

**DEVELOPING A TOURISM IMAGE**  
FOR THE  
**SAN LORENZO PROTECTED AREA**  
**PANAMA**



**MAY 2001**



Cover photograph: San Lorenzo Protected Area photographic collage.

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# **DEVELOPING A TOURISM IMAGE FOR THE SAN LORENZO PROTECTED AREA PANAMA**

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In cooperation with the  
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## Contents

	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Introduction to the San Lorenzo Protected Area .....	1
2. Background on Current Visitors .....	2
3. The Importance of Tourism Destination Image .....	3
4. Definition of Tourism Image .....	4
5. Image Development and Modification .....	4
6. Marketing Advice from the Business World .....	5
7. Relevant Niche Markets and Important Messages .....	7
7.1 Recreation Opportunity Zones .....	7
7.2 Niche Markets .....	8
7.3 Age Sets .....	10
8. Other Recommendations for the San Lorenzo Protected Area ...	12
References Cited .....	15
MAPS	
Map 1. Location of the San Lorenzo Protected Area .....	17
Map 2. Recreation Opportunity Zones .....	19

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## 1. Introduction to the San Lorenzo Protected Area

Situated at the Caribbean or northeastern end of the Panama Canal, the heavily forested 12,000 hectare (30,000 acre) San Lorenzo Protected Area (SLPA) is slightly outside the limits of the Panama Canal watershed but is nonetheless an integral part of the Canal Area (Map 1). The Gatun Locks are immediately to the east, the vast Gatun Lake forms the southwestern boundary and the majestic Chagres River—which provides the freshwater for the Canal system—flows through the heart of this area. Designated a “natural protected area” by Law 21 of July 1997 as part of conservation and development of the Canal Area, it is approximately 15 miles north to south, and 10 miles wide east to west.

This entire region was under the jurisdiction of the United States government beginning with the establishment of the Panama Canal in 1903. Beginning in 1910, Fort Sherman, a U.S. Army base, protected the northern entrance to the Panama Canal. It also preserved the SLPA’s natural and cultural treasures during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent decades, the area was used for jungle training by the U.S. military because of its high diversity of environments and topography (beach, cliff, hills, rivers, forests, etc). Military operations ceased in March 1999 and the Fort Sherman Military Reservation reverted to Panama in mid-1999.

Currently, the area is under multiple jurisdictions including: the Interoceanic Regional Authority (ARI), the agency charged with coordinating the use of reverted lands; the Panama Canal Authority (PCA), which controls much of the area’s waterways including the Chagres River; the National Environmental Authority (ANAM), managing parks and protected areas; the Panamanian Tourism Institute (IPAT); and the National Cultural Institute (INAC), which is responsible for preservation of historic monuments. Other stakeholders include the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), which operates a canopy-level research crane, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the local communities.

Because of the large number of players involved and their complicated and overlapping jurisdictions, a special collaborative effort has been launched to provide for the effective protection of San Lorenzo. The Panamanian Center for Research and Social Action (CEASPA), a local NGO, has the responsibility for this project, with funding from the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank. Project objectives include: 1) development of a management plan; 2) a program for community education, identity, and economic development; 3) financial mechanisms to ensure continued financial viability for environmental protection; 4) effective project management and evaluation; and 5) an appropriate institutional framework for the management of the area (CEASPA 1999). This discussion of tourism image and markets is in support of the first objective: a management plan being prepared by a local consulting group, Consultores Ecologicos Panamenos (CEPSA).

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The area is of exceptional biological and cultural importance. It provides an important link in the Panama Atlantic Mesoamerican Biological Corridor as well as the northernmost section on the north-south biological corridor between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It is the most biologically diverse part of central Panama, containing 9 different forest types, from coastal mangrove swamps and Cativo forests in freshwater wetland areas, to semi-deciduous and evergreen humid tall forests in the uplands. It also has major riverine zones, tidal lakes, coastal beach and reefs, and extensive freshwater lake (reservoir) shoreline.

