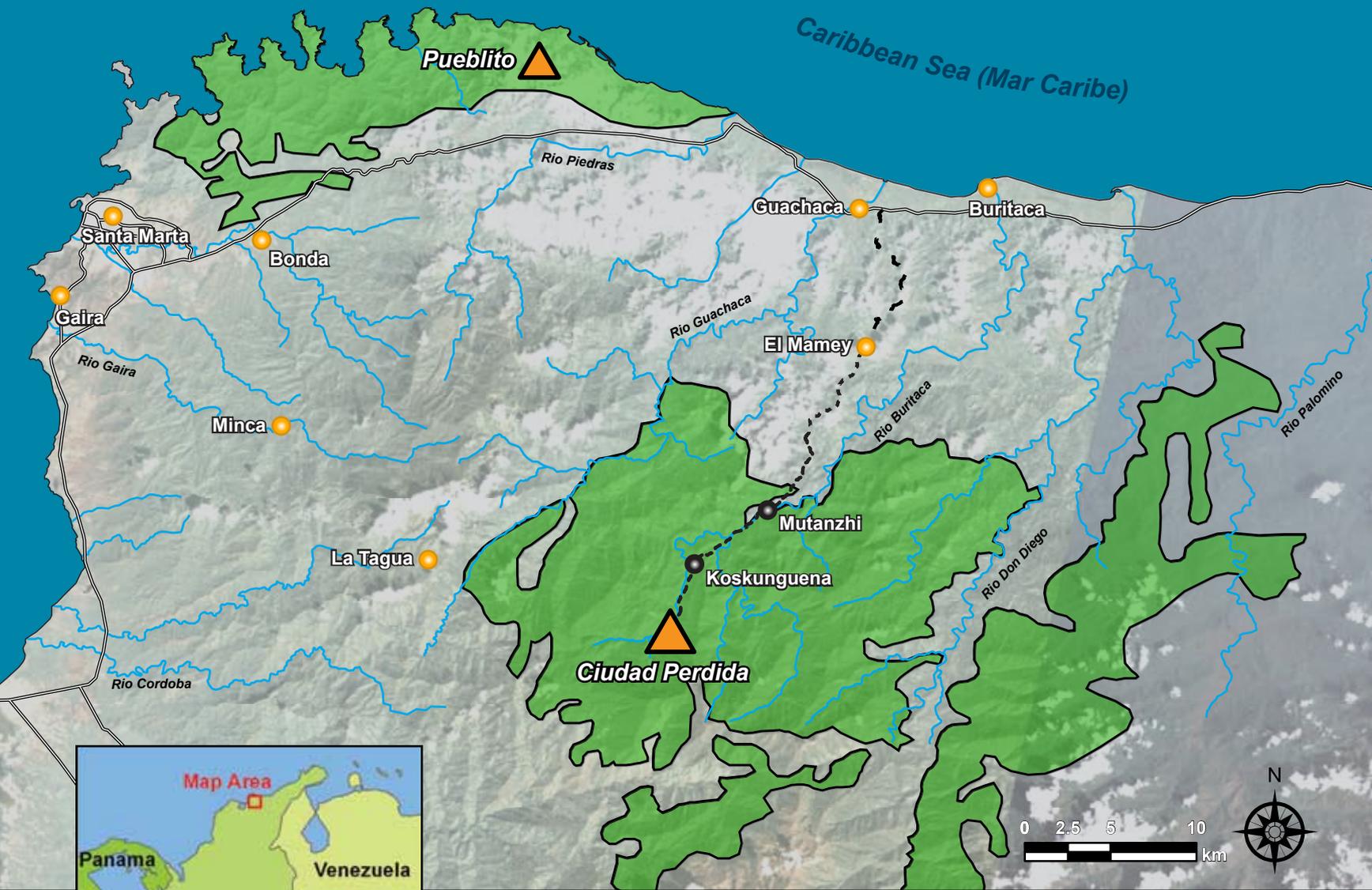


Global Heritage Fund

# Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park, Colombia



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The GHF Conservation Area - including the upper Buritaca, Don Diego and Guachaca river basins - contains some of the best-preserved swaths of rainforest and montane forest in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains, making it an important wildlife conservation area and sanctuary.



# Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park, Colombia

The Global Heritage Fund (GHF) Tayrona Conservation Project centers around the tropical forests and wildlife habitat of the Upper Buritaca River in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta massif, a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, and one of the highest and most ecologically diverse coastal mountain ranges in the world.

From A.D. 200 until A.D. 1600-1650, the northern portion of the massif was inhabited by a number of autonomous polities of varying size and political power known collectively as the Tayrona. More than 250 ancient Tayrona cities and towns with elaborate stone masonry and rammed earth architecture are today found throughout the Sierra, from the Caribbean shoreline to altitudes above 2500 meters, covering an area of approximately 3,000 square kilometers.

GHF's work and support focuses on preserving two of the largest ancient cities – Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida and Pueblito – today the only Tayrona sites open to the public. Major Tayrona cities are as large as 250 to 300 acres (100 hectares) with hundreds of structures, flagstone-paved paths and roads, canals and plazas.

Ciudad Perdida, which means “Lost City”, was discovered by chance in 1975 by looters, the people responsible for the destruction of many archaeological sites throughout the Sierra Nevada, Colombia, and the Americas. Over the past 30 years, archaeologists have

located more than 200 structures covering an area of approximately 60 hectares (150 acres). Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida was one of more than 250 towns inhabited by the Tayrona up until the end of the 16th century.

The park is reached by a 23.3-kilometer (14.5-mile) trail that winds upriver from the small town of El Mamey. The round trip takes five- to six days, with one night spent at the lodge closest to the park. Given that helicopters must land on archaeological structures, helicopter access is highly restricted by the Colombian Institute for Anthropology and History (ICANH), and those weighing over 5000 pounds are not allowed to land.

**Over the past 30 years, archaeologists have located more than 200 structures covering an area of approximately 60 hectares (150 acres).**

*Above:*

Central Terraces and surrounding views.

Photo: GHF

# Threats



Partial land slide of a terrace, which needs to be restored to prevent further damage (Left).  
Tree root embedded within the side of a terrace, which requires the tree to be removed (Right). Photos: GHF

The Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Park and its surrounding sites, the Buritaca River Basin, and the indigenous and peasant communities of the region all face certain threats to sustained preservation of the rich historical, living, and natural heritage of the Sierra Nevada. Among these threats are the following:

## Lack of Planning

Currently the site of Ciudad Perdida and the Tayrona archaeological sites of the Buritaca River Basin do not have a management plan to provide a comprehensive framework to deal with the legal protection of monuments and their integration into regional and municipal development plans, monitoring and maintenance, research, mapping, sustainable tourism, infrastructure, indigenous beliefs, visitor management, park carrying capacity and financial planning.

## Uncontrolled Tourism

Tourism to Ciudad Perdida has increased from approximately 2000 people in 2007 to 8000 in 2012, and the number of outfitters has gone from one to five. While these numbers are not considered to be mass tourism, the security improvements in the region and growing interest in both Colombia and Ciudad Perdida point to tourism numbers becoming unsustainable in the coming years if left unregulated. Uncontrolled tourism into the Buritaca River Basin also represents lost revenue and uninhibited intrusion into the daily lives of indigenous and peasant inhabitants.

## Looting

The site of Ciudad Perdida was discovered by looters in the early 1970s who were also responsible for destroying many archaeological sites in other parts of the Buritaca and Sierra Nevada, mostly looking for gold artifacts. While its discovery prompted an archaeological investigation and documentation project by ICANH which dramatically slowed looting at Ciudad Perdida, looters have continued to operate at the lesser known sites throughout the Buritaca basin.

The site of Ciudad Perdida was discovered by looters in the early 1970s who were also responsible for destroying many archaeological sites.

## Budget Constraints

ICANH's budget for the site of Ciudad Perdida was somewhere between \$25,000 and \$30,000 per year before GHF's involvement. This does not provide enough financial support for conservation and restoration at the site or for the other 26 known sites in the upper Buritaca basin. The number of park rangers currently under contract is clearly insufficient to meet regular maintenance needs, much less monitor adjacent sites.

