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Inirida, a conservation star



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Inirida, a conservation star

While the world was preparing for a historic match on tuesday 8 of july, the colombian government scored the first goal of the day. A presidential committee travelled to Inirida, Guainia, to witness the declaration of Colombia’s sixth Ramsar site: Fluvial Star of Inirida.

Ramsar is an international conservation figure that protects strategic places for their richness in water, biodiversity and freshwater ecosystems. Wetlands are invaluable ecosystems for us humans: they regulate water cycles and nutrients, protect us against floods and droughts and harbour thousands of species.

The Fluvial Star of Inirida is a mosaic of forests and savannas and a complex of rivers and basins where four rivers of different colors and origins unite to give birth to the Orinoco River. The declared area encompasses 253 thousand hectares and it is unique for its immense biological diversity. Here more than 900 plant species, 470 bird species, 400 fish species, 200 mammals and 40 amphibians can be found. The Ramsar figure will guarantee that Colombia will protect its natural capital. Guainia has the possibility to generate a greener development model in the higher Orinoco through ecotourism and possible jobs creation.

President Juan Manuel Santos publically affirmed in his declaration speech that protecting the environment was a priority for the country and that his government could not fail in that purpose. This declaration, together with the recent expansion of the Chiribiquete Mountains National Park, are great steps the Government has taken to move forward within the framework of the “natural resources reserves” Resolution, which ensures certain areas will be left out of mining activities temporarily, while the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development wraps up the studies needed to adequately delimit them and declare their protection. It is fundamental that the Government keeps protecting areas of high ecological importance such as marine grass prairies that are present in marine-coastline areas, the tropical dry forest and other places of great importance for their water supply.

This is a key moment to stress that conservation is a fundamental keystone to guarantee the country’s sustainable development and competitiveness. Effective management and protection of ecosystems allows for the maintenance of environmental services such as water, which plays a key role in the production process and the population’s well-being. Furthermore, this is the way to guarantee a healthy environment that can contribute to reduce vulnerability to climate risks.

But a responsible planning of the sectors which have impacts on the environment is essential to guarantee sustainable development. Most of all with regards to those situations which bring high impacts such as the ones involved in mining. In such cases it is fundamental to keep in mind the guidelines that have been developed for the Mining-Energetic Planning Unit and that the strategic mining environmental evaluation is encompassed as a priority in the National Development Plan.

With the declaration of the Fluvial Star of Inirida Colombia’s Government scored a goal and tagged the protection of the environment with a star. One must follow this positive path and take measures such as the inclusion of environmental criteria in the zoning of the mining sector, to define where we should, where we should not and how we should carry out this activity. This is the only way we can really open up the path towards a green economy that preserves the ecological structure, the most essential feature of our territory to guarantee human well-being and the country’s sustainable development.



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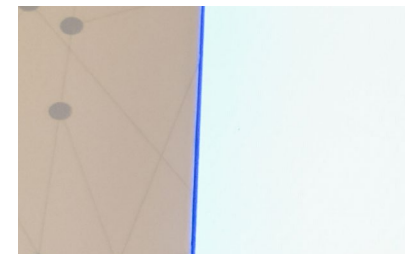
WWF-Colombia signed the Pact for Telework

Technology and access to the internet are bringing a revolution into the cities so they can become smart. Mobile work is part of this

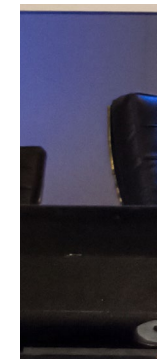
revolution. For this reason, on thursday 24 of july, during the Telework fair organized by the Ministry of Technologies of Information and Communications, twelve private and eight public entities, amongst which was WWF, signed the Pact for Telework. This initiative seeks to implement mobile work policies inside the different organizations involved.

“This alliance with the Ministry is a great opportunity for the innovation processes in the cities”, said Mary Lou Higgins, Director for WWF-Colombia, during the event. Cities are the highest generators of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. According to Higgins, 70% of CO₂ emissions are generated in cities. But if car rides are reduced then emissions will decrease. So, if telework can be used as a policy to reduce energy consumption in transportation, it means it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become a way of fighting climate change.

