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THE VINE

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"You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from masters."
Saint Bernard

No Child Left Inside- Take them to the rainforest

Rainforest education is part of the mosaic of environmental education. "No Child Left Inside" is finally a cry heard across the nation. Educators are rediscovering the outdoors as a natural classroom. A recent study showed that children can identify more than 1,000 corporate logos, but only a handful of plants in their own backyard. Parents are realizing that it is alright to let their children get a little dirty. The amazement, curiosity, and excitement of exploring under a log cannot be matched by a discussion in the classroom. Students cannot develop a true appreciation for the wonders of nature just from books and videos. Get your students outside. Develop or use the school forest. Grow a prairie plot. With our looming environmental predicaments hanging over modern society, an army of informed citizens will be needed.

Save The Rainforest has spent nearly 20 years trying to do just that. Taking a trip to endangered rainforest ecosystems has changed the lives of thousands of students. These trips educationally stir that excitement, curiosity, and amazement that we want to see in our students if we really want them to learn. These trips do make a difference. Students have decided to volunteer with the Peace Corp, or major related fields, including conservation biology, environmental law, marine biology, ecology, environmental engineering, and Spanish. They want to make the world a better place. Listen to these empowered Save The Rainforest students:

"Right now I'm saying goodbye to Panama and hello to a new perspective on the world." - Brittany

We are on the web at
www.saverfn.org

Save the Rainforest booth at National Science Teacher's Convention. Board member Maggie Eisenberger, President Bruce Calhoun and a representative from Neotropica, our partner group in Costa Rica.

(What is the) extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren?"
Robert Michael Pyle

"I know I am a different person now. This trip has definitely changed my life." -Jane

"This journey has had a profound influence on my view of the world. I will never look at issues such as poverty, environmental pollution, and third world governments the same way again. This voyage has taught me many things such as generosity, kindness, and social skills, and has helped me mature as a person." –Michael

Leave no child inside. Use Save The Rainforest as the ultimate learning experience by organizing a trip to the rainforest. Contact us to find out how.

A Gift of Life-STR trip to Mexico

By Maggie Eisenberger

Turtle eggs being rescued by student

Student reforestation

Time to get to work! We quickly learned how to dig down to the nest and remove every last egg, placing them gently into a plastic sack. After collecting a second nest, we carried the sacks back to camp.

Here, inside a protective corral, we dug holes in imitation of the shape fashioned by the mother turtle and deposited the eggs. The idea that we had prevented poachers and predators from taking these 227 baby turtles felt huge!

Over the next few days, we also learned to open nests that were old enough to contain hatchlings. We collected them and waited for darkness to release them into the sea. We also cleaned out nests from which the hatchlings had emerged on their own. In these, we found many scraps of shells, along with putrid, slimy eggs that never hatched and maggot-ridden hatchlings that had died without ever having reached the surface. That was the yuckiest part, but one of our students actually discovered two hatchlings that were still moving weakly and was able to revive them before releasing them into the sea! It was powerfully emotional for the students to feel they had saved these two lives.

During our three days at Camp Mayto we reburied a total of about 1600 hatchlings. Accomplishing this rapidly greatly improves the viability of the eggs, so we know we were instrumental in helping many more turtles survive. It wasn't all work, though. We went for a hike through a pristine rainforest and found a delicious stream tumbling around boulders, to cool off in. We went to another beach for body-surfing. One afternoon, we visited a tree nursery where we helped transplant well over one hundred seedlings for a reforestation project. We ate outdoors, played on trampolines and swam in large freshwater swimming pools, slept on the trampolines, and took our siestas in the shade underneath the trampolines! The food was simple, but plentiful and tasty.

Strolling the beach in the middle of the night was an awesome experience. The Milky Way was brightly visible thanks to a tiny crescent moon. We identified some familiar constellations and planets, tracked satellites across the sky, and even saw a few shooting stars.

Sea turtles weren't the only wildlife we saw, either. We also touched a Gila monster caught by the staff, laughed at the antics of a pygmy mouse opossum picked up while on patrol, and observed a preying mantis, many kinds of frogs, a walking stick, lots of lizards and geckos, pelicans, magnificent frigate birds, beetles, butterflies, hermit and other kinds of crabs, an armadillo, a dolphin, and a roseate spoonbill.

