

## **Northern Peru Mountain Tapir Protection and Sanctuary Establishment.**

By Craig C. Downer, President, Andean Tapir Fund, P.O. Box 456, Minden, NV 89423 USA. [www.andeanapirfund.com](http://www.andeanapirfund.com) Tel. +775-267-3484 Email: [ccdowner@yahoo.com](mailto:ccdowner@yahoo.com)  
Prepared in collaboration with Conservationist Alejandro Zegarra-Pezo of Sullana, Piura, Date: January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### **Summary for Early 2009 Phase:**

- \*Working with local officials and populace, take concrete steps to organize the General Assembly of Piuran Cordillera communities. This is to take place in Ayabaca, municipal capital.
- \*Prepare and present proposal with map for democratically establishing the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary. Professional map maker and lawyer to participate in preparation and presentation of sanctuary proposal.
- \*Apprehension and Prosecution of Mountain Tapir Hunters/Traffickers in collaboration with officials;
- \*Continuing campaign of public education and vigilance aimed at protecting remaining mountain tapirs and their habitat, countering mining propaganda, and gaining support for the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary;

### **Antecedents and Strategy**

(a) The operation to apprehend animal hunters/traffickers who are targeting the mountain tapirs has already been planned by Zegarra and local collaborators. Individual traffickers have been identified and located in Ayabaca and surrounding areas. Also their local contacts have been identified and located. These illegal operators recently tried to enter a mountain tapir occupied habitat near the rural community of Tapal and Yanta. A dozen or more mountain tapirs still survive here and are being protected by the local communities

Zegarra has learned that these animal traffickers have contact with certain managers of big mining companies with tentative concessions in the Piuran Cordillera, including Sijin, Rio Blanco Cooper, Newmont, and Rio Tinto. It is in the interest of these companies to allow or even promote the removal or extermination of the endangered mountain tapirs, spectacled bears, and other threatened/endangered species in their 35 tentative mining concessions. These species are protected in their wild state along with their Andean Forest and Paramo habitat by Peruvian law. Their presence provides ample legal justification for canceling these still tentative mining concessions. Legal authority comes from Supreme Decree 034-2004-AG-PERU and the National Forestry law. Also Peru is a subscriber to the Biodiversity Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, to CITES, protecting both the mountain tapir and spectacled bear, and to other international treaties designed to protect both these species among many others occurring here. These species and their habitat are considered to be in serious jeopardy by the IUCN Species Survival Commission. Many rare and disappearing plant and animal species would be threatened by the massive open-pit, cyanide heap-leach mines being planned in the remnant cloud forests and paramos in this region of the Piuran Andes. These comprise vital headwater sources for the region's

rivers and dams. All this has been placed in particular jeopardy with the recent Supreme Decree 024 giving 35 mining concessions to the Chinese Sijin mining company for the Rio Blanco mining project. This was issued in early December, 2009.

Reports have been received by Zegarra that the mining companies in question are contracting professional hunters to kill mountain tapirs and spectacled bears in the cloud forests and paramos of Piura and Cajamarca states or otherwise are in league with certain animal traffickers to remove them, perhaps for sale to zoos. For the above and associated reasons, Zegarra believes it is imperative that these hunters/traffickers be apprehended as soon as possible through collaboration with the legal authorities of Ayabaca. If all goes as planned, these will be apprehended safely and held by collaborating police then tried expeditiously by judicial authorities. Given the recent amplification of Peru's "General Environmental Law and Penal Code," these hunters/traffickers, if found guilty, face up to ten years in prison. Two of those identified are relapsed traffickers. Together with a pro-conservation lawyer from Ayabaca and local community representatives and vigilance committees, conservationist Alejandro Zegarra will carefully monitor this operation and judicial process to assure that the national Peruvian laws protecting wildlife and endangered species are upheld.

