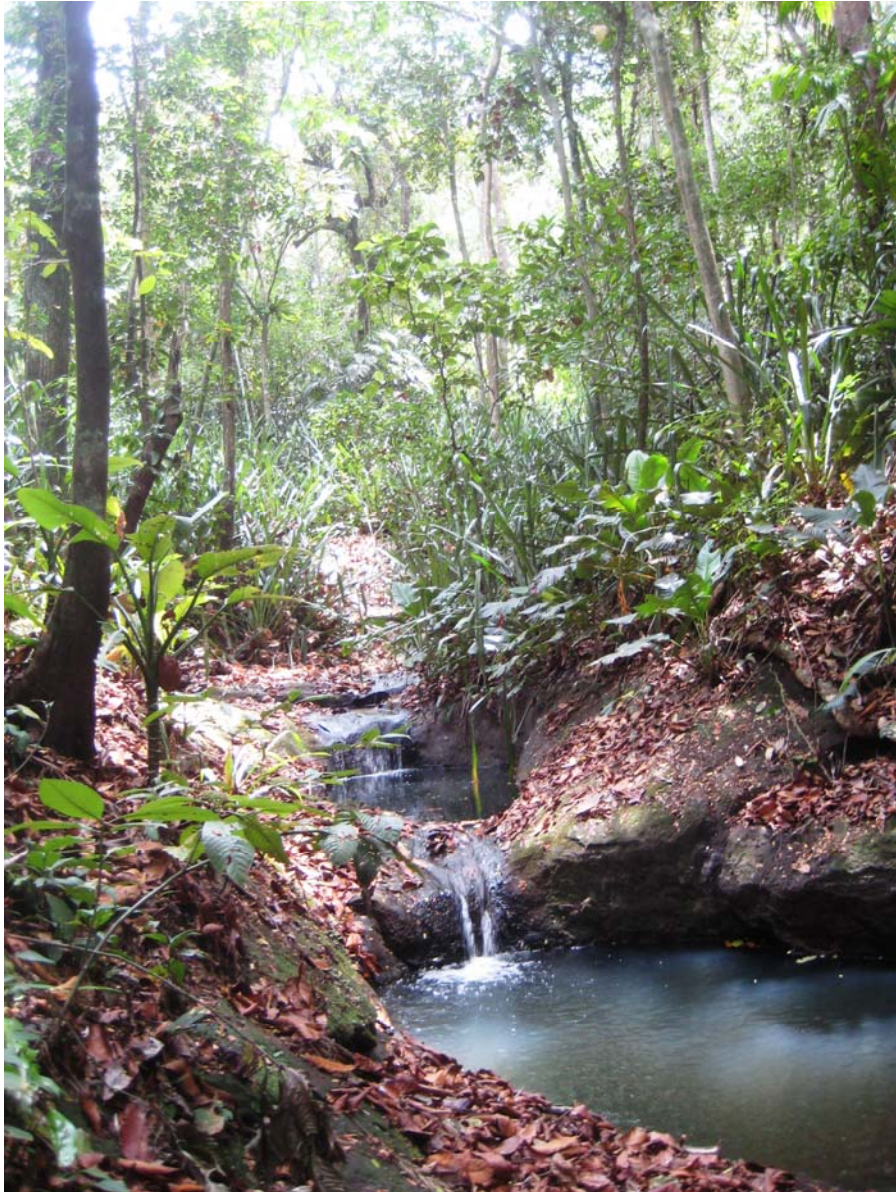


# THE DISTRICT OF CHAGRES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECOTOURISM?



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## HOST ORGANIZATION

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*La Asociación Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño* (ACEASPA) is a not for profit non-governmental organization. Founded in 1977 by Xabier Gorostiaga, Raul A. Leis and Charlotte Elton, the organizations main goals are to improve social justice and participation of Panamas marginalized people in creating an improved society. ACEASPA initiates and supports projects aimed towards equitable economic growth, democratic participation and environmentally sustainable development. ACEASPA functions as a centre of popular education, research, and action, collaborating with a wide variety of grass-roots organizations as well as national and international initiatives.

### **Projects**

ACEASPA has been involved in a wide variety of social projects in Panama. The organization has been involved in projects such as adult education programs, female sexual violence prevention programs, female community and market involvement programs, programs for sustainable development in rural communities, and education and sustainable development programs for indigenous groups like the Kuna and the Ngöbe-Buglé. New projects include environmentally and economically sustainable resource use projects with the Ngöbe-Buglé people of the Bocas del Toro area; and the support and

execution of community based sustainable development in the area surrounding Chagres National Park.

### **Facilities**

Since Built in 1977, ACEASPA has a head office in Panama City located on Via Cincueantenario in Coco del Mar, San Francisco. In 2004, ACEASPA also funded *El Centro el Tucán*, a center for education, research and community exchange located in the buffer zone of San Lorenzo Park, in the town of Achiote. Since its completion, *el Centro el Tucán* has been the site for artisanal and English courses, accommodated students from around the world and hosted a variety of scientific research projects.

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## DAYS SPENT ON PROJECT

	<b>Panama City</b>	<b>Costa Abajo</b>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
<b>Days Spent/Person</b>	13	24	37
<b>Man Days</b>	26	48	74
<b><i>Man Hours</i></b>	208	384	592

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE DISTRICT OF CHAGRES: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECOTOURISM?**

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*La Asociación Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño* (ACEASPA) is a not for profit non-governmental organization. ACEASPA initiates and supports projects aimed towards equitable economic growth, democratic participation and environmentally sustainable development. For almost a decade ACEASPA has been working in the region of Chagres, particularly the San Lorenzo buffer zone, to try and promote sustainable development projects in the area. While ACEASPA has organized small projects and conferences throughout the region, the brunt of the organization's support has been focused on the town of Achiote. With the help from ACEASPA, Achiote has developed a small but noteworthy ecotourism trade within the town. The town and its ecotourism group, *Los Rapaces*, have benefited in particular from ACEASPA's partnership with a group of architectural students from the University of Colorado. These students have helped to build a new ecotourism structure in the town every year for the last four years including an office, a coffee museum, an observation deck and a cabin.

Now that Achiote has an established ecotourism group and a variety of tourist attractions, ACEASPA is hoping to offer its aid to the surrounding communities. Our project was designed as a means of acquiring information on the ecotourism attractions, structures, committees and level of interest of other communities in the region of Chagres. Other factors which were evaluated were the public infrastructure and general socioeconomic situation in each community, as well as possible locations for future building projects. This study incorporated four towns: Piña, Union de Piña, Escobal, and Cuipo.

Information was collected through observations and semi-structured interviews conducted during the months of January to April 2008. This data was then used to perform an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to ecotourism in the community. It was also used to build maps of ecotourism sites in each town using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Based on the SWOT analysis, recommendations were made on the development of ecotourism in each town. Final general recommendations were also made on the development of ecotourism in the district of Chagres as well as recommendations for future building projects by the architectural students of Colorado.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO: EL DISTRITO DE CHAGRES: DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE A TRAVÉS DE ECOTURISMO?

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*La Asociación Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño* (ACEASPA) es una organización no gubernamental sin ánimo de lucro. ACEASPA inicia y apoya proyectos que fomenten el crecimiento económico con equidad, la participación democrática y el desarrollo ecológicamente sostenible. Por casi una década ACEASPA ha estado trabajando en la región de Chagres, en particular en la zona de amortiguación de San Lorenzo, para tratar de promover proyectos de desarrollo sostenible en el área. Aunque ACEASPA ha organizado pequeños proyectos y conferencias en toda la región, la mayoría de la ayuda de la organización se ha centrado en la ciudad de Achioté. Con la ayuda de ACEASPA, Achioté ha desarrollado un pequeño pero significativo comercio de ecoturismo dentro de la ciudad. La ciudad y su grupo de ecoturismo, *Los Rapaces*, se han beneficiado en particular de la asociación que ACEASPA tiene con un grupo de estudiantes de arquitectura de la Universidad de Colorado. Por los últimos cuatro años estos estudiantes han contribuido a construir una nueva estructura de ecoturismo en la ciudad cada año, incluyendo una oficina, un museo de café, una plataforma de observación y una cabina.

Ahora que Achioté ha establecido un grupo de ecoturismo y una variedad de atracciones turísticas, ACEASPA quiere ofrecer su ayuda a las comunidades alrededor. Nuestro proyecto fue concebido como un medio de adquirir información sobre las atracciones, las estructuras y las comisiones de ecoturismo, y el nivel de interés de otras comunidades en la región de Chagres. Otros factores que fueron evaluados la infraestructura pública y la situación socioeconómica general de cada comunidad, y también los posibles lugares para futuros proyectos de construcción. Este estudio se trata de cuatro ciudades: Piña, Unión de Piña, Escobal, y Cuipo.

La información fue recogida a través de observaciones y entrevistas semiestructuradas realizadas durante los meses de enero a abril de 2008. Estos datos se utilizan para hacer un análisis de las fortalezas, debilidades, oportunidades y amenazas (FODA) para el ecoturismo en la comunidad. También se usan para construir mapas de sitios de ecoturismo en cada ciudad por Sistemas de Posicionamiento Global (SPG) y Sistemas de Información Geográfica (SIG). Usando el análisis FODA, se formularon recomendaciones sobre el desarrollo de ecoturismo en cada ciudad. Recomendaciones generales finales también se hicieron en el distrito de Chagres, y recomendaciones para futuros proyectos de construcción de los estudiantes de arquitectura de Colorado.

# **1.0 GENERAL CONTEXT**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

With 900 million tourist arrivals in 2007, it comes as no surprise that tourism is the world's largest industry (WTO 2007). In 2007, tourism in Panama generated about \$3 419.90 million dollars and an estimated 158 000 (1 in every 8.6) jobs (WTTC 2007). While good for the economy, the rapid rise of tourism is increasingly impacting the world's protected areas (Goodwin 1996). However, there are alternatives, the most popular of which is ecotourism. Ecotourism is rapidly becoming the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry (Kiss 2004). Although many definitions for ecotourism exist, the key components remain the same: environmental sustainability; support for conservation of local culture and natural history; environmental responsibility on the part of the tourist; and socioeconomic benefits to local communities (Goodwin 1996, Simpson 2007, WTTC 2007). Thus, for communities with high biodiversity and a rich natural environment, ecotourism is being promoted as a tool for conservation, as well as for socioeconomic development (Stone and Wall 2004).

While community ecotourism has many benefits, these can often be accompanied by disadvantages such as the loss of culture and social structures, as well as the undermining of social norms and economies (Simpson 2007). In order to minimize community disturbance caused by ecotourism, communities are encouraged to form Community Benefit Ecotourism Committees (CBEC) in order to develop ecotourism initiatives that most profit locals (Simpson 2007). These community based initiatives are meant to be a way for biodiversity to pay for itself by aiding the economy of local people (Kiss 2004). Furthermore, by forming CBECs, communities can achieve a sense of ownership and

involvement in ecotourism activities and ensure that ecotourism initiatives satisfy local needs (Murphy 2007).

While CBECs empower communities, their success is limited by the small number of people involved and the competitive nature of the tourism industry (Kiss 2004). In addition, the lack of coordination throughout the tourism industry makes it very difficult for an independent community organization to operate without support from other stakeholders (Jamal and Getz 1995). Thus, it is often in a community's best interest to involve outside stakeholders. Historically, outside aid has generally not come from governmental organizations, but rather from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Simpson 2007). NGOs can play key roles in delivering benefits to communities by assisting in various ways, including through investments, consultation, partnership building, and by assisting in the formation and maintenance of CBECs (Jepson 2005). Furthermore, the participation of NGOs in the management of tourism initiatives can result in more sustainable and extended benefits to the community (Jamal and Getz 1995).

## **1.2 ACEASPA AND ECOTOURISM**

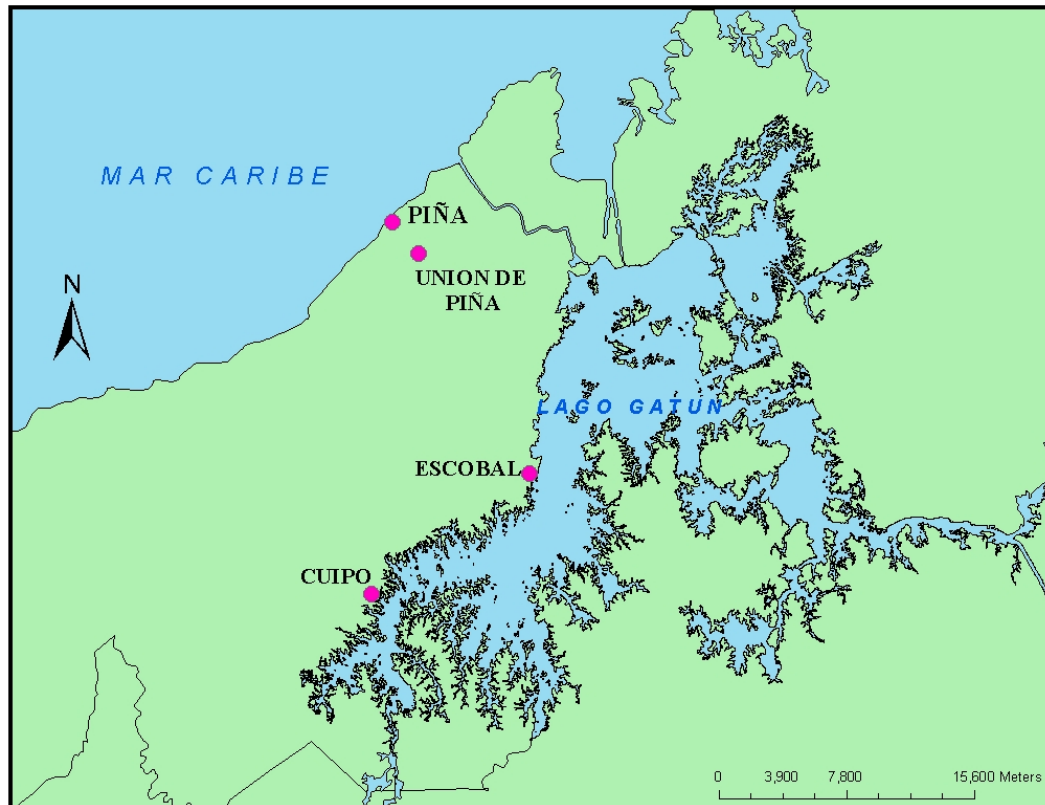
Such a relationship exists between the Asociacion Centro de Estudios y Acción Social Panameño (ACEASPA) and Achiote, a small town located in Costa Abajo, Colon. This town is the closest community to San Lorenzo Park, a protected area, and is located within the buffer zone. In order to prevent the detrimental affects that extensive natural resource use in the buffer zone could have on San Lorenzo Park, ACEASPA began building a relationship with the town of Achiote in order to promote sustainable

development. Initially, the town was looking to promote organic coffee farms as a new form of sustainable growth, but increasing tourist interest in the bird populations around Achiote quickly changed the focus to ecotourism. (Pers. Comm. Felipe Martines, president of *Los Rapaces* ecotourism group).

