

Cuentos de la Sombra

Spring 2007

STORIES FROM THE SHADE

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Karen Kühn, US Representative for Selva Negra Farm

Q: Tell us about Selva Negra – what do you do and where?

Karen: Selva Negra, La Hammonia, is located in the highlands of Nicaragua in the department of Matagalpa. The farm was settled by German immigrants in the late 1800s and has been producing high quality shade coffee ever since. Selva Negra has been slowly evolving into a sustainable education facility, and we focus on producing not only an organic product, but a sustainable one. We're currently working on projects like producing compost (over 4 million pounds per year) and developing a lab for identification of organic materials within the farm to use as pest and weed control. We are generating power with a water turbine, and potentially with wind power in the future. We generate methane gas from both animal manure, human feces and the by-products of the coffee production. We are also working on reforestation, community education, staffing an on-site clinic, and diversifying the farm through our sales of cheese, homemade sausages, and guest hosting in our resort.

Q: Why is coffee an important part of your work? Why have you chosen to balance coffee production with your lodging, flower and eco-tourism operations?

K: Coffee is the primary operation at Selva Negra, most everything has evolved from it. The various farm animals produce food for the farm as well as a critical organic input for the compost, which is a vital part of producing organic coffee. Greenhouse flowers add to the compost and also decorate our resort. Initially created as a means to balance the low-income times of the coffee, the resort now offers lodging for groups that come specifically to learn about our sustainable operations.

Q: How would you describe Selva Negra's role within the coffee community of Nicaragua and also within the communities that buy and drink your coffee (i.e. US, Europe)?

K: We have taken a role as educators to the local co-ops and farmers, as well as international organizations that tour our facilities. We've hosted numerous universities, scientists and researchers doing works on the orchids, birds, howler monkeys, insect life, sustainable practices, and more. To connect with the communities that buy our coffee, my mother, Mausi does educational tours in the US for interested roasters and retailers. I work from the US as well, serving as a communication link for the Estate, and my sister Heddy runs a coffee shop in Atlanta (JavaVino) and manages green coffee sales.

Q: You were recently honored by the Specialty Coffee Assoc. of America with their Sustainability Award. Tell us about this award and its significance to you.

K: We applied for the award based on our sustainability work at the farm, specifically our work to treat and utilize



Selva Negra Farm



FROM THE EDITOR

It's migration time again!

The flowering currants are bringing the buzz of the Rufous Hummingbirds back to the front yard of the Seattle Audubon offices. While these hummers are one of the earlier migrants to arrive in the Pacific NW after journeying from Mexico and Central America, I suspect we'll also soon hear the songs of Yellow Warblers, Bullock's Orioles and other familiar migratory birds.

This time of year also reminds us to reflect on our work. For ten years, the NWSCC has sought to promote coffee produced in ways that protect habitat for birds. I recently read an interview with Dr. Julia Parrish, a local seabird researcher who is tracking the third consecutive year of seabird population declines along the west coast. She explained that when this happens, scientists naturally ask "why?" and seek more data, but often by the time they have gathered the answers, it's too late. For me the message was clear - we must make take action now.

This past February, the NWSCC hosted its first Forum and Celebration - a gathering of Campaign members, Seattle Audubon staff and board, and community members. While unfortunate that many member companies did not attend the event, the Forum was a success in many ways. It served as a gathering and idea exchange for a community of people who care about the sustainable production and sales of coffee. Guests were also able to learn from the expertise of scientists from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Most importantly, the Forum sparked important dialogue and understanding around the question of certifications and the role of the NW Shade Coffee Campaign. The Forum has launched the Campaign into a new period of analysis, evaluation and review. Our members and our community have reminded us how critical it is to make an impact now. In doing so, we can move forward, knowing that together we're making a difference for the birds - before it's too late.

Happy Spring,

Kristen Kosidowski



www.shadecoffee.org

COFFEE TALK

Shade Coffee and Cork: What's the Connection?

By: Carolee Colter, NWSCC Volunteer

Like shade coffee, cork is a sustainably grown product that provides a livelihood to a local population and critical habitat for migratory and resident birds and other wildlife. Like shade coffee, cork forests are threatened by technological developments in the marketplace. And like shade coffee, consumer choices can make a difference.

Now a new product, the CoolCork coffee cup sleeve, brings the causes of shade coffee and cork together for the environmentally responsible company and the environmentally conscious consumer.

Cork is sustainably produced from stripping off the outer layer of the bark of the cork oak. Each cork oak tree provides an average of 16 harvests over its 150-200 year lifespan. In contrast to paper and cardboard, no trees are killed in the process.

Cork forests support biodiversity in the Western Mediterranean. They are home to many endemic plants and animals including globally endangered Iberian Imperial Eagle, Barbary Deer and Iberian Lynx. They shelter many wintering and migratory birds

from Northern Europe, including virtually the entire population of Common Cranes.

