

Volunteers

General Responsibilities of CFTC Volunteers

Thank you for your interest in volunteering your time and skills to the Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation (CFTC). The quality work of our volunteers greatly contributes to the success of CFTC projects. Like ourselves, our volunteers are committed to conservation and helping others, and recognize that each one of us must do our part to protect the environment. This document details the general guidelines and policies for volunteers participating in CFTC projects abroad. We appreciate you taking the time to familiarize yourself with the conditions and guidelines for becoming a CFTC volunteer.

Volunteers are required to conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner while participating in CFTC projects or working at CFTC sites. Participants are expected to work responsibly to complete the tasks outlined in their position description to the best of their abilities. Volunteers are requested to cite CFTC and any CFTC project locations (e.g., reserves, etc.) in any publications relating to work conducted while working on CFTC-approved projects. Participants must produce and submit a final written report on progress made during their volunteership, which must be received by CFTC no later than 60 days after the ending date of their position. CFTC may request that volunteers submit intermediate progress reports from the field (most often by email) in the case of extended projects. All participants are expected to provide CFTC with copies of data, notes, maps, photos, recordings, theses or publications that result from your volunteership. Participants are expected and encouraged to pass on their knowledge, and the information they have collected, to local people whenever possible, and to listen carefully to and incorporate the ideas and knowledge of local people. If appropriate, you may organize workshops, seminars and other presentations, and should at all times strive to involve those with whom you routinely interact (landowners, local students, field assistants, et al.). Finally, participants are encouraged to be prepared to be flexible, when situations arise that require adapting the initial description of your expected duties (after all, this is field work).

Volunteer Fees

Volunteers are responsible for their own housing and living expenses in Ecuador. CFTC will arrange low-cost housing and meals for you at the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve and other project sites. Our newest project is in the coastal dry forest, at Hacienda Loor. Fees for these expenses will be paid directly to CFTC on or before the first of each month of your volunteership. Latin American citizens (Central and South America), may be eligible for subsidized housing at CFTC sites.

Basic rates for lodging and meals at the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve or Hacienda Loor are \$300 per month.

CFTC will supply necessary equipment for completion of posted volunteer positions. The exact materials to be supplied, and their use, will be elaborated upon once a volunteer has been approved and arrives on site. In special cases, volunteers may be asked to provide necessary equipment; this may occur when volunteers are selected on the basis of a particular skill that relates to specific equipment, such as photographic equipment. In special situations, food, local travel and other costs may be provided. If this is the case, it will be indicated in the specific position description. Volunteers are responsible for supplying all unrelated and/or personal equipment (hiking boots, flashlight, etc.).

Liability and Insurance

Volunteers that work on CFTC projects must submit a letter to CFTC from their doctor certifying that they are in good health and can travel to a foreign country, prior to their arrival in Ecuador. All volunteers should carry their own health insurance and sign a waiver to release CFTC from responsibility for any illness, accident, or injury incurred during their stay in Ecuador. Many of our positions involve field work that will require you to be in good physical condition. Consult the specific position description to assess the physical demands of your position. Volunteers should consult their local physician or travel health agency to obtain necessary or recommended vaccinations for travel and work abroad.

Duration and Work Schedules

A one week minimum commitment is required, but volunteers can extend their stay for up to 3 months or more with prior approval from CFTC. An extended visa is required to remain in Ecuador for more than 90 days.

Volunteers are expected to work 5 days per week, though not necessarily Monday through Friday. Specific work schedules will depend on the position for which the volunteer is applying, for example many positions at El Pahuma require volunteers to work on Saturday and Sunday when visitation is highest. Volunteers are expected to work an average of 8 hours per day, depending on the position and activities assigned.

Qualifications

Applicants for a volunteership with CFTC should have a strong interest in conservation and related human issues, and be willing to undertake difficult and sometimes tedious outdoor work in a tropical climate under sometimes rustic living conditions. While university study is not required, certain positions will require certain knowledge or specific skills. Spanish language ability may be required for some but not all positions. See current volunteerships for specific requirements for each position.

Termination

Volunteerships will automatically terminate on the ending date specified in your application. Occasionally, volunteerships may be extended or renewed. Please arrange for extensions in writing at least 2 weeks prior to your ending date. CFTC reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer from a project site for any reason deemed sufficient by CFTC. Persons subject to dismissal will be notified in writing of the termination of their volunteership or the reasons for expulsion. Expulsion of participants may result from cases such as: 1) abuse of position as a CFTC volunteer, 2) misuse of facilities, 3) improper professional or personal conduct, 4) misrepresentation of CFTC and its goals, and 5) violation of CFTC policies such as reserve management guidelines. To date, we have never had cause to dismiss a volunteer. We are confident in the qualifications and professionalism of all our volunteers and provide these guidelines so that volunteers are aware of our policy.

