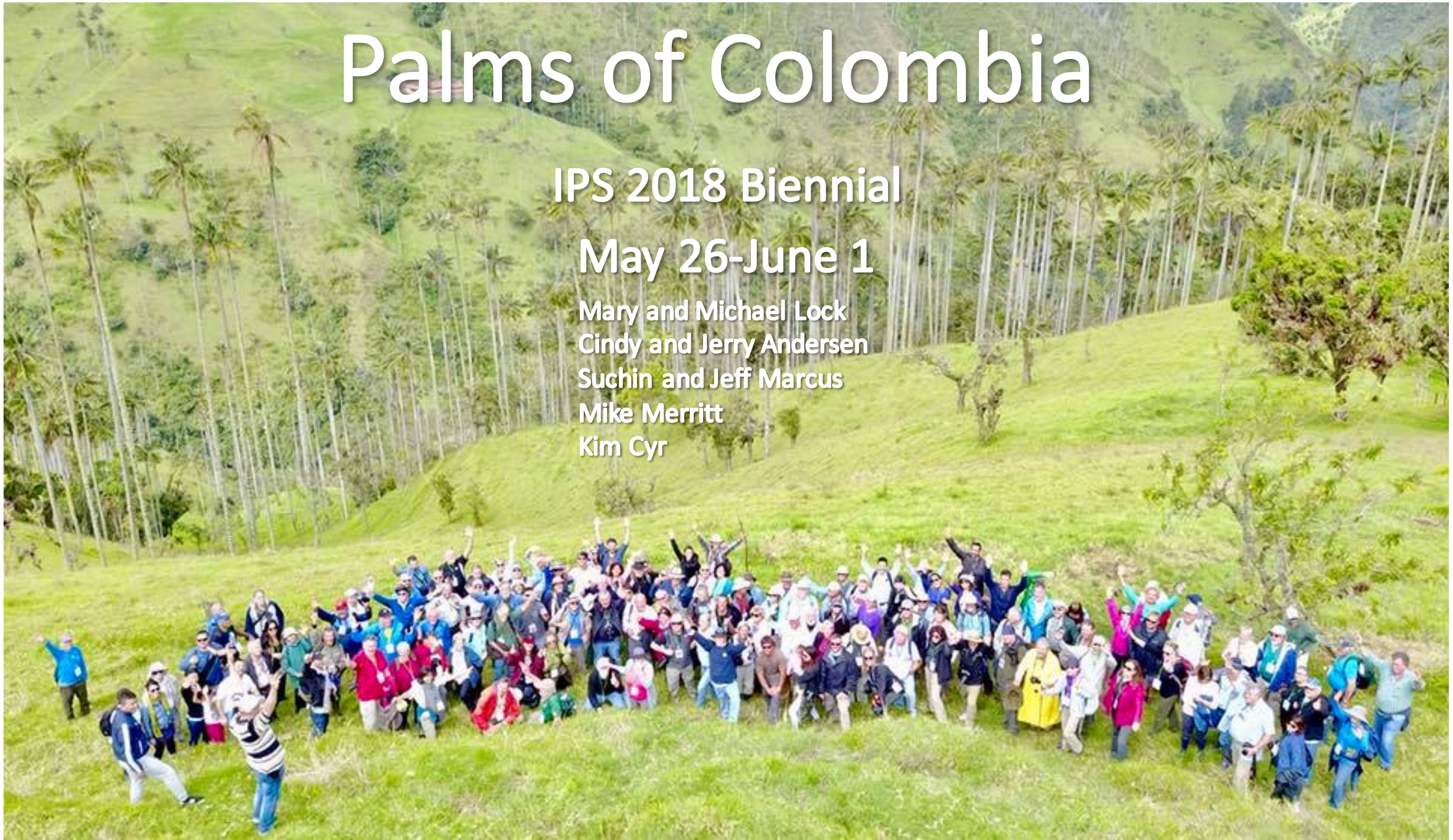
Palms of Colombia

IPS 2018 Biennial

May 26-June 1

Mary and Michael Lock
Cindy and Jerry Andersen
Suchin and Jeff Marcus
Mike Merritt
Kim Cyr