ACEASPA has spent much time working with the ecotourism group of Achiote, *Los Rapaces*, by helping with organizational issues, as well as with network building and project development. This thriving partnership is partially responsible for the success of ecotourism in Achiote. In 2004, the relationship between the town and the NGO was solidified when ACEASPA built *el Centro del Tucan*, a dormitory and a center for research, meetings and courses in Achiote (CEASPA 2007). Since then, the town has been able to house architectural students from Colorado, that are brought to the town by ACEASPA during spring break to build ecotourism related structures in Achiote.

### **1.3 THE DISTRICT OF CHAGRES**

The district of Chagres is an opportune area for ecotourism as it lies within the buffer zone of the San Lorenzo protected area and is teeming with biodiversity and culture (Larson 2002). Most of its residents are farmers with strong relationships to the land and its creatures, and many have a commitment to sustainable land practices around the protected area. The small and relatively isolated towns of Chagres are made up of people of African and Spanish descent, as well as indigenous people (Larson 2002).



**Figure 1:** Towns studied within the District of Chagres: Piña, Union de Piña, Cuipo and Escobal.

#### 1.4 OBJECTIVES AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The main objective of this project was to offer recommendations regarding the feasibility of ecotourism in the Chagres region. In order to make these recommendations several smaller objectives needed to be met. These objectives involved performing an overall inventory of the attractions and socioeconomic situation in each town, evaluating the degree of interest and level of organization in each community, assessing the possibilities for network building between ecotourism groups and finding sites for future construction projects of ecotourism structures. Based on these goals, we aimed to do the following:

- Inventory the attractions of each town
- Evaluate the presence of ecotourism committees in the town

- Determine the level of completeness of public infrastructure in the towns
- Determine the town's current capacity for receiving ecotourists
- Determine the general socio-economic situation in each town
- Determine sites which could be built upon in the future by Colorado students, as well as the owners or authorities who's permission would be required for their development
- Provide ACEASPA with recommendations on the type of aid they should administer, as well as the order in which this aid should be administered
- Provide recommendations for ways each town could best develop its ecotourism potential
- Provide overall recommendations on ecotourism development in the area

Fulfilling these objectives will give ACEASPA the base knowledge required to pursue further funding and development projects in the marginalized areas of the Chagres region. ACEASPA is one of five organizations, including the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute that will be responsible for a grant of approximately 5 million dollars in aid for the Parque San Lorenzo and Chagres area (Pers. Comm. Sr. Harbar, ACEASPA). ACEASPA's mandate with this funding is sustainable development for the communities located in the San Lorenzo buffer zone. ACEASPA will work towards implementing eco-tourism with the communities in the area to achieve nature conservation and sustainable resource use, while contributing to community quality of life. The inventory and recommendations produced in this report can help ACEASPA make decisions on where to invest the aid money.



## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

In order to determine the feasibility of ecotourism in Piña, Union de Piña, Escobal, and Cuipo, all towns were explored for possible tourist attractions and activities. . Note was taken of trails, water bodies, restaurants, natural wonders, boat and bike presence, look out areas, cabins and other such tourism structures and attractions.

Semi-structured interviews, involving both close ended and open ended questions were then administered to town members. Two surveys were given (see Appendix C). The longer of the two was given to community members who were already involved in ecotourism groups or had taken part in ecotourism initiatives. The shorter survey was given to all other members of the community with whom we spoke. The number of interviews administered to the general community members varied from town to town depending on overall town size and the number of people available to talk. In Union de Piña, the smallest of the towns, 12 interviews were administered, while in Escobal, the largest of the towns, 30 interviews were completed. Thirty surveys were administered in Piña and 20 were done in Cuipo.

Any information given on town attractions was then used in further exploration of sites of interest. These results, as well as those of our own observations were then used to map the locations visited and highlight the sites pertinent to development of tourism in the area. This was done by taking waypoints at locations of interest and track logs of important routes using a Global Positioning System (GPS). This data was then transferred to a computer where it was mapped using a Geographical Information System (GIS).

The overall viability of ecotourism in each of these four towns was later determined using a SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool employed to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats implicated in a project (Wikipedia 2007). The SWOT analysis allowed for the identification of key strengths and weaknesses present within the communities, as well as of the opportunities and threats presented by external environments. This analysis allowed us to assess the overall feasibility of ecotourism initiatives and give informed recommendations on the ecotourism promise of each town.

These recommendations were then conveyed to interested representatives from the communities and ACEASPA in a 40 minute presentation held in *El Centro del Tucan* on Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup> 2008.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS**

The greatest limitations of this project were due to time constraints. Initially, the project area for this study was supposed to encompass the entire District of Chagres. However, this would have involved an inventory of 14 towns in an area with very limited public transportation in only a few months. This was deemed infeasible early on, and instead we did a more complete examination of only four towns, the furthest of which were over an hour away from each other. However, since we only completed four towns, our knowledge of the overall area is limited and it is more difficult to make overall recommendations. Even in the four towns inventoried, time constraints were an added difficulty as most towns were sprawled over a large area and certain trails and tourist

attractions no doubt remained unseen. Any sites which may be of interest but remained unexplored by the researchers will be stated as such within the report.

A lack of knowledge and available resources on the area were also a limitation as it is more difficult to perform an adequate SWOT analysis on each town. External opportunities and threats in particular are difficult to gauge without thorough background information.

Lastly, the data collected through our surveys in each town may be biased. The times when interviews were conducted, usually in the mornings and early afternoons on Monday to Friday, meant that responses came mainly from women and retired citizens, which may result in biased results. Furthermore, in each town our sample size was small compared to population due to time constraints and could only be relied on to give us a general idea of the opinions, knowledge and socioeconomic situation of the people in

## **1.7 CODE OF ETHICS**

The McGill Code of Ethics was followed in the execution of this project. Ethical consideration was required in the structured and semi-structured interviews conducted with the general public and major ecotourism players in Piña, Union de Piña, Escobal and Cuipo. In compliance with the Code of Ethics, the researchers introduced themselves and the nature of their project to all interviewees prior to questioning. Interviewees were told that their consent was required for an interview to take place and no interview was performed without consent of the interviewees. In order to assure anonymity, no names were collected in the interviews designed for the general community members. Names and contact information were only collected for the community members already

involved in ecotourism initiatives and who wished for their contact information to be shared and published in this final report. The names and contact information included were incorporated with the formal consent of interviewees.

## **2.0 ECO-TOURISM ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: PIÑA**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

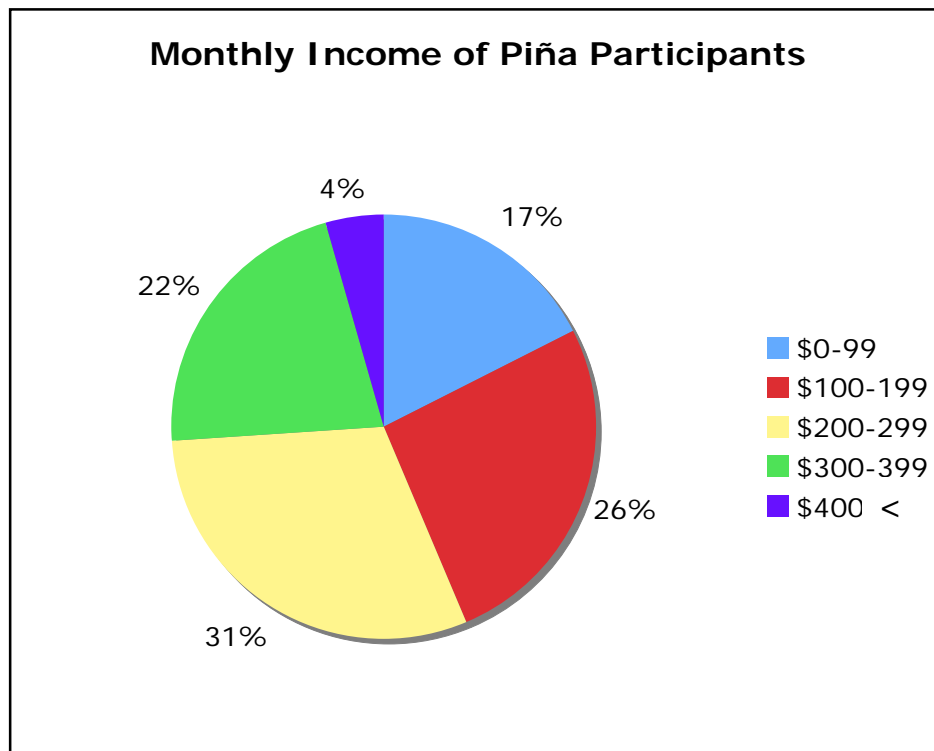
Piña is a small beachside community that was founded in the 1800s. Located next to San Lorenzo National Park, the surrounding area offers a plethora of wildlife to enjoy. Piña and the surrounding area consists of about 800 people, most of which are of Caribbean descent.

### **2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DESCRIPTION**

The main source of employment for the inhabitants of Piña is sand excavation, as well as a variety of positions within *Colon Zona Libre*. A small number of inhabitants also participated in agriculture, fishing and construction as their main source or a supplement of their income. The majority of community members were said to commute to and from Colon everyday which takes over an hour, depending on the waiting time at the Gatun locks. Within the town itself, sand excavation was the biggest source of employment. The sand, which is considered to be of good quality, is later sold to cement companies. Most of the females surveyed in Piña described themselves as housewives. However, this division of labor is not absolute, as some women also had part time employment at the school, the restaurant and the bar.

Thirty households were interviewed in Piña. Responses from these surveys indicated that 31% of respondents had a monthly income between \$200 and \$299 US dollars. The

second most frequent income category was the \$100 to \$199 bracket with 26% of participants. Only 4% of participants responded as having monthly incomes of \$400 or higher. In total, 74% of people surveyed reported a monthly income of under \$300 dollars.



**Figure 2:** The monthly household income of survey respondents in Piña. The population fell into five different income categories.

## 2.21 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The town of Piña has a good transportation system to and from the town. The bus from Colon to Piña passes daily, about every hour, and the road is of good quality. The segment of the road which enters the town was being re-paved during the time of our research.

There were some public health threats in Piña which stemmed from the absence of public infrastructure. The major concerns are garbage disposal and water treatment. There is no garbage collection system in Piña and as a result garbage is dumped in various locations. Garbage piles accumulate around the baseball field, in ditches and

around the shoreline. The town’s water is not potable as it is not filtered, although it is treated with chlorine.

Though the town does not have a clinic, there is a health center in nearby Palmas Bellas. The road to this service is of good quality, and bus service is available on an hourly basis to that town as well.

There is a primary school in Piña that appears to be in good condition. It may also serve as a gathering place for the community as meetings were held there during our visits. Students who attend high school must travel to nearby Palmas Bellas.

**Table 1:** Available Public Infrastructure within the town of Piña

	Potable Water	Paved Roads	Health Center	Public transportation To town	Primary School	Secondary School	Garbage Disposal System
<b>Piña</b>		X		X	X		

### 2.3 DEGREE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Piña does not have any community organization that is dedicated to ecotourism. There is a degree of community organization, which can be seen in Congo dance committees that organize these popular events which are usually concentrated during weekends in January and February. When the survey was administered, most people (92%), especially the women, were interested in participating in an ecotourism group or project. Since most of the women surveyed were housewives, involving women in an ecotourism group could be a way to motivate gender parity in economic activities.

### 2.4 ATTRACTIONS

As a coastal community, Piña offers the natural beauty of the sea. Despite this apparent allure, most of the coastline, where the majority of the dwellings are located, is

littered with garbage. The greatest appeal of the town would be to set up as a base point for excursions into nearby areas, such as Parque San Lorenzo. Unique from the other towns, Piña’s ethnic makeup was largely of Caribbean descent.

The town has a calming essence of rural tranquility where community members sit by the side of the road in front of the restaurant/bar at all hours of the day to converse and observe village life. Many of the community members we spoke to were hospitable to the idea of tourists. There were interested in the idea of home-stay programs, where tourists might pay a few dollars to stay in their homes for the night. We were offered such hospitality when we camped there at night. There are already some tourism structures available in the town which could be developed upon (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Tourism infrastructure already in place in Piña

	Look-out structures	Trails	Convenience Stores	Restaurants	Gazebos	Camping area
Piña		X*	X	X**	X	X

\* Trail not maintained

\*\* Only open for breakfast and sometimes lunch

Based on our observations and survey results, the main tourist attractions that could be developed in Piña are 1) Congo dances/Caribbean culture 2) Beaches 3)Fishing 4) Trail to San Lorenzo and the Chagres River and the 5)Series of freshwater pools.

**1) Congo dances/Caribbean culture**

The coastal, easy going feel of the community is a definite attraction. The black Caribbean cultural asset implies a distinction from other communities in the Chagres area

that could be of interest to tourists. One of the ways in which this cultural trait is presented is through the Congo dances they hold on the beach on weekends through February. Community members, from children to adults, perform these allegorical dances.

The Caribbean culture can also be of attraction with regard to cuisine. Though we did not eat there, it is possible for inhabitants to prepare meals for visitors with some Caribbean flavors absent in the normal fare found at other restaurants in the areas.

## **2) Beaches**

There are several sandy alcoves in and on the road past Piña that might be enjoyed by beach enthusiasts. The beach where the population is located has a river flowing into it as well. This beach and the other coastline where there are homes have a lot of trash. Though, we did see children swimming in the ocean just off the beach.

On the road from the town to the beginning of Park San Lorenzo there are several other beaches that were cleaner. We were unable to determine if the land was private property of government/public land. Furthermore, the sea floor water appeared to be rocky. If they are not suitable for swimming, these beaches might be nice for camping and fishing.

## **3) Fishing**

Many men in the community spend their free time, or gain their livelihoods by fishing off the coast. Some people own small boats called *cayucos*. These wooden canoes are used off the coast for fishing. There are a variety of species of fish and sharks caught in these waters which may be of interest to tourists. Fishing adventures would be easy to



organize since many of the Piña's men are experienced with these waters and could share good fishing spots with travelers.