(b) After stopping the attempts to eliminate the wild mountain tapirs, the project team will launch a public education campaign aimed at setting up the Cerro Negro nature Sanctuary and at protecting all remaining mountain tapirs and their associated habitat. This campaign will target both the general public and persons in positions of authority or influence, such as elected officials, teachers, and clergymen. We especially intend to dissuade certain of the latter from their pro-mining leanings and to generally awaken a greater ecological consciousness among the general public. This campaign will be accomplished, as before, through radio programs, including a previously collaborating station in Ayabaca, fliers, posters, and organized talks at places of public gathering such as town halls, schools, churches, plazas and market places. Strongly emphasized in our message will be the grave sanctions for disturbing, capturing, or killing the mountain tapir under the newly revised penal code mentioned above. While in the rural communities, our team will set up agreements by which the communities compromise themselves in defending and restoring the mountain tapirs in the wild together with their forest and paramo habitat. Instruction will be given concerning how to fulfill this obligation and its ecological and legal justifications by our team. This will involve the continuation of species conservation vigilance guards and guard posts along roads that have been in effect for several years (see below).

© Official and Local Collaboration (*guardas locales*): Already in place is a program of local monitoring and defense of the mountain tapirs and their habitat that has been set up through past efforts of the Andean Tapir Fund. This is operating in the communities of Tapal, Yanta, and other communities. Our team will further consult with, coordinate and advise these dedicated and conscientious citizens in order to better ascertain the threats that exist, their trends, and how better to counter these threats.

According to Zegarra, the regional office of the National Police located in Piura will issue orders to police chiefs in the municipalities of Ayabaca, Huancabamba, and Morropon to provide our team with assistance and protection. (I have asked Zegarra to

provide an official letter to this effect and to send it to me.) Again according to Zegarra, the directors of INRENA, Peru's national natural resource agency, and of the national Ecological Police have offered their support in apprehending those harassing, capturing or killing the mountain tapirs, even if these be mining interests either operating directly or indirectly through paid locals. (Again, I have asked Zegarra to provide me with letters proving this support and he has indicated that he is obtaining these.) The directives from these agencies have been sent to the municipalities of Ayabaca, Huancabamba, and Morropon with emphasis that those proven guilty be severely punished as a public example and that this be widely divulged. Additional Ecological police and INRENA employees may be assigned to the above three jurisdictions to help with our campaign, according to official promises to Zegarra. Our team counts upon informative sources throughout the Piuran Cordillera. These apprise us of the movements of the animal hunters and traffickers. It is important that these criminals, now been located through persistent and painstaking efforts, be apprehended right away. Dozens of our sources have indicated to Zegarra that these criminals are stepping up their activities to locate all remaining mountain tapirs. 'For this reason we believe that they are planning a big capture operation in collusion with mining interests and with their support'.

(d) A methodically planned schedule of meetings will take place between our team and governing committees of all communities involved in the creation of the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary. Zegarra has been promised support in the form of food and refreshments for those present at these meetings as well as the collaboration of a notary public who will charge only a token amount for legalizing signed agreements. (I have again asked Zegarra to supply me with a letter proving this.) Also possible is support in the form of transportation within the municipality of Ayabaca in order to visit the various rural communities, though this has not been assured. The above meetings should take place soon, since the rainy season is rapidly approaching and this will make transport more difficult.

**Schedule and Description of Activities for Zegarra and Collaborators**

Day # Description of Activities

1. Prepare papers and equipment and travel from Sullana to Ayabaca in rented vehicle with chauffeur.
2. Coordination with Ayabaca's public prosecutor and police, rural community patrols (*rondas*), collaborating conservation lawyer from Ayabaca, informants/sources among others to effect the apprehension of mountain tapir hunters/traffickers in Ayabaca.
3. Further Coordination with above plus a talk to this team by Zegarra leading to the final preparation of the operation to apprehend the persons accused of criminal intentions and/or acts.
4. Execute operation to bring mountain tapir hunters/traffickers into custody, decommission their equipment used to kill/capture tapirs and other animals such as spectacled bears and transfer them to the Ayabaca municipal jail to await judgement by authorities. This operation will be done in conformance with guidance received from Ayabaca's public prosecutor.

