

# Bocavaldivia Foundation

The largest biodiverse edible forest in the world!



**BOCAVALDIVIA**  
FOUNDATION



# What is BEF/BCB and what do you do?

The Biodiverse Edible Forest (initials BCB in Spanish) is a highly integrative project with an insatiable drive for conservation, to protect lands, restore and strengthen biodiversity while simultaneously growing local sustainable economies and transmitting knowledge to local communities using vanguard gastronomy as the central glue.

## Vision

We aim to unite reserves to create a large-scale conservation-based corridor spanning diversity in plant/animal species, cultures and communities. We will call this the largest biodiverse edible forest in the world.

There's a lot of conservation groups, are you really different?: Conservation done through altruistic acts, or driven by guilt is inefficient- we offer tacit solutions with quantitative metrics of success to ensure our efforts directly conserve lands, benefitting both local communities as well as the species that occupy the lands.



# Who is BCB and how is the team organized?

The foundation consists of a small complementary and agile team from diverse backgrounds. BCB was founded by chef and life-long conservationist Rodrigo Pacheco, FAO goodwill ambassador and vanguardist chef. He is joined by evolutionary biologist Dr. Justin Yeager, a research professor at Universidad de las Americas and active member of the Ecuadorian Academy of Sciences. Legal council is afforded by a world-renowned environmental defense lawyer Julio Prieto who made his reputation defending indigenous communities and lands in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Finally our cohesion is ensured by our project manager Camilo Montalvo and up-and-coming logistics specialist with ample experience in conservation projects. While each founder leads their respective areas of expertise, it is their blend that catalyzes the potential of the foundation.

On each site, biodiversity restoration is put in place by a team of agronomist Ingeniers with hands on the ground. Additionally, we have curated a group of advisors as well as mentors from diverse backgrounds to enhance and clarify a global vision for the project.



## Land acquisition:

Our foundation utilizes two distinct methods of land acquisition included in the project. Direct acquisition of lands is our preferred route, purchasing plots at fair prices directly from landowners. These lands are acquired in the name of the Bocavaldivia foundation and are managed by the board, following the legal protocols of Ecuador for buying lands with titles. Alternatively, we can also enter lands into the BCB in instances where a collaborator wishes to retain the title of the land, yet are willing to permit us to oversee all aspects of the management and operations on their land.

In these instances owners can choose to sign over their land to the foundation using a trust or 'fideicomiso', which ensures the use of the land follows all outlined guidelines related to the foundation for a minimum of 5 years, but the original owner(s) can retain the title. Utilizing these two methodologies we are able to acquire lands when funding permits, but can also not miss opportunities to include other privately owned lands or reserves under the umbrella of the project, while ensuring strict compliance with our management policies under both scenarios. Following SDG's we consider these alliances to be extremely important for large scale conservation projects, permitting us the agility to rapidly grow our conserved forests and share our mission.



## How we target lands?

We are currently prioritizing lands which can connect to, and expand our existing reserves on the Pacific Coast of Ecuador. This region spans from the saltwater mangroves to the tropical dry forests, and into the piedmont humid tropical forests. The namesake tourist destination and our founders restaurant Bovacaldivia with ally Tanusas resorts are seated on the coast, which represent the transition from mangroves to tropical dry forests. Coastal habitats which can be reconnected to other transitional ecosystems are difficult to find as anthropogenic intervention in these regions is advanced. Yet in this region of Manabi, if we act fast, we can establish significant corridors from the ocean to the mountains!

Notwithstanding, our medium and long term goals are to rapidly expand this region, to develop a larger continuous patchwork of reserves from the Galapagos to the Amazon. As fragmentation is among the most serious issues, restoring connectivity is crucial for the conservation of species in these regions, and while we are currently focused on building our first corridor, our larger vision remains to reconnect reserves at a national and international scale to build the largest biodiverse edible forest in the world.

We realize this is ambitious, however climate change requires substantial goals for the contention of the most difficult issue of our times.

Our project also differs from some other more traditional conservation initiatives as we do not dismiss degraded land plots simply because the quality (or lack thereof) of forests are depauperate. We see part of our work as actively restoring these lands, and maximizing the potential by focusing on planting endemic edible species, while we also plant a biodiversity of non edible species of trees in an effort to restore forests and reconnect fragmented forest patches, redesigning healthy landscapes that assure climate sovereignty. In this sense, we are able to acquire these types of plots of land at highly discounted prices and painstakingly restore them to ensure succession will take over.