Arrival

Please let CFTC know your exact travel itinerary as soon as you have made travel arrangements. A CFTC representative may be able to meet you at the airport, although project-related travel may necessitate you providing your own transportation to the site of your volunteership. On your first day on site you will be oriented to the project, introduced to people you will be working with, and assisted in any preparations. Travel within project site countries is normally arranged by bus. Upon your acceptance to the volunteer program, you will receive more detailed travel and arrival information. If you have additional questions regarding travel to and within your project site country, please contact us.

Volunteer Application Procedure

Our volunteer program operates under a set of guidelines to ensure that both the volunteer and the recipient project enjoy the maximum gain from the interchange. Volunteers provide assistance to ongoing projects, and also serve as representatives of international culture and their home country in particular. Please read the above conditions and guidelines carefully before applying to one of CFTC's volunteer positions.

To apply, send the following materials to CFTC at the address below:

1. CFTC coversheet (download Word file) (download as pdf file).
2. Your CV (curriculum vitae) or resume.
3. Name, address, phone and email of at least three references familiar with your relevant experience.
4. A passport photo.
5. A \$20 application fee (check or money order in U.S. dollars, refundable if not approved).

You may email or fax items 1-4, but we must receive your application fee by regular mail before your application will be considered. Applicants who are already in Ecuador may submit the materials and application fee

to CFTC's representative in Quito (contact CFTC for details). Please send all materials to:

Ceiba Foundation for Tropical Conservation

Volunteer Coordinator
2319 North Cleveland
Chicago, IL 60614
Fax: (773) 871-3798
Email CFTC

You will be notified within one month of receipt of all your application materials if your application has been approved. We may request to interview you, particularly for positions that require specific skills. Due to the volume of applicants, negative replies will not be mailed, however you may contact CFTC at your convenience to check on the status of your application.

Current Volunteer Positions

Environmental Education Program

El Pahuma Orchid Reserve, Ecuador

An resourceful, personable and creative individual with artistic skills and a knowledge of biology is needed to work in El Pahuma's new Information Center. Responsibilities include:

- helping to develop an environmental education program at El Pahuma
- planning, creating and installing educational displays on tropical montane forest ecosystems and orchids, in english and spanish
- organizing and maintaining educational resource materials in the Center
- planning, organizing and overseeing a program of guest speakers
- notifying local communities and schools of guest speakers and other educational events
- greeting visitors and assisting them with the use of educational resources in the center
- guiding school groups or other visitors when needed

Applicants must be able to speak Spanish. A minimum three month commitment is requested.

Nature Center Coordinator

El Pahuma Orchid Reserve, Ecuador

A friendly, independent and outgoing individual with good organizational skills is needed to run the beautiful Nature Center at the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve, a protected montane forest in Ecuador. Responsibilities include:

- greeting visitors and selling tickets
- orienting visitors
- organizing and maintaining records
- creating and maintaining educational displays and materials
- assisting with daily operations of the nature center
- helping to train a local community member to run the Nature Center after volunteership terminates.

Preference will given to those with previous nature reserve, managerial or tourism experience. Spanish language ability a must. Volunteer must be willing to live in rustic conditions in a tropical forest preserve and be willing to commit 2-6 months. Earliest start date is August 1, 2002.

Botanical Garden and Orchid Nursery

El Pahuma Orchid Reserve, Ecuador

One or two individuals with horticultural experience, preferably with a knowledge of orchids and other tropical plants, is needed to assist in the installation and maintenance of the Botanical Garden and Orchid Nursery at the El Pahuma reserve. Responsibilities include:

- general care and maintenance of the garden
- installation and care of plants
- transfer of orchids between nursery and garden
- tagging of displayed specimens
- guiding visitors when needed

Prior experience in botanical gardens, greenhouses, nurseries or the like would be extremely useful. Previous experience working in forest parks and reserves or in environmental education centers also would be helpful, but is not necessary. Knowledge of spanish beneficial, but not required.

Trail Construction & Maintenance

El Pahuma Orchid Reserve, Ecuador

Two individuals with experience using tools (chainsaw and router, especially) are needed to assist with the maintenance of trails at the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve and the construction of a new trail to the Shunguyacu Waterfall. Responsibilities include:

- maintaining existing trails (repairing stairs, benches and handrails, maintaining drainage channels, removing litter, replacing gravel, etc.)
- clearing downed and encroaching vegetation
- creating wooden painted signs with a router and installing them
- helping to building blinds and/or benches for wildlife viewing
- constructing a new trail in a steep area for access to the Shunguyacu waterfall
- installing new handrails, stairs and benches where needed
- assisting in other routine maintenance or construction tasks when needed

Applicants should be strong and physically fit, willing to do heavy work on steep slopes in a variety of weather conditions and/or be able to engrave letters with a router to make professional-looking signs. Applicants should possess an interest in conservation of tropical montane forests, have knowledge of or willingness to learn sound trail construction practices, and be at ease living in simple conditions in rural areas. Previous experience working in parks and reserves, or in forestry or construction a plus. Knowledge of spanish helpful, but not required. Please note that we have filled all available trail construction positions for July and August, 2002.

www.ceiba.org/volunteer