## Illicit Cultivation

While the demobilization of paramilitary groups throughout Colombia in 2006 and increasing tourism has slowed the narcotics trade in the lower Buritaca, there is still activity in the area. The Colombian and US governments are very interested in the use of natural and cultural assets of the Buritaca as the basis for alternative development in the lower Buritaca River Basin.

Deforestation, the looting of archaeological sites and the lack of funding to conserve them can cause the destruction of cultural and natural patrimony that belongs to everyone in Colombia and whose loss would be irreplaceable. Assuring its long-term protection and sustainability is a priority for GHF, ICANH, Tayrona Foundation for Archaeological & Environmental Research (FIAAT), and the indigenous and local communities.



ICANH conservation team during restoration activities in 2011: (Left to Right) Danilo Celis, Eucario Jesus Buitrago, David Mendoza (Site Guard), Walter Hinojosa (Supervisor), Jose Celis, Catalina Bateman (Conservation Director), Carlos Nieto (Architect). Photo: GHF

# The Tayrona Conservation Project

GHF is currently implementing a major program of heritage- and nature conservation along with community development in northern Colombia to help preserve the most significant natural and cultural heritage located in this area of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, mountains. GHF's work focuses on helping to preserve the tropical montane forests of the Upper Buritaca River Valley and the major archaeological sites from the Tayrona civilization that it contains.

## The primary goals of the Tayrona Conservation Project are:

1. Planning - development and application of Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida conservation and management plans by ICANH, including field survey, mapping and documentation of 3-4 major sites in the Upper Buritaca Basin.
2. Scientific Conservation – focused on the sites of Ciudad Perdida and Pueblito.
3. Community Development – improving the lives of indigenous and campesino (peasant) communities through training, new businesses, employment and investment in health-and social services.
4. Partnerships - creation of a Colombian Heritage Fund to facilitate private-sector investment in Colombia for heritage preservation.

In 2011-12, design of a comprehensive and inclusive management plan for the Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Park is being led by ICANH in consultation with the Colombian Park Service (UAESPNN).

## Planning

In 2011, a conservation plan highlighting threats analysis, conservation requirements and intervention recommendations was completed for the site of Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida. This allowed conservation work to begin on-site the same year.

In 2011-12, design of a comprehensive and inclusive management plan for the Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Park is being led by ICANH in consultation with the Colombian Park Service (UAESPNN). This plan will include a tourism management plan, carrying capacity analysis, and cultural and environmental impacts assessments for the Buritaca River Basin. This plan is scheduled for completion in early 2012.

## Heritage Conservation

The ICANH-GHF Conservation Plan is focused on structures with the most serious problems such as fallen walls that may cause the whole terrace to slide down slope due to the torrential rains (more than 157 inches per year). This includes the main terrace currently used as a helipad, the walls of which are at risk of collapse due to sagging, and bulging retaining walls whose inner drainages are completely blocked.

These are major interventions requiring significant funding, labor and expertise that are crucial for preserving Ciudad Perdida. Additional funding is also required to take conservation teams to the 26 surrounding sites for conservation assessment and design of monitoring and protection protocols.

During 2011, architectural and topographic survey work at the site also revealed a number of additional structures that were completely covered in forest yet adjacent to areas currently open to the public. Conservation and preservation activities must be designed and implemented for these structures, including clearing most vegetation, restoring walls and foundation rings along with terrace fills, and documenting them completely.

## Nature Conservation

The GHF Conservation Area-which includes the upper Buritaca, Don Diego and Guachaca river basins-contains some of the best preserved swaths of rainforest and montane forest in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountains, making it an important wildlife conservation area and sanctuary.

Covering approximately 120 square kilometers (30,000 acres), the upper section of all three basins is home to endangered jaguar and ocelot populations, tapir, hundreds of species of migratory and endemic birds such as the blue billed curassow, howler monkeys and endemic reptiles, amphibians, and insects that inhabit the massif. The area thus conjoins great cultural and natural wealth, both of which require continued preservation efforts and education of local populations to ensure protection.