The SLPA also has very high bird diversity. More than 450 species have been identified, and the Panama Audubon Society counted 357 bird species here in one 24-hour period, a Western Hemisphere record. Other key species include jaguars, tapir, monkeys, sloth, and crocodiles/caiman.

The area's historic resources are also impressive. At the mouth of the Chagres River is the magnificent Fort (or "Castillo") San Lorenzo, erected during the late 1500s to defend one of Spain's principal routes to the Pacific coast and Old Panama. The fort became the target of pirates and buccaneers, including Sir Frances Drake, Sir Edward Vernon, and Henry Morgan. Together with its sister site at Portobelo, it was declared a *World Heritage Site* by UNESCO in 1980. The area also contains remarkably well-preserved WWI defensive batteries designed to protect the Panama Canal, as well as remnants of France's attempt to dig a sea-level canal in the 1880s. Other historic sites include small farms and plantations along the coast and along the Chagres River, the town of Chagres near Fort San Lorenzo, and numerous banana plantations scattered throughout the interior (Weaver, Bauer and Jimenez 2001).

## **2. Background on Current Visitors**

Between February 1 and April 30, 2000, visitors at five principal tourist sites within the Panama Canal Watershed were interviewed. The sites included Pedro Miguel Locks, Camino de Cruces Trail, Plantation Road, Miraflores Locks, and Fort San Lorenzo in the San Lorenzo Protected Area. Information was collected from a total of 727 randomly selected tourists (Ham and Weiler 2000). These data provide an extremely important baseline for developing interpretive and marketing materials and measuring changes.

The general characteristics of park visitors in the Panama Canal Watershed are revealing. Tourists came from about 30 different countries, but Panama and the USA dominate with 59% and 14% respectively. Of the Panamanians, 72% were from the Province of Panama, 11% were from Colon and 7% were from Chirique. Spanish speakers comprised 72% and English 21%, although more than half indicated they understood another language very well, primarily English and Spanish.



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This information revealed that visitors to Fort San Lorenzo were significantly different from those at the other sites. Compared to other sites, visitors to Fort San Lorenzo sampled indicated that:

- They had the lowest overall levels of satisfaction due to a lack of on-site facilities, such as restrooms and parking, and a lack of interpretive information.
- They arrived by private vehicles (63%), slightly less than at other sites, and only 4% arrived with a tour operator, lowest of any site.
- They were younger (31.8 years old) than at other sites (34.7 years overall).
- They stayed nearly twice as long than at other sites, probably due to the remoteness of the site. This translates to about 45-60 minutes more.
- They reported fewer previous visits (2.0) than at any other site (up to 4.4 visits at Pedro Miguel Locks).
- Significantly more (40%) visited the Lake Gatun Recreation Area on the same day than visitors to other sites; 16% also visited the sister site of Portobelo.
- There were more native Spanish speakers (89%).
- More (25%) learned about the site from word-of-mouth advertising than any other site.
- They had the lowest use of tourist guide books (9%).

### **3. The Importance of Tourism Destination Image**

An area's tourism image is very important. It affects the travel decision process, who visits and when, and visitor expectations and behavior. For example, hear the word "Paris" and you immediately think of sidewalk cafes and the Eiffel Tower; "Yellowstone Park" and you probably imagine Old Faithful. Each destination is intimately associated with its unique icon (tower and geyser) skillfully used as a marketing tool. For the SLPA, the icon is most likely the historic fortress, perhaps together with some indicator of wildlife (a bird, etc.) or the natural setting (Chagres River).

A destination's image can also increase or decrease demand for certain activities and infrastructure development. In the SLPA, the historic fortress will attract visitors interested in Spanish Colonial history and this use will require sophisticated interpreta-

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tion and information. The accessibility and high-quality natural attractions along the lower Chagres River will also spark the demand for both motorized and non-motorized boat tours.

