

Rios Fund, Guatemala

Vision

The Reserva Natural Cañón Seacacar is one of Guatemala's top tourism destinations and serves as a guiding example of sustainable social development in harmony with the natural world.

Mission

Work with the Q'eqchi Maya to establish financially sustainable educational and economic opportunities that end extreme poverty while also conserving natural resources, restoring degraded landscapes and establishing protected nature reserves in the Rio Sauce watershed.

Welcome all! Discover the Rio Sauce



Where we work: Seacacar, Rio Sauce Valley, Guatemala

Seacacar is a Q'eqchi Mayan village and lies along the translucent green waters of the Rio Sauce, beneath the steep jungle slopes of the Sierra Santa Cruz and at the entrance to the overhanging walls of the Boquerón Cañon. A bird's eye view takes in Lago Izabal, 40 miles long and Guatemala's largest lake.

Although Seacacar is only a few miles from a paved highway, geography seals the village into a bygone century. There is no electricity and the only access is via a rough dirt road carved into the steep mountainsides. The rugged terrain isolates the village, but it also acts to protect some of the last remaining rainforest on Guatemala's Caribbean slope. Cattle ranching, plantation crops and slash and burn agriculture are Guatemala's leading causes of deforestation. All become difficult or impossible on steep mountain slopes or canyon walls.

The Rios Fund Operational Structure

Donations are sent to the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund, Inc. (GTF) is a non-profit, non-denominational organization located in the United States that raises funds and provides logistical support for Ak' Tenamit. All designated donations made to GTF are directly distributed to Ak' Tenamit and are tax-deductible. Ak' Tenamit is a vocational boarding school for indigenous youth. Students who graduate from our intermediate school have the option to continue their studies at Ak' Tenamit.

Our Adventure Trips are conducted via "The Rios Fund LLC," a limited liability corporation owned by Paul Heesaker. The Rios Fund is a mission driven social enterprise. A social enterprise combines the social mission of a non-profit or government program with the market-driven approach of a business. Future efforts may include an upscale and profit-sharing tourism lodge.

Amigos of the Rios Fund: A team of committed and compassionate people who conduct an annual fund-raising campaign for the Reserva Natural Cañón Seacacar. Oftentimes, this will address educational infrastructure (example - student dormitories / study areas) and on-going expenses, such as teacher salaries. It may also include tourism infrastructure that becomes a sustainable funding source. We hope to accept 20 more boarding students from other villages in the Rio Sauce watershed by the start of the new school year in mid-January 2019, but this will not be possible without a successful funding campaign.

The Q'eqchi Mayan village of Seacacar Abajo implements and oversees all project initiatives. Initiatives are presented to a local governing body called the Comite. This group is elected by local citizens. All project efforts must have the approval of the Comite before moving forward. Per written agreement, the community must use profits generated via tourism to fund some educational expenses. This includes providing meals for boarding students from other villages along the Rio Sauce. The community is also expected to fund all employees at the community owned tourism center. 100 percent of the funds for the Tourism Center (until July 2018) were donated by Paul Heesaker.

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