

Guanacaste

The sunny side of Costa Rica

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Santa Rosa
40 years of Tropical
Dry Forest Restoration.

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GUANACASTE
HAS IT ALL!
LOWLANDS, BEACHES
AND HIGHLANDS



Santa Rosa

National
Park

40 Years of Tropical Dry Forest Restoration

"I remember one hot January day in 1966 beneath a clear blue sky, when my dad and I went searching through inundated savannas for the Santa Rosa Casona in our 4x4 jeep.

The only road we had to follow was the one we had drawn on an aerial photo. On the ground, there was nothing more than the footprints of horses and cattle.

After we found the Casona and greeted its inhabitants, we continued in the same direction for several more hours until we reached Naranjo Beach.

We made it thanks to Santiago, a local sabanero or cowboy, who led us down from the savanna to the coast crossing several dry river beds full of huge rocks, marsh areas whose water came up to the height of the jeep, and an impenetrable curtain of mangrove. There was no sign of man, only the tracks of turtles and birds.

It was at this moment when my dream began to take shape...to create a national park that stretched from the ocean to the summits of the volcanoes."

Kenton R. Miller
Área de Conservación
Guanacaste International
Commissioner



By: Diego Torres
Área de Conservación Guanacaste (ACG)

This is how Kenton Miller narrates his first trip to Santa Rosa. In those times, Santa Rosa was part of one of the largest cattle ranches in the region. It was primarily vegetated with an African pasture grass (jaragua) and inhabited by hundreds and hundreds of cattle, as it had been for the past 300 years.

In 1971, the history of these lands completely changed with the creation of Santa Rosa National Park. At first it wasn't clear how the park should work, much less one with no real forest, only large open areas covered in pasture grass and shrubs.

A restoration process was begun which, with the passing of the years, began to give results. It was necessary to rescue an ecosystem that had practically disappeared from Mesoamerica, and Santa Rosa showed signs of being just the place where this region could recover this great habitat: the Tropical Dry Forest.



Sergio Pucci

Santa Rosa

National
Park

And so, Santa Rosa became the birthplace of an important project: The **'Área de Conservación Guanacaste'** (ACG).

The largest Tropical Dry Forest in Mesoamerica is protected within the ACG's one continuous block of protected area, extending from the pacific coast to the caribbean slope in the northwest of the Guanacaste province. Within the ACG's four ecosystems, coastal-marine, dry forest, rain forest, and cloud forest, approximately 65% of Costa Rica's biodiversity is conserved and 2.8% of the world's biodiversity.

Just within Santa Rosa scientists have discovered 250 species of birds, 115 species of mammal, and about 100 species of amphibians and reptiles.


With much pride and responsibility, the Area de Conservación Guanacaste today protects the formerly declared national parks, Santa Rosa, Rincón de la Vieja, and Guanacaste park within its continuous block of protected area as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site.

After 40 years of successes, history and incredible investments of human and economic resources, Kenton Miller's dream is now a reality for this country and a hope for the coming generations.



 Pablo Vásquez



 Pablo Vásquez