

POSADA AMAZONAS CONSERVATION IMPACT

SOCIAL IMPACT

Participation of Community Leaders - The Control Committee

Posada Amazonas is a participatory project by nature. The lodge is owned by the community and co-managed with Rainforest Expeditions. For its ownership, the community receives 60% of the profits. To make the co-management practical a Control Committee was created from the outset of the project, participating in the planning, implementation and management phases. The ten member committee is elected by the communal assembly and holds monthly meetings with RFE staff to decide upon human resources, financial and operational issues. It also has the responsibility of overseeing RFE operations and management, and of communicating decisions made to the rest of the assembly.

Although the control committee still takes backstage to RFE's hands on approach to day to day management, the intensity and quality of its participation has increased to the point where it is an asset to the project. In the final report to the Macarthur Foundation Training and Communication Project, a list of some tough CC decisions taken during the year 2004 is a great example:

- Definition of communicator CC functions and accountability
- Negotiation with the Communal Assembly in profit reinvestment.
- Establishment and management of a selection process for training courses.
- Establishment and enforcement of a widely accepted Human Resources Policy
- Implementation of a communications strategy to the community.
- Management of a revolving training fund
- External audits on RFE financial documents.

Finally, communicator surveys (see awareness raising, below), reflect a warm but not homogenous, acceptance of the CC. Seventy-three percent of community members answered that the CC's main function was to take decisions on the community project and 65% answered they did this well. Forty-two percent thought their biggest problem was communicating with the community.

Participation of Community Members in General.

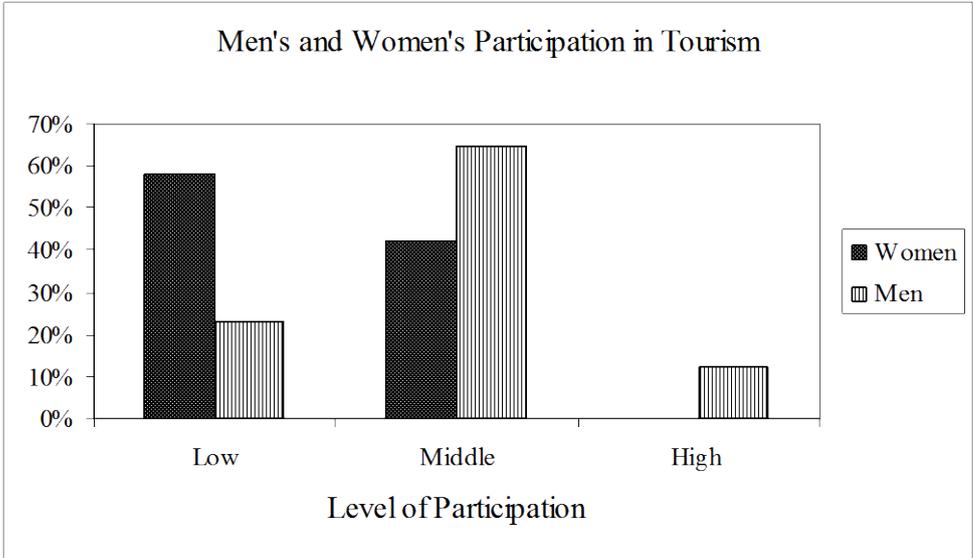
The community's participation in the project is best reflected by these two surveys. The first one responds to interviews to 69 community members done by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund project "the Trueque Amazonico". In response to the question "do you feel involved in Posada Amazonas", over 60 people answered yes. The second, done by our internal communicator team (see section on awareness raising below), asked community members to respond to "who owned the lodge". Ninety six percent answered that the community owned the lodge.

The level of participation is another matter. Community members can be directly involved in the project as staff members or guides, or indirectly as suppliers. They can also be involved as decision makers in the control committee. At any given moment, more than fifty families are involved in any of these three possibilities. Stronza's thesis ("Because it is Ours") provides an in-depth analysis of how different groups of people are involved more or less intensively and is reflected in these charts. However, it can be noted that there are two "excluded" groups – older people and women. In summary, what we have found is that older

people only have the option to participate in the decision making Control Committee because the nature of the jobs at Posada Amazonas is that they are physically demanding. On the other hand, although women have been participating more since this survey, their level of participation is low because taking up employment at Posada Amazonas means living there and abandoning household and child care duties. Therefore, many of them do not have the option of working at Posada Amazonas. Having said that, however, it is noteworthy that the Control Committee has been presided by a woman and that 80% of handicraft suppliers are women.