# What success looks like?

We see success as measured in two complimentary metrics: the first follows traditional conservation and features the preservation and maximized sustainable use of pristine lands. The second is the acquisition of degraded lands which will be restored and join other fragments of protected lands to reestablish biological, cultural and communitarian corridors.





# Next steps- moving towards a future selling carbon credits.

## The state of carbon credit sales in Ecuador based on current legislature

National legal frameworks are proximate indicators of the performance and potential success of carbon capture projects. In 2008 substantial constitutional reforms were made related to the provision of environmental services, which is related to the generation of carbon credits. In Ecuador, the constitution establishes that the rights to ecosystem services all belong to the state. Entrance into the international carbon markets is currently not possible as the legislation is written. Since environmental services are not possible to be owned as an individual, the wording of recent constitutional change appears to forbid landowners' ability to participate effectively in the international carbon market.

However, the constitution additionally recognizes the government's responsibility to adopt measures to mitigate climate change (Art. 440). Accordingly, there have been various cases where the payment for ecosystem services has been allowed, as the REDD+ (conceived as an international framework to encourage voluntary efforts in developing countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance carbon removals from forest activities), and the program called "Socio Bosque", which is a government program initially funded with government resources. Both are voluntary programs but have received strong criticism as a continuation of the type of policies that have impeded communities from the sovereign use of their territory.





## Voluntary markets and how we will poise ourselves for future International CC markets

Meanwhile a vibrant voluntary CC market has grown, and is currently dominated by private sales which have sharply increased in demand over the last years. Ecuadorian projects are already being traded in these Voluntary Carbon Markets, which offers a legal and practical solution to offering CCs for sale, mitigating local regulatory limitations. The terms of these sales depend on privately defined agreements which fit both the project's goals and the purchasing parties stated obligations. These markets are driven by increased demand and appear to be poised for double-digit growth by 2030.

In the last months, the Ecuadorian Government issued a referendum related to who can own environmental services, and compensation derived from environmental services. Although the referendum results did not yet favor entering international markets, the Constitutional Court analyzed ruled that there is no prohibition to utilize and enjoy natural services and that it was up to the government to regulate these uses (Decision N-°4-22-RC/22).

Since then, the National Assembly is discussing new legislation to include a new national Voluntary Carbon Market Mechanism, which would be overseen by the Ecuadorian Environmental Authority. Even though it is still too soon to tell if and when this proposed mechanism will begin, it is expected to encourage future CC selling options.

While we wait to officially enter international carbon credit markets, we can actively prepare a number of aspects. We first will be vanguard in the voluntary carbon markets, as well as measure where these markets are headed. As we access historical as well as forecasted pricing data, we will track the market's evolution, allowing us to advance our planning and carbon trading decisions with confidence. We will also develop and deploy a pricing methodology that is fully transparent and justified by the added benefits our lands offer in terms of sustainable biocommerce, conservation, education, and the like. Additionally, we will be launching programs to begin to reforest degraded lands, to maximize our carbon capture potential on deforested properties.



# Educational programs and community outreach:

The biodiverse edible forest foundation has its roots steeped in education, especially in rural communities. In fact, BCB was birthed from the Foundation Amor 7.8, an education-based foundation which provides high quality hands-on education to rural communities. All would agree that education and conservation function hand-in-hand, therefore we firmly believe in the importance of the educational component of our initiative.

Education in the BCB takes several distinct forms such as training in high end gastronomy, identification and use of non conventional edible plants, primary/secondary rural schools and the indirect educational experience of eating biodiverse food offerings in our affiliated restaurants. Each type of education is equally important, and together these initiatives can result in positive change and more conservation-minded philosophies.

## **Activities in early stages:**

In continuing collaboration with Fundacion Amor 7.8, BCB is assisting in workshops and the creation of conservation-based additions to curriculum. We are sponsoring the implementation of an edible garden in rural schools, and will hold cooking workshops using ingredients grown.

