



Angel Conservation

OUR FUTURE IS IN OUR PAST





How it all began

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GENESIS OF ANGEL CONSERVATION

Throughout history many discoveries, inventions, or simply good things, have sprung from intuitions or simple ideas. Angel Conservation is no different. It was the intuition of a couple of friends that all of a sudden saw that they really could make a difference in helping human kind in a field that has largely, and for too long, been put on the back burner of the community at large. This is the story of the creation of Angel Conservation.

Once upon a time... Just kidding, it wasn't that long ago. It all started about six years ago, with a trip to Venezuela. Paul Stanley, an English born entrepreneur who is a resident of Brooklyn, New York, fell in love with the magnificence of the natural wonders of that land. Especially with the region of Kamarata Valley which is dominated by the breathtaking sight Auyántepui, the table top mountain which is home of El Salto Angel, (Angel Falls), the tallest waterfall in the world. But most of all, Paul fell in love with the indigenous people that inhabit the region: the Pemón Indians.

Here comes the first idea: Paul devises a way to promote sustainable tourism in the area so to create new ways of revenue for the local population.

"I originally began working with Venezuela for one reason to help support the indigenous communities in Kamarata Valley by developing with them a sustainable model of tourism (ecotourism) – says Paul - The Pemón are more than just my special friends, and it hurts me to think that their culture and language are in danger of being lost as the elders in the community pass on".

So, for years Paul took it on himself to go far and beyond the normal "business duties". He kept trying to help as much as he could with the sending of reading and writing materials, educational instruments and mostly raising the awareness of the importance of maintaining – or better said reviving – of the indigenous culture of his newfound friends.

Through time though he realized that he could not do it alone – both because of time (he does have a regular job) and finances (he unfortunately isn't a billionaire) – therefore a sense of frustration started to sink in.

It was at this point that the



forementioned "simple idea" came to life. It happened a couple of years ago during a dinner with his long time friend Antonio Volpe Pasini. Antonio was born in Italy and hails from a prominent wine making family. Twenty years ago he moved to the US where he presently works as a journalist for an Italian newspaper. Antonio, who also lives in Brooklyn, shared Paul's love of indigenous cultures and views in how to try to help them survive. During that dinner the proverbial epiphany arrived: "Why don't we create a not-for-profit so that we can really have an impact in saving all those native cultures that are at risk of disappearing"?

Easier said than done. It took quite a while to register Angel Conservation as a 501(c)(3) organization, but in the end, in March 2006, the effort was successful. Also thanks to Isabel Barton, a filmmaker originally from Venezuela who lives in Hudson-on-Hudson, NY, joining the team with her views and expertise.

In the meantime though, Paul, Antonio and Isabel didn't idly sit back. Angel Conservation started to get involved in a series of ongoing projects, and creating new ones,

focused on helping the Pemón rediscover their ancestral culture.

This however was just the stepping-stone of Angel Conservation's commitment. Our view is in fact global, as there are dozens, if not hundreds, of indigenous cultures at risk of extinction every year. And it's a loss that the world cannot afford. Although there are 370 million indigenous peoples in 70 countries they are only 4 percent of the world's population, but they represent 95 percent of the planet's cultural diversity. The earth's more than 5,000 indigenous groups are scattered from the rainforests of the Amazon to the deserts of India and from the Arctic polar ice to the vast outback of Australia, and they speak some 6,000 different languages. But here comes the awful news: within the next century, 90 percent or more of that linguistic diversity -- all but 250 to 600 languages -- will probably disappear. In one way it is a trend that may facilitate communications between different peoples. However, it also threatens to erase forever aspects of the cultural identity of the tribes or ethnic groups affected. Language not only assigns names to objects and

abstractions, it also reveals the importance a particular culture places on kinship and other relationships between individuals.

To keep these languages alive has therefore become a pivotal interest in Angel Conservation's work. So, with our "first friends", the Pemón, we made our initial baby steps in what we hope will become a global effort in sharing, through our success in Canaima, these lessons with many other cultures worldwide that face the same threats. A goal that has already started to become reality thanks to the latest addition to our group: the one of Luisa Conzatti, owner of a travel agency in Italy who studied in the States earning a Masters Degree in foreign languages and specialized in Native American Cultures.