#### **4) Trail to rio Chagres/Fort San Lorenzo**

The road that goes through Piña ends, less than a ten minute walk later, with the border of San Lorenzo National Park. There is a vague trail through the forest that leads to a long beach looking across from the ruins of Fort San Lorenzo. This beach is also at the mouth of the remarkable Chagres River. There beach is relatively clean. We also saw traces of sea turtle nesting. The walk through the forest is about two hours, depending on the necessity of detours and the speed of the walkers. A machete was necessary to get through the trail. This trail used to be the main highway used by people to get to Piña, and other towns in the area, before the highway that goes through Achiote was built. Along the way, old bridges and other remnants of the area's history gives this route a tangible link with the past.

#### **5) Series of Freshwater Pools**

In the forest there is a set of cool fresh water pools. They are linked together by waterfalls. The water is extremely clean and very deep in some areas. They smooth rocks that hold this water makes swimming and relaxing on the rocks an ideal activity. There is also a variety of amphibian wildlife that could be spotted along the edges of the water. This site is the greatest natural attraction of Piña, as part of the general trail through the forest to the mouth of the Chagres.

#### **6) Boat tours with Union de Piña**

These tours will be discussed in the attractions for Union de Piña (Section 4.4).

## 2.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

**Table 3:** SWOT analysis for Piña

	<b>Internal</b>	
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beaches</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Trail to rio Chagres/Fort San Lorenzo</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Waterfalls/fresh water pools</li> <li>• Rural tranquility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garbage thrown on beach and throughout town</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low opportunity cost of hosting tourists</li> <li>• Sustainable returns on ecotourism as opposed to other resource exploitation</li> <li>• Paved road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low capital for investment</li> <li>• Lack of bank services, post office, grocery stores, public phone service</li> <li>• Lack of structures like cabins, hostels, etc</li> <li>• Lack of assets like boats, bikes for rental, etc</li> <li>• Lack of community resources to invest in waste disposal plans</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest of community members in Project</li> <li>• Some community level cohesion-displayed through organization of Congo dances</li> <li>• Some community members speak English</li> <li>• Knowledge of fishing and hidden trails in San Lorenzo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community lacks trust in community leaders like government representative</li> <li>• Lack of self organization in matters like garbage clean-up</li> <li>• Unequal gender participation in economic activities</li> </ul>

	<b>External</b>	
	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing interest in natural sites</li> <li>• Possible coordination with Union de Piña in boat tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning of Garbage threatens the attractiveness of the town</li> <li>• Sand excavation for external use threatens aquatic biodiversity</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing investment in ecotourism</li> <li>• Could be advertised as a two town package with Union de Piña</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of promotion outside the area</li> <li>• Hard to compete with other more well-established ecotourism sites in the area ie/ Achiote, Portobelo</li> <li>• No garbage collection system</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing interest is being shown by political parties in the area ex/ new projects like road paving and aqueduct amelioration</li> <li>• Close proximity to Achiote facilitates the establishment of a working relationship between the two communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad reputation of the Colon province</li> <li>• Little touristic interest in the area</li> </ul>

### **3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main objective of ACEASPA’s involvement in developing ecotourism in the Chagres area is aiding towns through the development of supplemental income sources. As such, any ecotourism development should be done through a group or committee that is composed of and run by Piña community members. Studies have shown that community based ecotourism committees have proved to be the most beneficial for local communities. The first stride in achieving this would be to have a well-advertised open-forum meeting in Piña on the topic. It should be at a time and date when the most people

would be available. Thus, the first step in ecotourism needs to be taken by the town. The results of this meeting should be the creation of an ecotourism group which will be based on the ideals of sharing community benefits. The projects this group initiates need to incorporate sustainability and social improvement.

Addressing the absence of an adequate waste disposal regime in Piña is an imperative precondition to eco-tourism development. The garbage problems affect the health and quality of life of the residents. Although undertaking the garbage issue requires the confrontation of the economic and political problems that have made garbage disposal in Piña such a low priority, community members could begin taking steps to mitigate the situation. There could be a day designated for community clean-up where the local school and community volunteers initiate a garbage clean-up. This activity would aid in developing a sense of community responsibility for the environment and cleanliness of their land. However, the town must also begin to look for resources and support from their political representatives to acquire proper trash collection services to solve the problem in a more permanent manner. Without this, the town will continuously face the challenge of where to put their garbage.

The town can implement organic composting as a way to manage waste. This could be a project organized through the school. Furthermore, the soil produced by this can be recycled back into the community with gardening projects. The women who are homemakers could also get involved in this.

In the same vein of improving the aesthetics of the town, a community group could begin a community beautification project by decorating public structures with colorful paintings. ACEASPA occasionally holds painting workshops in Achote which

interested parties could attend to capacitate them to paint town structures such as the gazebo. They can also create inviting signs to indicate attractions. Achiote has a number of colorful signs painted by community members that contributes to its friendly atmosphere. Again, a group comprised of, but not limited to, children and women of the community, could partake in these activities.

The community of Piña has much to benefit from a stronger relationship with neighboring towns that also have ecotourism projects. In addition to attending workshops held by ACEASPA in Achiote, a Piña ecotourism group can strengthen their projects if they have a robust network with other groups in Union de Piña and Los Rapaces in Achiote. Together, they can plan tours, share ideas and learn from each others failures and successes.

The natural assets around Piña make it a good base location for tourists who want to partake in various nature activities. A natural attraction that Piña should invest in is the trail that leads from the edge of town, where San Lorenzo National Park begins, to the beach across from Fort San Lorenzo. This route and the natural pools that are along this trail are potentially the greatest attraction Piña has to offer. A day or half day tour package can be promoted that can include swimming at the beach and in the pools, picnics and coconuts on the beach, and maybe even passage down Chagres River or over to Fort San Lorenzo. Until the town deals with the garbage issues and lack of infrastructure that makes it less attractive to tourists, this trail is the best attraction in which to invest, especially in terms of promotion of the feature.

To ensure that the community benefits from the attractions they offer, and not external tour companies, the town should equip local people with proper training. Similar

to bird guide training in Achiote, courses for wildlife and flora interpretation can be taught to people committed to taking groups on tours along the Piña-San Lorenzo trail. They can acquire the skills needed to take a group on such a tour in the forest, that can include wilderness first aid, and a history lesson of the trail's past. A common problem in the third world tourism development scheme is that often articulated is a loss of profits and a leakage of tourism earnings from the community (Brohman 1996). This type of skill training would avoid outside tour operators from monopolizing the trail.

An overall suggestion for Piña would be to find ways to expose its Caribbean culture. There has been a noticeable trend among eco-tourism travelers towards enjoying the special qualities and cultural characteristics of local communities and Piña could attract tourists to the Congo dances that are held on the beach year round, but especially in February (Bramwell 1990).

### **3.0 ECOTOURISTIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: UNION DE PIÑA**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Union de Piña is a small community consisting of approximately 30 households. The town is located on top of a hill 3 km away from Piña. To get to Union de Piña, one must travel a rolling dirt road from Piña. Public transportation is available from Colon to Piña, however, in order to reach Union de Piña, one must walk, get a ride or take a horse.

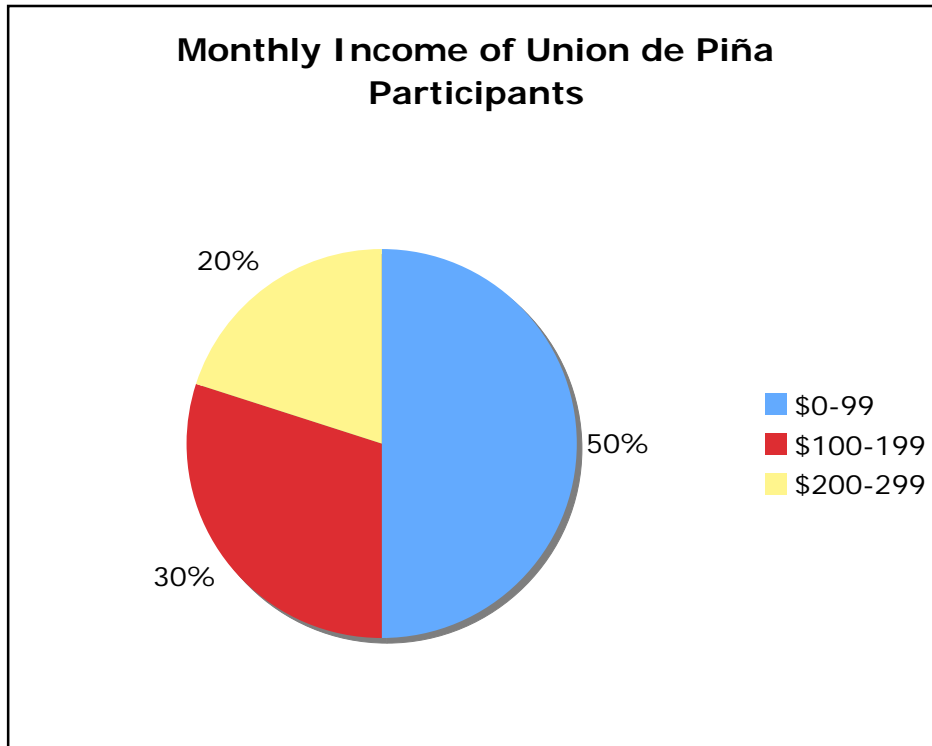
#### **3.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION**

The main source of employment for community members in Union de Piña is working in the *Colon Zona Libre*. This is the principal job for young people in particular who must walk 30 minutes down an undulating path followed by an hour long bus ride

into Colon in order to reach their jobs. The landowners of the community, which tend to be middle-aged or older, tend to work in agriculture and ranching on farms in the surrounding hills. Many respondents explained that agricultural yields have not been adequate in the last few years. The weak agricultural yields, and resulting lack of income may be a reason why many young people have not pursued agriculture, and are now working in the city. ACEASPA has held agriculture workshops for Union de Piña farmers that emphasized organic methods in previous years although no one we spoke to mentioned these workshops.

Based on interview responses in Union de Piña, there was on average 4.7 inhabitants per household, with a standard deviation of 2.2. The number of inhabitants ranged from one to seven people living per house. Forty percent of respondents were housewives. The other women interviewed worked at *tiendas* that have been incorporated into the structure of their homes.

Union de Piña was the poorest community we studied. Half of the respondents recorded a monthly income of under \$100. In this very small community located in the hills, most homes are made of temporary building material. The roofs and sides are usually constructed with scrap and sheet metal. Most are one or two rooms, with living spaces being separated by a sheet or curtain. Only 70% of respondents owned electronic devices like televisions and radios.



**Figure 3:** Monthly Income for Survey Participants in Union de Piña. The respondents fell into three income categories.

### 3.21 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The town has poor infrastructure as it is difficult to justify paving roads and building a secondary school for so few inhabitants and the economic resources are not available within the community. Furthermore, a garbage collection system would be too costly to implement considering the relative size of the community and the poor condition of the road up to the community. As a result, most garbage is dumped or burned.

**Table 4:** Available Public Infrastructure in Union de Piña

	Potable Water	Paved Roads	Health Center	Public transportation To town	Primary School	Secondary School	Garbage Disposal System
<b>Union de Piña</b>	X				X		



### 3.3 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Union de Piña currently has a dormant ecotourism group. While this group does not meet regularly or plan new projects, they band together if there are tourist groups coming to the town. This group is usually contacted beforehand about visits because groups of tourists are sometimes brought in from Achiote. These groups consist of students staying at *El Centro del Tucan*, generally those from McGill University or the University of Colorado. The main contact for this group is Marilyn Hernandez Deoureaña who organizes the town tours with the five other women who are in the group. Her husband is also involved. He conducts boat tours from Union de Piña to Piña.

One of the members of the community also showed us a certificate from ACEASPA certifying him as a *promotor comunitario* or community promoter. He stated that there were six members of the community with such certificates. Additionally, they had all taken a seminar on ecotourism. He too was occasionally involved in organizing activities with Marilyn.

There was one other community organization in Union de Piña dubbed *Genesis* which was a women's group organized through the church. This may indicate some community organization; however, most of the people interviewed cited a lack of town cohesion as a major hindrance to group based activities. This was apparent in the interviews where eight of the twelve people interviewed had never heard of an ecotourism group existing in Union de Piña.

### 3.4 ATTRACTIONS

As the smallest and most remote of the towns studied, Union de Piña gives off the greatest rustic and rural feel of all the communities. An abundance of cattle and horses along the main road to the town only solidify the town’s image as true countryside. Situated atop a hill, Union de Piña’s location allows for different views of forest and distant ocean. Although look-out structures (see Table 4) currently do not exist, there are many possible locations for their construction, including atop the hill where the water collection basins are located.

**Table 5:** Existing tourism infrastructure

	Look-out structure	Trails	Convenience Stores	Restaurant	Gazebos	Cabins	Camping area
Union de Piña		X*	X				X

\*Trails not cleared or maintained

Besides the town feel, the greatest possible tourist attractions were 1) Canoe tours down Rio Piña from Union de Piña to Piña 2) A camping ground complete with a small but deep natural freshwater pool and 3) Trails through the hills.

#### 1) Canoe Tours

Canoe tours have been offered in the past the husband to the leader of dormant ecotourism group of Union de Piña. These tours are best in the wet season, when there is enough water flowing through the river to ride down, but not when rains are so heavy that the river current is too strong to paddle. The canoes come from Piña where they are rented or borrowed from fishermen.

#### 2) Camp Ground and Freshwater Pool

Located on the same plot of land, both the campground and freshwater pool belong to Señor Luis Alberto Camargo Ribas (See Appendix B). Offering one of the best lookouts of the ocean in town, the field on the hill next to Señor Ribas home is ideal for camping. The owner of the property is more than happy to host any tourists and asks only for reasonable compensation. Down a sharp incline from the camping area is a deep natural pool of freshwater enjoyed by many community members. Although small, the depth and angle at which it is located makes it easy to jump into for a quick cool down. However, due to the steepness and slipperiness of the rocks surrounding the pool, building stairs to the site to facilitate the exit would be advisable if it were to be used by tourists. This pool is most impressive in the wet season when it is larger and its tributary stream is flowing.

### **3) Trails**

Some community members of Union de Piña spoke of existing but un-established trails through the hills surrounding the town. There are rumored to be three trails in the area but due to lack of time or a guide we were unable to explore these routes. Nevertheless, this possibility should be further investigated.