5. Initiate judicial processing of hunters/traffickers held in custody. This may take place right in Ayabaca, though the possibility exists that it will be necessary to transfer the subjects to Sullana or even to the department capital: Piura, according to Zegarra. The Ayabacan lawyer and Zegarra will mediate this process to see that it goes forth 'with the full transparency and personal security that the case merits, as well as in full obedience to Peruvian national laws'. Our team will press for fullest sanction for any proven violations against the endangered species involved. This would prove an excellent deterrent to possible future disturbance, capture or killing of Peru's scant surviving mountain tapirs.
6. Radio Ayabaca live interview to be broadcast. This will concern the great importance for conservation of Ayabaca's and adjoining jurisdictions' remaining cloud forests and paramos. This relates to regional water supply and rare and disappearing wildlife species, many of which are endemic. A special denouncement will be made of the recently issued Supreme Decree 024-2008-DE by the Ministry of Energy and Mines authorizing the Chinese Sijin Mining Company to gain control for purposes of open-pit mining over the most natural, least altered Andean forests and paramos remaining in the Piuran Cordillera. This concerns 28,268 hectares of vital natural ecosystem long coveted for mining exploitation by Rio Blanco mining project promoters including most recently Monterrico Metals and now Sijin. This is precisely where northern Peru's most important endangered mountain tapir Andean forest and paramo still occur and consequently where the heart of the future Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary is planned. Also during the radio interview the hopefully successful recent apprehension of the tapir hunters/traffickers will be divulged to the public. Special emphasis will be made concerning the importance of the mountain tapir to the ecosystem, i.e. seed dispersal, soil building, etc, and the serious threat posed by the recent Supreme Decree 024 that ignores the Piuran communities earlier referendum vote to reject mining that occurred on Sept. 16, 2007, in the provincial capital: Ayabaca. Here citizens recognized such mining projects to place in serious jeopardy the regional water supply as well as the last intact and still occupied habitat of the endangered mountain tapir. After the interview the radio station will record for subsequent emissions the following prepared talks: a. Cloud Forest and Paramos of Ayabaca, a Paradise in danger of disappearing, b. Mountain Tapirs, Endemic Biodiversity, Archeological Remains and Threats to these from Mining, and c. The Mountain Tapir, a Living Fossil in Danger of Extinction.
7. Deliver Public Talk: Cloud Forests and Paramos of Ayabaca, A Paradise in Danger of Disappearing. Place: Ayabaca's Municipal Auditorium. Attending will be local authorities and general public, including citizens from rural communities, students and teachers, clergy and church members. All will be invited.
8. Special meetings will be held to promote the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary and to prevent further wildlife and habitat destruction. These will take place with: a. rural community directors and patrols as well as conservation vigilance guards; b. judicial authorities, c Catholic and other clergy, and d. local, state and national