This adventure was part of our Save The Rainforest Mexico trip. Our middle school classes, a total of 16 students and two teachers, scheduled this trip as a bonding experience for the students coupled with an opportunity to do community service. The itinerary is normally 10 days but we only were allowed to miss one week of classes. Save The Rainforest graciously tailored the itinerary to fit our needs. We flew into Puerto Vallarta and were driven south to Camp Mayto, where the University of Mexico at Guadalajara conducts sea turtle conservation. The project is run by a professional biologist from the university and staffed by volunteers from all over the world.

After leaving Camp Mayto, we drove to Tenacatita and checked into a hotel. Here we were able to swim in a pool or in the ocean any time we wanted. We visited a coconut plantation and learned to drink the milk and eat the meat with lime or chili powder. We went to a nearby cove and snorkeled right off the beach, amazed by the colors and numbers of reef fish surrounding the coral. The fish were so different from what we've seen in the Caribbean! There were also little tide pools to hunt around in for small marine organisms. Finally, we drove back to Puerto Vallarta, stopping at the Chamela Dry Forest Reserve Research Station where we saw Stanford students recording their research on computers in the air-conditioned library and heard about the region from the director of the station.

In Puerto Vallarta, we were again able to swim in the ocean right in front of the hotel. Later in the afternoon, we strolled through Vieja Vallarta and shopped at the various crafts booths, photographed the unusual sculpture on the malecon, watched the costumed acrobats who twirl from a tall pole (head down!), and ate authentic Mexican tacos in a picturesque restaurant. Afterwards we enjoyed an outdoor dance interpretation of the life of Frida and walked back to our hotel in a light rain.

The entire trip was a whirlwind of fun but our most precious memories were from the turtle camp. The last morning at camp, we had gotten up well before dawn and carried 289 hatchlings a kilometer up the shore. Handful by handful, we gently set them on the sand above the water line. Then we sat in reverent silence for nearly an hour, watching, lending heart to the babies as they paddled back and forth, seeking the sea by smell. Sometimes they made a meter of progress toward the water only to be lifted back to their starting point by an incoming wave. The only sound from the students was a collective sigh. Seeing those 289 babies safely into the sea, and knowing that 1600 babies we reburied will be hatching around Halloween and being released by other volunteers, gave us a feeling of having participated in the gift of life, first given by their mothers when the eggs were laid.

Invisible Rulers of the Rainforest

From pollination to seed dispersal, explore a creature's indispensable role for the existence and health of the rainforest

By Maggie Eisenberger

Quick! What mammal do you think of when you picture the rainforest? A jaguar with its flaming golden fur dabbed with black, maybe a primate – the comical howler monkey, the brilliant orangutan, or the gentle giant, a lowland gorilla? Whatever came to mind, it probably was not a bat.

Bats are the dominant mammals of the rainforest in many ways. If you made a list of all the species of mammals in the world, about one-fourth of them would be some kind of bat. In rainforest ecosystems, that fraction can rise to one-half. That would make for a pretty lopsided food chain if all bats were like the ones we are familiar with in the US. In most of our country, all bats eat flying insects.

There are many insects in the rainforest, but not enough to feed the vast numbers of bats there. That's where things start to get interesting.

Bats have solved the problem of food supply in the rainforest in a couple of ways. For one thing, they rarely live in the giant colonies found in the US. Rather, they live in small groups or even roost individually, finding shelter in hollow fig trees or making tents out of giant heliconia leaves. This lower density reduces the competition for the locally available food.

Their best move, however, was to adopt a more varied diet. In addition to those species that eat insects, for example, there are also bat species which eat pollen and nectar or fruit. Picture a bat swooping down and snatching a fish from just below the surface of the water with its feet, like an eagle. Other bats hunt in similar fashion for frogs, homing in on the unsuspecting male as he belts out his mating song.

There are bats that catch lizards, small birds, or even small mammals, like mice and other bats. And of course, we can't forget the fabled vampire bat! There are three species of vampire; two specialize in the blood of birds while one only has a taste for mammal blood. These were relatively rare until European settlers brought their large numbers of livestock and enlarged the niche.

Two key words in that last bit are *specialization* and *niche*. Bats have carried specialization to a dramatic degree. For example, look at the way the eating of insects has been subdivided into a fractal tree of niches. There are bats that only catch insects in flight. There are bats that only eat insects that are on the surface of a body of water, grabbing them with their feet in the same way that fishing bats catch fish.

