

# **Huascaran national park recreation and tourism plan: Volume I**

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## **Presentation**

The National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), a public agency of the Agriculture Ministry created by D.L. N9 26902, has as its primary objective the management and rational use of the renewable natural resources and their ecological surroundings to achieve sustainable development.

The enactment of D.S. N2 01 0-90-AG created the National System of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SINANPE) as a national necessity to protect and develop areas and representative spaces of the natural heritage of Peru, in order to increase their contribution to the nation's development.

Within this framework the Huascaran National Park Recreation and Tourism Plan has been approved by R.J. No 056-95-INRENA as a planning and orientation instrument for tourist and recreation activities in this important protected natural are.

This document has been elaborated under the Specific Inter-Institutional Agreement between the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) and The Mountain Institute of the United States of America, with the financial support of the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands and of USAID in accordance with the general policy guidelines of the government oriented toward promoting tourism in the country.

The result of a broad participative process, the plan will promote joint coordination among the various sectors involved in the promotion, implementation and management of the Huascaran National Park Recreation and Tourism Plan, the first of its kind in the country and one of the first in Latin America.

Lima, May 1996

ING. MIGUEL VENTURA NAPA Director of INRENA

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

In many ways Huascaran National Park is the ideal region for mountain tourism, both adventure and conventional; it is a paradise of valleys, lakes, rivers, Andean flora and fauna, and pre-Columbian ruins as well as glacier-draped mountains. With the recent growth of tourism both in Peru and the world at large, the flow of tourists to the park is virtually certain to increase markedly in the coming years. In order to prepare for this increase, improve its attractiveness as a tourist destination, and to improve the regional and local economies, while still conserving the biodiversity and the natural resources of the area, the national park staff has committed itself to improving tourism management.

For the elaboration of the Huascaran National Park Recreation and Tourism Plan the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) signed an agreement with The Mountain Institute of Franklin, West Virginia. A Planning Team was formed by INRENA and a technical team from The Mountain Institute, which created the plan under terms of reference established by INRENA.

In accordance with this arrangement the plan followed a participatory methodology which included sessions including workshops, meetings according to specific interest, and consultations with rural populations and park visitors.

This methodology was implemented on the basis of current government policy, which seeks more direct participation by both the public and the private sector. The orientation from the Biosphere Reserve concept and the plan has been greatly enriched by the participation of the tourism sector. The broad participation led many people to realize that only by assuming the responsibilities of creating the future they desire can they become "owners" of this future. This concept is equally valid from the park's point of view, and it is important to note that the participative process has been highly productive for its staff.

### Diagnostic

Huascaran National Park is one of the areas of the National System of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SINANPE in its Spanish acronym), administered by the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA), an agency of the Ministry of Agriculture. The park was established in 1975 by D.S. 062275AG. Its legal framework includes Articles 67 and 68 of the Political Constitution of Peru, the Forestry and Fauna Law (NQ 21147) and its regulations (D.S. N11 16077AG), the creation of SINANPE (D.S. NQ 01090AG), and the Environmental and Natural Resources Code (P.L. NQ 613). The ViceMinistry of Tourism and International Negotiations and the Regional Direction of Industry and Tourism of the Chavfn

Region have limited authority, with respect to tourist activities inside the national park. The park is the nucleus of the Huascaran Biosphere Reserve, and has been declared a World Natural Heritage Site by UNESCO, backed by the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Huascaran National Park covers an area of 3,400 Km<sup>2</sup>, located in parts of terr provinces of the department of Ancash. It contains virtually all of the Cordillera Blanca, the highest mountain range in Peru and also the highest in the world's tropical zone. Thirty glacier covered peaks rise to more than 6,000 meters above sea level, crowned by the 6768 m Huascaran, and the park is an important hydrological reserve. It includes seven life zones which make possible its great biodiversity (779 species of flora, 112 of birds, 10 of mammals). Thirty-three preInca archaeological sites are known. The rural population living around the park speaks Quechua and still maintains many aspects of traditional Andean culture.