For more information on the benefits of telework and the Pact click here:



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WWF-Colombia present in the most important nationwide conservation event

All kinds of conservationists gathered in Bogota to share regional, national and international experiences in conservation and sustainable development.

Protected areas: territories for life and peace was the framework in which the different events of the II Colombian Protected Areas Congress were carried out.

WWF-Colombia's participation in the Congress was made visible through six conferences which covered the three thematic grounds of the event, which can be summed up in: protected areas for development; alliances for conservation; and intercultural visions of protected areas.

In the main hall of the Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada Convention Centre, Conservation Director for WWF-Colombia, Luis Germán Naranjo, talked about the necessity of finding new horizons of the imagination that allow us to understand conservation objects as dynamic entities, for only in such a manner can they respond to today's changing world.

In one of the Congress's side events, Sandra Valenzuela, Planning Director for WWF-Colombia, presented the achievements of the Tri-National Programme (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) and expressed their importance in these terms: "it is an example of strategic, systematic and technical alliance (...) an example of cross-border cooperation". In this alliance the regional countries define the conservation opportunities for the amazon biome, specifically in five border protected areas, whilst WWF facilitates the gathering of technical information, necessary for achieving the goals of the Programme.

In another conference hosted by WWF-Colombia consultant, Julian Caicedo, the fulfillments of the "Conserving Hydrobiological and Fishing Resources" Programme, also supported by the European Union, National Parks Office and Natural Heritage Fund were presented to the audience. Besides supporting the definition of the Sanquianga-Gorgona's region conservation strategies, in Colombia's South Pacific, the project seeks to strengthen the communities so they can continue the work they have begun on the environmental zoning of their territory.

Also present in the event were : the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, representatives of indigenous and afro colombian communities, academic professionals and international guests such as Pedro Gamboa, Regional Coordinator of the Latin American National Parks Network.

For more information on the conference given by Luis Germán Naranjo click this link:



For more information on the conference given by Julián Caicedo click this link:



Fotos © WWF-Colombia / Andrea Parra Jiménez



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Lifeguard for forests

The Second International Round of Responsible Forestry Businesses took place on the 22 and 23 of July in Panama City, Panama. On this occasion negotiations peaked at 525 thousand dollars.

The room for growth in the commerce of certified wood became evident once more after the event that gathered 43 companies –responsible producers as well as buyers of certified legal wood– had finished.

This event is promoted by the North Amazon & Choco Darien Forestry Commerce Network in association with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the National Authority of the Environment, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the U.N. Program of FAO–FLEGT. The Forestry Commerce Network is a WWF initiative to eliminate illegal logging and turn the global wood market into a thriving enterprise that preserves the most threatened and valuable forests in the world.

In the Business Round, negotiations reached 525 thousand dollars, which is a very positive result if one bears in mind that this is only the second encounter carried out in Panama.

The Forestry Commerce Network's strategy is based on the promotion of markets for the commerce of wood which comes from sustainable managed forests whose wood is also certified with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard.



BIBO, the award-winning campaign returns

On its fourth version the campaign seeks to create conscience about the relationship between forests and climate change.

“BIBO, a commitment for a better living” is one of the biggest environmental campaigns in Colombia, which seeks to generate conscience about the need of preserving our forests.

It is a long term strategy that began in 2011 and focuses on a specific theme each year, always related to the forests and the different environmental services they offer.

During the first year BIBO spread general knowledge about the forests. Afterwards, in 2012, it focused on the importance of forests in the equilibrium of the water cycle and taught colombians all around the country some every-day habits any person can adopt to help improve the water supply.

Work kept going on 2013 with the relationship between forests, water and energy, considering how sustainable or clean energy production can impact a sustainable development model.

On 2014 BIBO will do everything it takes to create awareness about climate change in people's minds, for this is the main cause in the environment that drives us to seek new ways of life.

Access BIBO's editorial special reports published in El Espectador:





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Tarapoto Expedition

The Tarapoto Natural Pools Complex is located in southern Colombia, close to the border with Peru.