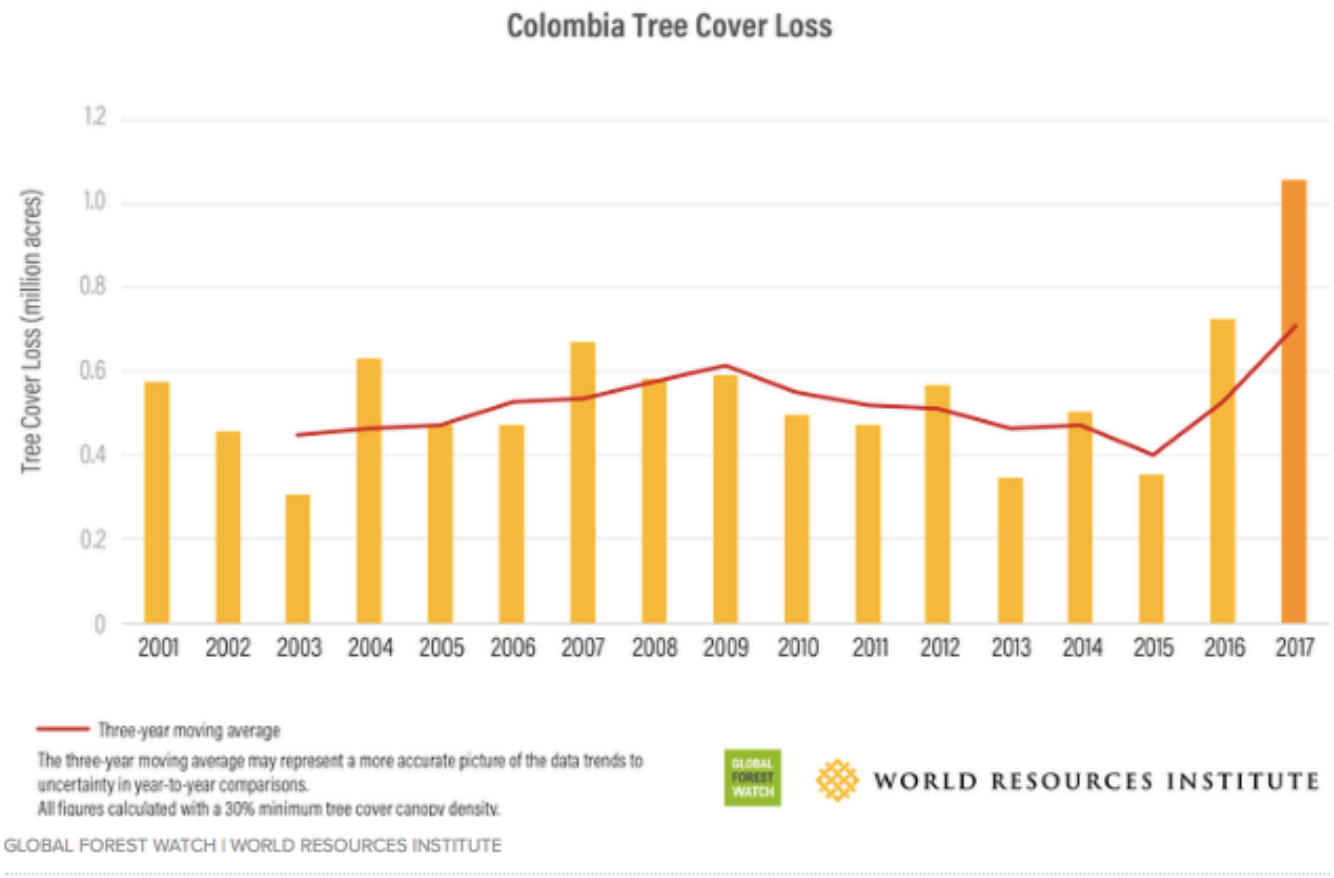
Introduction:

The Colombian biennial was announced during the Borneo/Singapore biennial in June 2016 as the Colombian government and the rebel group FARC appeared to be winding down 4 years of peace negotiations. The final peace agreement was signed in October 2016 ending over 50 years of war – the longest running domestic conflict in the western hemisphere, killing more than 200,000 people.

Why Risk Colombia?

Despite its relatively small size, Colombia includes five distinct geographic regions making it the second most biologically diverse country on Earth, home to about 10 percent of the world's species. It contains 88% of palm genera and 51% of all species found in South America - 252 species of palms.

The year after IPS chose to visit Colombia, Colombia had a 46% rise in deforestation



The IPS was visiting Colombia during a critical time, during a window of opportunity for the country to try to balance socioeconomic development and environmental conservation.

With more than 160 attendees, including some of the most renown experts in the field, the IPS biennial posed, in a small way, an opportunity for Colombia to demonstrate its committement to its environmental riches.

