade threaten these dry forest reptiles, while frog species are losing ground due to changing habitat and climate. With help from Miguel Ordeñana, a camera trap study launches throughout the entire Paso del Istmo to assess prey and predators, especially jaguars. The Noble family initiates a program to support rural schools and health clinics across the Paso del Istmo, increasing community well-being and thereby improving local support for conservation efforts. Paso Pacifico launches a women's sea turtle nursery to care for sea turtle nests at Playa del Coco. The organization also launches a sea turtle protection program in partnership with Rancho Santana. Sarah becomes environmental stewardship adviser to the Clinton Global Initiative.

2013

Study of Nicaragua's largest bat colony begins to document the use of agricultural areas and how bats reduce crop loss. Jaguars are detected at more than one location in the Paso del Istmo and their impact on local domestic animals creates conflict. Paso Pacifico responds with a program to support ranchers through technical assistance and financial support. An additional 100 Junior Rangers graduate from the Junior Ranger program. Fledgling yellow-naped Amazon parrots receive radio collars to monitor their use of habitat. A women's oyster cooperative is formed in Ostional and its members begin training to farm native oysters to improve livelihoods. Paso Pacifico hosts first donor trip for committed friends and donors. Junior Rangers participate with Paso Pacifico in the organization's first Christmas Bird Count and count 152 bird species. Paso Pacifico's annual budget exceeds one million dollars.

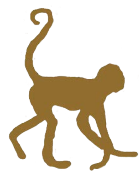
2014

The Paso del Istmo Biological Corridor is analyzed using resistance modeling to identify best sites for increasing forest connectivity. A detailed corridor map is developed. Paso Pacifico expands its partnerships with the private sector to include Aqua Wellness Resort. Paso Pacifico's ELLAS project helps over ten women entrepreneurs develop sustainable tourism-related programs. The project also helps educate local spear fisherman, leading to the fishers' commitment to stop fishing with dynamite. Yellow-naped Amazon parrots successfully reproduce using artificial nests. Paso Pacifico makes a down payment on its first property, 150 acres in the heart of the Paso del Istmo. As the El Niño season begins, Paso Pacifico helps local communities prepare for drought. The number of Junior Rangers continues to increase; their citizen scientist efforts gather valuable data about the Paso del Istmo. Sarah is elected an Ashoka Fellow, making her a part of the global Ashoka network of leading social entrepreneurs. Paso Pacifico celebrates its tenth anniversary.

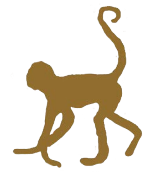
2015



PASO PACÍFICO



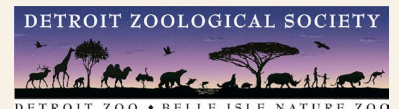
10th Anniversary Celebrations



This past fall, more than 200 people came together to celebrate Paso Pacifico's ten-year anniversary. Joyful celebrations were held in both Nicaragua and the United States. We sincerely thank everyone who has helped us reach this milestone.



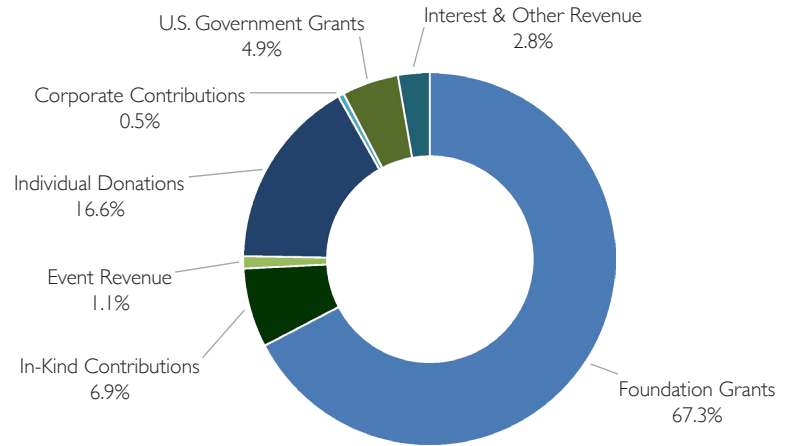
Thank You to Our Celebration Sponsors



2015 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

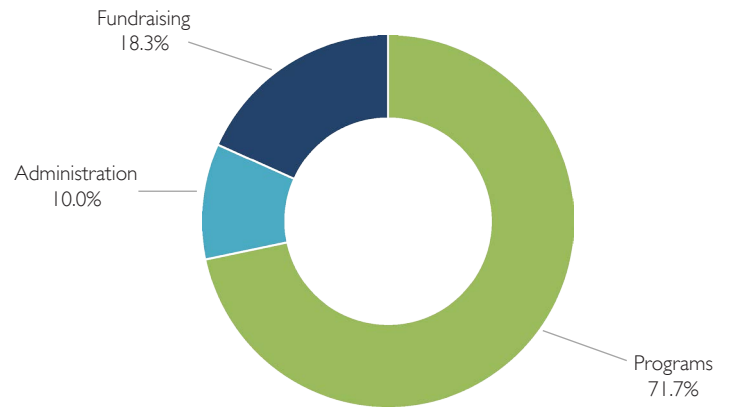
Annual Support & Revenue

Foundation Grants	\$808,537
Event Revenue	\$13,011
Individual Donations	\$198,951
Corporate Contributions	\$6,112
U.S. Government Grants	\$58,856
In-Kind Contributions	\$82,342
Interest & Other Revenue	\$33,062
Total	\$1,200,871



Annual Expenses

Program	\$858,446
Administrative	\$119,890
Fundraising	\$218,682
Total	\$1,197,018



THANK YOU!  ¡GRACIAS!



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