

# A Roaring Victory For Jaguars!

The Belize Zoo is located smack in the middle of the Central Biological Corridor. This is a vital tract of continuous forested landscape, providing habitat connectivity from the north to the south, for many species of wildlife.



### **Minister Vega (left) and Dr. Quigley of Panthera signing Corridor agreement**

In recent years, due to field studies which clearly show that jaguars utilize this area of our country, it has often been referred to as a "Jaguar Corridor". Belize Zoo keepers have frequently noted jaguar tracks outside of the zoo's boundary fence, and our environmental education efforts are strongly aimed at drawing attention to this important cat-friendly landscape. Of course, with the spectacular assistance from Jaguar Junior Buddy and Professor Jaguar Field Master, it is easy to get positive public attention focused towards our Belizean big cats. The message is a simple one: Isn't the jaguar a most stunning animal? YES!! Do we want to see them living forever in the wilds of Belize? YES!! Ensuring the continued survival of our jaguars became more solid recently when Hon. Minister of Natural Resources, Gaspar Vega, of the Government of Belize, and CEO Dr. Howard Quigley of the wildcat conservation organization, Panthera, signed an agreement to formally establish the Labouring Creek Jaguar Corridor Wildlife Sanctuary. This 9,000 acre tract of land, within the Central Biological Corridor, includes the type of habitat so essential for the healthy survival of the jaguar: Riparian forest. Why is this so important? The newly-proclaimed protected forest tract embraces waterways, and this is where a thirsty jaguar, in the burning heat of the dry season, can be refreshed. Equally important, much of the prey a hungry jaguar needs to hunt also lives in the riparian forest.



Plenty of armadillo, peccary and agoutis wander about, and their presence means happy meal time for our mighty big cats. Having this area officially protected is good news for everyone working to see that our jaguars have a secure future in the wild. A big PAWS UP to The Ministry of Natural Resources, the organization Panthera, and all involved in seeing that such a positive step forward on behalf of our stunning Jaguars, has been realized. JAGUARS FOREVER!!!

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