

# Parks in Peril Program

*A Collaboration between The U.S. Agency for International Development and The Nature Conservancy to Preserve Our Natural Heritage*



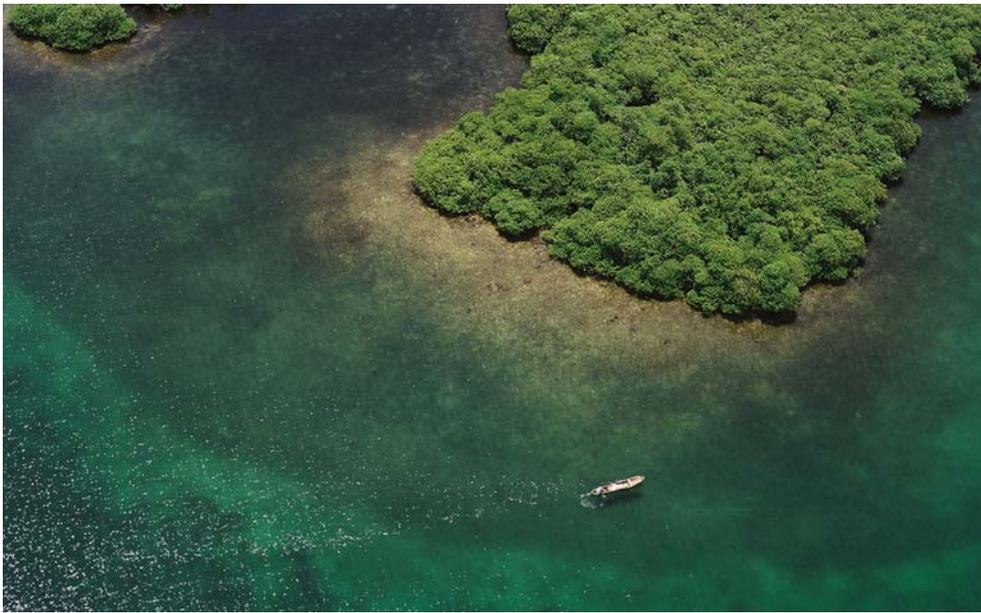
Since 1990, The Nature Conservancy's Parks in Peril (PiP) program has provided the financial support and scientific expertise to protect 45 million acres of imperiled habitat in 45 national parks and nature reserves across 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. ©Peg Kohring/The Nature Conservancy

Roads slice through virgin forest habitat. Smoke rises from uncontrolled slash-and-burn farming. Illegal logging transforms rich landscapes into vast wastelands. Poaching pushes endangered species to the brink of extinction. Unregulated fishing destroys coral reefs and seagrass beds that are nurseries for threatened marine species. This is the grim reality for countless parks and reserves throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, where local environmental protections are unenforceable or simply nonexistent. Without our help, these natural treasures will be lost forever.

Since 1990, the Parks in Peril (PiP) program has provided the financial support and scientific expertise to protect and manage 45 million acres of imperiled habitat in 45 national parks and nature reserves across 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result of a partnership among The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), foreign governmental organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), important natural areas are now being protected from damage and destruction caused by unsustainable forestry, uncontrolled tourism, and conversion to agricultural land.

## **Our Goals**

The Parks in Peril program strengthens local capacity to manage protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean. PiP's goals are to: 1) Build an on-site logistic capacity to manage parks in the hemisphere's most imperiled ecosystems; 2) Develop the analytic and strategic capacity necessary for long-term management of these areas; 3) Create long-term financial mechanisms to sustain the local management of these areas; 4) Integrate PiP protected areas into the economic lives of local society; and 5) Use PiP site-based activities, and



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the methodologies we develop there, to influence conservation in other sites in the region's most imperiled ecosystems.

### Site Consolidation

Parks in Peril focuses on strengthening conservation NGOs and GOs in countries where protected areas may have been designated on paper, but the realistic means for protecting them are lacking. PiP fosters the local support necessary for protecting them using a process called, "Site Consolidation." Site Consolidation is the process of consolidating, or bringing together, all the resources necessary to support conservation in specific areas. These resources include financial resources, technical resources, human resources, adequate infrastructure, a supportive local constituency, political support and ecological information. The goal is to provide NGOs and GOs with the tools to deal with current threats and management challenges, as well as the capacity to respond to threats that arise in the future. To manage this process, PiP developed the Parks in Peril Site Consolidation Scorecard. This vital tool helps us set priorities for site conservation capacity, measure progress, and assist adaptive management.

### Multi-Site Strategies

To reach hundreds or thousands of conservation areas where an intensive, site consolidation investment is not possible, Parks in Peril develops Multi-Site Strategies to work with our existing networks of sites and partners as platforms from which to influence entire systems of important conservation areas. For example, PiP trains government ministries—responsible for national protected areas—in methodologies for setting conservation priorities, based on the most important conservation targets and conservation threats. This, in turn, enables them to improve the management of the entire system of government-protected areas. PiP also works with local partner organizations to build the legal foundation to support conservation networks of private reserves—lands that are owned privately, but whose owners manage the land for conservation goals.

### A Model for Success

PiP serves as a powerful, efficient delivery vehicle for international conservation assistance. It capitalizes on the ability of one organization (TNC) to serve as an intermediary between donors and local conservation organizations in many countries at once—leveraging tools and meth-

odologies across international borders, bringing its experience in building strong institutions to partners throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to the 37 sites already consolidated, PiP's successes include: the adoption of the PiP Site Consolidation Scorecard by the national protected areas systems of Ecuador and Bolivia, as well as the parks of Chiapas, Mexico; the use of TNC's site financial planning methodology by the Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales of Peru for all the country's federal protected areas; and the Government of Bolivia's use of PiP's work with park-user fees as a model for all its protected areas. The PiP model could easily be applied by other donors and to other areas of international assistance, using an intermediary organization in a multi-site, multi-country program to foster lasting, locally based successes.

### Be a part of the PiP experience

In October 2001, the Nature Conservancy and USAID launched a \$46 million initiative to renew the Parks in Peril partnership, expanding it to eight additional sites (totaling 45) for consolidation activities, and focusing more on Multi-Site Strategies. To learn more about Parks in Peril's efforts to preserve the world's natural heritage, and to obtain many of the tools the program uses, visit us at [www.parksinperil.org](http://www.parksinperil.org) or <http://nature.org>.

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