However, sometime adversity and challenge can create a positive image. Summer storms in USA's "Tornado Alley" appeal to storm-chasers interested in photographing these powerful storms, and whitewater river trips attract those interested in wilderness adventure and primitive camping facilities. Customers in these situations would typically not be interested in high-end hotel facilities. For the SLPA, large caiman and tarpon in the Chagres River, and seasonal appearances of hammerhead sharks at the river mouth, while intimidating to many people, will certainly appeal to more adventurous visitors. The key point here is that "dangerous wildlife" promotes two things: the idea that the SLPA contains healthy ecosystems, and that this is a more "wild" experience than at other areas.

#### **4. Definition of Tourism Image**

Image is based on the natural resource base, the sociocultural system that provides tourism services, and the area's infrastructure. Experts recognize three functional components: the *cognitive* or intellectual understanding, *affective* or feeling and values, and an *action* component that relates to the travel decision. Image can also be how a destination is perceived, or in other words its reputation. More specifically, it can be a "brand," which is a name, design, symbol (or a combination) used to identify a service or product. Typically, a country or state provides the brand identification for image development for smaller entities.

#### **5. Image Development and Modification**

Experts who study image formation suggest that destination images are created primarily through direct visitation and secondarily through advertising or other "induced" means.

One model for image creation includes a continuum with the following elements:

1. Traditional advertisements
2. Ads from tour operators and others not directly associated with the destination
3. Second-party spokespersons
4. Earned media and familiarization tours
5. News media and movies

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6. Word-of-mouth (solicited and unsolicited)
  7. Actual visitation

The following general principles on tourism destination image are from Gartner (1996) and are highly relevant to the SLPA:

- Tourism images change slowly, especially with large or complex areas.
- Advertising image formation must be focused and long-term.
- The smaller the area in relation to the whole, the less chance it has to develop an independent image. The one exception to this is when the area visited is closer to the visitor's permanent residence than the larger area.
- Image change efforts can be wasted if baseline data on the present image *position* is unknown.
- Cash-poor rural communities should focus on quality service, unique attraction packages and lower-cost image-formation agents (items 4-7 above).
- You need to understand the nature of your target markets and when they have contact with marketing messages and information and make their travel decisions.
- Less effort and money is needed for developing a brand image for a smaller area when it is consistent with a larger brand.
- A smaller area trying to establish an image different from the prevailing larger brand requires a mass tourism market.

## **6. Marketing Advice From the Business World**

Techniques and models from the business world can help public agencies develop an important customer perspective to the delivery of services to visitors. Although speaking to service brands, marketing guru Harry Beckwith in his book Selling the Invisible (1997) has the following advice that is also useful for tourism destinations:

- First impressions are important. They become the anchor to which your image and marketing success are anchored.
- Take your current market position, even if isn't the best, and turn it to your benefit. For example, Avis' famous "We're #2 – We try harder!".

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- Nothing beats a well-recognized “brand” name.
  - Tell people, in a single compelling sentence, why they should buy from (visit) you instead of someone else.
  - In your words and pictures, make yourself *vivid*.

***Developing a market positioning statement.*** A Market Position Statement is a useful business tool that defines how you wish to be perceived. It forms the core of all marketing efforts and should address the following questions (Beckwith 1997):

- Who are you?
- What business are you in?
- Who are your customers?
- What are the special needs of your customers?
- Who is your competition?
- What makes you different?
- What unique benefits do you deliver?

Although such a document should be consistent with the SLPA’s legal mandates for environmental protection, it should focus on visitors, their *needs*, and what unique *benefits* the area provides to them as consumers of experiences. It might reflect, for example, that the SLPA is in the outdoor recreation, education and entertainment business (sometimes referred to as “edutainment.”). In addition, it should recognize that it is one of only two national parks in Panama with a *World Heritage Site* (the other is Portobelo.) Such a label carries considerable weight, and is certainly a big part of the reason why a cruise ship tourist, with only a few hours to spend, would want to visit.