### 3.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

**Table 6:** SWOT analysis for Union de Piña

	<b>Internal</b>	
Union de Piña	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall typical country feel</li> <li>• Isolated hill top location</li> <li>• Views of ocean and forest</li> <li>• Camping areas</li> <li>• Natural freshwater pools</li> <li>• Abundance of wildlife</li> <li>• Non-maintained partially visible trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent water supply- dries up by the end of the dry season</li> <li>• No organic agriculture- although the use of few inputs makes it a possible future development</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low opportunity cost of hosting tourists</li> <li>• Sustainable returns on ecotourism as opposed to other resource exploitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little start up capital</li> <li>• Little diversity of skills in community- all work in agriculture or <i>Colon Zona Libre</i></li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism group that unites when tourists come to town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism group is dormant</li> <li>• Lack of community trust and cohesion</li> </ul>

	<b>External</b>	
Union de Piña	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing interest in natural sites</li> <li>• Possible coordination with Piña in boat tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burning of garbage is a threat to air quality</li> </ul>

<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing investment in ecotourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boats for boat tours must be rented from Piña</li> <li>• Lack of promotion outside the area</li> <li>• Hard to compete with other more well-established ecotourism sites in the area ie/ Achiote, Portobelo</li> <li>• No public transportation to Union de Piña- must walk up dirt road for about 30 minutes</li> <li>• Previous projects with ACEASPA failed ie/ women's group given sewing machines that were sold or kept for personal use</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous workshops on ecotourism with ACEASPA, therefore some knowledge of ecotourism in area</li> <li>• Town members invited to workshops held at <i>el Centro del Tucan</i></li> <li>• Communication with <i>Los Rapaces</i> in Achiote</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad reputation of the Colon province</li> <li>• Little touristic interest in the area</li> </ul>

### 3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Union de Piña's quaint rural feel gives it a good base on which to build tourist attractions. However, before such attractions and activities can be developed, the town must address its weaknesses. Communication with town members is a big problem as many would like to be involved in ecotourism projects but few know of their existence. Public participation in community tourist initiatives and familiarity with information on tourist projects is important in establishing positive perception of tourist development among community members (Keogh 1990). The inhabitants of Union de Piña should hold an open meeting for all town members so that no one is excluded. This meeting should

be held on a weekend so that work does not intervene with attendance and adequate advertisement through word of mouth or posters should be a priority. Once the interested members have come together, there should be a meeting with ACEASPA representatives to give the people some indication that they have a resource which could help them in the development of ideas and projects.

Once this group is established, the next step is forming links in Piña. Boat tours between Union de Piña and Piña are an enjoyable adventure activity, which involves both communities. This venture involves marketing Union de Piña and Piña as an ecotourism package thereby rendering them a stronger attraction than one town alone.

The president of the dormant ecotourism group already has contact with Achioté's *Los Rapaces*. This is a good relationship to nourish. She is invited to all the workshops in Achioté, however, it is difficult for one individual to disseminate this information to all those in town. Thus, the community needs several people to take charge and spread the word when there are courses being held that could benefit town members. There should also be more than just the one contact in Union de Piña responsible for such a task.

Once the town has gained an adequate level of community organization it will be possible to begin projects. Currently, there is no garbage disposal system in Union de Piña and as a result, most trash is burned. As eco-tourism grows, the local government can use the income generated to improve community quality of life by improving town infrastructure (Tsaur 2006). This environmental degradation not only has negative consequences for inhabitants, it also decreases tourists incentives to revisit, and spread positive information about the location. Some of this burning could be avoided through organic fertilizer programs to decrease burnt organic matter. This compost could then be

used on the many farms found in the area. Organic fertilizers could also aid the town in moving towards organic agriculture, which although it currently does not exist in Union de Piña, could be a future option for its farmers. As the popularity of organic foods increases, it may be possible for Union de Piña to seek group organic certification for products or at the very least, eliminate inputs and begin offering organic farm tours to tourists. Organic certification could be done in conjunction with farms in the surrounding towns as small farmer organic certification tends to work better as a cooperative or collective, especially if the product is luxury item such as coffee which is a major product in Union de Piña (Nigh 1997). Furthermore, if they are certified agritourism can be promoted as an activity that exhibits an area's historical, cultural and social traditions (Clemens 2004).

Another possible activity which would require no extra investment, would be to offer horse rides through the hills up to the town of Union de Piña as horses can be seen on the lands of many along the main dirt roads. The ecotourism group could have a record of horse owners interested in giving tours and contact them if there are interested tourists.

While we were unable to visit the trails near town, we were told that there were used but un-maintained trails in the area. Although we were unable to find a guide to show us these trails, the option of clearing and promoting them to tourists is an option which should be further explored.

## **4.0 ECOTOURISM ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: ESCOBAL**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The town of Escobal, located on Gatun Lake, was founded on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 1909. The town got its name from the large quantity of Escoba plants which grew in the area and were used to make brooms by the *campesinos*. As the largest community in the study area, with approximately 2500 inhabitants and is continuing to grow.

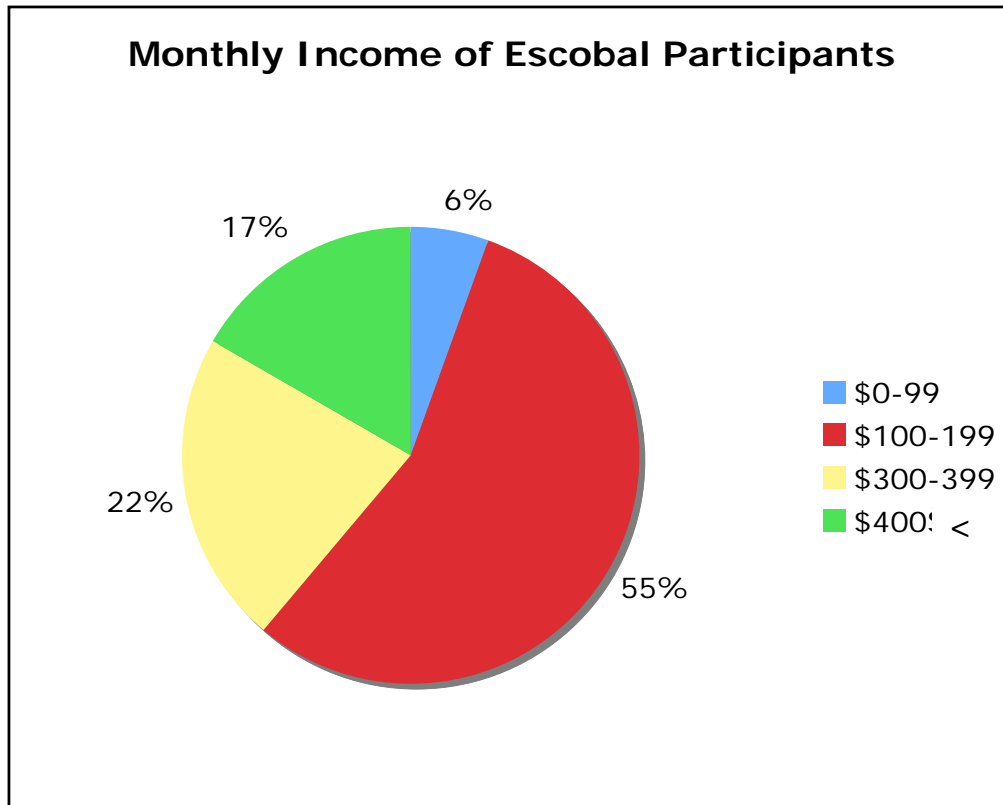
### **4.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION**

As the largest demographic center of the Lake Gatun area, Escobal offers more services, and therefore more jobs than the other communities visited. The *junta communal* office employs people, which is a municipal/political office. The health center and schools are also good job sources. Like in the other communities visited, many of the survey participants were women, and most of them reported being housewives. Construction, *Colon Zona Libre*, and agriculture were cited as the main sources of employment for people living in Escobal.

Many people we spoke with indicated the noticeable growth that was occurring in Escobal. Merely a few years earlier, the entire area of land near one of the attractions (Punto Macu) was completely uninhabited. Now there is a paved road that facilitates access to the many homes along this extension of the neighborhood.

Our survey in Escobal revealed that more participants were within the highest income bracket of \$400 dollars or more per month than any of the other towns visited. More than half (55%) reported earnings between \$100 and \$199 dollars per month. The average household size was 4.3 inhabitants per house.





**Figure 4:** Percentage of Escobal respondents that fall into five income categories. Results are based on household income.

#### 4.21 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The higher population values for Escobal as well as the greater reported income of its inhabitants was reflected in the available public infrastructure in the community. Escobal’s infrastructure could be considered complete consisting of a water filtration system, a primary and secondary school, a garbage collection system, paved roads and public buses which pass through town on an hourly schedule (Table 7).

**Table 7:** Public Infrastructure in Escobal

	Potable Water	Paved Roads	Health Center	Public transportation To town	Primary School	Secondary School	Garbage Disposal System
<b>Escobal</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **4.3 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

Currently, there is a dormant ecotourism group in Escobal. The group is called *Guia de Turismo Regional: Campos Verdes*. There are six members in the group: four females and two males. This is significantly less than the 26 people which wished to be in the group two and a half years ago when ACEASPA held its first ecotourism workshop in Escobal.

The president of this group, Profesora Rebeca Magallon de Llorente, is an active member of the community. A retired school teacher, la Profesora now works in the health clinic. She has been working to reunite the ecotourism group and was hoping to hold a meeting for the group in April. She also hopes to stay in contact with ACEASPA so that the group can work more closely with the NGO.

In the past, there has been evidence of excellent group cohesion in the town of Escobal. *El Comité de Ecoturismo de Escobal*, which consisted of about 15 people and functioned until 2002, used to organize a yearly fair which involved Congo dancing and the sale of artisan goods. The organization even secured sponsors for the event like *la Cerveceria Nacional* and *Pepsi*. The ecotourism group was not the unique organization in Escobal at the time as there was also an environmental group known as *el Comité del Medio Ambiente*, which also no longer exists. Since the group disbanded, fairs have ceased and the citizens of Escobal attend the artisan fair in Achiote instead.

### **4.4 ATTRACTIONS**

As the largest town of the four, Escobal has the most established tourist infrastructure (Table 8). While the town itself is quaint and beautiful, the main possible

tourist attractions that could be developed in Escobal are 1) *Punto Macu* and the *Los Heliconias Trail* 2) Boat Tours 3) Tuñon land and 4) Congo Dances.

**Table 8:** Available structures for the development of tourism in Escobal

	Look-out structures	Trails	Convenience Stores	Restaurants	Gazebos	Camping area
Escobal	X	X	X	X	X	X

### 1) *Punto Macu* and the *Heliconias Trail*

*Punto Macu* is a peninsula that juts out into Gatun lake. This point is private property, currently belonging to Sr. Joel Pitti (Appendix B), a political candidate. The owner has given open access to the community, as have previous owners of that land. The property has a hill top view, as well as land down near the water. Activities which occur on the land include parties, picnics, camping, swimming and boating. The area is also perfect for the construction of docks, look out points or a cabin for travelers.

In order to get to the land, tourists can take a short (about 15 minutes) trail to the point. The trail is called *el sendero las heliconias* due to the abundance of heliconia plants along the edges. The trail crosses a road which is also a shorter but less scenic route to reaching *Punto Macu*.

### 2) Boat Tours

Since the town is located on Gatun Lake it is ideal for boat tours. The town has a pier where boats come and go. Some are motorized while others are paddle boats. There is an opportunity in Escobal to perform boat tours either to other islands or between Escobal and Cuipo in order to develop a joint tourism venture. Many people in town own boats and the owner's with whom we spoke were interested in giving tours to tourists.

### **3) Tuñon land**

The Tuñon land is a plot of land on the edge of town which belongs to the family Tuñon. The land is next to the water and has a good view and swimming area. Two small cabins are found here, one with walls and the other without walls but with a sleeping space right under the roof. The owners charge \$15/night to stay in the cabins and has had sporadic visits from tourists originating from North and South America, Europe, and Australia.

### **4) Congo Dances**

Like Piña, there is a strong presence of Caribbean culture in Escobal. This culture is displayed in their cooking, as well as in their Congo dances. Both these aspects are put on display in January, the month of Congo. People come from various communities in the area to enjoy the dances and parties which occur throughout the streets of Escobal. These dances used to be accompanied by an artisan fair but this tradition ended when the old ecotourism group disbanded. However, it is possible to revive these traditions.

#### 4.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

**Table 9:** SWOT Analysis for Escobal

	<b>Internal</b>	
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gatun Lake</li> <li>• Several look out points</li> <li>• Nicely painted gazebo</li> <li>• Abundance of wildlife</li> <li>• Trails (not maintained)</li> <li>• Garbage pickup</li> <li>• Green space in community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails are not maintained</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More capital than other towns may be more to invest in ecotourism</li> <li>• Sustainable returns on ecotourism as opposed to other resource exploitation</li> <li>• Fisherman have assets in form of boats</li> <li>• Complete infrastructure</li> <li>• Existence of tourist structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While richer than the other towns, still do not have extensive capital to invest in ecotourism</li> <li>• Greater division of wealth than in other towns</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Guia de Turismo Regional: Campos Verdes</i> ecotourism group</li> <li>• Youth environmental committee- interest in sustainability in the community</li> <li>• Some townspeople have skills from previous workshops ie/ puppeteer, drawing and sewing workshops</li> <li>• Active community beautification program ie/painting gazebos, trimming trees in front of look outs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecotourism group dormant but reuniting</li> <li>• Little communication throughout the community/ lack of trust</li> </ul>

	External	
	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing interest in natural sites</li> <li>• Possible coordination with Cuipo in boat tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing population</li> <li>• Fluctuations in Gatun lake water levels due to canal activity and deforestation threaten tourist activities</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing investment in ecotourism</li> <li>• Tourism Guide: <i>Lonely Planet</i> mentions Escobal as one of the only town in Chagres worth a visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escobal fair no longer runs- now occurs in Achiote</li> <li>• Land for ecotourism development on private property- must pay rent and not all wish to participate</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past interest and involvement of ACEASPA in the community</li> <li>• Some communication established between president of ecotourism group and ACEASPA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad reputation of the Colon province</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step to be taken in Escobal for the development of ecotourism is a reunion of the ecotourism group. Profesora Rebeca Magallon de Llorente, the president of the group, has already begun to organize people and has set up meeting times for the end of April. Once the group has reunited, they can work with ACEASPA to become a legally recognized group which would allow them to seek funding from governmental organizations and NGOs. As a legally recognized group they could also begin to attend conferences held by the Panama Tourism Bureau (IPAT) on ecotourism in the Colon province, which the ecotourism groups of Achiote and Cuipo have been invited to in the past.

Escobal's tourism group should also establish a relationship with their counterparts in Cuipo so that they could support each other in their ecotourism ventures. A package, similar to the one that could be offered for Piña and Union de Piña, could be designed for Cuipo and Escobal. They are close to each other and along the same bus route. Since both are located on Gatun lake, boat tours between towns with the option of island stops is a feasible tourist venture.