As you can see we are an eclectic bunch with at least two things in common: the deep love for native cultures and the fierce determination to help keep them alive.

To those who joined us for the first fundraiser "outing", thank you and most of all thank you for your help on behalf of all the native people of the world that we will be able to reach with your support.



What we are doing



Angel Conservation is dedicated to creating, developing, documenting, supporting and working with programs and projects that conserve and preserve the cultures of indigenous peoples around the world. Our goals are achieved by working shoulder to shoulder with the indigenous people and with national and international cultural and environmental specialists, institutions and organizations, to provide the resources and programs for education, research and the restoration of cultures and lands.

We are currently working on an extensive program involving the Pemón Indians in Canaima National Park in Venezuela and presently in the process of documenting their culture through a documentary film, attaining other important documents and archives such as historical photographs, anthropology books and other texts related to the Pemón. Our projects include, but are not limited to, researching, and building and operating a cultural centre based in one of the Pemón communities. During that process we will look to create libraries in surrounding Pemón villages. Our activities also serve an educational purpose. Creating a documentary film, libraries and cultural centres not only educates the public about native cultures and endangered flora and fauna but also enables indigenous cultures to thrive.

Our mission statement is clear – “working with programs that conserve and protect the cultures of indigenous Peoples”. Therefore the involvement of Angel Conservation in the Telemedicine sector is a logical step.

Members of Fundación Etnika and Angel Conservation initially suggested to internationally renowned, Venezuelan not-for-profit organization Proyecto Maniapure, the installation of a Telemedicine Project in Kamarata Valley. Telemedicine is rural medicine without walls, where a team of recently graduated doctors, dentists and nurses can be stationed in a faraway community and act as professionals in their fields of expertise, but also as liaisons to renowned specialists in large cities via the Internet. In this manner, cases that would otherwise be hard if not impossible to cure in remote areas are diagnosed and treated via telecommunications, and in the cases in which that is not possible, the patient arrives at the medical center where he/she will be treated already with the preliminary studies done and a procedure scheduled and ready for his/her arrival.

Members of Fundación Etnika/Angel Conservation, acting as ambassadors for Proyecto Maniapure, visited the Kamarata Valley and informed the Kamarakotos about the existence of the Telemedicine Project. The community leaders set off on a long trek across the Sabana culminating with a bus trip to Caracas to seek Tomas Sanabria (Proyecto Maniapure’s President and now Advisory Board member of Fundación Etnika and Angel Conservation) to let him know the community wished to have the Telemedicine Project in Kamarata! The rest is history. This inspiring effort culminated with the installation of the Internet satellite antenna, in January 2006, in the village of Kamarata, capital of the Kamarata Valley and marked the third Telemedicine site for Proyecto Maniapure and crystallized Fundación Etnika/Angel Conservation’s effort also enabling the first and foremost need of the Kamarakotos –medical assistance. Up to that recent moment a Kamarakoto needing medical assistance would have to travel by plane to the nearest city at extraordinary cost to the individual (if indeed they could even afford to go!). In the first six weeks after the medical professionals’ arrival in January, approximately seven hundred Kamarakotos had been medically attended. They are being provided with medical, sanitary and dental attention, with special emphasis on preventive orientation.

Fundación Etnika / Angel Conservation and Proyecto Maniapure have agreed to partner to further the outreach of the Internet communication model used for the Telemedicine Project by connecting two ecolodges and a local village with WiFi connection: Kavak and Uruyén, two lodges owned by the Kamarakotos, as well as the village of Santa Marta, which is in close proximity.

A sustainable development plan for ecotourism (responsible tourism) would also benefit the conservation of the Pemón culture. We plan to work within the structure and confines of the Telemedicine Project to include these locations for the benefit of medical, cultural and tourism sustainability. A natural bi-product too would be the creation of much needed employment for the local Pemón.

