

MONTEVERDE WATER IN DANGER

Monteverde is known worldwide for the biodiversity in its cloud forests, its beauty and the ecological and conservationist awareness of its inhabitants. This has been a matter of pride and provided the impulse for the development of ecotourism in the area, which today is one of the most visited places in Costa Rica.

In fact, many people hear about Monteverde before they realize it is in Costa Rica.

Unfortunately, not all of the citizens and business people share the same respect for nature, and feelings of pride in the conservation of the nature that surrounds us. Some neighbors seem to have forgotten that water is a nonrenewable resource, and intend to appropriate the water in our streams, water that belongs to our children and the planet.

This greed has led them to acquire concessions and permissions granted without transparency, that will permit them to develop businesses at the cost of our water sources, where many species of flora and fauna live that are in danger of extinction.

This group of business people, capably camouflaged in their contacts with various government entities as “small farmers”, were able to acquire benefits granted to small farmers in need of water resources to produce a living.

WE ASK YOU TO JOIN US IN OUR FIGHT TO PROTECT MOTHER NATURE.

Some of us have tried to dialog with this group of citizens to persuade them to stop the work of tearing up the roads to bury the pipe (**which they had no permission to do at the time**). This has generated a lot of conflict, including violence.

It is important to point out that they are supposed to need the water for an irrigation system. The big questions are:

1. in the middle of a cloud forest, where there are 7 cubic meters of precipitation yearly in the highest points and 3.5 cubic meters in the lowest points, **is irrigation really necessary?** Farmers in the area are successful only when they use greenhouses to control the excessive humidity that can ruin their crops.
2. The permissions they obtained allow them (the business group) to take 12.65 liters per second from the Quebrada Cuecha, and 5 liters from the Quebrada Maquina. The local water system supplies 16 liters per second to a population of 6000, all of the businesses, and the tourist infrastructure which receives at least 200,000 tourist a year. **Could it really be necessary to use such an enormous quantity of water for an irrigation project?**

3. If this amount of water is removed from the streams, *what will be the long term effect on the surrounding villages, especially during dry season?*
4. According to water experts, there are various species that live on the banks of the Quebrada Maquina that could disappear if this situation continues. *Are we willing to sacrifice these species?*

The appropriate study of the environmental impact was never carried out, and without it, it is imperative, to obtain the appropriate permissions, to substitute this study with a sworn declaration of environmental viability (which is not acceptable in the Monteverde area, due to a *unique and fragile ecosystem*, with endemic populations.

WE DO NOT WANT TO LOOSE OUR POTABLE WATER FROM OUR STREAMS.

Water is a treasure and during more than fifty years we have jealously protected our sources of some of the best water in the world.

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“1,400 million people don't have access to potable water.”

“Less than 1% of the water of the planet is apt for human consumption”

“More than 4 million CHILDREN die every year from illness caused by contaminated water.”

“One of every two people in the year 2025 will face difficult living conditions due to the scarcity of water, if we continue to abuse its use.”

Source: Guardian Magazine, Edition Troubled Water,
La Nación, Viva section, January 13, 2005

PROPOSAL OF A VIABLE SOLUTION

To avoid a catastrophe of this nature, we are willing to sacrifice whatever it will take, including economical considerations.

We are convinced that it is not necessary to use potable water for irrigation purposes in this or any other place on the planet, especially if there are other options to provide the necessary water.

The solution we would like to implement is to carry out the necessary investigations to install water treatment plants in our businesses to provide them with treated water. This will provide them with water that is apt for irrigation and not the potable water they are taking now, which will have long lasting and drastic effects on our ecology.

This is to prove our serious intentions to maintain a SUSTAINABLE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT and control as much as possible the negative impact of development on the area.

Today our theme is: Growth in hand with Mother Nature.

Please join us in our struggle to keep our water... your support is important!!!

Remember we need to do something... anything... but we need to do something!

- Talk it over with your family
- Speak to your neighbors about it
- Send an email to your contacts (maybe one of them would support us or have a good idea for us).
- Tell us what you think.
- Just don't ... REMAIN PASSIVE!!!

Send your comments to the following address:

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