One of the most outstanding aspects of the park is its extreme accessibility. There are three access routes to the Callejon de Huaylas from the coast, two more to the Callejon de Conchucos, four unpaved roads which cross the range and nine more which enter the park. And of course there is also an extensive network of trails.

The area around the park (buffer zone) covers an area estimated at 5,710 Km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of 226,480 inhabitants in the Callejon de Huaylas and the Callejon de Conchucos. This population is characterized predominantly by a low standard of living. The most important economic activities are agriculture and raising livestock, with mining and tourism increasing in importance.

The work of the park administration extends to more than 3,500 people organized into 43 Rangeland User Groups. These people still maintain ancestral customs such as typical dress and religious festivals which take place inside the national park. Only sixty members of these User Groups are registered as providing mountain auxiliary services to tourists.

Two types of tourism prevail in the park: conventional, with brief visits to areas easily accessible by road; and adventure, which includes hiking, climbing, skiing and mountain biking lasting two or more days.

Tourism is growing rapidly, both in the world in general and specifically in Peru, especially in "nature-adventure" tourism, and it is highly likely that the demand for visiting Huascaran National Park will increase in the years to come following several low years (1989-1993). The most popular (and currently virtually the only) areas for conventional tourism are the Lagunas Llanganuco and the Pachacoto Valley/Pasto Ruri Glacier. In nature-adventure tourism the most highly-used trekking route is the Santa Cruz-Huaripampa-Llanganuco circuit, and the most popular mountains to climb are Alpamayo, Huascaran and Pisco.

Tourism is decidedly seasonal, with the high season lasting from May through September, although conventional tourism does maintain a fairly high level through the year, and is especially strong during holiday weekends such as Easter and Independence Day (July 28).

The park's preparation for the reception of visitors is limited: six control posts, and a few buildings for passing the night in case of emergency. Personnel for patrolling is also limited and is only able to cover areas close to the control posts.

Tourism in the park has positive social and economic effects on both the rural and urban populations. More than 80% of tourism in the region takes place inside the park, although its benefits are concentrated in the cities of the Callejon de Huaylas, and especially in Huaraz.

Tourist activities also generate many negative impacts, principally due to the accumulation of garbage, damage to flora and fauna, and the overuse of certain areas, and also cause socioeconomic changes among the rural population. Regulations, procedures and services to ensure visitor safety are insufficient, and infrastructure, equipment and use planning are inadequate.

Although many people among the rural population provide services in the most visited areas, their possibilities for development and decision-making have not been adequately developed. Various problems must be overcome to take advantage of the potential these people represent to benefit the park and the rural population itself.

The park staff lacks adequate financial resources. The number of employees, the equipment and logistical support are not sufficient for managing the entire area of the park.

Despite these limiting factors, Huascarán National Park has an immense potential for tourism due to its extraordinary beauty and variety of scenery, and by its easy accessibility. The mountain climber finds routes of all levels of difficulty, and there are hiking trails to suit all tastes which compare favorably with many other similar mountain areas in the world (98.4% of the park's area is considered appropriate for adventure tourism). For conventional tourism there are areas of great interest and beauty which can be visited by road, which are classified as Recreation Zones. Although today visits are concentrated in Llanganuco and Pasto Ruri, there are a number of other areas perfect for this style of tourism. (The recreation zones cover a total area of 490.2 hectares.)

## **Management Plan**

### **I. Conceptual Framework**

#### **A. Tourism in the Protected Natural Areas**

One of the overall objectives of the protected natural area is to "provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment in a constructive and healthy way, as well as for the development of tourism based on natural and cultural characteristics..." Therefore among all the responsibilities of managing a protected area, some of the most important are providing services for visitors and educating them and creating consciousness concerning its conservation; increasing the number of options for financing its management; promoting opportunities for the surrounding populations based on indirect use of its resources; facilitating options of recreation and enjoyment for the local population; and controlling tourist activities in order to avoid negative impacts which would cause the area to lose its original value or attraction. All tourist activities, whether "conventional" or "adventure," must follow certain management guidelines in order to reduce its negative impacts, as well as to maximize long-term positive results. This requires a meeting between sectors which also means including environmental and social considerations in tourism management, and defining mechanisms for integrating all those involved, and joint participatory decision-making processes. The planning of tourism development in the protected natural areas parts from the following considerations and long-term management goals:

- **Management Objectives:** tourist activity cannot be conceived separately from other objectives, but must be integrated with them. The Huascarán National Park Recreation and Tourism Plan is compatible with these objectives.
- **Land Use Planning:** attempts will be made to conciliate all the possibilities of use of the protected natural areas. Land use planning is defined by zonification, and the development of tourism inside Huascarán National Park must be carried out in the Primitive (Adventure) and the Recreational (Conventional) Zones.

The infrastructure for services is designed and located according to the needs of visitors and availability of strategies to modify impacts, taking into account the capacity to receive visitors both physically and psychologically. The capacity of the area will determine the real limit of visitors without provoking important damage or making it impossible to meet the recreational expectations of tourists.

#### **B. Tourism in the Buffer Zone around the Protected Area**

Huascarán National Park neither is nor should be managed as an island, but must be integrated into the surrounding area. By the same token, the planning of the Sierra region of Ancash must conceive of the national park as one component of the whole, since it is located between two corridors of

development (Huaylas and Conchucos), and is also the core of a Biosphere Reserve. The natural attributes of the park are the motive for tourism and to a large degree the engine of the regional economy. It is therefore vital that the policies and management activities are consistent with those established outside its boundaries. This perspective cannot be lost during the planning process-this is the vision which guides the proposals in this plan.

## II. Objectives

The overall objective of this plan is to orient and establish the conditions for the development of tourism and recreation in accordance with the conservation objectives of the national park in order to bring economic, social and cultural benefits to the population, while at the same time minimizing its impacts and strengthening educational aspects for visitors and those who offer services. This plan establishes objectives for the coming years as key points in the orderly development of tourism:

- Assist in the redistribution of visitors to a greater percentage of the park, both in the primitive and the recreational zones;
- Create proper conditions for the development of national tourism, especially in the primitive zone;
- Improve the quality of the experience for visitors, as well as minimize the risks they are exposed to;
- Increase the economic and social benefits of tourism in all areas surrounding the park, especially on its eastern flank,
- Increase the presence of park employees and the supervision of visitors in its entire territory;
- Increase public consciousness with respect to the park's objectives as well as its attractions;
- Reduce negative impacts and environmental damage due to tourism and other activities;
- Strengthen park management capability for more efficient collection of entrance fees;
- Improve inter-institutional cooperation in the management of tourism.

## III. Policy Guidelines

The **General Guidelines** are established according to the government policy of maintaining annual growth of 20% in tourism and the worldwide growth in nature-adventure travel, which indicates a substantial growth in tourism in Huascarán National Park:

- Tourism management is based on intersectoral cooperation;
- The development of tourism will attempt to open new alternatives in order to involve surrounding communities;

- Initiatives which will bring concrete improvement in education of the public, the formation of a local service base, and the conservation of the park's resources;
- The management of tourism will be oriented toward optimizing the collection of funds (park entry fees), without interfering with the primary objectives of this plan.

#### IV. Strategies

The strategies are directed toward the design and implementation of site plans in the recreation zones, a garbage management system, monitoring and capacitation programs, visitor interpretation services, community participation, a concession system, and a fee collection system based in Huaraz, Caraz and other cities (not at point of entry). Also contemplated are the creation of a Tourism Cooperation Committee, obtaining funds from governments and private donors, ordering and implementation of all the trails in the primitive zone, determination of carrying capacities, strengthening of the park staff, and the implementation of regulations for park development.

#### V. Programs

For the implementation of the plan eight specific programs which deal directly with different aspects of tourism have been elaborated.

##### A. Adventure Tourism Program

Huascaran National Park contains one of the world's most beautiful, accessible and diverse mountain areas, making it ideal for adventure tourism. The **General Objective** of this program is to order and establish proper conditions for the development of this activity. To meet this goal the necessary facilities and procedures for its management must be put in place, tourists must be better distributed throughout the park, the critical areas must be identified and the necessary actions taken and a rescue and safety team must be established.