The following is a draft that could be used as a starting point for the development of a positioning statement for the SLPA.

*The San Lorenzo Protected Area, consisting of both the resource base and the public agencies and community partners responsible for its protection and management, is in the business of conserving world-class natural and cultural resources, providing recreation and educational opportunities to the visiting public, and providing sustainable, community-based tourism as a tool for conservation and economic development for local residents and adjacent communities.*

*Special needs of visitors include access to resources, need for high-quality information, and convenient access due to time constraints. Cruise ship tourists, in particular, have very limited time and they may prefer instead to invest it in tours that are shorter and more predictable. Similar Spanish Colonial ruins are also available at nearby Portobello*

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*For local visitors, this area offers some of the only public beaches anywhere near Colon. On a much more limited scale, opportunities for observing wildlife are available closer to Colon at the Lake Gatun Recreation Area. Flatwater kayaking on a large, undeveloped river can only be done within the SLPA; the closest alternative is the section of the Chagres River near Gamboa, which is a much tamer experience.*

*In sum, the SLPA offers the best chance of any protected area in Panama of seeing a wide range of wildlife, having access to the Caribbean coast, and at the same time enjoying a World Heritage Site. And although it is outside the park boundaries, it is also easy to visit the Gatun Locks, which is unique in having all 3 stages and in providing visitors a closer and better view of the ships than at other locations.*

## **7. Relevant Niche Markets and Important Messages**

The San Lorenzo Protected Area has many high-quality natural and cultural features that will attract visitors who are interested in a particular range of experiences. It is important, therefore, that the image projected creates an accurate expectation in prospective visitors for the particular services, infrastructure and recreation opportunities that are available.

The following is not intended to be a detailed marketing analysis for the SLPA. However, it does provide a simple recreation and tourism framework to help guide future planning and investigation.

### **7.1 Recreation Opportunity Zones**

Clearly, the vast majority of visitors today are going to the historic ruins at Fort San Lorenzo, perhaps combining this visit with wildlife viewing along the 6 mile unpaved road from Sherman. Very few people stay long or venture off the roadway. Some tour operators also provide boat trips on the Chagres River.

Using the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) methodology, Sherman is an *Urban* zone, the World Heritage site including historic San Lorenzo is a *Rural* zone, the roadway between Sherman and Fort San Lorenzo is a *Roaded Natural* zone, the Chagres River is classified as a *Semi-Primitive Motorized* zone, and the majority of the unroaded portions of the SLPA are *Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized* zones. Certain experiences are highly probable outcomes of participating in recreation activities in each of these specific recreation settings. This report will concentrate on the three areas that are currently receiving significant visitor use (Map 2). For a detailed description of the ROS methodology and its application to the San Lorenzo Protected Area, see Wylie, Valenzuela, and Sosadeeter (2001).

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- For visitors to Fort San Lorenzo’s *Rural* zone, the opportunity to observe and affiliate with other people is important, as is convenience of access and facilities such as restrooms. Opportunities for wildland challenges, risk-taking, and testing of outdoor skills are generally unimportant. Visiting the historic site and enjoying the views with others is the primary objective.
  - Depending on whether it is a week day or weekend, visitors passing through the road corridor between Sherman and Fort San Lorenzo may or may not encounter other users. Self-reliance on outdoor skills are of only moderate importance and there is little physical challenge or risk in this *Roaded Natural* zone. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation are possible.
  - The Chagres River *Semi-Primitive Motorized* zone provides moderate probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, independence, closeness to nature, and tranquility. For those who paddle their own kayaks, it also offers important opportunities for the application of outdoor skills in an environment that offers some challenge and risk. Motorized watercraft are currently allowed but may be prohibited on some portions of the tributaries to provide a more pristine experience. More details on kayaking opportunities are presented in a companion report (Wylie 2001).