The GHF-FIAAT partnership has applied to USAID-Patrimonio Natural Funding to be used for conducting a biodiversity assessment program for the Buritaca basin. Given that the last biological assessment was conducted in 1977, the information is sorely needed to evaluate mammal, reptile, amphibian, and butterfly populations and their current health and population status. In the following years (2012-2015) we aim to conduct similar assessments in the Don Diego and Guachaca basins. This will also result in a better knowledge of the potential of these areas for bird and animal watching activities, thus diversifying offerings for niche tourism and diverting pressure from the archaeological site itself.

A Citi Foundation grant received by GHF and implemented by FIAAT has also focused on strengthening environmental and heritage education at the trailhead school. As such, school curriculum improvements have focused on highlighting the importance of cultural *and* natural heritage preservation, as well as rural micro-entrepreneurship related to tourism, sustainable agriculture and ranching, and environmental services. Additional funding was also

Conservation activities underway by the ICANH team. Photos: GHF



The ICANH-GHF Conservation Plan is focused on structures with the most serious problems.



secured by GHF-FIAAT from USAID-Patrimonio Natural to set up an Ecological Club at the school, and to provide seed capital for a school farm. The objective of this club is to locate, support and promote young environmental and cultural preservation leadership aimed at creating local stewardship and conservation.

Future (2012-2015) activities involve linking and strengthening environmental, heritage and bird conservation curricula currently under design by partner organizations and making them available to all teachers and schoolchildren in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta under open access protocols. Further funding is needed to set up and maintain web access to these materials, conduct workshops with teachers and students, and further improve curricular materials. We are also exploring an alliance with Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural Park in order to set up a wider environmental and cultural heritage education alliance.

In sum, activities have focused on and will continue to focus on the need for preserving and protecting natural and cultural heritage in ways that include local peasant and indigenous populations and promote continued and sustained stewardship beyond government institutions and NGOs.

*Left:*

Local family heading towards Ciudad Perdida.

Photo: GHF

*Right:*

Rumaldo Lozano, mamo kogi from the Mutanzhi Community, and family in Ciudad Perdida.

Photo: GHF

The upper part of the basin is also home to about 150 people belonging to the Kogi and Wiwa indigenous communities, concentrated around the small town of Mutanzhi, which was founded in the early 1980s.



Most of the alternative development activities, as well as improved tourism control, will benefit the conservation objectives of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural Park areas and buffer zones.

### Community Development

Based on extensive discussions with local stakeholders (indigenous and campesino communities), ICANH, Colombian Parks Service, local NGOs and Colombian government, the following activities have been selected for community development investment:

#### 1. Training and capacity building

- Conservation training
- Guide training (wilderness first aid, natural and cultural heritage)
- Capacity building for silvopastoral production systems and family owned micro-businesses

#### 2. Income and employment

- Community owned eco-lodge improvements
- Rural micro-entrepreneurship related to sustainable farming and tourism

#### 3. Social development

- Cultural and environmental education - public school serving the peasant and indigenous communities
- Creation of local youth eco-club
- Sanitation, fuel efficient wood burning stoves and residual water treatment for community eco-lodges

#### 4. Heritage development

- Trail and site interpretation and signage
- Trail improvements and maintenance
- Trail bridge for river crossing
- New site accommodation and kitchen for on-site teams
- Guidebook

This part of the basin is home to a number of peasant small-holders who under paramilitary rule grew coca bushes and processed the leaf into cocaine base. After the demobilization

agreements of 2006, most peasants have slowly shifted back to traditional crops such as coffee, cocoa and dryland rice. Others have turned to ranching, clearing out new patches of forest for livestock, while a few have hired themselves out as guides, porters, muleteers or cooks to the outfitters handling tourism to Ciudad Perdida. Today, about 300 campesino people inhabit the Buritaca River Basin.