Among the **Policy Guidelines** the de-concentration of adventure tourism will be initiated and conditions will be created to offer more opportunity for national tourism. The management of this activity will be a priority in order to minimize its impacts. Key **Strategies** include the conditioning of alternative areas for the redistribution of tourism (and the dissemination of pertinent information), making estimates of the carry capacity of each area and taking corrective actions in overused areas, and designing systems of concessions (mountain huts and refuges, climbing centers) and for collecting use fees in Huaraz. The Regulations for Tourist and Recreational Use will establish the **Norms and Procedures** in this area.

The national park staffs has designed a network of hiking circuits and a list of climbing routes (listed in the plan) with the purpose of redistributing the tourist use to less-visited areas and relieve the burden on the most popular trails and routes.

Many of the **Projects** in this plan are directed toward these circuits and routes. Included are the construction of mountain huts, implementation of base camps, and the opening of and placing of signs on all the hiking routes. Areas have also been identified for skiing and mountain-biking circuits.

The plan also proposes various Managements Activities in this program, including registering all visitors as well as individuals and companies involved in adventure tourism, the establishment and dissemination of the regulations, and the monitoring and patrolling of the use of different areas.

## B. Conventional Tourism Program

Until now it is conventional tourism which has attracted the greatest number of visitors to the park, especially among Peruvian tourists, but unfortunately it causes many impacts and offers few benefits for the education of visitors or the conservation of the area. However it is possible to develop conventional tourism in a sustainable manner and the **General Objective** of this program is to order and establish the conditions for this development. The **Specific Objectives** are to complete the land use planning and establish the proper use and conservation of the recreation zones, decongest the most-visited areas and open new areas, and improve services.

The Policy Guidelines determine that conventional tourism must be carded out principally in the recreation zones and that their use should be redistributed among all of them. But the immediate priority will be the implementation of Pachacoto/Pasto Ruri, Lianganuco and Laguna Churup areas. Services of the dispensation of food, basic lodging and the sale of tourist material will be permitted in the recreation zones. The adjacent populations will have priority (without exclusivity) in operating these services.

**Strategies** for this program include the design and implementation of site plans, sign systems, the recovery of damaged areas, the implementation of a ticket system in Huaraz, and the design of a new registration system.

The operation of conventional tourism will be managed by the Regulations for Tourist and Recreational Use. In general the management regulations declare that each area will have a maximum number of visitors, that everyone who provides a service will be identified as a park user, and establish requirements for guiding in the glacier zone (Pasto Ruri).



This program will require many **Management Activities**, including registering companies, guides and visitors; the establishment and dissemination of rules and procedures; coordination with the tourism sector, operators and the surrounding population; monitoring of use and concessions; and regular patrolling.

This program also has a number of **Projects**, including site plans in the principal recreation zones; placing signs and ordering trails and areas of interest; and the construction of a mountain refuge.

### C. Program of Interpretation and Dissemination

The **General Objective** of this program is for visitors to have not just an enjoyable time in the park, but also to better understand it and awaken their interest in its conservation. Many visitors do not have much knowledge of the park's environment. Their experience should be enriched by learning about it, as well as learning to minimize impacts through a program of interpretation and diffusion.

The **Specific Objectives** for reaching this goal include motivating people to visit areas under less pressure, orient visitors as they enter the park, and improve their knowledge concerning the natural and cultural value of the park as well as the importance of its conservation. Among the **Policy Guidelines**, messages should be directed toward all classes of visitors (including those from nearby towns) which emphasize the primary objectives of the national park, as well as information to aid in the redistribution of visitors. Key **Strategies** include agreements with media outlets, recreation/education programs for schoolchildren, and a volunteer program to collaborate with the park administration. The **Management Norms** determine that the messages should be simple and presented in Spanish, English and Quechua, always using local Quechua nomenclature.

Among the **Activities** to implement this program are identifying the messages and principal means of interpretation, obtaining the required information, elaborating interpretative material, and establishing contacts with the authors and editors of guides covering Peru.

