



Elimination of Disposable Plastic - Ecotourism

Goal : Becoming a disposable plastic free zone

Objectives accomplish

- Eliminate plastic bags to cover luggage
- Eliminate plastic bags in cabins to cover glasses for water
- Find a alternative way to wrap food for the box lunch for arriving guests
- Eliminate all plastic and aluminum foil that we use for our box lunches and breakfasts at the lodge and for departing guests.

Brief Description

After this prize was announced, La Selva determined that while we were doing quite well with the use of very little disposable plastic, we were keeping our own environment pristine, but still contributing to the global mess and further evaluation proved we still used enormous amounts per guest in disposable plastic and aluminum foil.

The goal of this project was to find non-disposable plastic alternatives for these everyday plastic throw aways. During the course of a year and two thousand guests, plus some employee we realized that we actually created a great deal of pollution from our point of view.

After 3 months of work we have achieved our goal and even more. The elimination of plastic bottles were not listed in the main objectives but we decided to take an action on this matter so we eliminate the plastic disposable water bottles in our box lunch,

Please find below the final results that have been running since September 23rd, 2008

1. REPLACE PLASTIC BAGS FOR LUGGAGE

Part of our operation is by a motorized canoe in which the luggage has to be protected to not get wet. For many years we have been using plastic bags for this purpose but since we are an eco-lodge we decided to change the plastic for an eco waterproof material. After 3 different tests, we choose Canvas to manufactured waterproof luggage bags.

We are using canvas to manufacture our waterproof luggage bags. It is a heavy and dense and has water-resistant applications. It is a heavy and dense and has water-resistant applications. It is an eco-friendly material since it is made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the same material used to make plastic drink bottles. So basically, we are recycling plastic bottles since these bottles are recycled by being reheated and turned into polyester fibers.



BEFORE We used to use plastic bags to protect the luggage



NOW, we manufactured our own canvas waterproof luggage bags. They can handle 2 big bags plus one little bag. It is 100% waterproof and the most important thing is that with this bag we are helping to recycle plastic bottles.

2. GLASSES PROTECTORS

In our bungalows, we always set clean glasses and purified water for clients to drink. These glasses were protected with small plastic bags in order to keep them clean.

In this part of the project we decide to use cambrela textile that is composed with polyester and cotton. This textile has the faculty to disintegrate in approximately 1 month if you leave it in a sunny place or if you bury it.

Moreover, as it is a nice carry bag, our passengers have the option to take it as a souvenir so if this will be the case; they are going to reuse them and we will accomplish our goal again.



BEFORE This is an example how we use to protect the glasses with plastic bags.



AFTER This is our new bag to protect glasses at the bungalows. As you may notice, we decided to put the recycle Logo with our new green slogan: Recycle is smart. Also, we choose the brown color since we have to maintain the harmony in our bungalows.

3. FOOD WRAPPED

Every day we prepare a box lunch from the hotel for the return trip. We used to send a cake wrapped in aluminum paper and after some test we decided to use achira leaves to replace the aluminum. Also, we used to put everything in a plastic bag but now we are reusing the crambella bags that are exceeded from the Quito-Hotel box lunch



This is the achira leave. Now, we are wrapping our cake in the leave that maintains it warm and clean.



NOW, we also use the crambella bags for the box lunch Hotel-Coca.

4. ELIMINATE ALL PLASTIC AND ALUMINI FOIL

We have purchased a completely biodegradable “Lunch box” that has been imported from china by way of the United States. The “eatware” as it is called breaks down in landfill in 180 days and in water in two weeks. It is made of bamboo fiber and sugarcane and is edible by livestock. We intend to feed it to our pigs.

We already eliminated all plastic and aluminum foil that we previously used for our box lunches and breakfasts and we replace them with the eatware. The eatware will be used on return trips from the hotel and for box lunches that guests sometimes take with their excursions.

5. AN EXTRA EFFORT

We did not include the elimination of plastic bottles in our main objectives but since we were working every day on this project, we realize that we couldn't keep the plastic bottles as part of our box lunch. That is why we decided to take an immediate action and we eliminated the bottle and we replaced it with a refillable souvenir water dispenser.



BEFORE we gave plastic bottles to passengers.



NOW, We usually give these souvenirs to our clients at the lodge in order that they can refill it all the time with water for their excursions. We are still going to do this but if any passengers ask for water for the 2 and ½ hour boat ride we will give them the souvenir there instead of a bottle of water. (And they will use it for the remainder of their stay to get drinking water from the various water stations around the lodge.)