

Friendship - Costa Rican Style!

A section of the Bruce Trail in the Beaver Valley is twinned with a section of the Sendero Pacifico in Costa Rica

When I joined the BTC I had no idea that my membership would lead to a truly heartwarming experience: a trip to Costa Rica for the twinning of a section of the beautiful Falling Waters Trail in Beaver Valley with 6 km of the spectacular Sendero Pacifico in Monteverde.

On July 4, 2015, Joelle Martin (BVBTC Past President) and myself were among the guests of honour for the inauguration of the Sendero Pacifico BTC Friendship Trail in San Luis, Monteverde. Nearly 100 people attended - about 25% of the local population! Nat Scrimshaw, Coordinator (and initiator) of Sendero Pacifico, gave an excellent presentation in Spanish on the BTC and BVBTC. After being serenaded by marimba players, about 40 people, from babes in arms to grandparents, participated in the inaugural Friendship Trail hike.

The Trail starts at an elevation of 1032 metres and is surrounded by a ring of forested mountains whose slopes are interspersed with steep pastures. When we set off, the summits were cloaked in clouds which periodically rolled down to meet and cool us as we climbed 3km up



Setting off on the Sendero Pacifico

Photo: Bridget Cole

a steep, wet, rocky path with the sun on our backs. Much to my surprise we reached a ridge 350 metres above San Luis without feeling the least bit out of breath. We stopped to admire the fabulous views down to the Gulf of Nicoya on the West Coast. Those views and a flock of soaring swallow-tailed kites took my breath away!

For the next 1.5kms, the Sendero Pacifico follows an undulating, narrow ridge through the Children's Eternal Rain Forest Reserve. The final 1.5 kms had us wending our way downhill through pastures and in-and-out of strips

of woods that served as windbreaks – the winds can be fearsome. The day's hike ended at Albergue Amapala, a converted farmhouse that provides hikers with a welcome, if primitive, overnight shelter. While Joelle and I took in the cloud-enhanced sunset, Nat cooked us a delicious supper. As we ate by candlelight, he explained the vision for the 50 mile Sendero Pacifico: a recreational footpath, yet to be completed, which will link a series of rural communities from the Gulf of Nicoya to San Luis, Monteverde and promote small-scale, environmentally sustainable, economic development.

Joelle and I were warmly welcomed by the people of San Luis. If you were to make the journey south, you would be equally warmly welcomed. I, for one, have promised to return and I'm looking forward to planning some cooperative expeditions with Nat that will further cement the bonds that now tie the two Friendship Trails. •

Sendero Pacific information and photographs: <https://www.facebook.com/Sendero-Pacifico-Pacific-Slope-Trail-165108403570435/>



Sendero Pacifico Inaugural Hike

Photo: Ros Rossetti