- police; At these meetings in Ayabaca, a window of dates for the General Assembly to establish the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary will be agreed upon.
9. Travel from Ayabaca to Culcapampa in order to realize coordination with local authorities concerning the General Assembly and the establishment of the nature sanctuary, and public vigilance to protect remaining cloud forests and paramos, their tapirs, bears, Podocarpus trees, white-winged guans, etc. A possible window of dates for the General Assembly will be agreed upon by the community and its directors in conformance with dates that were earlier determined in Ayabaca. Also a map will be presented to the community and agreement will be made on where the community decides the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary will be located within its jurisdiction. A precise delineation of the sanctuary's boundaries within each community's jurisdiction will be made on the map and signed by the community authority or authorities. This will be notarized by the notary public earlier mentioned. A special talk will be given to the people of Culcapampa after which a ceremony will take place appointing local patrols to protect mountain tapirs, spectacled bears and other wildlife and their remaining habitat. Also, a special vigilance post will be installed on the main road in order to control any illegal trafficking in mountain tapirs, spectacled bears, Podocarpus wood, etc., as well as to detain illegal mining activities. In the evening, our team will travel on to the community of Tapal.
  10. This day the same program will be conducted in the Tapal community as just occurred in Culcapampa, including the naming of guards and the installation of a control post. Tapal occurs near occupied mountain tapir habitat, so a special incentive will be given here to spur mountain tapir vigilance and protection. Travel on in evening to Yanta community.
  11. Same program as above for Yanta community. The jurisdiction is also key to protecting remaining extensive cloud forests and paramos and their mountain tapirs. Return to Ayabaca in evening.
  12. Day of rest and recuperation
  13. through 17: Travel from Ayabaca to following rural communities: Olleros, Olleria, Cujaca, San Vicente and El Molino. In each of the five above named communities conduct the same program as described above at the rate of one community per day. Return to Ayabaca during evening of day 17.
  - 18 through 21. Travel from Ayabaca to following rural communities: Lanchipampa, Chirinos, Laqui, Samanga. In each of the four above named communities conduct the same program as described above at the rate of one community per day. Return to Ayabaca during evening of day 21.
  22. Break for rest and recuperation in Ayabaca.
  - 23 through 26. Travel from Ayabaca to following rural communities: Hurara de Vera, Huara de Indios, Lucarqui, Aragota. In each of the four above named communities conduct the same program as described above at the rate of one community per day. Return to Ayabaca during evening of day 26.
  27. Consultation with Ayabacan authorities and conservationists concerning how the project is shaping up for the establishment of the sanctuary.
  - 28 through 34. Travel from Ayabaca to following rural communities: Mostazas, Chocan, Joras, Soccabamba, Cuyas, Cuchayo, Suyupampa. In each of these seven

communities conduct the same program as described above at the rate of one community per day. Return to Ayabaca during evening of day 34.

35. Rest and recuperation in Ayabaca.

36 through 39. With professional surveyor and map maker, prepare agreed upon map of future Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary incorporating input from all communities just visited by team.

40 through 43. Meetings with mayor and directors of Ayabaca municipality to discuss proposed sanctuary and its location and to fix the precise dates during which the General Assembly of communities is to take place. This will reflect the consensus of opinion among all the communities just visited since day 9 through 34, i.e. 26 days. The primary objective of the General Assembly will be to legally establish the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary and with the greatest rapidity and thoroughness possible! Meetings will also take place with Ayabacan police, public prosecutor, judges, and the Ayabacan lawyer who is collaborating with our team. He is a lawyer whose specialty is the conservation and environmental laws of Peru. (I have asked Zegarra to provide a resume of this lawyer as well as the map maker.) The exact location of the sanctuary may have to be revised, in which case the professional surveyor and map maker would again be employed. Hopefully this would not be too major.

44. Rest and recuperation.

45 through 49. Communicate to all involved communities the final agreed upon dates of the General Assembly that is to take place in Ayabaca and that here the proposal to create the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary will be thoroughly explained and described, illustrated by map and photos, and voted upon by all communities involved and as sanctioned by Peruvian Law. The official communiqué/invitation concerning the General Assembly will be in the form of an official letter to the director(s) of each community and signed and sealed by the Ayabacan mayor. When necessary, this will be hand delivered in person by Zegarra. Final agreement to participate in the General Assembly will be made by each community in written form and signed by community representative/authority and sent to the Ayabacan mayor. Our team will assist wherever necessary in this process.

50 to 51. Once the community agreements to participate in the General Assembly are received and papers placed in order in the Ayabacan mayor's office, the public announcement of the General Assembly will be made through all appropriate media channels: radio, newspapers, loudspeakers in Ayabaca plaza and other town plazas, public posters, etc. Preparation for the General Assembly will then commence regarding: place of assembly, presumably the Ayabacan municipal auditorium or town plaza, lodgings and food for community representatives and other participants estimated by Zegarra at ca. 5,000 in number, etc.