As the town with the most established tourist infrastructure of the study area, Escobal already has the capacity to receive eco-tourists. The main problems currently lie in the promotion of the area and publicity of its attractions. At the community level, Escobal can begin by painting signs that indicates the location of its trails and lookout points, as there are already tourists passing through the area. Further advertising will have to be done at the regional level with help from ACEASPA and will be discussed in the general recommendations section (Section 7.2).

While there are already some tourists traveling through Escobal, there are few town members who benefit from their presence. The only cabins in town are on the land of one family (la familia Tuñon) and profits benefit that family alone. The ecotourism group has made plans in the past to build cabins on a plot of land next to the look-out point and the lake. This cabin would be on municipal land and the group has already acquired permission for its construction. This is project could be completed through ACEASPA with the Colorado students, and will be discussed further in the recommendations for future building projects (Section 7.1).

The rapid growth of Escobal's population, threatens the possibility of ecotourism in the community as houses continue to takeover natural lands. However, the affects of

this growth could be partially mitigated through the involvement of as many citizens as possible in select sustainability projects such as individual house beautification endeavors. A garden workshop, to make home lands more attractive to tourists and biodiversity, would be one way to get more townspeople involved in eco-friendly projects. Furthermore, due to the rapid growth of the town, reuniting the existing ecotourism group of Escobal should only be a base on which to build. Well-advertised open meetings should be held in Escobal to increase interest and motivation towards community participation in ecotourism and sustainable development.

## **5.0 ECOTOURISM ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: CUIPO**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Cuipo is a small community located on a minor peninsula on Lake Gatun. It is located at the end of the bus route which passes by Escobal. The drive between Escobal and Cuipo requires approximately half an hour.

### **5.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION**

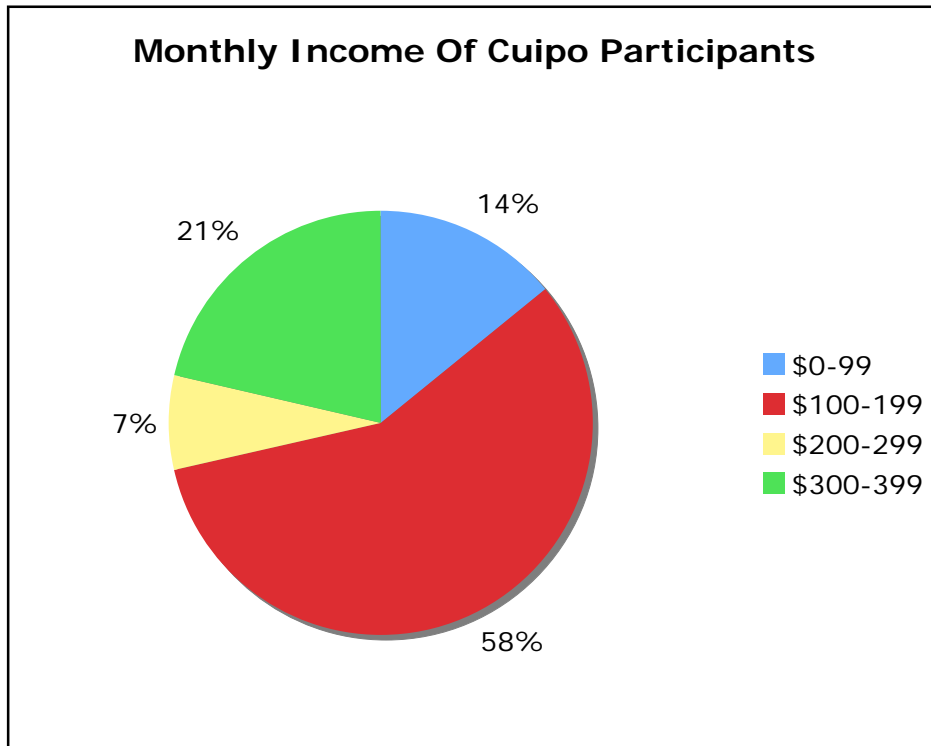
The main source of employment for the people of Cuipo was working in *Colon Zona Libre*. Many of the town's young people had moved to Colon to avoid the long commute each day. Some people also worked in agriculture in Cuipo, however, much of the production lands were only for subsistence agriculture.

Interviews were conducted mainly with housewives, many of which thought that there were unequal employment opportunities in the community. The jobs within the town of Cuipo are mainly with the local school, health center, and municipal offices. There are also three restaurants and some *tiendas*. Several participants indicated that there was a



degree of favoritism involved in who could get jobs at the municipal and public buildings.

The residents of Cuipo are slightly better off than the towns we studied in the Costa Abajo area (Union de Piña and Piña), in that only 14% of survey participants reported being in the lowest income category. The vast majority of respondents (58%), responded to household earnings of between \$100 and 199\$ per month. There was a significant portion in the higher income brackets in comparison to the towns in the Costa Abajo.



**Figure 5:** Percentage of survey respondents in Cuipo that fell into four income brackets. Responses were based on monthly household income.

### 5.21 PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Though much smaller than Escobal, Cuipo has an infrastructure that is almost as complete. The major threat to town health in terms of infrastructure, is due to the lack of potable water. The water in town comes directly from the lake and chlorine is then

added. Several town members reported that water related illnesses were a problem, especially for their children and grand-children. While there is a weekly garbage disposal system, trash still litters the streets and shores of Cuipo and the burning of garbage was observed during visits.

**Table 10:** Public Infrastructure in Cuipo

	Potable Water	Paved Roads	Health Center	Public transportation To town	Primary School	Secondary School	Garbage Disposal System
<b>Cuipo</b>		X	X	X	X	X	X

### 5.3 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

At the present time, Cuipo has an ecotourism group. The group is not actively pursuing any project as the moment. The president is a retiree named Angel Navarro (see Appendix B). He explained to us that there are about 15 official members to this group. There are about five or six that hold official titles within the group.

The group does not own any land but rents land from a private landowner who has lakeside property. They have built two cabana structures in this person’s backyard.

They have legal documents that legitimize the existence of the group as an ecotourism committee. His group was also invited by IPAT, to participate in a seminar in Colón with tourism groups from Portobello and elsewhere, about five months ago.

Though a tourist has not come in over two years, with the exception of the Colorado student group, the group has a planned tour of Lake Gatun. They do not own the boat and must rent it, for this tour of the lake that includes lunch on an island. The

group members have also been responsible during these tours for cooking meals for the tour customers.

#### 5.4 ATTRACTIONS

Cuipo has a tangible country feel. Its attractions lie mainly in lake Gatun where the ecotourism group has previously offered tours. There have also been past ecotourism initiatives to construct attractions like lake-side gazebos (Table 11), however the tourist infrastructure is still lacking. The main attractions which could be developed in Cuipo are 1) Lake Gatun Boat Tours 2) Gazebos and 3) the Look-out Point.

**Table 11:** Structures Available for Tourism Ventures

	Look-out structures	Trails	Convenience Stores	Restaurants	Gazebos	Cabins	Camping area
Union de Piña			X	X	X		X

##### 1) Lake Gatun and boat tours

Boat tours between the lakeside town of Escobal to and from Cuipo could be offered as a joint attraction between towns. The town has the potential to take visitors on boat tours to different islands and swimming hotspots along the lake shore. With proper training, community members can act as interpreters for wildlife in and around the lake.

##### 2) Gazebos

There are two gazebos along the lake. These simple, wall-less structures, can be rented out as campsites or used as picnic areas. The gazebos are located on a community member's land, who rents the space to the ecotourism group. There are no signs to

indicate the existence of these structures and a tourist would not be able to locate them without previously being told of their existence.

### 3) Lookout Point

On a hill at the end of the peninsula on which the town is built there is a look out point next to a dilapidated tower and a small community building. There are stairs here which allow one to go down to the lake's edge. The land here is municipal and the tourism group had already received permission to build a structure at this location, though this project was never realized.

## 5.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

**Table 12:** SWOT Analysis for Ecotourism Development in Cuipo

Cuipo	<b>Internal</b>	
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Gatun- many access points</li> <li>• Natural look out</li> <li>• Boat tours to islands</li> <li>• Gazebos by lake</li> <li>• Garbage disposal system every Tuesday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trash burning</li> <li>• Garbage strewn along lake</li> <li>• Sand excavation</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some tourist structures already built ie/gazebos, convenience stores, restaurants</li> <li>• Health Center in town</li> <li>• Low opportunity cost of hosting tourists</li> <li>• Sustainable returns on ecotourism as opposed to other resource exploitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little start up capital</li> <li>• Income and employment opportunity inequality</li> <li>• Renting land for gazebos is a cost for the ecotourism group that they rarely see returns on</li> <li>• No potable water system</li> <li>• Lack of tourist structures or assets</li> <li>• Ecotourism group rents boats for the tours (does not own assets)</li> </ul>

<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established and legally recognized ecotourism group</li> <li><i>Representante</i> shows interest in ecotourism activities and offers suggestions for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of community cohesion</li> <li>Lack of communication and inclusion by ecotourism group and <i>representante</i></li> </ul>

Cuipo	<b>External</b>	
	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing interest in natural sites</li> <li>Possible coordination with Escobal in boat tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variations in lake water levels due to canal use and general area deforestation affects use for tourist activities</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing investment in ecotourism</li> <li>Hourly public transportation from Colon</li> <li>Could build links with Escobal that has more attractions and tourist visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of promotion outside the area</li> <li>Hard to compete with other more well-established ecotourism sites in the area ie/ Achiote, Portobelo</li> <li>Transportation to the area difficult</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecotourism group has been included in IPAT coordinated conferences</li> <li>Support from Peace corps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bad reputation of the Colon province</li> <li>Little tourist interest in the area</li> </ul>

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

As was recommended for other communities, Cuipo should hold a meeting, open to the entire community, with the agenda of ecotourism. Here, they can extend membership to anyone who would want to commit their time to such an endeavor. Such a

meeting could also increase transparency for the ecotourism group as many towns people are interested in the ecotourism groups agenda. An annual letter could even be distributed summarizing what the group has done. The group might be faced with less hostility if this were to occur and may find people more willing to volunteer their services, skills and resources. For example, we encountered one man who knitted articles of clothing. These items could be sold along with other local creations when tourists come to town.

Cuipo is located near a densely forested area. People who have lived in the area for a long time may be familiar with the town's environs and know of possible trail locations. Such trails could be further developed, along with appropriate signage and structures.

Running boat tours between Escobal and Cuipo should be developed as a way to establish a relationship between the two communities. Escobal already has publicity, as it is mentioned in the popular tourist guide the *Lonely Planet*. Cuipo can capitalize from this publicity by having joint projects with Escobal. Escobal also has more experience with ecotourism and environmental groups which Cuipo could learn from. The more the area has to offer, the more tourists will come. Thus, a well established network between both communities could mutually reinforce their projects.

The two gazebo-like structures in Cuipo should be maintained regularly. Essentially any land that is intended to be enjoyed as a green space, such as the lookout spot, and the land on which the camping structures are located, should be kept clean. It may even be possible to beautify these areas with gardens. Achiote planted flower bushes along their roads through a workshop created by ACEASPA. Such courses could be brought to Cuipo.

Community beautification and clean up projects can include the students that go to the school in Cuipo. Cuipo used to have youth environmental group which could be reinitiated and could work with the ecotourism group on sustainability and beautification projects.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 FUTURE BUILDING PROJECTS**

As was mentioned earlier in this report, ACEASPA is looking for new places to start building ecotourism structures. The relationship between Achote, ACEASPA and the architectural students of Colorado has proved fruitful for nearly five years now, however, the benefits of this relationship must be shared throughout the area. Since many town are lacking in tourism infrastructure there are several spots within the area where structures could be built. While our top recommendation for next year is to begin building in Escobal, the following paragraphs include recommended building sites for each town so that construction locations can rotate each year.

#### **Escobal**

Escobal is our top recommendation for future investment as the town already has an ecotourism committee and several appropriate sites. The eco-tourism group already has permission to build on a municipal a site by the lake but has complained of a lack of available resources. This site is located at the bottom of a set of stairs next to a look-out platform and the church. It is a small area of land that is reached by a set of stairs. A simple cabin could be built here. This cabin could either have walls and beds or it could simply have stairs leading to an area under the roof where people may sleep or store

belongings. A dock could also be built here as a place where kayaks, or other boats could be stored and boat tours could begin.

Another location in Escobal where cabins could be built is *Punto Macu*. Permission to build on this land is required from Sr. Pitti (see Appendix B) making it a less desirable building site for the group as they would likely need to pay rent if they hoped to rent out the cabins to tourists.

Though we were unable to visit it, there is apparently another trail in the forest. This is a trail that the *Amigos de Media Ambiente* youth group was working on. We were told that they were planning on proposing a project to ANAM to cover the trail in gravel. A follow-up could ascertain the exact details and whereabouts of this trail.

### **Union de Piña**

The fresh water pool attraction in Union de Piña is at a bottom of a very steep hill. A set a stairs could be built here that would greatly facilitate access to the water. Exiting the water in particular would be made much easier as the rock sides of the pool are slippery and difficult to climb up.

On the same property, a cabin structure could be built for campers. The landowners would have to be consulted, though in previous meetings, he was eager about to the idea of renting his land for eco-tourism and camping. There are cleared, flat areas on the land which would be ideal for the building of such a structure.

### **Piña**

Though Piña may not be the immediate candidate for the next building projects, there are spaces suitable for construction.



A cabin similar to the *Rapaces'* office in Achiote, could be built on the land right in front of the main beach. This cabin could serve as a storage place for a future eco-tourism committee's equipment as well as a general meeting place. Artisan products created by community members could be displayed and sold here.

The fresh water set of pools in the forest along the trail would benefit from some additions to make it more comfortable for visitors. There is a steep hill off the trail that must be descended to reach the water where a set of stairs could be built for safety and to indicate where the pools are located. A rope ladder that facilitates exit and entrance from the largest of the pools would be of benefit.

### **Cuipo**

We believe that further research should be conducted in Cuipo to determine the best location for construction. Based on our research, the location most suitable for building would be an area next to the community hall which is located atop a hill. A lookout could be constructed here to enable people to enjoy the view of the lake. For example, benches and picnic tables would be a good addition to this place as it would make the green area enticing for tourists. It could help the location become a good place for picnics, or camping. When the water is not low, this location is quite aesthetically pleasing, but has some unsightly garbage along its shores. A flower garden could be planted in this space to beautify it as well. A dock built into the water in this area could also help establish it as a designated swimming area and a starting point for boat tours.

## **6.2 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on what was seen throughout the study area and the results obtained from interviews, there are some general recommendations that can be made for successful

development of ecotourism in the Region of Chagres. The main recommendations are in regards to 1) Individual town organization 2) Networking and spreading the word and 3) ACEASPA's involvement.