There are bats called gleaners, which snatch insects from the surface of leaves as they rest or try to avoid notice. Some bats hunt high over the canopy, some hunt in the understory, some fly low over water, some creep along the ground, sneaking up on an unsuspecting tapir.

Within each of these specialized behaviors there are a range of sizes of bat species. The smallest, weighing only 2 grams or so, survive on only the smallest of insects or fruits. Medium-sized bats will eat medium-sized stuff. The largest bats, some as big as 750 grams with a wingspan of 2 meters, eat the largest fruit or hunt large prey.

Yet another way bats have enlarged the number of available niches is by hunting at different times. Some are crepuscular, hunting only in the half-light of dawn and dusk. Some are completely nocturnal, hunting only in the middle of the night. Others hunt just after full dark, then rest until a few hours before the sky begins to lighten, when they hunt again.

The importance of bats to the rainforest cannot be overstated. Many of the products that we use that come from the forest, including kapok, balsa, papaya, and banana, are pollinated by bats. Many others depend on bats for seed dispersal, as is the case with cacao.

The fruit of the strangler fig tree contains a chemical that acts as a laxative, ensuring that the seeds don't spend too much time in the bat's digestive tract. Within 20 minutes of consuming the fruit, the bat will pass the seeds. These seeds are sticky and cling to the fur of the bat, motivating the animal to perch in the fork of a tree and scrape the seeds off on the bark of the tree. Seeds that sprout in this elevated location will send down aerial roots in search of the soil and eventually dominate and kill the tree it grows on. If a bird or monkey drops these same seeds on the ground, they will never produce a mature tree.

Bats disperse the fruits of many pioneer tree species. Once a gap in the forest reaches a certain size, such as those left by settlers who have attempted to farm or ranch and then given up and moved on, most rainforest animals will not cross the clearing but will travel around it. The bat, which will still fly over the gap, drops the seeds of pioneer species.

Responsible Ecotourism

Take only pictures-Leave only footprints

Visiting the rainforest can provide an incredible opportunity to connect students directly with these magnificent endangered ecosystems. By combining the dynamics of a rainforest and travel to a foreign country, teachers find that the trip engages and inspires students to connect with the natural environment. These opportunities put book learning in context and make it so meaningful that it creates a lifelong impression.

But traveling to a natural destination carries some responsibility. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people". Good educational ecotourism programs have the following characteristics:

1. Involves travel to natural destinations.
2. Minimizes environmental impact.
3. Builds environmental awareness.
4. Provides direct financial benefits for conservation.
5. Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
6. Respects local cultures.

Rainforest ecotourism programs can vary greatly in their ethics. Some lodges look more like a 5 star hotel. They use the forest as their marketing tool, but give token amounts back to conservation efforts. The focus isn't exactly on the environment. There must be a proper balance between comfort and purpose. A good program should stress the scientific and environmental lessons students can learn. Their camp should have minimal impact on the local ecosystem. It should fit in with the surroundings in a cultural context. A good ecotourism program is actually a money making opportunity for conservation groups to continue their work. In the same context, good ecotourism groups understand that they need to be in partnership with the local people. The local people should be benefiting from the presence of tourist too. One benefit is the employment opportunities or given the chance to sell their handicrafts to tourists. Without the support of local citizens, the efforts of the environmental group will not be totally successful.

Save The Rainforest and their partner organizations have taken the responsibility of ecotourism very seriously. The students will witness the highest standards of environmental ethics from the staff and their trip plan. The above six principles of ecotourism are cornerstones in the Save The Rainforest's trips. Our partner groups are national leaders in their conservation efforts. They bring in student tourist groups because it generates income to keep protecting endangered habitat and it educates our world citizens about the environmental perils that are present. They provide jobs for local people and make keeping the forest a benefit to them. Ecotourism can be a wonderful benefit to more than just our students.

Here are some personal tips for eco-travel

1) Prepare for your trip: Educate yourself about your destination. Learn about local history, customs and culture as well as vital ecosystems. It would help to learn at least the basics of the local language. A simple "hello", "please" or "thank you" in the native tongue goes a long way. Approach travel with the desire to learn rather than just observe.