This program has important **Programs**: a convenient Interpretation Center in the center of Huaraz, and equipping the Interpretation Centers to be created at the control posts.

### D. Capacity-Building Program

An important duty of the Huascarán National Park is to disseminate knowledge for the sustainable use of its resources. This requires the continuous capacitation of its personnel and, in the case of tourism, of all involved in the

activity. The **General Objective** of this program is to improve the conditions for training and to improve the park administration's ability to manage tourism. One **Specific Objectives** is to enable park personnel to respond to the requirements of managing tourism. Capacitation must be continuous, practical, decentralized and specialized according to the people receiving it, and offered in a cooperative spirit. It must also help to form groups in the rural population tied to tourist services.

**Strategies** include cooperation with university, training centers, other protected natural areas and non-governmental organizations, plus school contests related to the park, a volunteer program to aid in park development, mutual capacitation between the park staff and the tourism sector, and the interchange of knowledge with the rural population. Among the **Norms** in this program are that training must aid in the decentralization of tourism, and that training in rural communities must be compatible with their culture.

**Principal Activities** include production of educational material and a data base, and courses for the National Police, the rural population, schools and universities.

This program has three **Projects**: two Education and Environmental Training Centers and a Climbing Center in Q. Llaca.

#### E. Campesino Tourism Cooperation Program

The **General Objective** of this program is to establish conditions for the rural population to participate in tourism in a manner which permits sustainable development. The organization and management of small tourism companies in the rural population will be supported, efforts will be made to minimize the presence of cattle and horses in areas of great interest to visitors, and the use of llamas in adventure tourism will be promoted. The rural population will have priority in providing auxiliary services, and participation in the providing of tourist services will be promoted among groups whose other economic options are incompatible with the conservation of the area. The **Strategies** include the strengthening of coordination among rural organizations and the companies and guides (above all from Huaraz) who operate in the park; training programs, continuous coordination with campesino leaders; and making the pasture use plans compatible with tourism management.

**Activities** include identifying the potential of campesino groups to provide services, implementing a Campesino Tourism Management Program, coordinating with specialized groups for the re-introduction of llamas, and developing training programs. The most promising Project

is the establishment of Tourism Service Communication Network to link Huaraz with departure points (trailheads) for entering the park.

## F. Tourism Impact Evaluation Program

The **General Objective** of this program is to prevent and mitigate the impacts which tourism can generate within the park. All tourist activities will be evaluated periodically in order to identify, avoid and/or mitigate their impacts, and to take the corrective measures which each case requires. A key **Specific Objective** is to develop practical methods of monitoring and controlling impacts in both environmental and sociocultural terms.

The Policy Guidelines are to carry out the necessary actions and the capacitation of park personnel for the impact evaluation process. The objectives will be met through collaboration with institutions with experience in this field, monitoring of tourist projects and activities, and the implementation of a plan of corrective action. The **Management Norms** require an Environmental Impact Statement for each stage of service concessions, whose cost are to be assumed by the concession holders, and also declares that qualitative (i.e. aesthetic) environmental evaluation will be weighed heavily and will complement the established standards. Activities for implementing this program include the participation of park personnel in courses in environmental impact evaluation and preliminary evaluations before activating concessions.

## G. Institutional Strengthening Program

The objectives of this plan demand that the park administration maintain a dominant role with respect to tourism in the park. Its management must be properly implemented in order to meet the objectives of the management plans. This program is thus defined with its **General Objective** the improvement of the park administration's operating capacity for the implementation of the plan.

The **Specific Objectives** include the availability of sufficient funds for the implementation of the plan, an organization which will permit better management of tourism, and carrying out the functions delegated by INRENA for the execution of monitoring of the plan.

The **Policy Guidelines** declare that the park administration is responsible for its management, but that decisions relating to tourism will be coordinated with the different people and groups involved. In addition supporting institutions and relations with sources of cooperative funding will be strengthened.