Level of Participation	Andean	Ese Eja	Ribereño	Part-Ese Eja
Low	42%	32%	45%	30%
Middle	53%	59%	52%	50%
High	5%	9%	2%	20%

Level of Participation	15-25 years	26-40 years	41-60 years	61-75 years
Low	11%	15%	11%	78%
Middle	68%	37%	46%	22%
High	21%	48%	43%	0%



Raising Awareness with Community Leaders – The Trueque Amazonico

At the director level, the single most important action taken to develop a sophisticated level of understanding of community leaders with regards to tourism was the Trueque Amazonico. The Trueque Amazonico was an exchange funded by the CEPF where three community based ecotourism lodges shared their experiences in an extensive format. These three lodges from the Amazon regions of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia (Kapawi, Posada Amazonas, and Chalalan, respectively) had one thing in common – they were the result of partnerships between communities and the private sector (Achuar - Canodros, Infierno – RFE and San Jose de Uchupiamonas – Conservation International, respectively). The project conducted months of fieldwork to obtain baseline information on the similarities and differences between communities and their relationship to and impacts due to tourism. This information was summarized and provided to participants as food for thought during the debates. Participants were six community members selected for their leadership status and each representing a

sector of the community (community leader, staff, guide, handicrafts, etc). Two or three representatives from the private sector partners were also invited. Discussions were held during week-long sessions at each lodge - covering the costs of transporting the crew from one country to another. Finally, debates centered around seven topics: What was the dream? Creating Ecotourism Partnerships, Sharing Economic Resources, Building Local Capacity, Tracking Changes in Communities, Managing of Natural or Cultural Resources and Monitoring Impacts. A phrase from the report summarizes the intensity of the debates "Participants often sat back in quiet surprise as it became apparent just how much they had to share, the extent of their knowledge, and how far they had come, metaphorically and otherwise."

To give an example of how important this was at developing sophisticated understanding of tourism dynamics, a list selected from the Trueque Amazonico's report samples the effectiveness of this project in this respect. Responses are combined from the three communities.

What things do we do now that we never did before?