Biodiversity specialists and leaders, or curacas, of the four indigenous groups that inhabit the Amazon Trapeze in Colombia, carried out an expedition to characterize biodiversity in several wetland complexes associated to the Amazon river and two of its tributaries. The expedition is carried out within the framework of an important line of work for WWF: the declaration of new conservation areas to protect strategic ecosystems, a freshwater ecosystem in this case. The project is part of the route towards the designation of this complexes of wetlands as a RAMSAR site. The groups of wetlands spread around the Tarapoto Natural Pools Complex, located in Puerto Nariño, 80 kms west of Leticia.

The presence of the curacas and the joint work done by them and the research group of the Omacha Foundation, the University of Tolima, WWF-Germany and WWF-Colombia was essential for the expedition's success. Besides allowing for the exchange of knowledge between intercultural perceptions of the environment, their presence ensured that the visited communities could actually take a leadership role in the process, since the indigenous leaders are interested in the establishment of a conservation figure on the wetlands complexes. Also, the inter-disciplinary and inter-ethnic work surrounding the conservation of the environment was one of the most attractive aspects of the expedition for two journalists of the Deutsche Welle german t.v. network, who accompanied the work group on the tour.

To view the Deutsche Welle's t.v. production click here:



During the ten days of the expedition researchers gathered samples of fish, amphibians, reptiles and bats; they identified the bird species associated to the aquatic environment and the floodlands and they counted the river dolphin populations. The results are still being analyzed, but they corroborate the importance of these ecosystems in maintaining the rich biodiversity in the Amazon Trapeze, the cornerstone of the indigenous people's that depend on them.



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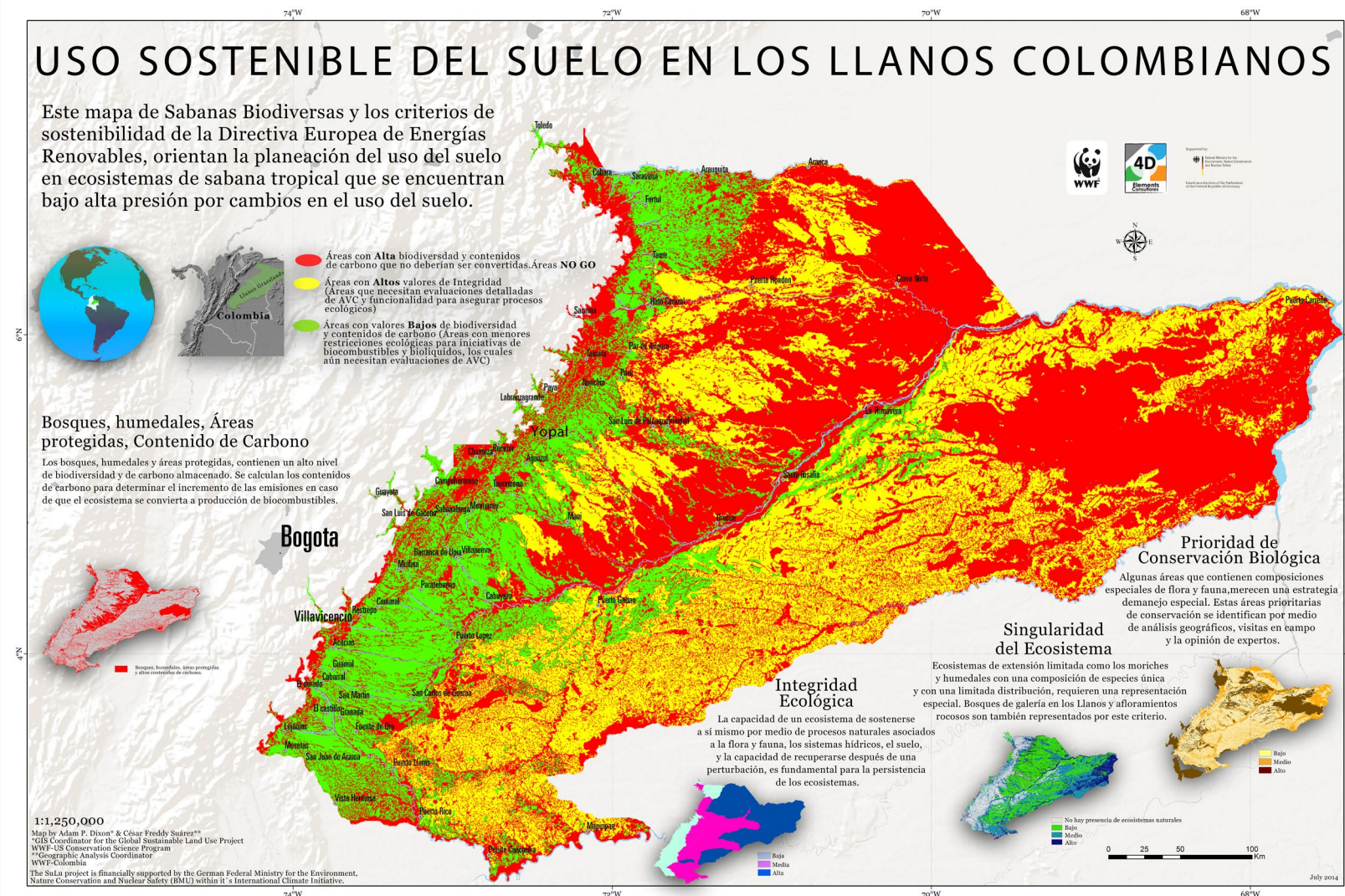
Planning a sustainable future for the colombian plains