2) Respect local traditions and etiquette: Remember that you are a guest. Observe local customs. Be perceptive of your own cultural values and how they affect your judgment of others. Being different isn't wrong. Wear clothing that is accepted by the local culture. Be aware of people's sensitivity to being photographed; always ask first. Act as an example for other travelers who are less informed than you.

3) Avoid displays of wealth: Leave jewelry and other unnecessary valuables at home. They only create barriers and inhibit genuine interactions. Don't hand out sweets and loose change. This only serves to corrupt and create a begging mentality where none existed before. In rural areas electronics can be a major distraction and may even become a barrier to communication

4) Be flexible in your expectations: Approach your adventure with an open mind and you won't be disappointed. Sometimes plans change. Adapt yourself to the situation rather than trying to adapt the situation to you.

5) Conserve resources: Often times the resources in an area visited by tourists are under a great deal of pressure already. Watch your personal consumption. Don't create a lot of waste or garbage from things you bring from home.

6) Practice minimum environmental impact: Follow the practice of taking only pictures and leave only footsteps. Take out everything that you bring into the forest. Remove litter that others left behind. Do not remove any objects, plants or animal products from nature. Be aware of local endangered or threatened species so as not to purchase souvenirs made from their skin, wood, feathers, etc. Not only does this have a negative impact on the environment, but it is illegal.

7) Support local people: How will your visit directly benefit the local economy of the community? This is an integral part of true ecotourism. This helps create an economic alternative to potentially destructive practices. Community based ecotourism spreads the wealth and workload. When locals can make a living because tourists are present, they have less reason to cut down the forest for their needs.

8) Bridge cultural gaps: Take the opportunity to be a cultural ambassador. Much of the world's image of western tourists is based on the unrealities of television and magazines. Look for situations where you can get to know the person driving your bus or cooking your food. It takes some effort but is often the most rewarding experience of the trip.

9) Continue being conservation minded: Environmental education doesn't need to end with your flight home. Follow through on your commitment to conservation in your everyday life. Share your experiences with others to foster a greater understanding of our world. You will have seen and learned much from your journey. While it is still fresh in your heart and mind take action using the various agencies, grassroots organizations and resources available to you.

Rainforest Resources

KIDS Books (E-Elementary, M-Middle School, H-High School)

Journey Through a Tropical Jungle-Adrian Forsyth (Simon and Schuster) (M)

How Monkeys Make Chocolate-Adrian Forsyth (Owl Books) (E,M)

What do We Know About the Amazonian Indians?-Anna Lewington (Peter Bedrick Books) (E,M)

Antonio's Rain Forest-Anna Lewington (Caroirhoda Books) (E,M)

Secrets of the Rainforest Series:
- Plants and Plant Eaters
- Predators and Prey
- Poisoners and Pretenders
- People and Places
- Partners and Parents
- Resources and Conservation

(Crabtree Publishing Company) (E,M)

Atlas of the Rainforests-Anna Lewington (Raintree Streck-Vaughn) (E,M)

The Monkey Thief-Aileen Kilgore Henderson (Milkweed Editions) (M)

Monteverde: Science, Scientists in a Costa Rican Cloud Forest- Sneed Collard III (Franklin Watts) (M)

Rainforest: A Pro/Con Issue-Linda Carlson Johnson (Enslow Publishing) (M, HS)

Lives Intertwined: Relationships Between Plants and Animals-Allen Young (Franklin Watts) (M)

The Umbrella-Jan Brett (G.P. Putnam's Sons) (E)

The Remarkable Rainforest: An Active-Learning Book for Kids –Albert (Trickle Creek Books) (E, M)

Eyewitness Books: Jungle-Greenaway (Alfred A. Knopf) (E,M)

The Rainforest Book-Lewis (Living Planet Press) (M, HS)

The Shaman's Apprentice: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest-Cherry and Plotkin (Harcourt Brace and Co.) (E)

The Great Kapok Tree-Cherry (Harcourt Brace and Co.) (E)

Rain Forest: Kingfisher Voyages-Johnson (Kingfisher) (E,M)

Rainforests &Reefs: A Kid's eye view of the Tropics—Maynard, Maynard and Rullman (Franklin Watts) (M)

Bats, Bugs, and Biodiversity: Adventures in the Amazonian Rain Forest-Goodman (Atheneum Books) (E,M)

Videos

3-2-1 Contact- Can't Grow Home Again (Children's Television Workshop)

Elida's Story (United Learning)

Get Real- Rainforest Adventure *Available through La Tirimbina

Jungle -Life on Earth series- David Attenburough

Flooded Amazon (National Geographic)

Exploring the High Frontier (National Geographic)

Planet Earth (BBC)

These are some tried and true resources. More are coming out all the time. If you have some that are your favorites let us know and we will pass them along. Try writing a review of the resource for The Vine. You never know. You may find yourself in print.

