

# cocobolo news



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## The work doesn't stop, even in tough economic times

By Michael Roy, Executive Director



Planting a school garden

It's certainly not news to any of you that there has been a lot less money around than in previous years. NGO's across the board have taken a big hit in terms of revenue, but for small ones like CREA, we knew we would have to fight harder than most to make sure our much needed work continued.

With a significant drop in donations last year, we

<http://www.crea-panama.org>



Several ocelots now live in the wildlife corridor that CREA has created

decided to prioritize. We reduced staff and used volunteers in as many areas as possible. Regular newsletters were one of the casualties of our belt-tightening measures.

However, **every single one** of our programs has continued to run and grow, land has been protected (*see our exciting photo above and report on the next page*), training has been given, 5000 trees are being planted,

and a community nursery is under construction!

### Audit

CREA was also audited by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in March and we have just received their report. Permit me to quote from Roberto Pedraza of IUCN:

*".... my complete impression after the visit is that if I were the donor I would be so happy with the results. Although CREA is an small NGO they are doing a great job...."*

I hope CREA's commitment and measurable results, will encourage you to **support our work this year**. Your donation allows us to make the positive changes you wish to see in the world.

Thank you for your loyalty and support.

# progress updates

## CREA Land Protection has Outstanding Results



**A large male puma in Cocobolo Nature Reserve**

Ten years ago certain parts of the Cocobolo nature reserve were nothing but cattle pasture. But since CREA took on the protection of the land five years ago we have seen many animals returning to the area. Today it has become an important refuge for local wildlife including several endangered species. This large male puma was recently captured on one of our motion cameras. The ocelot on the previous page was photographed in broad daylight proving how secure these usually nocturnal animals now feel in the reserve since hunters and loggers have been dissuaded from their activities. In fact some of those same hunters are now trainees under the CREA sustainable farming program.



## Reducing the Impact of Cattle Ranching

To complement its work with small farmers, CREA is now embarking upon a training program for cattle ranchers. Cattle ranching is responsible for immense tracts of deforestation each year. In a joint project with CATIE from Costa Rica, CREA has begun working with ranchers to reforest their land with trees which provide shade and fodder for their livestock. This will aid soil conservation, protect water sources, increase biodiversity and produce healthier cows on less land.

## Nursery to Provide Trees for Reforestation

CREA is now building a nursery on its demonstration farm to provide seedlings for local reforestation projects. Currently seeds are bought outside the area which greatly increases costs of reforesting.

## CREA, the Smithsonian and Indigenous Group Collaborating on REDD +



CREA is working alongside the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama to develop innovative ways to help indigenous groups benefit from protecting their forests under the Bali Action Plan "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation" (REDD). We will bring you more news on the project later in the year.

## Menlo School visit CREA

Students from Menlo School visited Cocobolo in March for a service trip to participate in community projects such a planting a school garden and monitoring local wildlife. Read some of their observations on the following page. Click below for a link to the full students' report on their trip.  
[http://www.crea-panama.org/files/reports\\_and\\_papers/menloreport.pdf](http://www.crea-panama.org/files/reports_and_papers/menloreport.pdf)

# Excerpts from the Menlo Students' Report

"We followed Joel and his father over to their sugar cane plot, and watched them slice it via machete from the ground. Next, we placed it in a press and manually rotated a wheel and out came sugar water." -David



"Michael told me what was good, bad, poisonous, edible. He was passionate about his work, as was Emilio. Everyone was very welcoming in Panama - even the bugs!" -Lindsay

I learned something about myself...I might want to pursue a similar interest later in life—plants, animals and 'saving' the planet sounds like a pretty sweet lifestyle. I stepped out of my comfort zone and am very happy I did so...Overall, all I can say is this was more than an adventure, more than a reality check. But rather a discovery, an out of this world experience. And with no doubt something I will never forget. Thank you Panama, for everything. -Alec

"We got stuck in the hardest rainstorm, lightning and booming thunderstorm ever." -Max

"This trip to me was really fun and a real adventure. I became closer and got to know new people I never would have known." -Claire

"The amount of trust CREA placed in our hands was refreshing. Few would ever trust a group of untrained, jumpy teenagers with the life of a bird no bigger than your pinky finger. I loved it. The fluttering heart beat against the palm of my hand and the responsibility it instilled. Panama is about the adventure, the leadership, the exciting absurdly different Knight School course that succeeds in taking one out of your environment. Clothes will be drenched, boots muddied, bugs will be crawling everywhere in the open-air huts, but white, shiny smiles are permanently glued on everyone's face." -Ava