On the 28 of august the SULU (Sustainable Land Use) project officially came to an end. This initiative was carried out by WWF with support from the German Ministry of Environment and it has also been put into practice in Brazil and Indonesia. It is based on the Directive 2009/28/CE from the European Union´s Consumption of Renewable Energy Agenda, which establishes sustainable criteria relative to the origin of primary sources for biofuels, excluding from their goals the consumption of biofuels that come from areas with significant biodiversity or which have high carbon reserves. Its main goal is to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the loss of biodiversity due to inadequate changes in land use.

Decisions on land use may have important implications in relation to climate change, biodiversity and poverty. Unplanned agricultural expansion largely affects natural ecosystems but if this development is adequately planned and implemented it can provide an income to local communities, contribute to their development and reduce poverty. In this sense, the SULU project was aimed at providing tools and technical information that can contribute to a better planification of land use, conservation of biodiversity and its functions, as well as zoning of productive activities. The area of study was set in the colombian eastern plains and it encompasses 17.903.559 hectares (15,7% of colombia´s continental surface).

The closing event was a big success and it counted with the participation of public entities such as the Environment and Mines Ministries, other entities linked to planning processes, the Institute for National Climate and Meteorology (IDEAM), the National Institute for Biodiversity Research (Humboldt) and the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (INCODER), the Javeriana University and The Nature Conservancy; representatives of the private sector such as Fedepalma and Fedebiocombustibles, amongst others, were also present at the event.

The participants in the event exchanged their vision on the project´s final product: the Map of Biodiverse Plains. Everyone agreed on the fact that the digital map that was produced is a useful tool for land planning in the eastern plains region.



For more information on the SULU project visit:



PLAN GENERAL DE MANEJO INTEGRAL DE LOS ECOSISTEMAS DE MANGLARES EN EL DEPARTAMENTO DE NARIÑO



Publications

The Marine-Coastland Programme of WWF-Colombia created the General Integrated Management Plan for Mangrove Ecosystems in the Department of Nariño, which is the outcome of five years of joint work with the regional environmental authority –Corponariño– to complete the second step in the environmental zoning of the territory: the formulation of management plans for each area.

The mangrove ecosystems in Nariño now have a characterization, a diagnose and a detailed zoning that can be found in the General Management Plan. Sustainable use zones, zones for preservation and recuperation, and the general management guidelines for the units defined were also identified.

For more information
follow this link:



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LIVING
PLANET**

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Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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