



# THIRD MILLENNIUM ALLIANCE

## Disclaimer for Prospective Interns

Before you sign up for an internship with Third Millennium Alliance in Ecuador, please consider the hardships that you may face, and whether or not this program is really the right one for you. In the Bamboo House Research Station in Jama-Coaque Reserve, you will be living in the middle of the forest - albeit in a house, with a nice bed with mosquito netting and good food - but in the middle of the forest no less. For example, there are a few venomous snakes out there. Nobody from the program has ever been bitten, but it can happen. There is a mean ant and painful white caterpillar, too. Things like malaria and yellow fever are not a problem, but dengue fever (usually 2 days of high fever and 2 days of joint and bone pain) or cutaneous Leishmaniasis (curable skin ulcers) are possibilities. Interestingly enough, however, there are surprisingly few mosquitos here, thankfully (but there are some). On average there are 4-8 interns at the house and 1-3 staff members. We make an effort to make sure that there is always a staff member with you at the research station, but sometimes that doesn't happen - that staff member may need to go home and milk his family's cows or something, and you will be alone in a beautiful place. If you are staying in the community, you may have to tolerate loud music at inopportune times of the day or night and public drunkenness. The people in the community are warm and friendly people and very curious about the outsiders that come there to help, but "change" comes about slowly here, and you will need patience and perseverance when working on projects with the community.

Nothing comes easy here. When developing a primary project, we make our best effort to provide you with necessary materials, but we work with a tremendously limited budget (which is how everyone works around here) and so you will often be forced to make do with less than you wanted, or even better, you will have to find or make the supplies yourself. You will also have to be in good physical shape, as the Bamboo House Research Station is an hour walk from the nearest community of Camarones. A vast majority of our trails in the Reserve are also muddy and uphill, so physical fitness and the ability to work hard in tough field conditions are important to make the most of your experience. With the variety of challenges that come with remote field research station life, you will need to be a self-starter and take your own initiative. Between Directors, local staff, interns, and researchers, there are almost always people in the reserve, but the mix of people changes almost every day, and the Directors balance their time between the reserve and the office in Quito or elsewhere in the pursuit of funds. There will be many times when you are with only people who speak Spanish, which are good opportunities to practice languages. You will be given guidance when needed, but oftentimes you will be without guidance and have to figure it out on your own. This is an internship for self-starters who overcome obstacles to achieve results.

Third Millennium Alliance, as an organization, was founded by people who left corporate and other institutional jobs to build an organization that is fluid and personal and constantly evolving, and also informal and loosely organized, and it is certainly imperfect. Moreover, our internship program is a work in progress, and is only one of many arms of this organization, so it would be imprudent to expect the program to function with the polish and efficiency of a well-oiled machine...rather, the internship runs on sweat and raw energy and creativity. Third Millennium Alliance staff has accrued an impressive amount of knowledge and experience in several areas, these past years, but we do not consider ourselves experts on all topics; we're more like really, really long-term interns ourselves. In general, the rhythm of life in this region is very different from that which you are probably used to, and concepts like punctuality aren't really recognized. Sometimes projects move much more slowly than you'd like, or the circumstances shift, and the project changes over the course of your internship. And no matter what kind of physical shape you are in when you start, you will leave in much better shape, with strong legs - expect lots of walking, hiking, and robust physical activity.

If these conditions do not deter you...then welcome aboard to a truly valuable experience that is unlike any other.