



ASOCIACIÓN CULTURAL DE INTERCAMBIO
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Project Name:

FUDEBIOL

Fundación para el Desarrollo del Centro Biológico Las Quebradas.



Location:

Las Quebradas, Pérez Zeledón. Southern Costa Rica.

Description:

The Biological Center of Quebradas is managed by FUDEBIOL (Fundación para el Desarrollo del Centro Biológico Las Quebradas), which is a non profit grass roots organization started in 1989. Their mission is to stop the deforestation of the Quebradas River basin which is the source of drinking water for the whole town of San Isidro and most of the region of Pérez Zeledón. In the Center they have also built an educational hub. The project site is located 3 km uphill from the community of Quebradas, between 1000 and 2500 meters above sea level. Today the main goals of FUDEBIOL still are:

- Conservation of the basin of Las Quebradas River.
- Development of environmental education for children and the community.
- Establishment of different sustainable systems to guarantee conservation of flora, fauna and water resources in the area.
- To become financially independent through eco-tourism.
- Research and promotion supporting conservation.

This is a grass roots organization located in the small village Quebradas close to the town of San Isidro (744 meters above sea level) which is part of the Valley named El General. This valley is surrounded by high mountains, such as the Cerro de la Muerte (3491 meters above sea level) and the highest mountain of Costa Rica, Chirripó at 3820 meters. The weather in the region is humid and although the rainy season lasts from May until December, there will probably be some showers during the dry season as well. The average temperature lies around 24 degrees Celsius, and the precipitation is 3800 mm a year. Quebradas has some indigenous heritage from the pre-columbine times and there are still some traces from those cultures that can be found in the community and the region.



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Quebradas was founded by farmers from “Zona de los Santos”. Today many people work in the closest town of San Isidro. They also make a living from agricultural products such as coffee, sugar cane, beans, fruits and vegetables.

The project is especially proud of the diversity of birds and butterflies that live in their forest. They have already constructed a butterfly farm to present all the different types of butterflies for the visitors to enjoy. Now, they also want to improve the bird watching opportunities in the area. Experts suspect there are about 200 different birds in the protected area. The Biological Center wants to observe the habits of these birds and create leaflets about the types of birds that can be found in the area during the different times of the year.

You also can find white-faced monkeys and other small and interesting mammals of the tropics. The center also has a garden with medical plants and they produce organic compost.

In addition, within the 36 hectares of the Reserve you can find a system of 4 trails and 3 of them have signs for environmental education guided tours.

Possible tasks for the volunteer:

- Maintenance of the Garden of Medical Plants
- Maintenance of the Butterfly Garden
- Maintenance of the channel in the lagoon.
- Maintenance of Trails inside the Reserve.
- Cleaning and Maintenance of green areas.
- To make new informative wooden signs for the trails.
- To plant flowers and others on the access road.
- Painting and maintenance of buildings at the entrance Reserve.



Operating hours of the project:

The biological center is open from Tuesday until Sunday and is closed on Mondays.

Schedule for the volunteer:

Volunteers work from Tuesday until Saturday.

The daily schedule is from 8 A.M. until 2 P.M. with the option of working until 3 P.M.

Required skills and interests of the volunteer:

- To have the maturity to work following the internal rules in a responsible way.
- Work on hard duties such as constructing and maintaining of trails.



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- Live under simple conditions and be willing to eat the typical food, probably rice and beans with other local vegetables everyday (the volunteer will receive three meals a day).
- Have the maturity to work in a foreign country and adapt to a different culture with different manners.
- Deal with mosquitoes after 5pm, but there is no Malaria in the area.
- **Be willing to walk uphill for 45 minutes every morning in order to get to the project and walk back to the host family in town after finishing work every afternoon.**

Rules of the project:

- No consumption of alcohol during working hours or abuse of alcohol at any time.

Important notes:

Living situation

There are several families in the community that are regularly hosting volunteers in town. They have a rotating system to host the volunteers, as the project wants to give the families equal opportunities and benefit from the volunteer program. This means that the host families of the volunteers are assigned by the community. All the houses have electricity, drinking water (as well as the biological center), telephones, and will provide the volunteer with three meals a day.

Living amenities

The village of Quebradas has a small grocery store "*pulperia*", pay phones, and internet café with several computers. It is located only 10 minutes from the small city of San Isidro of Pérez Zeledón (60,000 inhabitants). There is public transportation about every half hour to get to San Isidro and taxis run during the night.

In San Isidro you will have better Internet connection (for Skype phone calls), a hospital, banks, a post office, supermarkets, pharmacies, etc. From San Isidro it is also possible to visit some beautiful beaches like the surfing town of Dominical or the Marino Ballena National Park where during season you may watch whales! The Chirripó National Park (where the highest peak of Costa Rica, Cerro Chirripó at more than 3800 meters -12 000 feet) can be visited on a long weekend from this area.

What you should bring

- Hiking shoes.
- Lightweight fast drying clothes.
- Light long shirts and pants to protect against mosquitoes.
- Working gloves.
- A light sweater.
- Insect repellent.



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- Rain coat or poncho
- Flashlight.
- Medicine for skin funguses, colds, or other problems related to high humidity.

What you can expect from you stay



- To share experiences with the local people from Quebradas, where you can practice Spanish and learn about the culture of this region of Costa Rica.
- To experience how a small grass roots organization is trying to preserve the environment around the community.
- Depending on which host family you will stay with, you could either live in simple rural conditions, or just like in any house from an urban area.
- Frequent transportation between Quebradas and the bigger town of San Isidro.
- To be in a beautiful Rain Forest where you can enjoy its flora and fauna, especially birds, butterflies and other small mammals.
- Often you will volunteer with other volunteers from different countries, who participate in one of the ACI volunteer programs.