THE PEMÓN, OUR FIRST FRIENDS

The Gran Sabana, an area of approximately 3,000,000 hectares (7.4 million acres), is home to Indians who are believed to be of Carib descent, the Pemón, and are thought to have migrated to the region possibly six hundred years ago, although archeological sites to the north have unearthed finds dating back almost 9,000 years.

The Pemón are divided into three distinct tribes that have their own dialects – Kamarakotos, Taurepanes and Arekunas. The Taurepanes live in the southern region of the Brazilian territory of Roraima and the Arekuna (northern Pemón) on both sides of the Venezuela-Guyana border.

The majority of the Pemón still practice slash and burn agriculture, a practice that, in the region often burns valuable rainforest and is destructive to the local environment. The Pemón continue to hunt in the forests and savannahs and fish the local rivers.

Their number has increased steadily since the colonization of the region by Creoles over the last fifty years or so and it is estimated that the total population of Pemón is now in the region of 20,000 with an estimated 4,300 of them living in the Kamarata Valley region.

Although Catholic and Protestant missionaries have converted most Pemón to Christianity, many of their traditional beliefs, particularly surrounding the natural world, are still cherished. The Pemón people possess one of the most impressive oral literatures of any American indigenous people. The work of the Capuchin priest, Fray Cesareo de Armellada during the last century, is testament to this. Their heritage includes magical invocations, chants and rites, as well as didactic, moral and humouristic tales.



Angel-Eco Tours



Pemón Indians & Angel Falls

Day 1: Caracas – Uruyén (B,L,D)
Transfer to Uruyén. Spectacular overflight of Angel Falls. Afternoon hike to Yurwan Canyon and local waterfalls with Pemón guide. Overnight at a Pemón lodge.

Day 2: Uruyén – Kavak (B,L,D)
Transfer to Kavak by jeep, or hike through the savannah and rainforests visiting local Pemón Indian village's enroute. Afternoon hike to Kavak Canyon and the sacred cave of Kavak with Pemón guide. Overnight at Kavak Lodge.

Day 3: Kavak – Kamarata – Kavak (B,L,D)

Early morning hike to La Toma which overlooks the canyon and Kamarata Valley.

Afternoon jeep transfer to visit local Pemón community in Kamarata. Overnight in Kavak.

Day 4: Kavak – Canaima (B,L,D)
Fly to the small landing strip in Canaima. Explore Canaima Lagoon by curiara (dugout canoe), hike through the rainforest to Sapó Falls and walk behind the powerful gushing curtain of water. Overnight in Canaima.

Day 5: Canaima – Angel Falls (B,L,D)

Hike to Ucaima Port to board a motorized canoe along the Carrao and the Churún Rivers, to Angel Falls in Devils Canyon. Trek to "Mirador Laime" for a breathtaking close up of the falls. Overnight at Ratoncito in hammocks.

Day 6: Angel Falls – Ciudad Bolívar (B,L,D)

Return to Canaima and take an afternoon flight to Ciudad Bolívar.

Day 7: Ciudad Bolívar – Caracas (B)

Transfer to the local airport for flight to Caracas and beyond. End of service.

Price – starting from \$ 1.499 pp



Orinoco Delta & Warao Indians

Perfect for any budget - experience the daily life of the Warao and their fascinating culture.

This excursion will appeal to nature lovers as well as adventure travelers.

Day 1: Maturín – Orinoco Delta (L,D)
Departing from Maturín, take an exciting trip into the exotic Orinoco Delta. Spend an overnight or two within a local Warao community.

Day 2: Orinoco Delta (B,L,D)
Navigate the Orinoco in search of river dolphins, spectacled caiman, capuchin and red howler monkeys, hummingbirds, scarlet ibis, toucans, parrots, macaws and kingfishers. Visit the pile-dwellings of the Warao. Your guide will explain in detail the Warao culture and their daily life. Meet some of the local craftsmen and negotiate for their handicrafts.

Day 3: Orinoco Delta – Maturín (B,L)
Try your hand at piranha fishing and conditions permitting enjoy the Orinoco 'beach' in the middle of the river. Return to Caracas via Maturín or Ciudad Bolívar.

Price starting from: \$ 295 per person

For more information visit our web site www.angel-ecotours.com or call (212) 656-1240



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