



December 2003

# Agua Para La Vida

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## Four new projects completed in 2003 - five planned for 2004!



Another year comes to a close and four communities in Nicaragua have clean water thanks to the contributions and hard work of the entire APLV family.

**Santa Rosa** - completed in March, this project was made possible by the generous donations of Kim and Randy Tews who visited the community shortly after the completion of the project. A beautiful spring supplies more than enough water for the community of 140 people

**Mombacho Arriba** - completed in June, this village is located near Camoapa, a considerable distance south and east of Rio Blanco. Xiomara Obando, the APLV technician in charge of the project, is a recent graduate of our technical school (ETAP) and the first woman to engineer and oversee an APLV water project.

**Puerto Yaro** - completed in August, this community of 145 people is one of several villages tucked into the northeast folds of Cerro Musun that APLV has worked with. Cerro Musun is a beautiful mountain that has become a National Park and is home to considerable biological diversity. The project was funded by Rural Water Ventures through the work of Bill McQueeney. The tecnico in charge was Tomas Matamoro another young graduate of our last ETAP class. During the rainy season, the community is accessible only by mule. The problem and expense of delivering sand and gravel was resolved by the villagers

who got the sand from the river and broke stones to make gravel.

**Villa Siquia** - completed in October, this was another project funded by Rural Water Ventures. The fastest way to reach the village from Rio Blanco is to drive across the Rio Grande de Matagalpa - highly inadvisable during the rainy season! There has been severe deforestation in the area of the spring and we hope to be able to make an impact here by replanting the watershed.

Three more projects have already been started in the communities of Walana, San Isidro and Bjugua. The project in Vijagua is a collaboration with our sister organization El Porvenir.



*Villa Siquia community members dig the trench for their water system through very rocky soil.*

## 2nd APLV Project Tour a Success

Once again we organized a week-long visit to Nicaragua to visit projects and see the APLV team in action. The delegation included Gilles Corcos, Erik Decamp, Charlie Huizenga, Bill McQueeney, Kelly Naylor, and Jeanne Panek. Erik took lots of video footage and is working on producing a short piece on APLV's work. Jeanne put together some excellent web pages of the trip at [www.aplv.org/panek/nicaragua.htm](http://www.aplv.org/panek/nicaragua.htm).

Our 1989 4WD Toyota pick-up, bought used in '95, finally gave up the ghost after over 275,000 km of rugged travel. We bought a 2001 Toyota with low mileage to replace it and although some APLV members have jumped in to help foot the bill, it has dug a good size hole in our budget.

## Rural Water Ventures Partners with APLV



Bill McQueeney of Rural Water Ventures with the mayor of La Isla.

Bill McQueeney is no newcomer to water projects in Nicaragua- he first got involved over 15 years ago- but he's bringing a novel approach to the most important need- fundraising. In March of 2002, he founded Rural Water Ventures as a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising money for rural water projects in Nicaragua. Rural Water Ventures' business model

is analogous to a venture capital firm - it seeks major investors who are inspired to invest in providing safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation for rural villages in Nicaragua. A major difference from venture capital is that the investors are guaranteed no monetary return! Their return comes from being intimately associated with a project that saves children's' lives and provides improved health to a whole village for generations.

RWV was an investor in two APLV projects in 2003-- Puerto Yaro and Villa Siquia. "Our investors are very pleased with the outcome in both cases", says Bill. "RWV plans to invest in three or more projects in 2004. We are pleased and honored to be a partner of APLV. APLV's contributions in conceiving, designing and carrying out rural water projects are nothing short of marvelous". From our perspective, Bill's success at finding investors for water projects is equally marvelous.

## A Beautiful Spring for the village of Walana

(Kelly Naylor had the following recent discussion with Arnoldo Altamirano, a 30 year resident of the community of Walana and Water Committee Coordinator for the APLV project currently underway).

*"La fuente es bonita! Hay mucho agua pura aquí!" ("The spring is beautiful! There is a lot of clean water here!")*



explains Arnoldo, standing ankle deep in spring water emerging from the soils of the lushly vegetated hill behind him. About 25 community members were busy collecting and washing stones to be used with concrete to enclose the spring catchment area and prevent rainwater runoff from contaminating the clean water coming out of the spring. APLV mason Pedro Zamorro and project

engineer Jaime Alonzo were directing the masonry work, with ETAP students Eddin and Vladimir taking careful notes.

