



Societas Europaea Herpetologica

Conservation Committee

December 17, 2010

To whom it may concern,

With this letter we wish to express our serious concern about the future of the "Balsa de los Sapos", a very important ex-situ conservation breeding project for Ecuadorian amphibians. The "Balsa de los Sapos" is an internationally renowned project of ex-situ conservation and breeding of threatened species of Ecuadorian amphibians, hosting some of the last individuals of species threatened with extinction and possibly extinct in the wild.

We have heard that the founder of this project, Dr. Luis Coloma and part of the staff responsible for the management and day-to-day running of the "Balsa" project are no longer directly involved and that the responsibility to the "Balsa de los Sapos" has been transferred to other herpetologists at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador in Quito (PUCE).

We would like to stress that conservation breeding of living amphibians is not a trivial matter and requires experience and extensive commitment. We feel that the expertise accumulated by Dr. Coloma and his team over the past years cannot be easily replaced and are concerned if these are no longer available to contribute to this work. We are keen to see the continuation of this important project for amphibian conservation and to see it being successful. We would like to see reassurance from PUCE and the Ecuadorian government that the "Balsa de los Sapos" initiative is properly resourced and that it is supported by the necessary expertise to allow it to contribute effectively towards amphibian conservation in Ecuador.

On behalf of *The Conservation Committee of the Societas Europaea Herpetologica* (SEH-CC)

Ylenia Chiari, Secretary of the SEH-CC

<http://seh-cc.org/index.shtml>
<http://www.seh-cc.org/blogs/blog2.php>