Cork forests provide essential ecological services: water retention, soil conservation and

carbon storage.

The cork industry provides income for over 100,000 people, from directly related jobs and from other crops of the cork oak forest: mushrooms, honey, aromatic plants, acorns, livestock fodder and pasturage.

The cork forest is in danger due to market trends. 70% of the total cork market value goes to stoppers for wine bottles. But the wine industry is rapidly moving to plastic stoppers or screw-tops which are more harmful to the environment because they use more energy in production and are oil-based products, and aren't biodegradable.

The World Wildlife Fund reports that if current trends continue, "there is a risk that the Western Mediterranean cork oak landscapes will face an economic crisis, an increase in poverty, an intensification in forest fires, a loss of irreplaceable biodiversity and an accelerated desertification process within less than 10 years." WWF calls on the wine industry to commit to retaining cork stoppers.



Cork is waterproof and heat resistant, which is why it's used for insulation—even in the space shuttle. Using cork in coffee cup sleeves will protect the hands of consumers from hot coffee and help protect the cork oak forests.

Sample cork sleeves with the Campaign logo were given out at the NWSCC Forum & Celebration in February. For more information visit www.CoolCork.com.

Backstage

A look inside the Campaign

Highlights and take-aways February 17, 2007 Forum and Celebration

The demand for shade-grown coffee has indeed increased over the past 5 years, but it hasn't grown enough.

The panel discussion with Campaign member representatives and SMBC guest Robert Rice proved informative and insightful. The panel addressed questions of individual commitment to shade coffee as well as sentiments about certification. Some members value certifications while others prioritize relationships and home-grown standards for improving quality.

Some panelists and audience members questioned the Campaign's work to protect habitat by promoting uncertified coffees. Guests raised the question "How does a consumer or even Seattle Audubon really know that a certain coffee choice is helping to protect birds if it hasn't been certified using credible scientific criteria?"

What next?

Visit shadecoffee.org to see event pictures
Join our discussion listserve (email us to add your name)
Stay tuned as the Campaign continues to grow



Forum panelists discuss shade coffee issues at the recent NWSCC Forum held in Seattle.

Continued from front: Member Spotlight

coffee by-product. This award is very exciting for us because it provides recognition of the workers that are responsible for our success and it provides exposure – we're a little fish in a big pond. Our work has been significant enough to be recognized at a very high level. We want to sell our coffee as single origin, estate coffee, and we have many plans for the future. We will continue making Selva Negra a sustainable educational farm where we can help others understand how to not only preserve but also restore our environment.

Interview with Kristen Kosidowski
March, 2007



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www.shadecoffee.org
Find shade coffee near you!



NWSCC Community Calendar

April 2007

7: **Seattle Audubon Plant Sale** at the Seattle Audubon Nature Shop. Find native plants to spice up your yard or local park, or use your Seattle Audubon membership in the Nature Shop. Visit www.seattleaudubon.org for details.

16-May 31: **Seattle Audubon's 23rd Annual BIRDATHON!** It's not a walkathon, it's a birdathon. Count birds instead of miles, or sponsor someone else who will. Funds directly support the NW Shade Coffee Campaign and the Forest Friendly Lumber Campaign. Visit www.seattleaudubon.org/ for info and sponsor incentives.

27-29: **Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival** in Hoquiam, WA. www.shorebirdfestival.com

28: **NW Student Coffee Convergence** at University of Washington. UW South Campus Center. Students from across the NW will convene to discuss the issues around coffee - policies, certifications, labor, ecological biodiversity, and more. Write to shadegrown@seattleaudubon.org to connect with event organizers.

May 2007

4-7: **19th Annual SCAA Conference and Exhibition** in Long Beach, CA. NWSCC members and Friends - interested in meeting informally during the weekend? Let us know, we'll coordinate. shadegrown@seattleaudubon.org

International Migratory Bird Day Events

10-13: **15th annual Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival**. Visit www.homer.alaska.org/shorebird.htm. While in Homer, visit Campaign members Captain's Coffee.

19: **Festival of the Birds** at Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, WA. 9:30-3pm. Come for games, informational resources, bird banding demonstrations, and much more fun. NWSCC will host an outreach table.

Do you know of an upcoming shade coffee-related community event?
Contact shadegrown@seattleaudubon.org to submit your information.



CUENTOS DE LA SOMBRA GOES ELECTRONIC!

The paper version of *Cuentos de la Sombra/Stories from the Shade*, newsletter of Seattle Audubon's NW Shade Coffee Campaign, will be discontinued as of June, 2007.

If you are not yet receiving an email version and would like to, please write to us at shadegrown@seattleaudubon.org

Northwest Shade Coffee Campaign

Working to protect habitat for wintering neo-tropical migratory birds in Latin America and the Caribbean by increasing consumer demand for shade-grown coffee.

Organizer: Kristen Kosidowski

A Seattle Audubon Initiative
Washington Non-profit Corporation
www.shadecoffee.org

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