Walana is a ranching community northeast of Rio Blanco. Although the odometer only registers 20km for a one-way trip, at the end of the rainy season it takes about an hour to negotiate the steep, deeply rutted, and frequently flooded roads.

How many houses and people in the community?

*28 houses and about 180 people with private tap stands. We are a dispersed community, so the distances between houses are far. My house is 3 km from the spring.*

What is the current water source?

*We have wells, but in the summer the wells become dry so we have to go to the river. The river water is dirty and the water from the spring is much cleaner.*

What is the most difficult part of the project?

*Economics. We collected funds to purchase the spring and some land in the watershed and we pay for the housing and food for the APLV staff while they are here working on the project. Raising the funds for this was difficult. (The community paid about \$1,000 for the spring and a half-acre of land.)*

When did you begin to consider a project with APLV?  
*Our discussions with APLV began in November 2001. It took a lot of time to organize and raise funds for the project.*

*What is the current schedule?*

We will finish the spring catchment by December 5, begin work on the tank in January and finish the project in April or May.

Has the community worked on other projects in the past?  
*No, this is our first project together. 'Estamos un comunidad unidos y trabajamos juntos.' (We are a united community and we work together.)*

He ended the interview with a question for Kelly:

*What is winter like in the US?*

I explained that in the northeast the temperature is freezing and the ground is covered waist high with snow. Winter construction requires wearing many layers of clothes, up to five pairs of pants on my last job, and looking very fat bundled up in all those layers - it all seemed kind of hard to imagine in the Nica heat and humidity!

## Meet the APLV Staff

(Over the next several newsletter, we'll introduce the members of the APLV team working in Nicaragua)



María Inés García Bracamonte is the very able APLV accountant in Rio Blanco. She grew up in the area and worked for the Rio Blanco mayor's office for 13 years before joining APLV in June of 2000. "APLV is an important organization for our country.

Our communities our very poor and the economy is very bad. APLV's projects have a big influence on the health and well being of the families. We have the biggest impact on the women and children who have to carry water from the river or wells".

## APLV-France takes off

Officially registered as a French organization in April of this year, APLV-France has made good use of its 8 months

of activity. It has been invited to give lectures at no less than five public events (two in Paris, one in Chamonix, one in Grenoble and one in Annemasse near Geneva), with an information table at three of these. Erik Decamp's photographs of Nicaragua have been displayed in several additional venues. They are contacting a growing list of people, groups and foundations and have produced a number of documents describing APLV's goals and activities. It is expected to make a welcome contribution to APLV's budget before completing its first year of existence.

## School is in session!

APLV's technical school, ETAP, has finished the first year with its third class of students. We are very pleased to have Jim Stacey on the team as our instructor. Jim, a native of Canada, has considerable experience with water projects throughout the world including South America and Eastern Europe. The class of six students includes 3 women and 3 men, all of whom show great promise. In addition to their classwork, the students are each assigned to current projects where they get plenty of hands on experience.



## What you can do...

- Make a **financial contribution** to APLV. Consider making a larger gift than you did last year.
- **Spread the word** by finding at least two other people who will contribute and join the APLV family.
- Put us in **contact** with a person or a foundation that might help us bring clean water to more people.
- **Volunteer** some time to help us with the many things it takes to keep our organization going.

We thank you for your support and wish the whole world a year of peace.

Gilles

Gilles Corcos

Charlie

Charlie Huizenga



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- I'm interested in learning more about the APLV Nicaragua Project Tour next spring
- Please add the following person to the APLV mailing list
- I would like to support APLV in bringing clean drinking water to the people of Nicaragua. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:
  - \$25 Material cost for drinking water for one person
  - \$50 Material cost of 500 seedlings for reforestation
  - \$100 Material cost of a latrine for a family
  - \$200 Sponsorship for one APLV technical student for one month
  - \$300 Material cost for drinking water for an entire family
  - \$500 Drinking water, latrine and trees for an entire family

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_