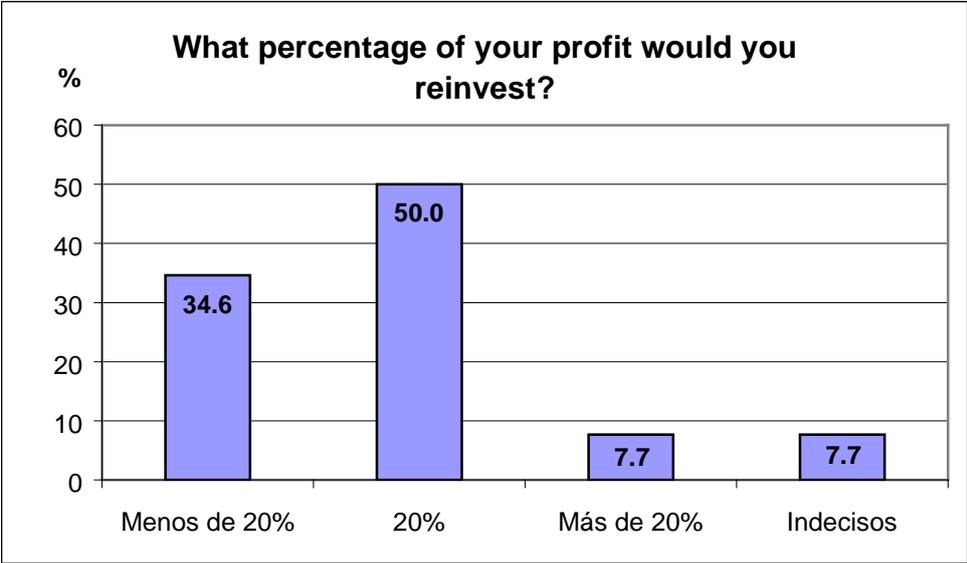
- ✎ Change of attitude related to hunting. Before we hunted animals just to kill, but not always for necessity.
- ✎ Now we change money for communal work, with individual contracts, or, alternatively, we pay to get out of communal work obligations.
- ✎ There is greater integration between the Achuar and other communities.
- ✎ Now we don't sell or trade wild animal species.
- ✎ Now we are creating zones for conservation, thinking about future projects.
- ✎ Now we are paying sanctions for breaking rules related to hunting in trails near the lodge
- ✎ We dedicate more time to ecotourism
- ✎ * More abandonment of families
- ✎ More national and international travel for cultural exchange and professional development
- ✎ Greater leadership skills within the community
- ✎ More relations with national and international organizations, and with people from different places and types of knowledge
- ✎ Greater consciousness about conservation
- ✎ Greater interest in professional development
- ✎ Greater concern for assuming responsibility
- ✎ Handicrafts
- ✎ More meetings focused on tourism
- ✎ More investment in education
- ✎ Some engage in fewer everyday activities, such as hunting, fishing, farming and extraction because they are waiting for profits from tourism and other opportunities for work. "Some have misunderstood how much they were going to benefit from ecotourism, and so they do nothing. Instead of tending to their chacra, etc., there are just waiting for tourism money."
- ✎ Personal interests for developing ecotourism apart from the community enterprise
- ✎ More children studying in the community

* Asterisks indicate issues perceived as challenges.

Raising awareness with Community Members – The Communicators

At the level of the community members it is also important to generate awareness as to the opportunities and threats brought by ecotourism. In addition to the relationship between the

CC and the assembly described in the section on community participation, the project has taken a proactive approach to communication. Two community members are hired as full time communicators. Their job is to visit each household with a predetermined agenda. The agenda is set by the CC after their monthly meetings every month or two. The agenda is designed with two items in mind - to communicate complex issues or decisions on a personal basis and to obtain a reading on the communities understanding or opinion of such issues or decisions. An example of the results of an agenda is given on the chart below, in respect of a question asked on profit reinvestment.



Cultural Impacts

Although the project has not addressed cultural issues strategically, it has been careful not to work with culture as a tourism resource unless we were absolutely convinced that community members were comfortable with it. For example the project began without a single cultural activity or manifestation. It incorporated the ethnobotanical garden and the farm after several months of tourism visits and coordination with the community.

Without having it as one of the stalwarts of the project, cultural revaluation has been generated at Infierno whenever the opportunity presents itself. Two examples include the Ethnobotanical Center and the Handicraft Decoration Project. The ethnobotanical center has existed in the community for two decades, so before the arrival of tourism. It served a purpose as a medical post of sorts, with community members going there for free medicine produced from plants by Ese-eja elders. When the Centro Ñape (as it is called) saw tourists were interested in ethnobotanical tours around Posada Amazonas, they developed a short trail around their center where Ñape’s staff now take tourists on guided walks. About 4000 tourists now visit the Center every year, and contribute about US\$12000 a year with which the Center can maintain its activities. The Center currently wishes to expand its services and products to a line of wellbeing products, a modest spa, and a story-telling CD.

The Handicraft Decoration Project, although much less economically attractive, is an important anecdote in the way in which Posada Amazonas is strengthening identities. In 2002, we pitched the idea of decorating Posada Amazonas with carved icons of Ese-eja mythological characters related to the forests and the waters to the CC . They consulted with elders who did not want to share their ancient myths with tourists. One elder, however, returned after a few weeks saying he had a dream where one of the characters had appeared and told him to go ahead with the project because it would allow many people to hear of it and thus would allow his spirit to go on living forever and not be forgotten. The

elders reconsidered and then spent months discussing the correct way in which to tell the story and draw the character. Finally, these stories were reproduced in beautiful bas-relief wood carvings in the rooms of Posada Amazonas.