STR Trips to the Rainforest

*__Mexico:__ Tropical forest, Pacific beaches, colonial cities. 10 days

__* Belize:__ Tropical forest, Mayan ruins, Caribbean reefs. 12 days

__* Costa Rica:__ Tropical forest and Pacific beaches. 12 days

__* Panama:__ Tropical forest, Indigenous culture, Coral reefs. 14 days

__*Galapagos/Ecuador:__ Tropical forest, Indigenous culture, Galapagos experience. 14 days

__*Bali:__ Tropical forest, Hindu temples and coral reefs. 14 days

-Teachers who lead an expedition will travel free.

-Students will learn about different cultures and tropical ecosystems, AND participate in conservation projects that will enhance their college resumes.

-Your trip with us will be safe, fun, educational and truly inspirational.

-If you have never taken students overseas we will make it easy for you.

-Prices include international airfare, food/lodging, instruction/ transport. Please check the website or contact Save the Rainforest for exact price.

Contact STR for available summer dates or to set up dates over your spring break.

Contact Butch Beedle (beedle@eishome.com) for **a free CD** that provides a QuickTime movie of each trip and answers most of your questions.

Volunteer Internship Opportunities

Save The Rainforest provides students and interested adults the opportunity to gain practical experience in the field of tropical forest conservation as volunteer interns. Volunteers are not tourists. They will be expected to work full days along with the staff and researchers at the site they chose do their internship at, sometimes under rigorous conditions. They can expect to participate in research projects, plant conservation, education, community outreach and station maintenance.

FAQ About Volunteer Internships

A . The Stations?

Palo Dulce Station in Jalisco, Mexico. Located on a mountain top overlooking Lake Chapala, Mexico's largest lake, in a diverse biological zone that includes deciduous humid tropical forest and spiny tropical dry forest

Galapagos Station on San Cristobal Island in the Galapagos. Home to the giant tortoise and many other of the classic animals of the Galapagos.

Jatun Sacha Station in the upper Amazon of Ecuador. Located along the Rio Napo River near the city of Tena.

Bilsa Station. Located on a mountain top in western Ecuador. Very rugged site. Extremely wet and hard to get to during the rainy season, January - June.

Guandara Station. Located in the Andes of Ecuador. Parts of the reserve are above the tree line. Coldest of the stations.

Titos Santos Station. Located on the Pacific Coast of Ecuador. Dry forest habitat at lower elevations to wet forest at high elevations.

Congal Station. Located on Pacific Coast of Ecuador. Mangrove forest, estuary and beaches.

B. Internship duration and cost?

A minimum commitment of one month. Interns need to pay their own airfare to the country of their site and $400 per month to cover room and lodging ($700 in the Galapagos).

C. Who can apply?

Students 16 years and older and adults. Students under the age of 18 need a letter of permission. All interns need a certificate of good health stating that they have no existing physical problems and can undertake strenuous activities.

D. Do I need to speak Spanish?

No, but it helps if you can speak a little, or are willing to learn.

E. How do I apply?

Send a check or money order for $40 to Save The Rainforest.
Include a letter stating your age, experience, why you want to be an intern and the site/dates that you want to volunteer for.
If 16-18 years old include a letter of permission from parents or legal guardians.
Include all your contact information.

If you have more questions please email Save The Rainforest for more information.

Save The Rainforest Class Trips—

It's not just an Adventure, it's a Call to Action.

A school trip to Panama with Save the Rainforest

What an incredible place our world is. There are so many beautiful and extraordinary places to see. Panama is a tiny country that is only 50 miles wide in some places, but has an unbelievable amount of wildlife and history. Students from our school have been participating in Save The Rainforest's two-week adventure in Panama for a number of years. This exceptional educational program through Save the Rainforest and ANCON Expeditions attempts to show the students a variety of ecosystems, history and cultures.