Sabinaria magnifica CANCELLED

Sadly the pre and post trips to the infamous Darien Gap were cancelled when guns were drawn on Rodrigo Bernal and his students during a scouting expedition.

Sabinaria magnifica was described in Phytotaxa November 2013 – a new genera and species.

Itinerary Map

1. Bogota
2. Armenia
3. Tochecito/ Valley Cocora
4. Buenaventura
5. Baia Malaga/La Plata
6. Cali

Quindio Botanical Garden Palm Collection

Started in 2007, 13 Expediitions over the last 11 years have expanded the palm collection at the garden to 210 out of the 252 species of palms and 44 of the 45 genera currently known in Colombia. Collected seeds and seedlings often come from the remains of endangered forests, trails and other fragile habitats, so harvesting becomes a rescue activity.

Planting of a Syagrus orinocensis at the garden honoring the late Gloria Galeano-Garces

IPS gave a $2000.00 grant to the garden planting a Syagrus orinocensis tree grown from a seed collected in the wild by Rodrigo Bernal's recently deceased wife, botanist Gloria Galeano-Garces. The tree had significant meaning for the couple being a subject of their research together for many years.

Going to Tochecito to see large stands of Ceroxylon quindiuense in WWII era Willy's Jeeps

WILLYS
PJJ-157
QUIMSAYA

TEMP
FUEL

Seen leaving Salento

Also on the road

Breakdowns and landslides were not enough to stop us

Difficult to get to, this stand of Ceroxylon quinduense across the valley represents a healthy mixture of trees of varying ages.

Dr. John Dransfield and others enjoy a bagged lunch overlooking large stands of Colombia’s national tree - Ceroxylon quinduense.

The Emerald Toucanet, when not enjoying a strangely shaped variety of passion fruit, is one of a few bird species that helps disperse Ceroxylon seeds.

We saw the critically endangered Yellow Eared Parrot that lives exclusively witin the Ceroxylong quinduense leaves, but did not get a good photo.

Ceroxylon alpinum vs quindiuense

The easiest way to tell the difference is elevation, C. alpinum grows at lower elevations, we found this one (left) in Salento town. C. quiduense is found high in the cloud forest. The leaflets of C. quinduense are pendulous where C. alpinum are horizontal. Both have shuttle cock shaped crowns when juveniles.

PHYTOTAXA

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A revision of the Andean wax palms, *Ceroxylon* (Arecaceae)

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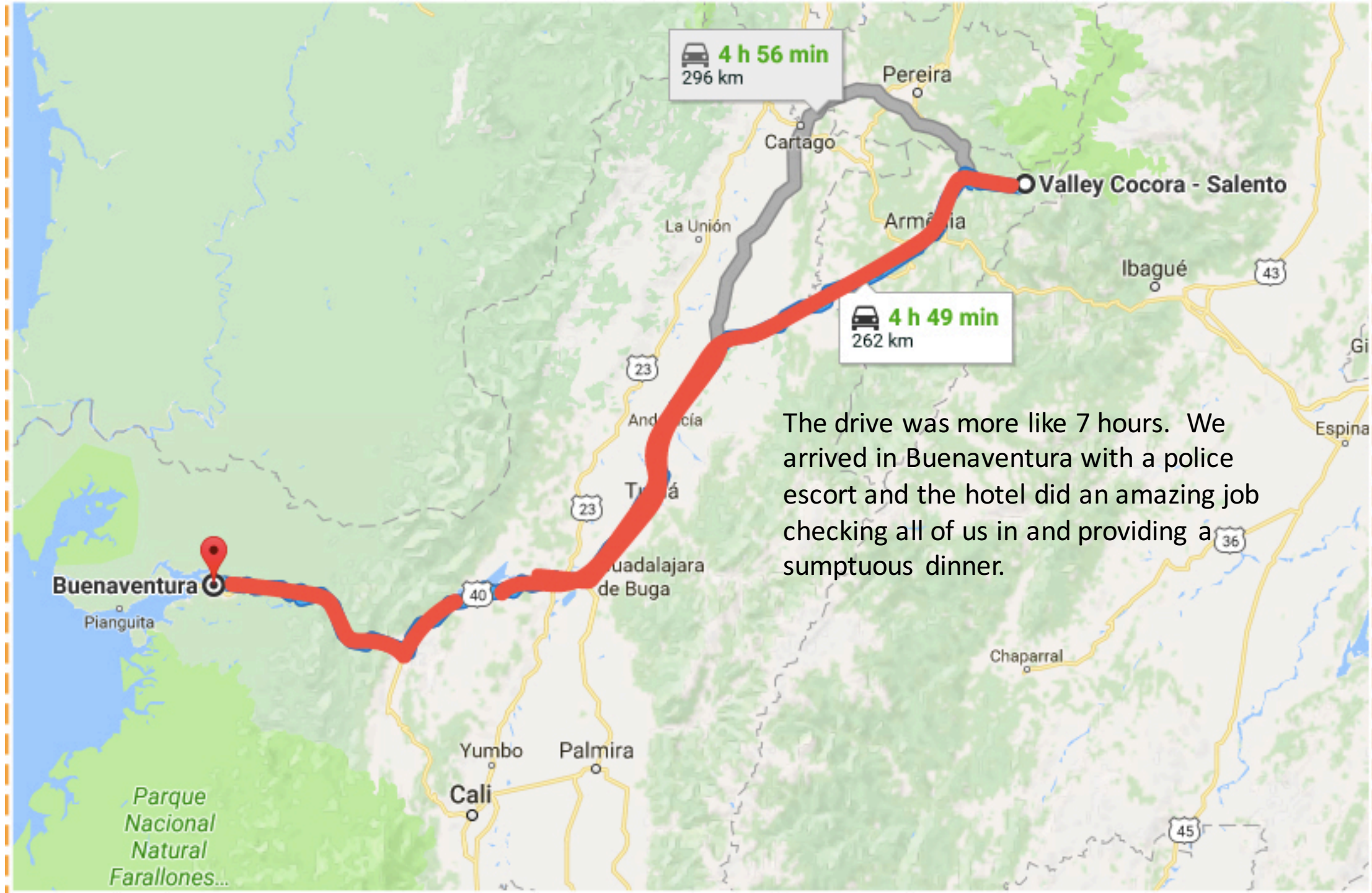
We were lucky to have the author of the monograph on Andean wax palms Maria Jose Sanin as our guide

