



Felipe Andrés Velasco
Director Fundación Montecito
Sogamoso
Colombia

27 March 2013
Our Ref: RW/10172

Dear Felipe

Lago de Tota and the potential for a Wetland Centre

Thank you for contacting the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust regarding Lago de Tota. We are writing to express our support for the protection of the site and future development of a wetland centre.

We believe that a wetland centre at Lago de Tota presents a unique opportunity for the creation of Colombia's first site showcasing the wildlife, cultural and historical importance of the high Andean lake ecosystems.

A wetland visitor centre provides a great opportunity as it is our belief that recreation in a natural habitat, especially activities that result in a better understanding of that habitat, promotes a respect for the land and a sense of shared ownership. These feelings of respect and ownership in turn result in a desire for its care and protection. Therefore, investing in providing environmental education and recreation today will result in a legacy that will sustain Lago de Tota into the future. Such a project would work towards public recognition that a healthy environment, rich in wildlife and managed on sustainable principles, is essential for continued human existence. It would aim to encourage visitation by a wide range of audiences both national and international.

When developing a visitor centre we recommend that a holistic approach should be adopted, compiling a multi-disciplinary team to work together. This leads to a centre and associated facilities fit for purpose. It is the belief of WWT Consulting that in the field of environmental education and interpretation centres, best practice is characterised by not presenting a 'done deal', fully designed, bland wetland centre model that is clonable worldwide. Instead, presenting a framework, within which:

- The project is Colombian led with input from international experts, such as WWT Consulting when required;
- Local stakeholders are consulted about the content and design of the Wetland Centre. This ensures that local knowledge and 'stories behind the stories' are captured within the interpretation, and that prospective user groups are engaged in 'their' centre from the start;
- Core and potential audiences are researched and developed; and
- Messages are presented using a range of appropriate media in ways that have relevance and resonance with local cultures and audiences.

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If we can assist in the future we would be delighted to be involved in such an important project.

Yours sincerely
for and on behalf of
WWT CONSULTING

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Woodward'.

Rebecca Woodward
Associate Director

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