



University for Peace
Universidad para la Paz



Apdo. 138-6100 | Ciudad Colón, Costa Rica
Phone +506-2205-9000; Fax: +506-2249-1929
email: info@upeace.org | Website: <http://www.upeace.org>

PRESS RELEASE

The Monteverde Institute and UPEACE to launch “Monteverde Now”

- Website on the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of Costa Rica's Monteverde Cloud Forest, once a small farming community established by North American Quakers, now receiving more than 250,000 tourists every year.

Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica, 15 April, 2011. On Tuesday 19 April, 2011, marking the 60th Anniversary of the founding of Monteverde, the [Monteverde Institute](#) and the [University for Peace](#) (UPEACE) will launch MonteverdeNow.org, a Master's research project produced by graduate students in the MA programme in Climate Change and Media, Peace and Conflicts Studies, featuring 11 shorts films on people who live and work in the Monteverde cloud forest.

The project was produced in June 2010 and attempts to initiate dialogue on the changes that can be observed in one of Earth's most diverse and delicate ecosystems.

On 19 April, 1951 a small group of Quakers from Fairhope, Alabama arrived in a Costa Rican cloud forest – a place they would call “Monteverde,” or the “Green Mountain.” For decades the Quakers lived a simple life farming and producing cheese. During this time only a handful of scientists would arrive to study the region's magnificent diversity of flora and fauna. That was Monteverde then.

Today, Monteverde is visited by quarter of a million tourists every year. Business is booming. But native species are in retreat. Traditional weather patterns are changing. What is happening in the cloud forest?

“As far as Monteverde...having tourists, that's the last thing I wanted to do,” says Wilfred “Wolf” Guindon in MonteverdeNow.org. Mr. Guindon, a founding member of the Monteverde Quaker community in 1951, is concerned with Monteverde's enormous growth. So are many people in the region.

MonteverdeNow.org (MonteverdeYa.org in Spanish) is a research project conducted by Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Austin Haeberle during his Environmental Security MA Programme at UPEACE, Costa Rica, and features nature guides, eco-tourism operators, scientists, researchers, educators, and farmers.

“Monteverde Now is an online film project that came out of a class on climate change that I helped teach at UPEACE,” said Mr. Haeberle who helped students conduct a series of interviews with local Monteverde residents. “MonteverdeNow.org, while reflecting on the past, gives local residents a forum to discuss the type of community they'd like in future. It's also a way for foreign visitors to quickly learn about the unique challenges and pressures on the cloud forest.”

Monteverde institute is a Costa Rican non-profit founded in 1986, located high in the Tilaran Mountains of Costa Rica. Its 38-acre campus forms part of the famous Monteverde Reserve Complex,

an area of natural preserves that protect more than 65,000 acres of endangered tropical forest.

United Nations-mandated University for Peace was established in December 1980 as a Treaty Organization by the UN General Assembly. UPEACE's activities comprise: teaching, research, distance learning, and outreach. The Costa Rica campus serves as a laboratory for the entire UPEACE system focusing on curriculum development and face-to-face-teaching programmes.

For more information, please visit MonteverdeNow.org or contact:

Mariela Solis
Marketing and Communications Officer
University for Peace
msolis@upeace.org
506-2205-9008

Jannelle Wilkins
Monteverde Institute Director
jwilkins@mvinstitute.org
506- 2645-5053

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