In the future, more primitive forms of recreation may be provided for visitors interested in hiking or biking into the unroaded portions of the Core Forest zone and the Caribbean Coast zone

## 7.2 Niche Markets

There are many ways to separate visitors into various sub groups or “niche” markets; for example by age, gender, various interests, or place of origin. A simple model for resource-based travel includes four overlapping categories based on psychographic motivations, demographics, and associated activities: *Recreation, Educational, Adventure and Wilderness*. These four niches can be viewed as primary types; they can stand alone or be combined to form different mixes, and each can have “hard” or “soft” forms. Various combinations will provide the package of experiences and personal benefits desired. An initial assessment suggests that opportunities for recreation and educational tourism is very high in the SLPA and that there are fewer opportunities for adventure and very little chance for pure wilderness type experiences.

When combined with three obvious sources of visitors – Local, Cruise Ship, and Other Foreign – we can create the following matrix:

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*Potential Niche Markets and Potential Levels of Interest*

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	----- Types of Visitors -----		
	Local	Cruise Ship	Other Foreign
<b>Recreation</b>	ΔΔ	ΔΔΔ	ΔΔΔ
<b>Educational</b>	Δ	ΔΔ	ΔΔ
<b>Adventure</b>			Δ
<b>Wilderness</b>			

Key: Δ = Low, ΔΔ = Medium, ΔΔΔ = High Potential

This suggests that local visitors may be primarily interested in recreation, cruise tourists in recreation and educational activities, and other foreign visitors may be interested in recreation, education and adventure. There appears to be no opportunity or market for pure wilderness activities, primarily due to a lack of large, pristine tracts out of sight and sound of automobiles and motorboats.

These are estimated markets and additional studies will be needed to verify this model. However, it does provide a useful starting point for considering niche markets and relevant marketing messages, such as the following:

- The primary focus and motivation in the *Recreation* niche is outdoor recreation to enjoy nature, to relax and have fun, frequently with others. Physical risk and challenge is low. Exercise and fitness, social contact, pursuing hobbies, such as bird-watching and fishing, and learning or refining outdoor skills can be important motivations. Group size is not critical and can range from one to as many as 100 for special events.
- The *Education* niche market is interested in learning and discovering nature or history through high quality information. Physical risk and challenge is low and not an important motivation. However, group size is critical, usually fewer than 25 people. The focus of the activity is on spectacular and unusual species or historic sites. Educational travelers are primarily interested in improving their knowledge and experiencing the beauty of nature. One key target group is U.S. veterans who went through jungle training at Fort Sherman.
- *Adventure* travelers seek thrills, excitement, and personal accomplishment

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by overcoming nature's challenges and sharing this experience with others. This involves traveling to remote places known for their natural beauty and physical attributes. The level of physical effort and risk ranges from moderate in "soft" adventure to high in "hard" adventure trips. Group size is variable and limited by safety and technology, not by social factors. There is intensive contact with nature, but unlike the wilderness niche, there is the possibility of more interaction with local cultures.

- *Wilderness* involves settings and activities which provide for psychological and physical benefits by experiencing wild areas with a minimum of development and human presence. The focus is on outdoor recreation within pristine environments, usually involving primitive camping and very small groups. Solitude is important. The search is for an intense, personal experience through challenge and sacrifice, with nature as a backdrop. Challenge and risk are moderate and an important part of the overall experience.

### 7.3 Age Sets

Age-based niches and marketing messages should also be considered. There are five basic population groups recognized in the USA: The *GI Generation* (age 70+), the *Silent Generation* (55-70), *Older Baby Boomers* (45-55), *Younger Baby Boomers* (35-45), and *Generation X* (25-35). Each has its own distinctive travel character based on family circumstances, presence of children, discretionary income, educational level, interests and affinity group affiliations, media influences, and past travel experience (Forbes 1997). Efforts to develop an image for the SLPA and reach these groups with targeted marketing should consider the following traits for each group:

#### *GI Generation* (70+)

- Comfortable with group tours and mass travel
- Passive observation of destinations and cultures
- Least interested in cultural tourism and visits to historic sites
- Interested in hands-on and intellectual activities
- Cleanliness, security, comfort and healthy environments important

Recommendation: Marketing for the GI Generation should emphasize older Americans as socially and physically active, promote tour products integrated with the family, and provide extensive information needed to make a purchase decision.

