## Reserva Natural La Pedregoza

It is always exciting to talk about km (4 miles) of river front along the Amazon River basin, but that the banks of the Rio el Bita. The means that other parts of South natural reserve has inundation America tend to get overlooked. and gallery forest making up The Orinoco is South America's its rainforest, as well as some second largest river and it has the 3rd largest fow of water in minent feature of La Pedregoza the world after the Amazon and are morichals, or heavily treed the Congo. In the rainy season the Orinoco rises some 14 meters over normal, and is already 10 meters deep during the dry season. Needless to say this makes for a spectacular and interesting environment, which includes amazing biodiversity of both for and fauna.

In 2009, a Canadian family founded a natural reserve along Pedregoza is a treasure trove of the banks of the Rio el Bita, a tributary to the mighty Orinoco, in the Colombian departamento of Vichada. They named the Pedregoza Environmental Cornatural reserve La Pedregoza poration (Corporación Ambienafter the naturally occurring fer- tal La Pedregoza) to manage rous-oxide rock and gravel that and operate the natural reserve is endemic to the area. This and its exciting programs. They natural reserve is located about registered the natural reserve 57 km (35 miles) from the Ori- with RESNATUR, the relevant noco river port city of Puerto Colombian agency and are Carreño . It is 2,470 acres presently seeking registration (1,000 hectares) in size, with 6 within the Colombian national

grassland savannah. One prosavannah drainage creeks, socalled because of the Moriche palms (Mauritia fexuosa) that grow in their wet soils. The area receives some 2,400 mm (95") of annual rainfall.

In keeping with the fact that Colombia has approximately 8% of the planet's terrestrial biodiversity, the Reserva Natural La exotic trees, plants and wildlife. The Dombro family founders set up a non-proft NGO called La lat/long: 6.103517,-67.720499

parks system. Part of these efforts led the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to name Dexter Dombro, one of the founders, to their World Commission on Protected Areas.

La Pedregoza has agreements with major research institutions, including the renowned Omacha Foundation of Bogotá, Colombia, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, the Natural Sciences Institute at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and the Environment Faculty at the Universidad Distrital in Bogotá, Colombia. The purpose of these agreements is to assist researchers and scientists to do studies in the Orinoco River basin at La Pedregoza, as well as to provide support for students doing their internships in various science-related dis-

The Reserva Natural La Pedregoza is also engaged in carrying out a number of important programs The first is the collection, germination and propagation of







endangered native tree spesecond program involves the alike. rescue of the giant Podocnemis river turtles. The eggs are Another program is a Sacred collected before poachers can Seeds garden. Together with take them, incubated in artif- the Mssouri Botanical Gardens cial nests, and when the baby the Reserva Natural La Pedreturtles hatch they are looked goza is busy setting up a after until their shells are hard specialized botanical garden enough to withstand predators, that will feature the traditional thereby increasing their survival medicinal and alimentary trees rate.

mental Corporation's third profunds to build an Interpretive appreciated. Center at La Pedregoza that the rainforest, inundation and www.pedregoza.org.



gallery forest, and the wildlife cies. The idea is to plant a and plants that depend on it for sufficient amount of these en- their survival. The Interpretive dangered trees to insure their Center would be the only one survival and to act as a seed of its kind in the region and a bank, thereby allowing others valuable resource for local to plant them in the future. The schools, residents and visitors

and plants used by indigenous people, before that knowledge The La Pedregoza Environ- is lost to the world.

gram is biodiversity education. Whether your interests are Traditional practices such as conservation, biodiversity, bird turtle egg consumption, or the watching, endangered wildlife removal of trees from the fo- or rainforest preservation, there rest without replanting, simply is something for everyone at are no longer sustainable. As a La Pedregoza. Your support of result they are looking to raise their programs would be much

will explain the importance of You can visit their web site at