### **Additional Activities**

#### Days Required Description

3 days. Appropriate authorities in Sullana and Piura will be consulted in regard to the creation of the Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary and to the crackdown upon illegal hunters/traffickers of mountain tapirs, etc.

2 days. Interview by Radio Nuevo Norte and Radio La Capullana in the city of Sullana concerning the urgent need to establish the sanctuary and prevent open-pit mining takeover of Piura's last intact Andean forests and paramos – vital regional watersheds and habitats for endangered mountain tapirs and many other species.

1 day. Similar interview as above described by Radio Cutivalu in state capital city: Piura

3 days. Interview on public television stations based in Sullana, Piura, and Lima.

3 days. Meetings with and presentations before conservation related associations, networks, and individuals including but not limited to: (1) *Agua, Desarrollo y Democracia*; (2) *Frente Para Desarrollo Sostenible de la Frontera Norte*, and (3) The president of CONVEAGRO in order to promote sanctuary and wildlife and habitat protection, to counter regional mining takeover, and to counter the related proposed mineral ore viaduct by Rio Blanco mining project that would extend to the Pacific coast of NW Peru.

**Ongoing during entire project.** Preparation of illustrated articles concerning (a) proposed Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary, (b) crackdown on mountain tapir hunters/traffickers, (c) importance of Piuran Cordillera and its natural habitats as regional water source, endemic wildlife bastion, etc. These are to have published in many outlets including:

*El Tiempo de Piura* (the major regional capital newspaper)

*El Comercio* and *La Republica* (major national capital Lima newspapers for national coverage)

Magazine *Rumbos del Peru* (international coverage and in Peru, Spanish and English, and which published an earlier illustrated article by Craig Downer on the subject of the mountain tapirs and their habitat in northern Peru and the threats thereto by mining, etc.)

Magazine *CARETAS* (national coverage);

As well, articles would be prepared for circulation in diverse Internet webpages and e-news bulletins, including the globally respected Environment News Service.

### **Project Budget**

- I. Surveyor and mapmaker to prepare agreed-upon map of Cerro Negro nature Sanctuary, including research and expense of materials. 10 days (10 hours per day) x \$100 per day = \$1,000
- II. Lawyer consultation and preparation for legal establishment of Cerro Negro Nature Sanctuary. 5 days (12 hours per day) x \$100 per day = \$500
- III. Four Wheel Drive vehicle with chauffeur-bodyguard and gasoline & service of vehicle for Zegarra, notary, and lawyer during community visits and travel to and from Sullana to Ayabaca. 30 days (12 hour per day) x \$50 per day = \$1,500

- IV. Preparation for General Assembly: fliers letters, telephone charges, meeting refreshments, etc. = \$500
- V. Expenses for conservationist Alejandro Zegarra Pezo including meals and lodging, other incidental transport costs, i.e. taxi, bus, and to include extra expenses involved with public education campaign, e.g. fliers, posters, article preparations, telephone and email charges. 50 days (12 hours per day) x \$30 = \$1,500
- VI. Costs of operation for 23 local communities in Piuran Cordillera for conservation vigilance guards and guard posts along roads, to be delivered by Zegarra to each community upon reception of prepared receipt itemizing guard duties and agreeing to monthly reports: 23 x \$100 = \$2,300
- VII. Expenses involved in apprehension and prosecution of mountain tapir traffickers: \$700
- VIII. Expenses for Andean Tapir Fund in preparing and overseeing this project: office supplies, telephone, mail and internet charges, preparation of reports, articles, communication with Peruvian team, government officials, other conservationists, plus professional consultation and representation of the project. For one-half year, carried out by Craig Downer, president and wildlife ecologist, member IUCN SSC Tapir Specialist Group and American Society of Mammalogists: \$1,000

**TOTAL: \$9,000 U.S. Dollars requested**

Full report on project accomplishments including budgetary receipts and proofs of goals reached to be issued to sponsors by project team by end of June 2009.