**Strategies** for meeting the objectives include the modification of the organic structure of the park administration; prioritizing of infrastructure, equipment and human resources; and the implementation of the plan in cooperation with the Tourist Cooperation Committee. Key **Activities** include writing a Park Organization and Functions Manual, application of the Regulations for Tourist

and Recreational Use, and the execution of supervision of the new entry fee and concessions systems.

**Projects** to support this program include the implementation of a series of Control Posts.

#### H. Program for Interinstitutional Cooperation in Tourism

The use of Huascarán National Park for tourism involves not only the park administration, but also the governmental and private tourism sectors, the surrounding populations, and the park visitors themselves. The importance of the area needs a more stable and efficient framework of cooperation to achieve high-quality tourist use, the conservation of the environment, and regional development.

This program has a **General Objective** of integrating the parallel policies of conservation and tourism development through Interinstitutional cooperation. The **Specific Objectives** are oriented toward minimizing the overlapping of functions and "informality" (unregulated activities) in tourism. They also aim to create a formal institution for continuing cooperation among all those involved in tourism.

The **Policy Guidelines** include increased participation by both the private and governmental tourism sectors as well as all others providing services, to be achieved through a mechanism of inter-institutional cooperation.

#### VI. Evaluation of the Plan

The hypothesis of **Value of Benefits** has taken into consideration a conservation projection of the growth of tourism in the coming years, visitor surveys, and the total cost of investments programmed in the park. The basic indicator is Cost/Benefit Analysis, which shows a 5.8 multiple of return on investment.

## Program of Investments and Financing

PROGRAM OF INVESTMENTS AND FINANCING			
COMPOSITION OF THE INVESTMENT			
CODE	PROGRAM/PROJECT	EQUIVALENT TOTAL	(THOUSANDS) DOLLARS
<i>I</i>	<b>ADVENTURE TOURISM</b>	<b>439.60</b>	<b>187.69</b>
A	Improvement and opening of trails: 149.8 km.	134.82	57.62
B	Base camps: 14	158.69	67.64
C	Huts : 05	(*)	(*)
D	System of signs (107)	146.09	62.43
<i>I</i>	<b>CONVENTIONAL TOURISM</b>	<b>709.04</b>	<b>303.02</b>
A	Llanganuco site plan	73.29	31.33
B	Yuraccorral site plan	171.27	73.19
C	Yurac Corral lodge	(*)	(*)
D	Chinancocha trail clean up	5.20	2.22
E	Maria Josefa trail clean up	14.18	6.06
F	Querococha site plan	6.93	2.96
G	Pastoruri site plan	255.07	109.01
H	Carpa-Puma-Pashimin site plan	76.18	32.56
I	Purhuay site plan	7.01	2.99
J	System of trail signs (98)	99.91	42.70
<i>I</i>	<b>INTERPRETATION AND DIFUSSION</b>	<b>22.75</b>	<b>9.72</b>
A	Acquiring land	13.60	5.81
B	Interpretative Center in Huaraz	9.15	3.91
<i>I</i>	<b>CAPACITY BUILDING</b>	<b>~</b>	<b>~</b>
A	Education and Environmental Center	(**)	(**)
B	Mountain Climbing Center Llaca	(*)	(*)
<i>I</i>	<b>CAMPESINO TOURISM PROGRAM</b>	<b>234.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
A	Strengthening the participation and finding benefits of tourism for local communities	234.00	100.00
<i>I</i>	<b>EVALUATION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b>	<b>209.76</b>	<b>89.64</b>
A	Base study for concession sites	13.20	5.64
B	Inventory of word heritage Archaeologic sites of HNP.	58.50	25.00
C	Monitoring and Evaluation of Tourism in the park	138.06	59.00
<i>I</i>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING</b>	<b>642.33</b>	<b>274.50</b>
A	Ranger stations ( 04 )	284.54	121.60
B	Implement HNP	357.79	152.90
<b>TOTALES</b>		<b>2 257.48</b>	<b>964.57</b>

(\*) The investment would be by concessions. (\*\*) Large investment. (\*\*\*) The cost of personnel, goods and services of 11 operating ranger stations corresponding to the first year of operation.