

Launching of Honduran National Corridor – Lanzamiento del Paseo del Jaguar

La Ceiba, Honduras, November 15, 2007

At the Wildlife Conservation Society Jaguar Conservation Program's regional priority setting workshop Paseo de los Jaguares in Costa Rica July 19-20, 2007, the lead Honduran Representatives (Carla Carcamo, Director of Wildlife, Juan Pablo Suazo, Director of Biodiversity, Jorge Ivan Restrepo, Director of the CCAD Regional Institute for Biodiversity at Escuela Agricola Zamorano) expressed interest in a launching ceremony, matched with a working session, to initiate the Jaguar Corridor in Honduras.

The Launching of El Paseo de Jaguar in Honduras took place November 15 in the town of La Ceiba, which is centrally located along Honduran's Caribbean Coast. The event was held at the Hotel Palma Real, with the spectacular Nombre de Dios mountain range, a key part of the corridor in Honduras, as a backdrop.



The event was a collaborative product of the Secretaria of Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), the Forestry Administration of the Honduran State Corporation for Forestry Development (AFE-COHDEFOR), the Comision Centroamericano del Ambiente y Desarrollo (CCAD)'s Regional Institute of Biodiversity (IRBIO) which is housed in the Escuela Agricola Zamorano (a prestigious agricultural university in Honduras), and the Wildlife Conservation Society's Jaguar Conservation Program (JCP). Ultimately it was the Honduran government who organized the event. Leonardo Lanza, Division of Biodiversity (DIBIO SERNA) was the central coordinator, with Juan Pablo Suazo, now Honduran Director of the bi-National Biosphere Reserve Corazon del Corredor, and Carla Carcamo, Director of Wildlife AFE-COHDEFOR providing advice.



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Representante de Gerencia de Administración Forestal del Estado Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal

El Director Región Forestal Atlántida -

Coordinador, Programa para la Conservación de Jaguares - WCS

The format of the Launching was presentations and a signing ceremony in the morning, attended by approximately 60, followed by an afternoon planning session planned by approximately 30. The morning's event was covered by the Honduran program television show Sol a Sol. The ceremony's attendance was diverse. Virtually every non-government organization working in northern Honduras was represented as were multiple government agencies. Miskitu indigenous leaders had made the arduous journey by water and air from the far flung Department of Gracias a Dios. School teachers and Mayors were also in attendance

The afternoon's working group was smaller, dominated by a mix of government agency personnel and indigenous leaders, with a representative of the national cattlemen's association providing important input. Maps were studied, areas of occupancy and dispersal marked down, and priorities expressed. One outcome was a matrix listing actors and their expertise and responsibilities. Another outcome was further crystallization of this year's (2008) schedule of activities.



The WCS JCP ground-truthing team started the evaluation jaguar dispersal routes (ground-truthing) within days of the launching, developing a substantial network of on the ground collaborators. They will resume ground-truthing, with Honduran partners, in March 2008.



As this is written a camera trapping survey is underway in Rus Rus near the Nicaraguan border. As soon as that is over another camera trap survey will start in the World Heritage Site Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve. WCS staff will present two week-long educational workshops in rural centers using our Jaguars for Forever curriculum in May 2008. Also in 2008, WCS JCP and IRBIO Zamorano will develop training events, protocols, and pilot projects to enhance cattle ranching and jaguar co-existence. The government of Honduras has fully embraced the corridor. Extensive ground-truthing, additional surveys, and work with ranchers the entire length of the corridor is anticipated, as is collaborations with indigenous, private and government actors in the wilds of the La Mosquitia, the Honduran stronghold of jaguars, adjacent to Nicaragua's Bosawas reserve.