These are two examples which illustrate the care with which the project confronts cultural issues. However, the project per se does have a cultural impact, as chapter 6 of Stronza's thesis demonstrates. A reflection of this can be gathered from the list of comments from Trueque participants on debating managing cultural resources

- Tourism has favoured the revaluation of culture and the feeling of pride in being "native."
- Tourism has also prompted new interest in "cultural rescue."
- It's true also that tourism has brought more exposure to western culture, and if some of those outside characteristics are assumed by the population, it does not necessarily mean that people are no longer "native." For example, what people are wearing, or what they are driving, or cooking with or lighting their homes does not necessarily define their status as indigenous.
- With regard to the management of cultural resources, it is vital to respect culture and local desires with regard to whether and how to represent culture to tourists.
- It is essential to establish and uphold Codes of Conduct for showing culture and community to tourists. Participants agreed that Codes will vary from community to community, but some common ones are the following: place limits on where tourists can go and what they can do when they're there, educate tourists about how they should behave when they are visiting communities, do not allow tourists to give gifts, especially to children - gifts should be channeled through the lodge or other organization that can accept them for the community.
- The lodges themselves are also expressions of local culture because they are products of the community, and, in many cases, they are located in communal territory. Therefore, Codes of Conduct and rules for community tourist visits should be applicable to the lodges as well.

Avoiding Impacts on Daily Life.

Posada Amazonas was built on a 2000 hectare portion of the community that has remained uninhabited since the community's creation in 1976. Since its foundation, community by-laws had restricted access and use of this reserve, prohibiting hunting, clear-cutting and logging. Therefore this reserve had essentially been used for timber extraction during 20 years. It proved an ideal place where to build the lodge, as it was both the most beautiful standing forest in the community and it allowed tourism to take its course without affecting the daily lives of people in Infierno, which had occurred elsewhere.

Secondly, any visits of tourists to community members' homes or infrastructure are programmed beforehand. In order to visit community infrastructure, two possibilities exist. A contract is signed for recurring visits (such as the Centro Ñape), or an ok is obtained from the CC. In both cases, retribution is negotiated with the CC. In both cases the CC gives the final approval. In both cases, if a second party such as the school board or the Centro Ñape committee is in charge, they also have to agree to the terms. In all cases, visits are overseen by a RFE guide and are hosted by one or more community representatives. In this way we assure that tourists keep to an acceptable code of conduct during their visits.

There is also only one visit to community members' homes when we visit the farm. The structure of the contract is similar to that of the Centro Ñape: we obtain agreement from both the CC to contract with the individual, and with the individual.

The question of changes in family life was addressed by the Trueque Amazonico.

<p>Positive Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of infrastructure for health, education, and transportation - People talk about and do more for conservation - There is a greater concern for things related to the company - There are more people worrying about outcomes and results. - There is greater sense of identity and self-esteem with respect to local culture There is greater equality of opportunities for work for both men and women There is greater human capital and skills in the community, and greater capacity to manage projects among community leaders - There are new possibilities to develop other activities, such as handicrafts, fish ponds, and wildlife breeding - More confidence in outsiders - Those who work in the lodges now understand the importance of concepts like punctuality, responsibility, client satisfaction, and decision-making. <p>Negative changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distance from family - Rise in jealousy and suspicion against those who work at the lodge - Certain loss of community spirit, specifically with regard to communal work. Now there is interest in individual gain through paid employment and not in voluntary work for the community. - Some people have become dependent on profits from tourism and have abandoned other subsistence and income-earning activities.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Overall Economic Impact

Economically, the community has benefited immensely. Below is a chart of overall economic impact in the community, from 1998 through 2004.