The upper part of the basin is also home to about 150 people belonging to the Kogi and Wiwa indigenous communities, concentrated around the small town of Mutanzhi, which was founded in the early 1980s. The town is located within the Kogi-Arzario reservation boundary line which begins close to the settlement. Further upriver from Mutanzhi, only one indigenous family lives relatively close to the park (3.5 kilometers away). This means that most of the area surrounding Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Park is completely uninhabited and covered in 400-year-old forest, which makes it a crucial sanctuary for endemic bird species, howler monkeys, jaguar and ocelot populations which find refuge in this area.

### Partnerships

GHF is working closely with the following partners to achieve success in the Tayrona Conservation Project:

#### Colombian Institute for Anthropology and History (ICANH)

Founded in 1938 as the National Archaeological Service, ICANH is the State institution that oversees anthropological and archaeological research in Colombia. As the current administrator of Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park and with many decades of research and heritage administration experience in Colombia, ICANH's presence in parks such as Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida has ensured the long-term preservation of the country's archaeological heritage. ICANH's active participation in the design and implementation of the Management Plan, as well as its local knowledge and expertise, are crucial factors in the successful application of GHF's *Preservation by Design*<sup>®</sup> methodology. In addition, this also guarantees that the site will continue to be protected beyond the completion of this project. In the event of a World Heritage nomination process for Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park, it would be ICANH's responsibility to present the nomination, as it has done successfully for San Agustín and Tierradentro World Heritage sites.

#### Tayrona Foundation for Archaeological & Environmental Research (FIAAT)

Established by Santiago Giraldo, PhD (GHF Project Director) and Luisa Fernanda Herrera, PhD in 2010 with the support of GHF, FIAAT conducts anthropological and archaeological research and designs and implements community development in the Buritaca, Guachaca and Don Diego Basins of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. FIAAT receives and channels in-country funding aimed at natural and cultural heritage protection projects located in these areas.

#### Colombian National Parks (UAESPNN)

As part of the Ministry of the Environment, the National Parks Unit is charged with administrating the entire national parks system for Colombia and coordinating the National System of Protected Areas. Though administrated by ICANH since its discovery in 1976, Ciudad Perdida is also located within the borders of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural Park, and visitors pass through park lands to reach the archaeological site. Most of the alternative development activities, as well as improved tourism control, will also benefit the conservation objectives of Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Natural Park by controlling activities in park areas and buffer zones.



Above:  
Kogi child in Mutanzhi.

Photo: GHF

Opposite Page Left:  
President Juan Manuel Santos while visiting  
Ciudad Perdida, 2011.

Photo: GHF

Opposite Page Right:  
Kogi Nuhue (men's ceremonial structure  
and meeting house) in Ciudad Perdida.

Photo: GHF

The area surrounding the Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Park is a crucial sanctuary for endemic bird species, howler monkeys, jaguar and ocelot populations which find refuge in this area.



Vereda Honduras trail to Ciudad Perdida. Photo: GHF

# Colombia Heritage Fund

GHF is helping to mobilize key Colombian private sector leaders, corporations and foundations towards the development of a Colombian Heritage Fund (CHF). GHF hopes to bring together a coalition of private sector leaders and companies that can co-fund the sustainable preservation of Ciudad Perdida with GHF over the next 4-5 years and other major sites in Colombia. In 2006, GHF helped to form PACUNAM, now an 11-member organization that has made a \$3M matching commitment to GHF for co-funding at Mirador in Guatemala. GHF believes that a Colombia Heritage Fund would help to coordinate efforts and facilitate resources to identify, lead and promote projects for the protection and conservation of Colombian cultural patrimony. This organization would have a long-term commitment, capable of integrating the efforts of the private sector, government and civil society to generate high impact sustainable Colombian heritage conservation projects with local, regional (and even national) economic, cultural and social benefits.

GHF hopes to help mobilize key Colombian private sector leaders, corporations and foundations towards the development of a Colombian Heritage Fund (CHF).

Bridge over the Buritaca River, built by the indigenous and local communities, with support from FIAAT, Fundación Puentes de la Esperanza, and GHF under the Conservation Landscapes Program, Colombian Natural Heritage Fund-USAID.

Photo: GHF



# Building A Better Future By Preserving Our Past



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Cover:

Central Terraces at Ciudad Perdida.

Photo: Fausto Giaccone