#### *Silent Generation* (55-70)

- High interest in cultural tourism
- Enjoy in-depth cultural exploration and learning
- Want fewer subjects with intense, interactive participation
- Like to get to know local people
- Strong interest in physically active activities (walking, bicycling, canoeing)



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Recommendation: Marketing messages for the Silent Generation should emphasize rest and relaxation, and enjoying leisure with others their age.

***Older Boomers (45-55)***

- Cultural tourism “junkies”
- Education and entertainment important
- Not group tours
- Physically active soft adventure
- Highest interest in visiting historic sites
- Self improvement important
- Status conscious

Recommendation: Marketing messages for Older Boomers should emphasize self-discovery and improvement and the fact that they are still able to enjoy and participate in full physically experiences, despite their growing age. However, because there is considerable diversity within this group, it will be difficult to create a single message which will cover everyone.

***Younger Boomers (35-45)***

- Many single women
- Strong family market
- Highest interest in art fairs, art museums, and historic sites
- Low interest in hands-on experiences and education
- Low motivation for travel for socializing
- Physically active
- Less expensive trips

Recommendation: Marketing messages for Younger Boomers should provide more detailed information about the product and its experiences and benefits (high value) at a reasonable cost (affordable but not “inexpensive”).

***Generation X (25-35)***

- High interest in cultural activities
- Social and family aspects of travel important
- Pleasure-seeking and escape
- Fair interest in intellectual activities
- Interactive participation
- Walking, running, bicycling and competitive sports
- Not status consumers

Recommendation: Marketing messages for Generation X should emphasize authenticity, good service and high value, and provide multiple product options.

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## 8. Other Recommendations for the San Lorenzo Protected Area

The SLPA's image as a tourism destination can either be a byproduct of Panama's national brand, it can be developed by local and international tour operators, or it can be planned and managed by the agencies that have responsibility for the area's management and development. The latter alternative is recommended: active management. However, there are certain challenges to this task.

- Although it is a relatively small area, which would ordinarily make it easier for image development, it is *very* diverse. Major environmental zones include the Caribbean coastline, the Chagres River, Lago Gatun shoreline, and tropical rainforest. In addition to incredibly rich flora and fauna, the area also contains a World Monument site with a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish fort, numerous WWI defensive batteries, and Fort Sherman from the American period.
- There is limited information, especially good data on the nature of the target market and when customers make travel decisions, as well as baseline information on the present image position.
- There is a lack of financial resources.

### General recommendations:

**8.1 *Be consistent and integrate with other attractions.*** Less money and effort is needed to create an image for the SLPA if it is consistent with larger, existing brands; for example, the Panama Canal (including Lake Gatun), all national parks in Panama, or the Panamanian national strategy for environmental tourism, the "TCI" strategic alliance of tourism, conservation and research. In fact, it is within the context of the proposed TCI network of heritage sites, quality interpretation and education, and protected areas that the SLPA finds its best fit and a marketable image.

The most relevant of these routes is the "*Route of the Treasures of the Americas.*" This consists of the two principal trans-isthmian historic routes: the royal road between Panama and Nombre de Dios/Portabelo, and the Chagres route comprising the Camino de Cruces and Rio Chagres to Fort San Lorenzo. Later this same corridor included the Panamanian railroad and the Panama Canal.