## **Upon securing more funding:**

It is our goal to rapidly expand our educational outreach activities to schools in the surrounding regions around our reserves. We also plan to write and distribute (free of cost) the BCB children's cookbook with the objectives of encouraging local foraging/harvesting, restoring traditional knowledge, and deepening children's appreciation of biodiversity and conservation on local and regional levels.



## Bioeconomy and sustainable uses of biodiverse edible forests:

Questions like “what is a forest truly worth” are common, particularly when looking at the trade-off costs of development, non-renewable resource use, and other potentially detrimental activities. Aside from the value in consumptive terms (e.g. timber or mining), in conservation defining economic added value of lands can be challenging. As our initiative has a direct link with gastronomy, we are able to explore and define novel sustainable uses for products derived from forests such as unique food items. Perhaps paradoxically, even the most degraded forests have edible products to offer, though of course the number of potentials correlates with the increasing quality of forests.

The foundation builds off an incredibly rich history of traditional knowledge in local edible species. Building off this foundation research and development, applying traditional French and European cooking techniques as well as prehispanic ancestral methods of cooking and ethnobotany are used to refine primary ingredients into the fine dining experience Rodrigo is known for presenting to his guests in Bocavaldivia and international events such as the Bocuse d’Or, or on Netflix’s The Final Table.





### Activities in early stages:

The backbone of the bioeconomy in our current state of the is the use of edible species in the restaurants Bocavaldivia and Foresta as well as other affiliates. Ingredients are grown in the edible forests, in addition to other sustainably produced ingredients which are procured from members of the local communities. Additionally, coffee and chocolate are the first products that are currently being produced for regional distribution, which are grown on our El Abrazo reserve (see below for details). In the near future we will be launching subscription services for our products with monthly deliveries, and products will be available in our associate restaurants and hotels (e.g. Bocavaldivia, Foresta and Tanusas).

### Upon securing more funding::

As the project grows and more funds are available we intend to develop additional commercial products for regional, national and eventually international sale. We plan to set up distribution routes and help local producers find buyers and then let the producers sell directly to the buyers as well as creating added value through the creation of different products so they can maximize profits. This may take the form of a monthly membership program with deliveries to major cities. Additionally, portions of harvests that are damaged or otherwise unsuitable for retail we will purchase to use for humanitarian efforts such as schools, orphanages and/or retirement homes.





# Scientific ventures and the measurement and monitoring of biodiversity:

Assessing extant biodiversity and monitoring the recovery of diversity in degraded habitats are our central research goals, though as our funding support grows we aim to not only enrich our applied studies of biodiversity, but also expand into other experimental avenues in the fields of ecology and evolutionary biology.

## How we monitor biodiversity:

Conserving, and enhancing biodiversity is a central theme of our project. We utilize a number of methodologies to estimate biodiversity using cost-effective techniques such as visual/auditory surveys, camera traps, and environmental DNA strategies. In each of our reserves we take baseline data with regular subsequent sampling modalities to ensure the stability of communities, and measure species richness and recovery. Our collaborators in biodiversity research include numerous researchers from top Ecuadorian universities and local institutions such as Instituto Nacional para la Biodiversidad.

## Upon securing more funding:

As the foundation continues to grow, our biodiversity research will similarly scale to meet the needs of the project and take advantage of available funds to allocate in research grants to encourage current students to become future conservation leaders through research projects funded by the foundation. Our priority will continue to be focused in studies of biodiversity, understanding anthropogenic influence on plant/animal populations, and the recovery of degraded lands.