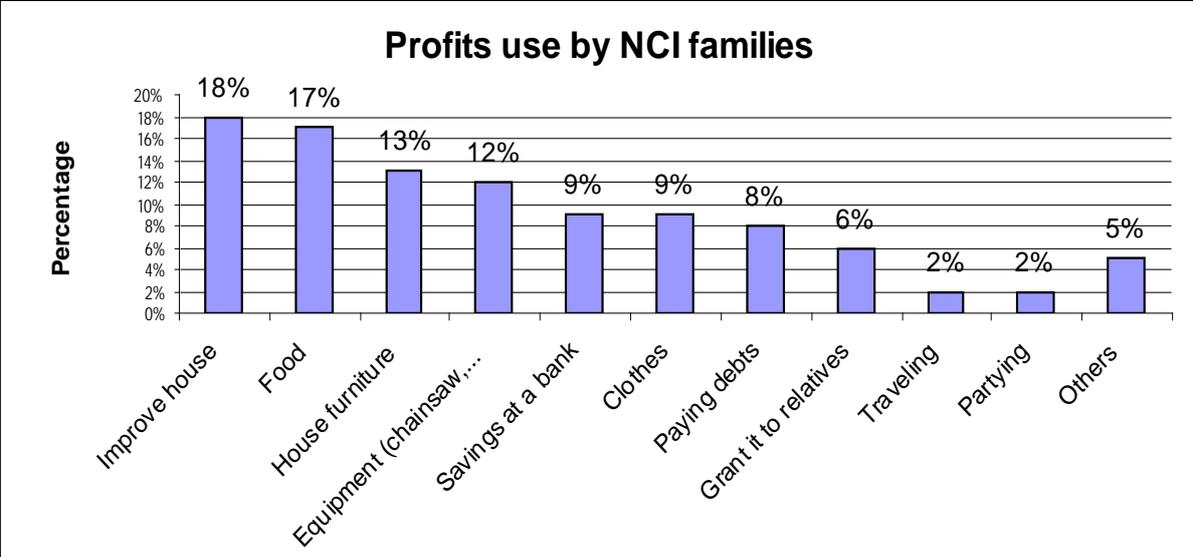
Community economic impacts				
	1997-2002	2003	2004	2005
Profit invested in the lodge	\$ 260,851.0	\$ 6,500.0	\$ 20,000.0	\$ 5,000.0
Construction materials	\$ 215,000.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net liquid profit	\$ 133,212.0	\$ 84,500.0	\$ 125,760.0	\$ 126,540.0
Guides	\$ 6,000.0	\$ 17,044.0	\$ 18,494.0	\$ 19,573.0
Wage laborers	\$ 47,092.0	\$ 12,688.0	\$ 9,037.0	\$ 20,115.0
Payroll	\$ 227,829.0	\$ 45,112.0	\$ 45,447.0	\$ 55,806.0
Handicrafts	\$ 29,228.0	\$ 6,000.0	\$ 7,600.0	\$ 6,025.0
Food suppliers	\$ 13,743.0	\$ 4,546.0	\$ 4,600.0	\$ 3,857.0
Ethnobotanical suppliers	\$ 12,100.0	\$ 9,918.0	\$ 7,984.0	\$ 11,484.0

At Infierno, a family normally spends around \$90 cash per month. This indicator is taken from the Trueque Amazonico surveys. Money spent is used rather than money earned, because in economies without standard monthly wages, it is easier for families to remember how much they spend a month, rather than how much they make. Using this indicator as a reference we can deduce the increase in liquid income the project represents to each Infierno household. One hundred and thirty families spending \$90 a month are the equivalent of \$140,000 a year. \$249,000 (subtracting the \$20,000 of reinvested profit, which generates an asset, but is not liquid) is an increase of 77% on each family's income. This of course varies greatly between families, but the average is representative of the impact on Infierno families.

Finally, this profit, poorly invested, would of course generate a problem. Three charts can summarize the social impact generated by this influx of cash.

The first is a list of community investments spurred by tourism profits: secondary school, a boarding school for students that are far from town, a computer centre, lightning rod and radio, a port, improvements to the ethnobotanical center, a handicraft workshop, a fish farm (this was an individual investment) and soon to come: a new ecotourism concession, a water tank, environmental education and entrepreneurship programs for the school and more.