### **1) Town Organization**

Throughout our interviews, a recurring theme in each town was the lack of communication and organization of community based initiatives. Even in towns with active ecotourism groups many towns people did not know that groups had been created and many expressed a desire to join such a group if it did in fact exist. Thus, for all towns, it is recommended that open community meetings be held to spread the word on new initiatives or existing projects. These meetings should be well advertised. Posters could be place in mini supers, restaurants and other central town locations. A representative from ACEASPA should attend this meeting to see the direction that the town is going in and to give some direction in reference to the concept of ecotourism. The presence of ACEASPA will also help to motivate people as outside interest is encouraging when initiating projects. Once a group of interested people has been assembled, delegating different roles for people will keep the group more organized. Positions like president, vice president, secretary and treasurer should be filled, and the role of each position should be determined and documented for future reference.

### **2) Networking**

Once the individual towns have become organized and the key individuals have been identified, a network must be created between towns. A support network is the most efficient way to encourage ecotourism through out the towns of the Chagres region as it can act as an advertising tool, a source for ideas, and a way to share the benefits

from each town's attractions. . The creation of a strong regional network, that has control over its own tourist resources, will avoid the common culprit of foreign company monopolization (Brohman 1996). The first step in establishing such a network is holding regular meetings (for instance tri-annually) for all the groups in the area. These meetings should rotate location so that Achote is not always the central meeting area. However, since the center *El Tucan* has the best facilities, this is where the initial meetings should take place. The purpose of these meetings should be to exchange ideas and update the other groups on the activities and projects going on in each town. This exchange may stimulate ideas for new projects and allow other groups to advertise these projects when talking to tourists.

This network is particularly important in the Chagres region because while each town has its charm, no town on its own is strong enough to draw significant numbers of tourists solely for the purpose of visiting that one space, with the exception of some bird watchers who visit Achote strictly for its bird populations. The difficulty of transportation in the area and the bad reputation of the city of Colon renders the region of Chagres an ambitious and challenging travel destination for any tourist. Thus, when tourists do make it to the area, it is important that they have access to as many activities and attractions as possible so that they will stay to completely enjoy all that the Chagres region encompasses. Until a complete network is accomplished, towns can begin by forming partnerships with nearby communities and offer their activities in packages. For instance, Piña and Union de Piña can be offered as a package as they are close by and boat tours can be offered between the two towns. The same can be applied to Cuipo and Escobal.

The key town in forming a larger network is Achioté. Achioté and *Los Rapaces* are currently in the best position to spread the word about the region due to its central location, established ecotourism base and the level of organization of its group. The restaurant owned by *Los Rapaces* is a popular pit stop for travelers and can be used as an advertising post with a few posters or pamphlets on each town. *Los Rapaces* have already been functioning in this capacity by bringing large groups such as the students from McGill University and Colorado, to the nearby communities like Union de Piña and Cuipo to enjoy some of their attractions. If the resources become available, van tours of the area starting from Achioté, could take tourists to different towns to allow them to enjoy all of the regions activities.

Once tourists have visited the region and are pleased with the area it becomes a lot more likely that more will come as there is strong communication between travelers. Internet information sites and tip sharing through blogs are becoming increasingly popular. Also, if information on new tourist activities and packages in the area becomes publicized, then it will encourage popular travel book authors to check out the area. Currently, there is a rather condemning view of the Chagres region painted in the popular travel guide *Lonely Planet: Panama*. The guide dismisses the entire area as dirty and unexciting. It goes on to state that the only towns with anything worth seeing are Achioté and Escobal (Firestone 2007). Since the whole region suffers from such an assessment, even towns with good reviews will experience a smaller inflow of outsiders to the area. Changing the overall image of the region should be an issue of high priority for the ecotourism network.

Since this project only covers four of eleven major towns in the district of Chagres, future projects should address the ecotourism feasibility of other towns within the district in order to build up a truly inclusive and stable network between all the communities within the district of Chagres.

### **3) ACEASPA's Involvement**

ACEASPA's involvement will be integral to the successful implementation of ecotourism in the area. As an NGO with a wealth of knowledge, resources and support, ACEASPA can provide the towns in the Region of Chagres with help and inspiration in the ecotourism venture. The results of a strong partnership with ACEASPA are reflected in Achiotés now well-established ecotourism construction of an education and meeting center, cabins, look outs and a coffee museum with ACEASPA's support. However, there are several ways that the NGO can offer aid to the other communities.

The main recommendation for ACEASPA is that they ensure that there is a follow up on all projects. Whenever resources are endowed upon a community, it is ACEASPA's responsibility to monitor how these resources are used. In all towns visited, there was an air of resentment and dismay displayed by many who had seen projects begin and fail and resources wasted within their towns. This attitude no doubt, stems in part from the good intentions of outsiders that inspire hope by starting up projects but that later fail once the outsider retreats and there is no follow-up. ACEASPA has been implicated in these types of situations in the past. For instance, in Union de Piña, we were told that there were sewing workshops held in the past, and that sewing machines were given to some individuals. Currently, the whereabouts of some of these machines are unknown while we were told that others were sold or were kept for personal use and

have not benefited the community. Other examples include ecotourism workshops held in Escobal and Union de Piña which ended years ago and left the participants uncertain of what to do with what they'd learnt. Therefore, in order to promote sustainable development in an area, ACEASPA needs, not only to focus on the environmental sustainability of the project, but also to the socio-economic sustainability of its initiatives.

One way to mitigate such consequences is to ensure that there is always someone at ACEASPA, preferably more than one person, to be a reliable contact for the communities of Chagres. This person/people should have the responsibility of monitoring how resources given to the communities by ACEASPA are used. This person should not be charged with mobilizing people or organizing initiatives as these activities should come from within the community. Ecotourism committees should be able to communicate about these projects with ACEASPA, who may offer any support and resources that can be allotted to the projects.

While ecotourism is definitely an opportunity which can be developed within the district of Chagres, all towns, especially Union de Piña and Cuipo had evidence of poverty in the population. Surveys indicated many households with high occupancy, low income and only basic goods. These towns require more help than can be offered simply through the addition of income from a few tourists. Consequently, ACEASPA in conjunction with these towns, should seek other sustainable alternative income sources in addition to ecotourism. Group organic certification for agriculturalists in the area may be one way to increase income for farmers in the area, especially coffee farmers who may be able to profit from higher product prices and organic farm tours from tourists.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, each community faces its own set of distinct challenges towards realizing eco-tourism development goals. It is important to keep in mind the essential principles of conservation and sustainable development that should drive community eco-tourism projects in the Chagres region. Projects are less likely to be successful without the follow-up support of outside organizations such as ACEASPA. This aid is crucial at the initial phases of these development projects, especially as communities try to unite in a commitment towards conservation and tourism.

The positive perceptions of community benefits from eco-tourism projects will depend on how information and profits are shared. None of this can occur without leadership, motivation and community organization. Some communities must address basic infrastructural and public health requirements before or in conjunction with the pursuit of eco-tourism.

Hopefully, this research will enable ACEASPA to make decisions that will bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the towns studied. While eco-tourism can only provide a supplement to the incomes of these communities, they can perhaps create a sense of environmental stewardship among community members. The protection of environmental resources through conservation will be a benefit with potential and sustainable returns for generations, thus still allowing future generations to take advantage of the natural wonders that the district of Chagres has to offer.