Valle de Cocora

The lack of juvenile palms may mean that this stand of trees may not be around in the future. The life cycle of wax palms will complicate any restoration efforts. A similar species of wax palm, C. alpinum takes 57 years to produce a stem, 83 years to reach reproductive age, and has a life expectancy around 213 years.



The drive was more like 7 hours. We arrived in Buenaventura with a police escort and the hotel did an amazing job checking all of us in and providing a sumptuous dinner.

Our hotel room shows looked over the port

Buenaventura was the murder capital of the world a couple of years back, and still has a formidable military presence. Luckily we had our charming ambassador Suchin with us!

We boarded boats to head out to Bahia Malaga in the morning

With a coast guard escort

The Pacific lowlands of Colombia has an annual rainfall of up to 472 inches.

From La Plata we set out in smaller boats splitting into 3 groups to search for 40 species of palms.

Hector Favio General Director of the Quindio Botanical Garden was one of the guides and explained that the undersides of leaves on Welfia are white and on Oenocarpus they are green

Photos by Kim Cyr

Wettinia aequalis

Wettinia aequalis

Manicaria saccifera

Manicaria saccifera

Oenocarpas minor

Chamadorea deneversiana

Bactris manriquei

Geonoma cuneata

Photos by Mike Merritt

GVC

Astrocaryum standleyanum

Bactris manriquei

Ammandra decasperma

Celebrating our adventurous first day in the jungle

Another guide Saul Hoyos, one of the discoverers of Sabinaria magnifica boards the tractor bus out to the boats the next morning

Cindy is back in the boat for more adventure

Euterpe oleracea with O. bataua in back

Mauritiela macroclada

Attalea cuatrecasana – Juvenile leaves are whole splitting as it matures

Geonoma deversa

Chelyocarpus dianeurus

A quick lunch in the boat near a waterfall before heading back to La Plata and the big boats back to Buenaventura

Bo grabs one for the road

Jeff scores a hat made from Manicaria

Independent Explorations

Cindy and Jerry explore Cali

Fueling up for Bird watching with Michael and Mary

Watching hummers with Cindy, Jerry, Michael and Mary

Booted Racket-tail

Long-tailed Sylph

Mike Merritt

Syagrus sancona
at Nirvana Nature Reserve

Suchin and Jeff explore a private garden

Geonoma Undata

Suchin and Jeff go to the Cloud Forest above Cali

Geonoma Undata – Cloud Forest above Cali

Geonoma linearis

rheophytic Geonoma

San Cipriano below tunnels 200 m above Buenaventura

Geonoma linearis

Saying farewell with a salsa exhibition

Video not speeded up!