The students were flown to Panama City and whisked to a rainforest education lodge only 45 minutes away in the Panama Canal Zone. The Canal Zone is kept as a prime rainforest to protect the canal from siltation. We were in a small buffer zone bordering both the Soberania and Chagres National Parks. Our jungle lodge had 8 bedrooms on the second floor surrounded by a beautiful rainforest. Howler monkeys and parrots called during the day. Frogs serenaded us to sleep at night.

The first day began with a pleasant walk in the forest. Students were prepared for an onslaught of mosquitoes, snakes and other assorted creepy crawlers. To their surprise there weren't that many. The treetops are the pastures of the forest, so most animals make their homes in the maze of leaves called the canopy. The students did witness a variety of insects and frogs. There were no dangerous creatures to be seen.

The group was fascinated with the busy work of leaf-cutter ants. These amazing creatures have a variety of jobs that are assigned by birth and are carried out to perfection. The leaf cutter ants have flawlessly clean trails to retrieve their cut leaves. They do not eat the leaves but take them to their nest and compost them to grow a fungus that they eat. We experimented by putting a small twig over their trail. Immediately, large engineer ants came and removed it from the trail. They were carrying an object many times larger than themselves. Our guide, naturalist and teacher, Alvaro "Al" Perez, showed us a leaf cutter nest that was as big in area as a ranch house. He estimated that there were 50 million ants in this gigantic colony.

One of the days we took a boat down a tributary to the Chagres River. The Chagres is the main water source of the Panama Canal. We went right into the Panama Canal along with 1000-foot ocean ships. Our goal was to see wildlife on the canal islands. When the Chagres River was

dammed to create Gatun Lake in the middle of the country for ship travel, the mountaintops became islands. These uninhabited islands are teeming with life. We saw four species of monkey in one day. Capuchin monkeys came down to within a yard of our boat. The highlight was seeing night monkeys. Most people never see them because they are nocturnal, but Al knew where a pair nested. They graciously cooperated by poking their heads out to watch us as we watched them.

Little Panama is rich in history. It was very important to the Spanish empire hundreds of years ago because stolen Inca gold could be carried across the country easily and then shipped to Spain. We visited the ruins of the most important Spanish fort at Portabelo. Here, all the Inca gold was counted and cataloged. It was also where the English pirates Henry Morgan and Francis Drake tried to remove that gold from Spanish hands. The forts were heavily armed with many cannons and protected by walls 10 feet thick. Panama has some of the oldest buildings in our hemisphere. We saw some of the forts and cathedrals that have been standing for centuries.

This was hard to top but it got better. We went to an Embera Indian village to stay overnight and visit with these traditional people. Their village is called Embera Drua, which means "Place of the Embera". Many students were nervous. The people do not wear many clothes and they didn't know what to expect.

We were picked up by giant dugout canoes and piloted upstream about an hour. When we saw the village they greeted us with waves and music right on the beach. The women had bright red flowers in their hair. The men were playing hand made drums and flutes. We were back in time. The student knew that we were definitely welcome. We proceeded through the village to our new home, a hut on stilts with a thatched roof and no walls.

The Embera elders told us about their lives and customs. They fed us fish caught right in the river and took us swimming at a beautiful waterfall. As a thank you, we brought a large garbage bag of school supplies. They have a two-room school built by the government. Most students will go to morning classes until 6th grade. They have very few books and supplies. These small items were really appreciated.

It was time to leave. Many would have wanted to stay longer. It is hard to put into words how a 24-hour experience like this can touch your heart and make the world seem like such a different place.

On the way back to the lodge we visited the Miraflora Locks at the Panama Canal. The locks and design of the system is an engineering marvel. Even today it would be very difficult to reproduce. Only 32 ships a day are allowed through and must make reservations well in advance. The estimated cost for a large ship to go through is $100,000. We saw two large ships go through the locks up close. Seeing is believing. The Panama Canal is no longer some abstract myth in a book. The students rode in it and saw its operation. (cont. on next page)

Bruce Calhoun's book, *"Close Calls and Foolhardy Romances: The Maturation of an Environmentalist"* is available through Amazon.com.