Together, these sites create a critical mass of attractions for visitors and serious students of history, which is unsurpassed in Panama and perhaps the world. This heritage corridor concept could easily link the SLPA with other parks, historic sites, and the world-famous canal system. Because of its access and its diversity of resources in such a compact package, *the SLPA*

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*serves as the key Caribbean anchor for this route and a logical starting point for visitors.*

**8.2 *Focus on quality service, unique attraction packages and lower-cost image formation.*** Spend other people's money by influencing the production of appropriate advertisements by local and international tour operators. Provide high quality photographs, maps, and information and encourage operators to develop packages which feature the area's unique attractions and emphasize low-impact and educational tourism. Exposure can also be obtained by assisting travel writers and publishers of guidebooks. Provide guidelines and oversight for ensuring quality service by tour operators. Provide diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and high quality settings and interpretation to enhance the visitor experience.

**8.3 *Emphasize current products by focusing on a combination of recreation and educational products for locals, cruise ship tourists, and other foreign visitors.*** Currently, the best opportunities for the recreation and educational niche markets are primarily at Fort San Lorenzo, and secondarily by driving for pleasure and wildlife viewing along the road between Sherman and Fort San Lorenzo and wildlife viewing by powerboat and kayak along the main Chagres River. Recreational tourism can continue without much additional development. However, educational opportunities can be significantly enhanced through better visitor information and interpretation of the area's natural and cultural resources. Also consider developing tour products targeted to U.S. veterans who went through jungle training at Fort Sherman, as well as former Canal Zone residents ("Zonians").

**8.4 *Look for ways to expand adventure and wilderness tourism opportunities.*** Perhaps the best opportunity for soft adventure at present is trips along the Chagres River by kayak. Paddling up some of the smaller tributaries can provide a harder form of adventure and a semi-wilderness experience. This could be enhanced by removing evidence of previous U.S. military use (old bridges and trash), clearing some of the fallen trees, and prohibiting access by powerboats (Wylie 2001). Jungle survival adventure tours have proven to be popular in other training areas once used by the U.S. military.

**8.5 *Understand and target different niche markets.*** Determine which age cohorts are represented in the U.S. cruise ship market and tailor tour products and marketing information to them. It is probably the GI Generation (70+) and Silent Generation (55-70). In addition, it is important to determine if there is a difference between cruise ship tourists and other foreign visitors to the SLPA. Also conduct research to understand who the local visitors are and what they are interested in. (This exercise has been started; see Wylie, Valenzuela and Sosadeeter 2001, Annex F).

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**8.6 *Develop your own market positioning statement.*** Use this for guiding marketing and image development efforts and responding to opportunities that arise. Although such a document should be consistent with the area's legal mandates for environmental protection, it should focus on visitors, their needs, and what unique benefits the SLPA provides to them as customers and consumers of experiences. It could recognize, for example, that the SLPA is in the entertainment or outdoor recreation business. In addition, this is one of only two national parks in Panama with a World Heritage Site. Such a label carries considerable weight, and should be emphasized in "single compelling sentence" explaining why people should visit.

**8.7 *Collaborate with others.*** Because of the complex and overlapping jurisdictions, it is important that a coherent tourism image be developed for the SLPA by all the key stakeholders. This would include CEASPA, ANAM, IPAT, ARI and of course INAC. Like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, everyone may have a different idea of the area's tourism potential because each organization has a hold on a different part of the "animal," but all of these perspectives must be included if the area's image is to be accurately portrayed and effectively implemented.

**8.8 *Encourage training.*** Support managers to attend international conferences on tourism marketing. Also encourage Panamanian students in tourism programs to become involved with the SLPA as part of their university training.

**8.9 *Utilize volunteers and support groups.*** Consider the unique role of the Friends of San Lorenzo in supporting CEASPA and promoting the area as a tourism destination. There may be many things such an association can do in the private sector that are difficult for public agencies. For example, fund-raising and organizing special events to generate publicity within Panama, as well as marketing activities outside the country.

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Map 1. Location of the San Lorenzo Protected Area.







Map 2. Recreation Opportunity Zones (Map 5 from Wylie, et.al. 2001).