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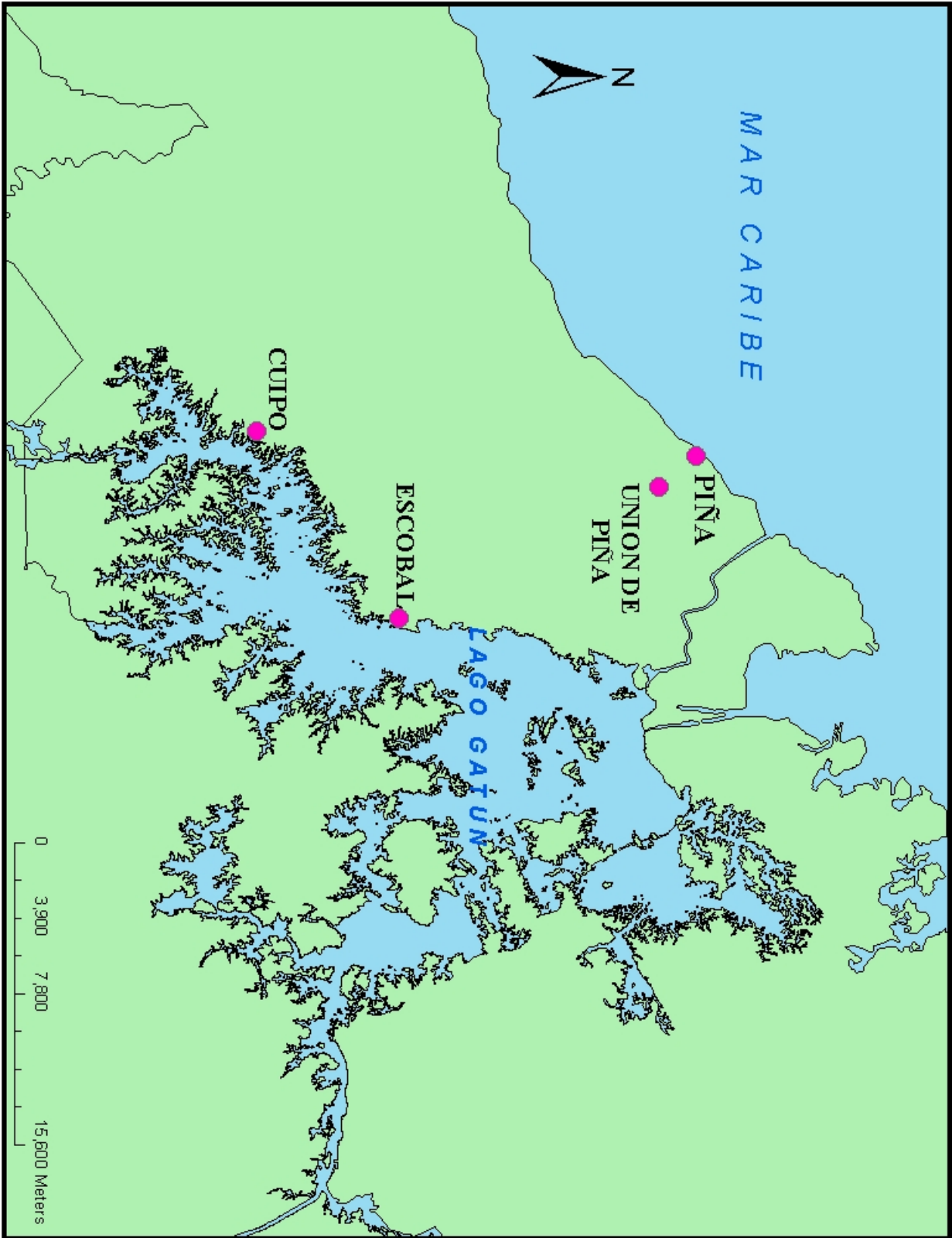
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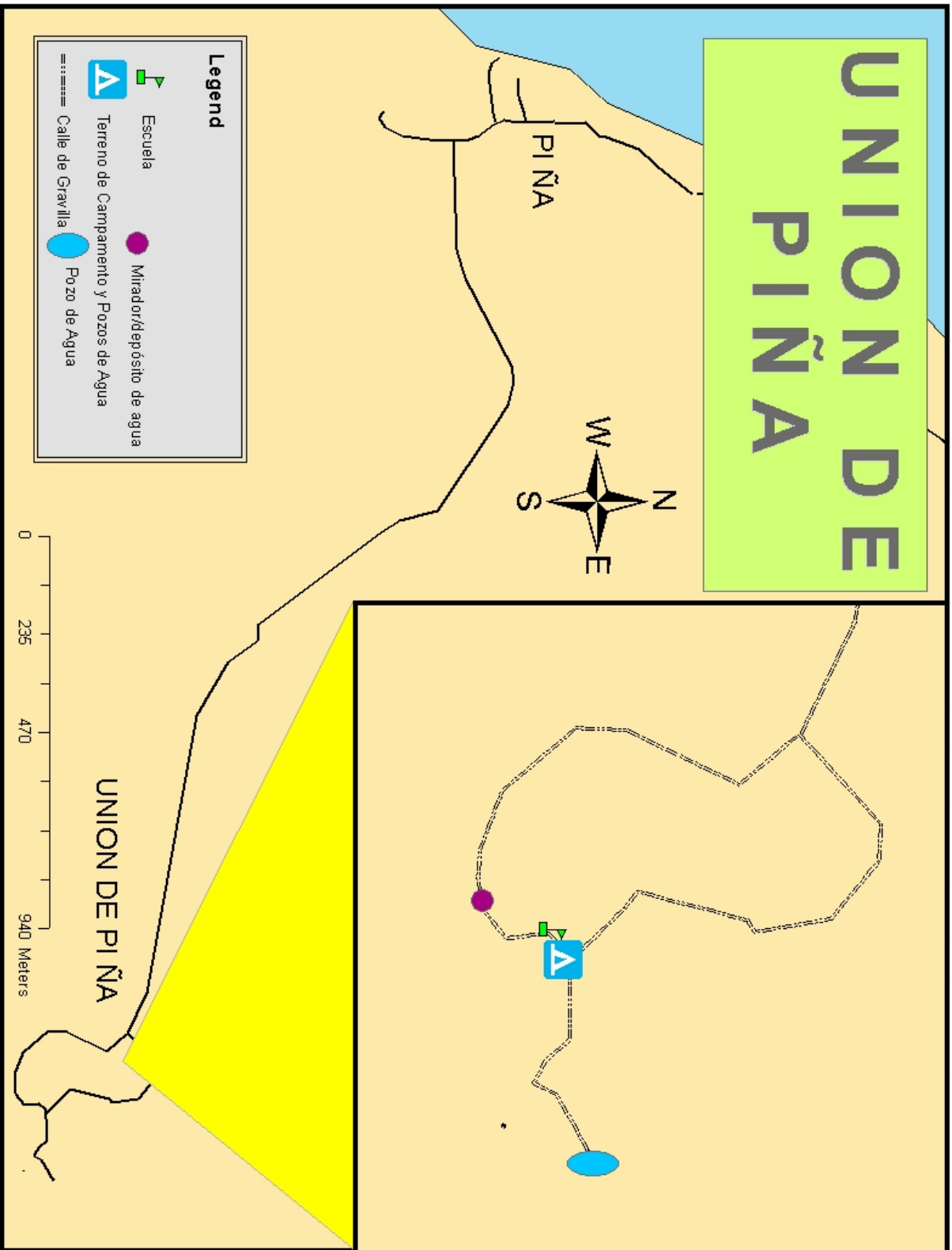
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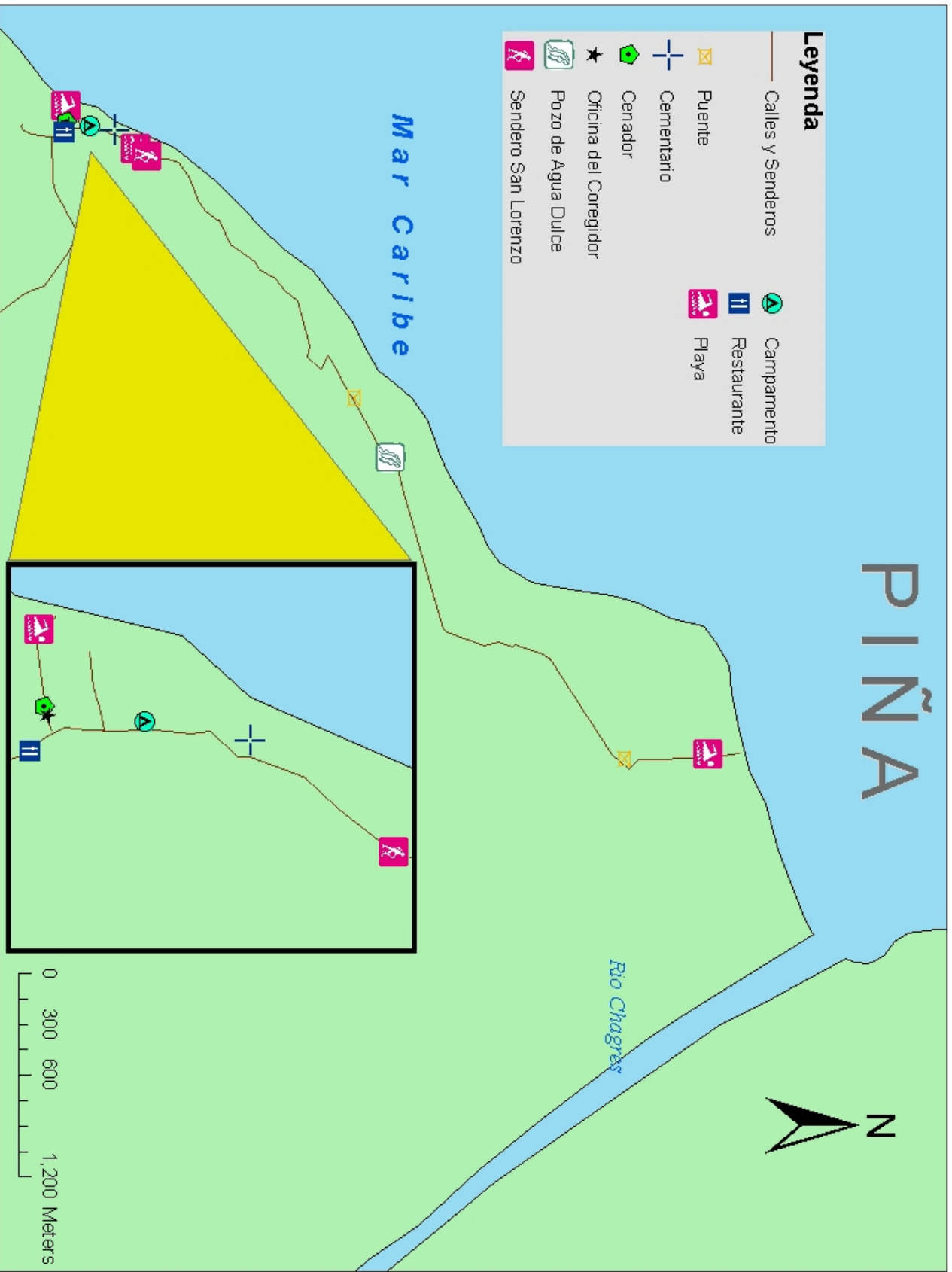
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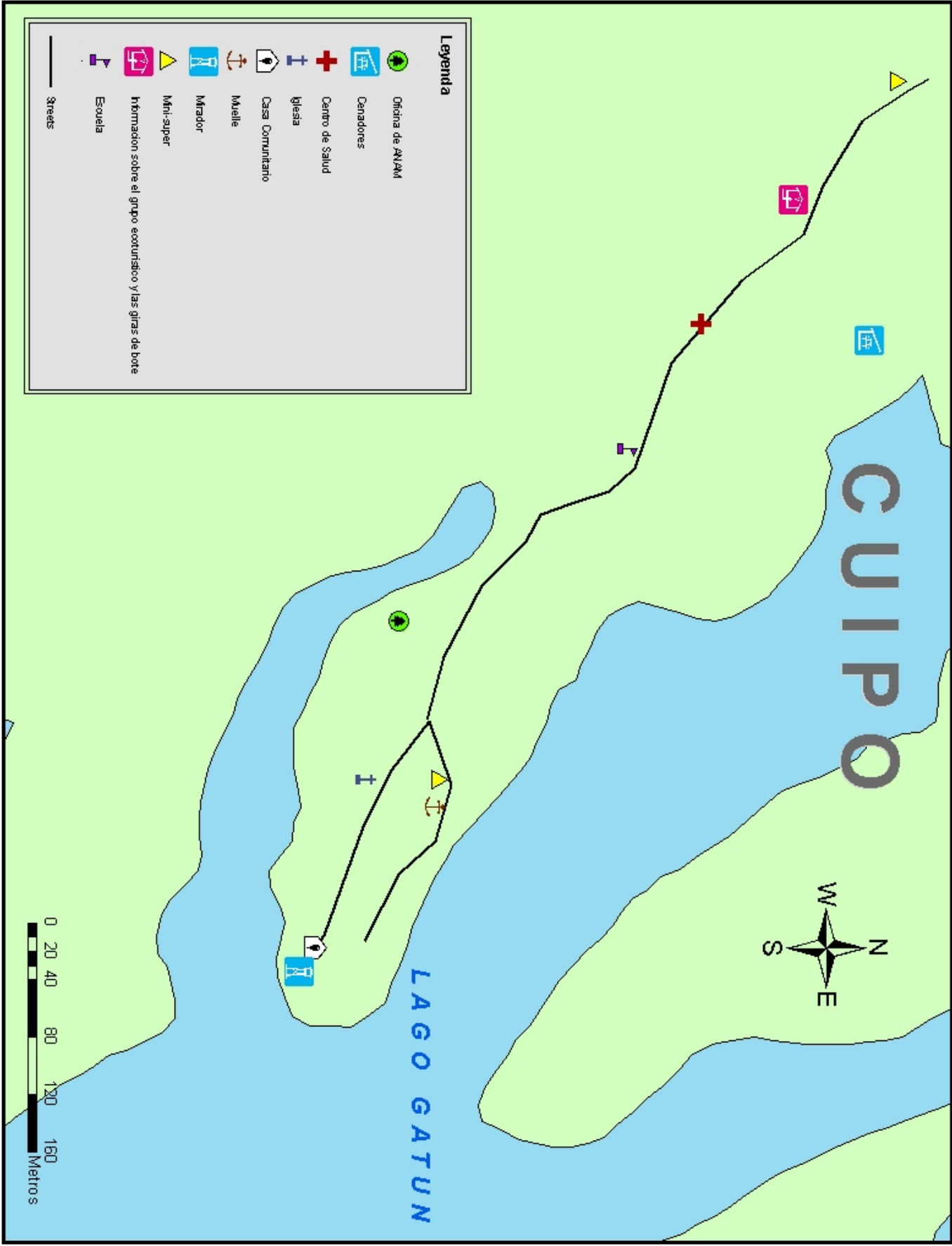
**APPENDIX A: Maps (Spanish and English Versions)**





# PIÑA



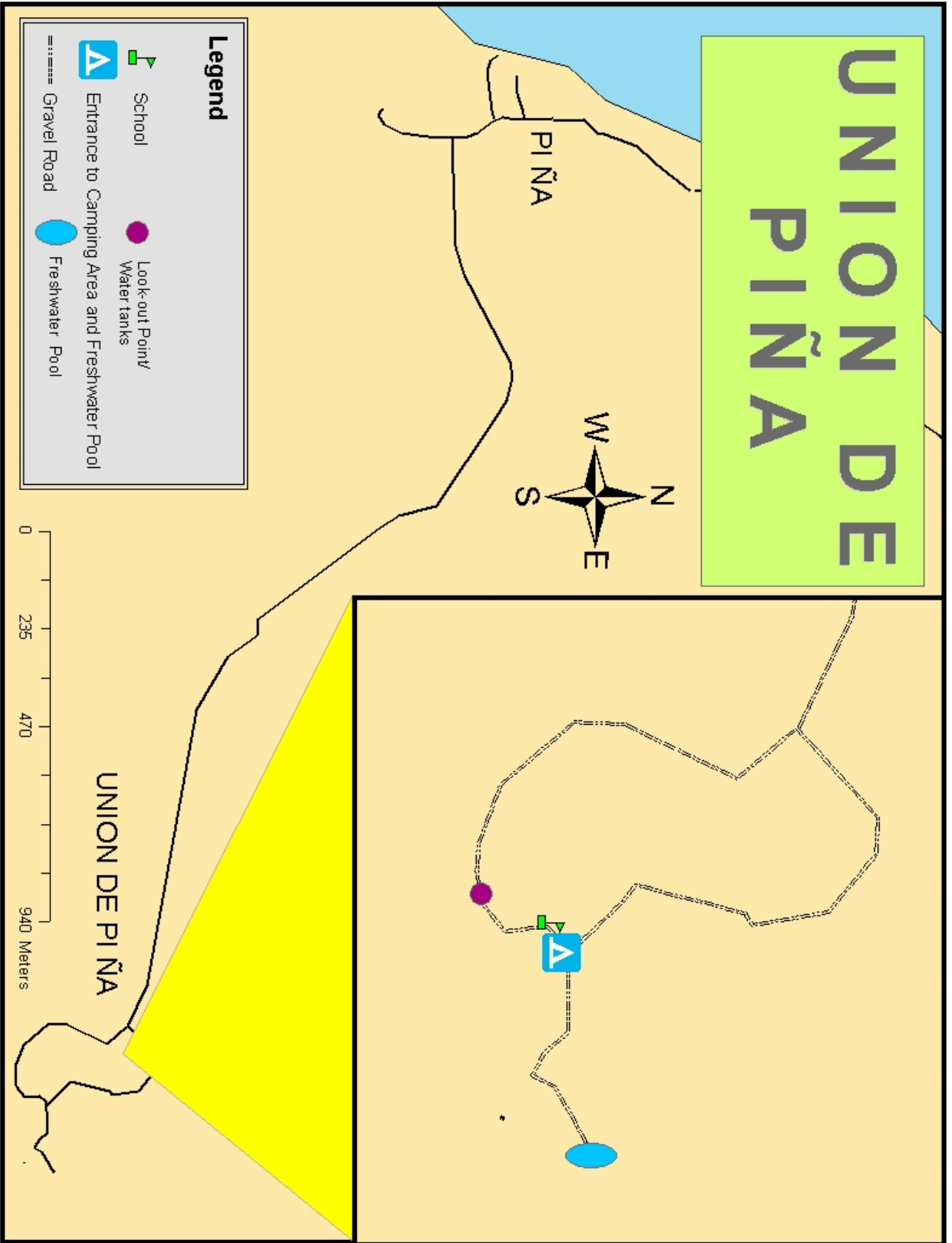


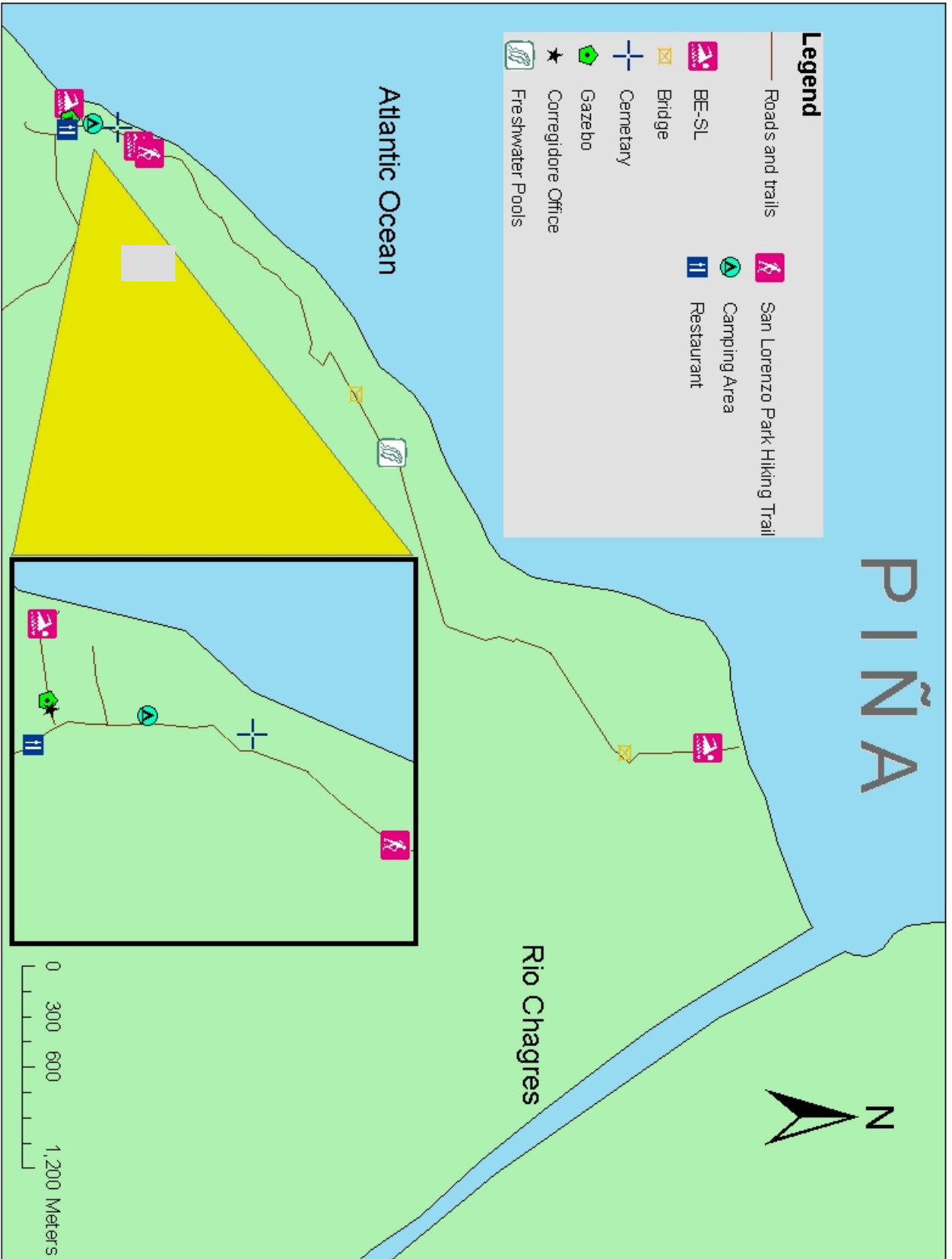
**Legenda**

- Oficina de AYAAM
- Cerradores
- Centro de Salud
- Iglesia
- Casa Comunitario
- Muelle
- Mirador
- Mini-super
- Informacion sobre el grupo ecoturistico y las giras de bote
- Escuela
- Streets