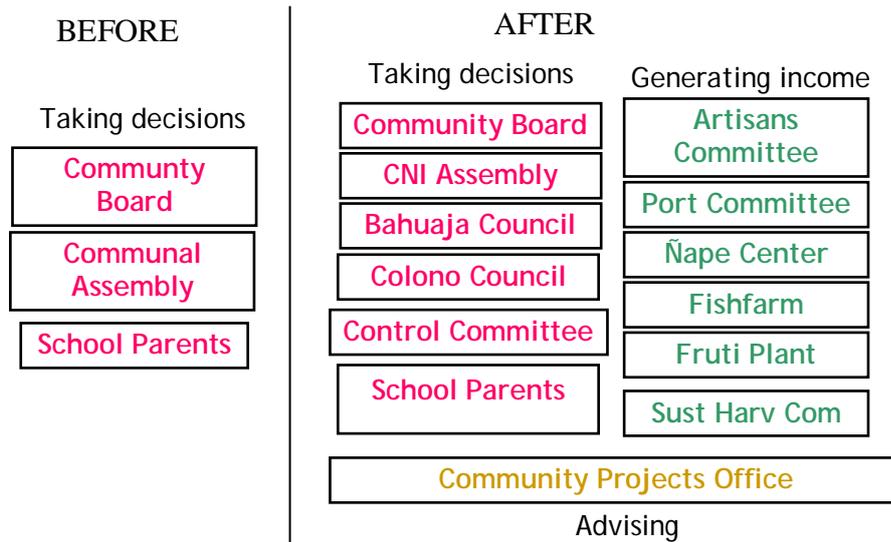
Individually, the following chart summarizes where families put their income from the project.



It can be concluded that 32% of families use the income to survive (food, clothing, relatives), 43% use it to improve their living in some fashion (improve house, furniture, equipment) and 23% use it in some form of savings or debt payment (savings, debts which could be for development or simply out of poor financial management). Finally only 2% use it for partying. It is also noteworthy that the profits may not be generating a more sustainable lifestyle, as noted by equipment investment in chainsaws or rifles or house improvements in tin roofs.

Finally, the diagram below summarizes the organizational changes in the community as the project has brought the need for a better organization in order to make decisions and produce.

Organizational changes



Employment

The project is intricately related to job creation and training. At the heart of the project lies the 20 year association contract, which, amongst with key issues such as the CC and the 60-40 profit division has a clause which states that every position at the lodge must be filled by a community member AND that it must rotate every two years. In addition, it states that if community members are not prepared to do the job properly, then RFE must implement a training program. As of 2005, 18 of 21 lodge positions were in the hands of community members and seven community bilingual guides were obtaining client satisfactions of 90% or above. The only two lodge positions that were not filled with community members were bartender, souvenir shop manager and lodge manager.

At the beginning of the project, community members had to be trained to become housekeepers, waiters, assistant cooks and drivers. As the project evolved, we developed training mechanisms for cooks, maintenance crew and guides. We are currently in the midst of the bartending training and have a project that will allow us to train a community manager.

Training for operational (versus technical) positions is fairly straightforward. Every year, RFE calls for papers amongst the 130 community families. The CC reviews all applicants to make sure all belong in the community. Then they gather for a two week course which introduces participants to tourism, customer service, environmental basics and the position specific aspects of housekeeping, driving, waiting, and cooking. The best students stay to replace the outgoing crew, about half a crew a year. In this manner RFE has trained over 100 community members and dozens have been employed at Posada Amazonas. After their stint at Posada Amazonas, at least ten have gone on to obtain tourism jobs at other lodges.

Thanks to a MacArthur Foundation grant, it was possible to start covering some technical positions at the lodge. Through a seed fund, cooks and maintenance crew receive professional courses on technical aspects of these positions. The seed fund loans money to the students, whilst RFE covers half of the expenses. The fund recovers its income by discounting it from their salary and thus replenishes the fund.

Guides receive more intensive training. Community guides start their training in a community guides' course, in order to level their knowledge about terms such as biology, conservation,

biodiversity, ecosystem, and basic flora and fauna classification. The first four qualify for the RFE annual guide course, which is offered for all those who want to become a RFE guide. This annual course covers most major taxonomic groups, such as mammals, birds, insects, ecology, and plants, and includes Red Cross first aid training. From the four community participants, the best two are the ones selected to start their training as guides for RFE. The next step is to work at PAL as bar assistant, in order to train the ear a little and become familiar with the English language. After six months, the participant goes to Lima for three months of intense training, covered by the seed fund. Once back, the guide practices for one or two months, and then becomes a professional guide who starts repaying his loan for the next community guide. In this manner, nine guides have been trained, and one or two additional ones are trained yearly.

