2018

ASCENDING

SOUTH AMERICA

6500km from South to North in inflatable boats

Argentina . Paraguay . Bolivia . Brazil

RIBEX

WORLD WIDE EXPEDITIONS
Ascending South America Expedition is an unprecedented and unique project both in scale and scope

Aim of the Expedition

Cruising these Rivers and its tributaries on Inflatable Boats is a deep exploration of the South American spirit. We will travel along the entire 6500km length of the continent, from the Delta of the Paraná river in Buenos Aires, Argentina, towards Manaus, in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, drawing attention on the environmental threats and climate change in and around the river, and highlighting several sustainable solutions.

The Ascending South America Expedition is a journey also aimed at showcasing the unique natural beauty of the rivers and the fascinating diversity of cultural traditions hidden on its banks.

Our next Goal

SEPTEMBER 2018

Explore and surge the 6500km river road from Buenos Aires to Manaus which, to my knowledge, has never been achieved on Inflatable Boats.
In 1804, the famous Naturalist ALEXANDER FREIHERR VON HUMBOLDT returned home to Europe after his historic five-year-expedition to the Americas. One of his most famous and important discoveries is the Rio Casiquiare, which connects the two largest rivers in South America, the Amazon and the Orinoco. This “Father of Geography” proved true the legends of this mysterious river connection.

The Journey

The last part of this epic journey was done on our 2003 Expedition following Alexander von Humboldt’s route.

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Itinerary

We start on the Rio de la Plata, in Buenos Aires, and continue navigating into the Paraná river until it merges with the Paraguay river, which is followed all the way up to the Mato Grosso area, home to the Pantanal, the world’s largest wetland and natural habitat for almost a thousand species of animals, including several types of aquatic birds.

The local culture here is fascinating and diverse due to the interaction of various cultures, from the original Native Americans dwellers, the African slaves brought over by the Portuguese, to the Europeans.

Caseres, Mato Grosso, Brazil, will be a halfway point, by which time we will have completed the first 3400 km of the expedition.

Here, our boats will be transported 280 km by road to Vila Bela da Santíssima, on the Guapore river, a few miles from streams flowing southward to the Paraguay and Paraná rivers.

We will follow the Guapore river, then navigate the Mamoré, a large river shared by Bolivia and Brazil, cruise Madeira river, one of the largest tributaries of the Amazon and home to the Amazon River Dolphins, to finally reach our destination: the mighty Amazon river and Manaus.
Navigating the Paraguay River

This is a major river in south-central South America, running through Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. It flows about 2,621Km from its headwaters in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso to its confluence with the Paraná River, north of Corrientes and Resistencia.

Amazonia

Amazonia represents over half of the planet’s rainforests and comprises the largest and most biodiverse rainforest on Earth.

Located along the rivers are thousands of tiny hamlets, where dwellers scratch out a modest living from the rainforest.
The Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition was set out in 2008 to rally political support for the fight against Malaria and demonstrate the need for coordinated cross-border action.

Navigating through Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, the expedition stopped along the shores of each country to take on board local Malaria control staff, document the Malaria situation in remote river communities and hand out insecticide-treated nets and Malaria medicines.

Journalists from around the world travelled with the team, being able to document the situation and advocating for more action in the fight against the disease. The Roll Back Malaria Zambezi Expedition not only achieved more than 500 million media contacts around the globe, but also was recognized by the World Economic Forum as a successful model of a public private partnership that could be replicated for tackling other development challenges in the future.

www.zambezi-expedition.org

Background

Project Management

The organizing team of Ascending South America Expedition has considerable experience in preparing and implementing projects of such scale and scope.

Andy Leemann, a Swiss boating expert and expedition leader who travelled the Orinoco, Mekong, Zambezi, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Yukon, and many more rivers, is the organizer of this journey together with his Partners.

Previous Projects

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Notes

* “Los Tres Gigantes” biological station lies 40 km from Bahía Negra, on the Rio Negro, which is the first marshland investigation centre in Paraguay, with an extension of 15,000 hectares. It is administrated by Guyra Paraguay, an NGO tasked with the defence and protection of biological diversity.

* Document the state of the South American rivers in 2017 and the impact of climate change, the problems of environmental degradation (pollution), and illustrate the consequences for local populations.

* Generate video and image material for multimedia and social media communication.

* Mato Grosso: Mineral wealth was discovered in this region around 1750. To prevent the Spanish from getting some of this wealth, the Portuguese monarchy built a fort on the Guapore and made Vila Bela the capital of Mato Grosso. Tax incentives were used to populate the region, but that was a difficult task due to its remoteness. In 1820, the capital was moved to Cuiaba and the landowners walked away from their properties and businesses, leaving behind their African slaves and buildings. Since that time, the descendants of those slaves have managed the "Black City", keeping alive old traditions that are no longer practiced even in Africa. A full 75% of the population is proudly registered as black or mulatto and a festival to celebrate their Congolese heritage is well attended each year here.

* Rubber, wood, gold and diamonds are just some of the highly prized resources found on native Amazon lands, and the pursuit of those riches has perpetuated a violent frontier mentality that continually threatens the Amazon's survival. When the Portuguese colonized Brazil in the 16th century, there were an estimated 6 million indigenous Brazilians. At the time of the 2000 census, there were only 734,000.

* The result of the gold rush in Brazil is evident in the dozens of beautiful baroque churches and hundreds of statues and paintings; the expeditions of the Bandeirantes, as these adventurers were called, were aimed at obtaining native slaves for trade and finding mineral riches. The Paulistas, who at the time were mostly of mixed Portuguese and native ancestry, knew all the old indigenous pathways through the Brazilian inland and got acclimatized to the harsh conditions of these journeys.

* Much of the Amazon, the world's largest rain forest, lies within Brazil's borders. Exploitation of this resource, including slash-and-burn deforestation, is a major concern -- more than a fifth of the forest has already been destroyed. This destruction impacts not only the biodiversity of plants and animals, but also the indigenous tribes that have long populated these areas. And the release of carbon into the atmosphere when trees are cut down has contributed to global warming, according to climate-change scientists.

*The entire Expedition will be in September and will take 75 Days. We can also split it in two trips of 35 days. This will be decided by the crew or the project.

Information

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