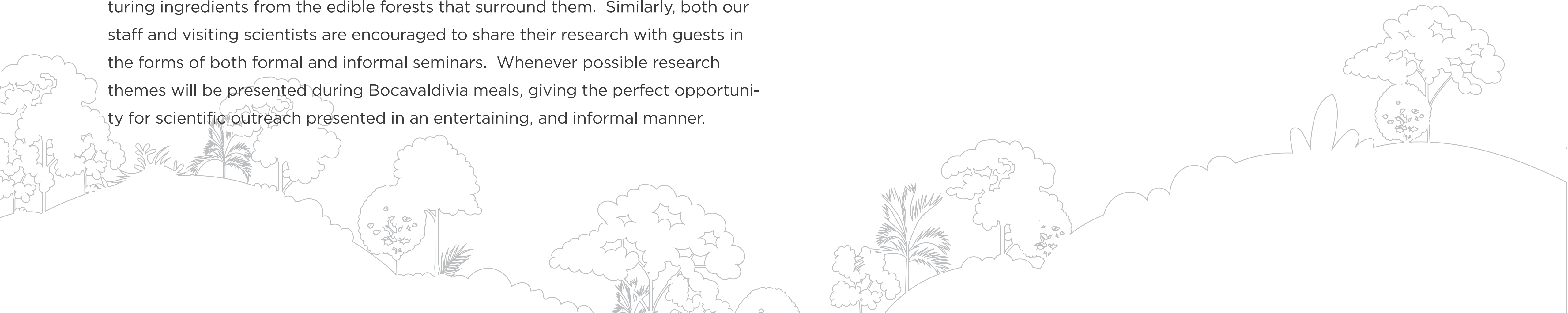


## El Abrazo research station:

With a recent acquisition of an impressive transitional humid forest called el Abrazo, an impressive 45 hectare reserve which connects the lowland tropical dry forest with the low elevation Andean Chocó, we are poised to launch our flagship research station. While the use of many research stations are exclusive to researchers, we feel strongly that scientific outreach and ecotourism are highly complementary and therefore mutually beneficial. While scientists based in El Abrazo can utilize isolated laboratory spaces, there are also many common use spaces including experimental plots, outdoor kitchens and social areas where scientists can socialize and share their work with ecotourists.

Bocavaldia has established an outdoor kitchen en el Abrazo where tourists are brought and can enjoy a full multi-course fine dining experience exclusively featuring ingredients from the edible forests that surround them. Similarly, both our staff and visiting scientists are encouraged to share their research with guests in the forms of both formal and informal seminars. Whenever possible research themes will be presented during Bocavaldia meals, giving the perfect opportunity for scientific outreach presented in an entertaining, and informal manner.

One perfect example of this is with a dish which features an edible so-called glass frog which is made using the silicone molds from a scientific study which demonstrated how transparency functions as a novel type of camouflage in these frogs. During their meal guests are briefly told of these endemic species of transparent, nocturnal glass frogs, and from their dining table can look towards a stream in the distance where these frogs are found.





# I understand, I love it, how can I/we get involved!

## Howler Monkey: 40k

- BCB Silver Ranger Certificate

### **Scientific package:**

- Primary Technical Report:
  - Forest Geography
  - GIS Information
  - Ecosystem identification
  - Summary of flora and fauna species
  - List of edible plants and gastronomic potential.

### **Communication package:**

- Brand presence on all digital platforms and informative documents.
- Portfolio of 15 HD photos
- 5 Captions copywriting for social networks
- Accompaniment in communication and marketing strategies.
- Images from camera traps and drone flights

### **Social Media (INST) package:**

- 1 reel of recognition in Rodrigo Pacheco and Fundación Bocavaldivia.
- 1 post and 2 stories on Fundación Bocavaldivia
- 1 story in Bocavaldivia
- 1 story in Rodrigo Pacheco

## Humpback whale: 100k

- Guided tour for 8 people on the BEF Trail.
- BCB Gold Ranger Certificate
- Ranger sponsored by the brand

### **Scientific package:**

- Primary Technical Report:
  - Forest Geography
  - GIS information
  - Ecosystem identification
  - Summary of flora and fauna species
  - List of edible plants and gastronomic potential
- Environmental DNA analysis of biodiversity
- Water quality analysis
- Scientists available for interviews and events

### **Communication package:**

- Brand presence on all digital platforms and informative documents.
- Portfolio of 20 HD photos
- 10 Captions copywriting for social networks
- Accompaniment in communication and marketing strategies.
- 2 days of content generation in acquired forest.
- Images from camera traps and drone flights.

### **Social Media (INST) package:**

- 2 reel of recognition in Rodrigo Pacheco and Fundación Bocavaldivia.
- 2 post and 3 stories in Fundación Bocavaldivia
- 2 story in Bocavaldivia
- 2 stories in Rodrigo Pacheco

### **Activities with brand presence (Documented and published in social networks):**

- 2 BCB workshops for the community
- 2 undergraduate/postgraduate thesis

For even larger contributions to the foundation we would be happy to work with your organization to tailor recognition, data, and personalized recognition such as catered meals or guided visits to our reserves as per your preference.



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