Jobs at Posada Amazonas are standard payroll jobs with social security, unemployment insurance, two bonuses at mid and years end, and an additional profit bonus. Jobs pay from 75% to 150% more than the minimum wage, and 10-30% above competing lodges. Guides earn from \$20 to \$40 a day depending on experience and the type of group. Working hours are difficult and we try to motivate people with celebrations during holidays and an end of year party with prizes for the best employees. Since staff members live and eat at the lodge, we also provide food and housing for them.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Rainforest Expeditions was born out of a conservation ethic. Posada Amazonas was therefore a project directed towards generating sustainable development and conservation. Both the community and the company are aware that our clients come to see natural resources as much as cultural ones. Attractions such as the giant river otters, harpy eagles and macaws are key. Charismatic fauna such as monkeys and caiman are important. Therefore we keep an eye on not only the impacts of tourism on these species, but on how we can work to ensure the survival of their populations over the long term.

Managing visitor impacts on sensitive wildlife species.

Key alliances with research projects focusing on some of the most vulnerable species has helped establish studies to determine the impact of tourists on them. We also follow their recommendations through voluntary management plans and monitoring programs. Macaw, otter and harpy eagle research and monitoring have been conducted on and off since the beginning of the project.

The following chart also provides important data that proves the little impact we have on wildlife. This data has been gathered throughout the years by our guides, who register all important wildlife encounters. A sample of the most common ones has been selected for this paper.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Giant River Otter	61%	48%	60%	71%	71%
Capuchin Monkey	18%	14%	17%	23%	20%
Squirrel Monkey	25%	27%	32%	38%	33%
Dusky Titi Monkey	78%	80%	81%	77%	80%
Howler Monkey	24%	29%	20%	25%	27%
Capybara	18%	14%	34%	33%	40%

Managing lodge impacts on soil and water.

We unfortunately have no data that proves our impact on water courses and soil is negligible, but we can describe what we do to keep our operation green and clean. First of all we separate and recycle. All biodegradable material is composted onsite. All non-biodegradable material is taken by boat to the city dump. And all glass material is taken to the recycler in town. Secondly, we use only biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and laundry materials, which are completely innocuous. We do not use solar energy, and turn on a generator during five hours a day for essential kitchen equipment and battery recharging. The lodge is lighted by wind lamps and refrigerators are gas powered. Finally, although we do have septic tanks, we need to invest in a cleaner waste management system.

Managing environmental impacts from traditional community economic activities.

Tourism in the community should generate a change in habits and decisions which lead to conservation. This can be seen anecdotally to work both ways, and is expensive to measure and follow, so we have not been successful at monitoring it.

For example, on the plus side, the community has incorporated regulations which forbid members to hunt in the communal reserve, to fish with nets in the lake, and to cut forest around harpy eagle nests. Although these regulations are infringed upon every now and then, the three important take-away lessons are that the community has indeed decided to regulate the use of these resources because of their value as tourism resources, that in effect the frequency of hunting in the reserve or fishing in the lake has diminished drastically, and that the community views as a problem every time someone is heard hunting in the reserve. If it could patrol and find out whom, it would sanction the infractor, likely taking his profit away for a year and blacklisting his family for jobs at Posada Amazonas. A specific example of the community's conservation commitment and capacity to act: in 2003, a logger came to the community to buy a standing hardwood near the lake. The community assembly said no because it is close to the otters. Then the logger offered to bribe the president, and he said no. Then the logger went and cut it anyway. The community went to the police and had the timber and equipment expropriated. A second example is that they pay for two wildlife monitors, who follow Conservation International's protocol to evaluate wildlife population sizes. The community pays for the monitors as a way to keep an eye on what impact hunting is having as a resource that is shared by tourists and community families alike.