(Panama trip continued)

Returning to Chagres, Al planned a night hike. Walking in the rainforest at night is a very different experience. Most of the animals actually come out at night. These include snakes, ocelots, tarantulas, bats and mosquitoes. We were very apprehensive but excited. The whole feeling is different. Your senses are much more focused. Eventually, the sounds and darkness turned our nervousness into a serene kind of peace. Our scheduled short hike went on for two and half hours. We saw some small opossums and lizards. There were many tarantulas hiding in their lairs along the trail. The highlight of the walk was finding the most poisonous snake in the forest, a fer-de-lance. We were very cautious as it went about its business.

For our second week we flew to a set of islands near the Costa Rican border called Bocas del Toro. Our educational goal was to make comparisons with the island ecosystem and learn about life in coral reefs.

We stayed at the Bocas Inn run by ANCON. A travel magazine has named this ecotourism lodge as one the top ten best kept secrets in the Caribbean. The inn is on stilts over the water. The bottom floor is open on three sides. The bedrooms upstairs have a fantastic view of the sea.

Al planned for us to snorkel in five different types of reef ecosystems. Each system was different and the students were to make comparisons. We began our marine adventure by snorkeling at "Alvaro's Point". It was named after our guide because he liked to take groups there. This calm clear water was right next to mangroves. We spent three hours snorkeling at this beautiful location. The water was crystal clear and the fish abundant. The fish came in all colors of the rainbow. There were parrot, trigger, angel and damsel fish everywhere.

We had a chance to visit two other Indian villages on the Islands. These came from the biggest indigenous group in Panama called the Ngobe. At Salt Creek we also gave them school supplies. They were very short of regular school necessities like pencils and paper and were very thankful for our help.

Our snorkeling visits took us to an outer reef, an inner reef and a sponge garden. We rode through a banana canal looking for wildlife. We also had time to play on many magnificent beaches. One beach island was the home to the European "Survivor" TV show. This island beach had over thirty hawksbill sea turtle nests marked for safekeeping. Another beach was famous for having red poison arrow dart frogs and one was coffee black from the volcanoes.

Our farewell gift was having a calypso band, "the Beach Boys", play for us right in our lodge. Dancing with the Bocas Inn staff and laughing at our students who sat in with the band made for an unforgettable night. The Caribbean flavor of Bocas along with the beautiful corals was truly unforgettable.

Bocas was so different than the rest of Panama, but so were the Embera from the Ngobe, as was one type of coral reef from another. The world is a wonderful place. You can try to explore a country smaller than Wisconsin and never be able to see or understand all of its complexities. Our students have stories that will be told for a lifetime.

If you are thinking one year ahead, sow seeds
If you are thinking 10 years ahead, plant a tree
If you are thinking 100 years ahead, educate people

Global Rates of Destruction

-2.4 acres (1 hectare) per second: equivalent to two U.S. football fields

-149 acres (60 hectares) per minute

-214,000 acres (86,000 hectares) per day: an area larger than New York City

-78 million acres (31 million hectares) per year: an area larger than Poland

"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another."
- Gandhi

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." -Native American Proverb

GRAB A VINE!

Destruction of tropical rainforests is still occurring at an astronomical rate. Environmental and rainforest education is as important as ever before. Apathy is inexcusable. We need your participation to make a true educational community. Forward this newsletter to everyone. Please send us the email of anyone you think maybe interested in our newsletter. Share your favorite rainforest activities or resources. Tell us about your Save The Rainforest trips. Share trip suggestions. Write your own article or suggest one.

Let's build up a huge base of connected rainforest educators that can make a difference.

SAVE THE RAINFOREST BOARD MEMBERS

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Mission Statement: Raise money to support rainforest preservation and to educate the public on the adverse effects of rainforest destruction.

Save The Rainforest Bracelets Available

Save the Rainforest has designed one of a kind bracelets that can be used as promotion, education, or fund raising. These bright green bracelets have **Save The Rainforest** embossed on them. Your cost is $1.00 each. You may sell them for $2-3 to raise money for your projects or trips. Thousands have been sold through out the U.S. and Costa Rica. Order at beedle@eishome.com.

The best way to teach about rainforests is to take the students there. Plan a trip to the rainforest with Save The Rainforest. Lead teachers go free. Order your free CD of information or go to www.saverfn.org.

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