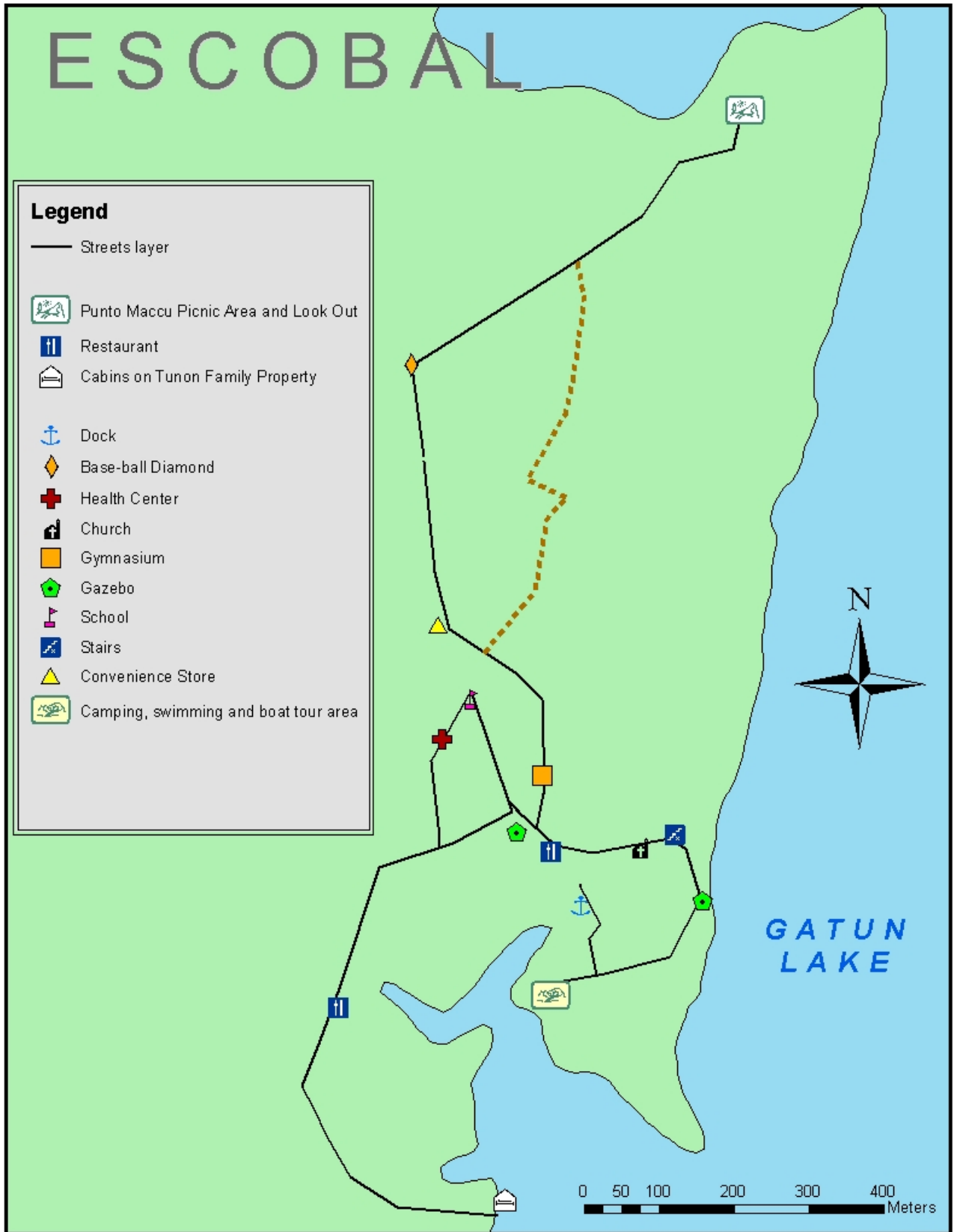


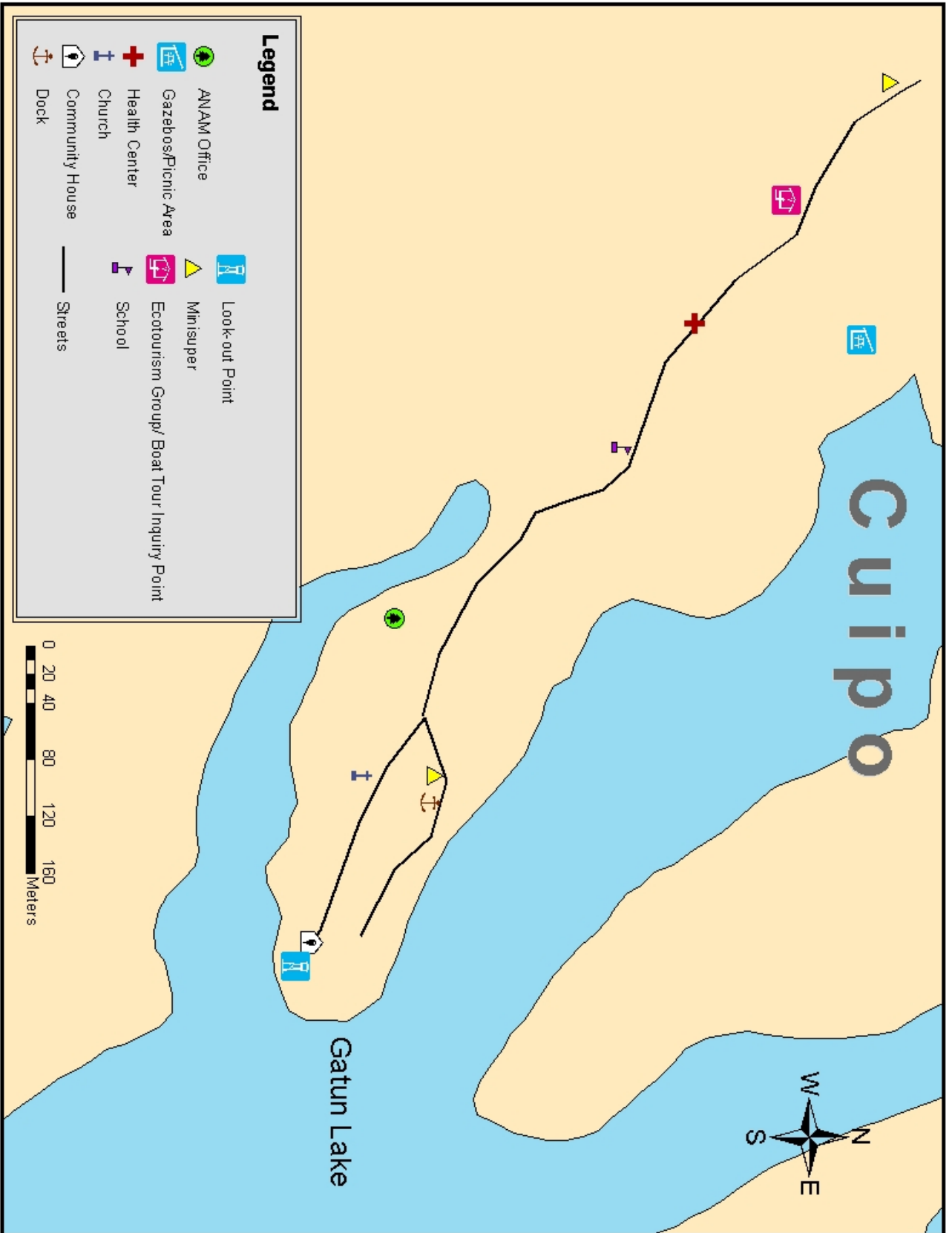












## **APPENDIX B: Contact List**

### **Piña**

H.R. Esther de Rodriguez  
Representante de Piña  
6745 2108

Felipe Salcedo  
Corregidor de Piña  
67977465

### **Union de Piña**

Luis Alberto Camargo Ribas  
Owner of land with Freshwater Pool  
No Number

Marilyn Hernandez Deoureaña  
Presidente del Grupo de Ecoturismo en Union de Piña  
6758-5275

### **Escobal**

Profesora Rebeca Magallon de Llorente  
Presidente del Grupo de Ecoturismo de Escobal  
434-6128

Eduardo Reno  
Dueño de tierra cerca del lago  
434-6528

### **Cuipo**

Angel Navaro  
Presidente del Grupo Ecoturistico de Cuipo  
434- 6096

### **Panama Tourism Bureau (IPAT)**

Profesora Indira Olmo  
475 2301

## **APPENDIX C: SURVEYS**

### **A) SURVEY FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS INVOLVED IN ECOTOURISM**

Buenas días, somos estudiantes de la Universidad de McGill en Canada y hacemos un pasentillo con el Instituto de Smithsonian y ACEASPA. Hacemos una investigacion en la region de Chagres sobre el desarrollo de ecoturismo. Podemos hablar con usted de su comunidad y el ecoturismo?

Podemos usar la informacion que usted nos da en el documento final de nuestra proyecto? Podemos compartir su informacion de contacto y su grupo con los otros grupos ecoturistico de Chagres (por ejemplo, en un boletin sobre el ecoturismo en Chagres)?

Nombre:

Sex:

Telephono:

Correo electronico:

- 1) Nombre de su grupo?
- 2) Cuantas personas estan en su grupo?
- 3) Cuando (En que ano) iniciaron este organizacion/comite?
- 4) Con que frecuencia se reunen su grupo?
- 5) Que actividades del ecoturismo ofrecen?
- 6) Tienen propaganda sobre su grupo y las actividades que ofrecen?
- 7) Quiere comunicar con los otros grupos turisticos en Chagres o de la ciudad? Esta interesado en un bolitin de informacion de turismo que incluye los atractivos y actividades de todos las comunidades de Chagres?

- 8) Como se benefician estas actividades de ecoturismo a la comunidad? En que manera ayudan a la comunidad?
- 9) A quien pertenece la propiedad que utiliza para las actividades?
- 10) Cuanto cuesta mantener los atractivos y las actividades que ofrece? Cuanto dinero gastan cada vez que hay turistas? Para comprar o alquiler materiales/facilades?
- 11) Cuanto cobran los turistas para los servicios ecoturísticos?
- 12) Que otros atractivos turísticos ofrece en esta comunidad

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>restaurante</i></li> <li>b. <i>mirador,</i></li> <li>c. <i>senderos</i></li> <li>d. <i>museo</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. <i>produccion artesanal,</i></li> <li>f. <i>guias,</i></li> <li>g. <i>fincas organicas</i></li> <li>h. <i>cabanas, campo</i></li> <li>i. <i>otros?</i></li> </ul>
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- b. Quien es el dueño de la propiedad donde estan estas atractivos?
- 13) Que necesita su comunidad para desarrollar el ecoturismo?
- A. Estructuras
    - a. Cabanas
    - b. Miradoras
    - c. Otros
  - B. Materiales
    - a. Barcos
    - b. Propaganda
    - c. Otros
  - C. Recursos
    - a. Artisanals
    - b. Guias
    - c. Conocimientos administrativos
    - d. Conocimientos de mercado y promociones
    - e. Otros
- 14) Tiene documentos oficiales (legales) del grupo? Tienen puestos oficiales dentro del grupo (ejemplo, presidente, tesoro, secretaria....) y documentados?

15) Tiene comunicacion con una organizaicon que les apoyan ? Que tipo de apoyo?

## **B) SURVEY FOR OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Buenas dias, somos estudiantes de la Universidad de McGill en Canada y hacemos un pasentillo con ACEASPA. Hacemos una investigacion en la region de Chagres sobre el desarrollo de ecoturismo. Podemos hablar con usted de su comunidad y el ecoturismo?

1) Esta interesado en el ecoturismo en su comunidad?

2) Su comunidad tiene un grupo ecoturistico?

3) Tiene interes en (formar, tener) un grupo de ecoturismo en su comunidad?

4) Que atractivos turisticos hay (existen) en su comunidad?

- |                 |                         |                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Restaurantes | d. Museo                | g. fincas orgánicos |
| b. miradores    | e. producción artesanal | h. otros?           |
| c. senderos     | f. guías                |                     |

5) Que necesita la comunidad para el desarrollo del ecoturimo?

- |                |               |   |
|----------------|---------------|---|
| A. Estructuras | B. Materiales | C. Recursos/cursos                        |
| a. cabañas     | a. barcos     | a. artesanales                            |
| b. miradoras   | b. propaganda | b. guía                                   |
| c. otros       | c. otros      | c. conocimientos administrativos          |
|                |               | d. conocimientos de Mercado y promociones |

6) Existen lugares apropiados para la construcción de atractivos turísticos? (por ejemplo...bohios, muelles, miradores...)

b. Quien es el dueño del terreno?

c. Necesita permiso de las autoridades (ANAM, IPAT, ...)?

7) A que se dedica Ud.? En que trabaja Ud.? (Cual es su profesion?)

10) A cuanto Ud. considera que esta su ingreso familiar cada mes? De

a) B 0-99

b) B 100-199

c) B 200-299

d) B 300-399

e) B 400 o mas

8) Que es el empleo principal en la comunidad?

9) Cuantos años de escolaridad tiene Ud.? Esta interesado estudiar mas, (tomar clases de educación de adultos)?

Cual es su nivel de educación? (Cuantos años de escuela tiene?) Tiene especialization?

11) Tiene hijos? Cuantos hijos tiene?

12) Tiene acceso a agua limpio (potable)? De donde viene el agua?

13) Hay una escuela aqui? (Es una primaria, secundaria...? Si no hay una escuela adecuada aqui, adonde tienen que ir para estudiar...?)Cuantos años tienen los niños que van a la escuela?

14) Tiene terreno? Cuantas hectárea?

15) Como ust. Utilisa esa tierra

16) Cuantas personas viven en su casa , cuantas pueden trabajar?