On the minus side, it is evident that community members are spending their hard earned tourism income on chainsaws and rifles. Although the monitors mentioned above will provide us data with regards to the impact of hunting on the community, it is more difficult to understand what goes on with chainsaws. These can be used for timber, but far more likely, to develop farms. In this respect, we are still uncertain. As Stronza mentions in her thesis "we can be cautiously optimistic that ecotourism at Posada Amazonas is helping to protect the rain forests of Tambopata while meeting the economic needs of the people in the Community of Infierno".

THE FUTURE

Posada Amazonas has some exciting years ahead. The lodge is working at an average annual occupancy of above 70%, which is virtually unsurpassable. The lodge owners have opened a third lodge, Refugio Amazonas, which will absorb Posada Amazonas' huge waiting lists. Thus, commercially, Posada Amazonas can always tinker with its infrastructure, products and services but it has no major tourism related projects which will change it drastically. For example, this year's projects include the maintenance of beams and the

improvement of laundry services through the use of solar dryers. Projects in the near future will look much the same.

The challenges for the project do not necessarily lie in the tourism operation aspect, but in the communal aspect. Two huge undertakings need to take place. The first one is continued capacity building. The second is enhancement of economic opportunities. So far we have succeeded in building capacity to cover all the operational lodge positions, except for manager. We have also haphazardly developed leaders through the CC, travel and the Trueque Amazonico. However it is important to implement a strategy that will produce leaders with a degree of cohesion to the community fabric. Since the manager at Posada Amazonas is in essence a leader, we have secured funding from the Interamerician Foundation to develop a two year program where twenty to thirty individuals will benefit from a curriculum specifically designed for community leaders from a Bolivian University. Topics such as accounting are mixed with gender issues and human resources management during week long workshops given once a month for more than two years. In between some of these workshops we contract specialists on topics ranging from communal law to sustainable agriculture to basic computer skills. Thus after two years we hope to have a handful of committed and trained individuals with the capacity, commitment, and fiber to handle both the organizational challenges of the community as well as its commercial opportunities.

A second challenge is the multiplication of the economic impact. Posada Amazonas profit potential is reaching its peak, both in terms of employment and profit. It will increase marginally as per person prices are raised and the lodge owner's chain continues to grow, but it will not be enough to make a meaningful difference from the present. So more connections need to be established between tourism and the economies of the families, and more importantly, these connections need to outgrow tourism eventually so that stability is achieved. Many such initiatives are now under way, and the projects concentrate on keeping them alive and ensuring new opportunities. The project also concentrates on developing new initiatives. For example, five such initiatives currently in place are the Ñape ethnobotanical center, the port, the handicraft workshop the fruit plant and the fish farm. The Ñape center produces about US\$12000 of services. However, we are working (very slowly) to develop along with them a service that they can take to other lodges in the region, and double or triple their income. We are also working to establish a line of products which can be sold to tourists, such as wrinkle creams or relaxants. These are the same concepts we follow with the other initiatives, always allowing the committees behind each initiative to take the lead and execute their ideas. A person contracted by the project, a Project Coordinator, facilitates the realization of these initiatives.

Finally, the foremost challenge we will be facing in the near future will be the construction of the Interoceanic Highway forty kilometers from Infierno. This highway will connect the Atlantic Ocean in Brazil to the Pacific Ocean in Peru. It will change the way the state of Madre de Dios looks. We are taking two measures to counter this threat. The first is that the community has asked and obtained from the government an ecotourism concession which essentially seals the unprotected border of the lake. This should assure the lake does not suffer encroachment from the Interoceanic Highway. The second is that the lodge owners are securing alliances with communities further upriver from Posada Amazonas to assure that the land between Posada Amazonas and the Tambopata National Reserve remains protected. With its latest lodge, Refugio Amazonas, the lodge owners plan to establish the same connections that have worked well at Posada Amazonas, with four small communities around the new lodge. These four communities comprise the entire population between Infierno and the border of the TNR. By allying with them and securing their support for the conservation of the forest, we will be in essence producing a buffer zone to the Interoceanic Highway.

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