In March of 2013, I made my first attempt to penetrate into the Meseta de Ichún, an oval-shaped landform in southern Venezuela.
To Santiago

Who brought us to the Meseta
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 2013 Paragua River Expedition carried flag #60 into the Meseta de Ichún. I had identified this area as a target for exploration for reasons illuminated below. My originally stated objectives were, “To trace the source of the Paragua River in the unexplored Meseta de Ichún (one of Venezuela’s largest and least explored Tepuis*) and return via the river below Salto de Ichún to Lake Guri.” [*I note that the Meseta may not be a tepui proper as I had originally cited in my application. Its geographic nature, not typical of a tepui, is discussed on page 19.]

The results of the expedition were as follows:
1. The Ichún River was explored above Ichún Falls, but still approximately 50 kilometers shy of its source (as the crow flies).
2. I have determined that the Meseta, an area of approximately 3000 square kilometers enclosed by a raised oval rim, is virtually unexplored; what few possible exceptions are discussed under Previous Exploration. (See page 13.)
3. Possible evidence of (European) expedition (circa 1600) by galleon on the Paragua River further south from its confluence with the Ichún has been found.
4. Photographed six species of flora found inside the Meseta (and one on its rim) that a group of four Shirian men (the tribe closest to the Meseta) confirmed they had not seen before.
5. Identified 31 Shirian names for flora and fauna.
6. Found evidence of jaguars and wild pigs and spotted a tapir within the Meseta.
7. Recorded stories of a lost village named Wanapa inside the inner north rim of the Meseta.
8. Identified means of overcoming challenges to further exploration south into the Meseta de Ichún.
9. Identified the Meseta as a probable source and excellent candidate area for the discovery of species not known to science.

The expedition started up the Paragua River from the town of La Paragua on March 2, 2013 and returned on March 20, 2013.

PROJECT EXPLANATION

Why the Meseta De Ichún?

The seed of this expedition started three decades ago when I walked out of the Highlands of New Guinea. Having had my Western ideas thoroughly challenged by experiences with the wantok system and admiration for the fitness of the Papuans, I developed not only a love for the forest, but the notion: how nice it would be for mankind to preserve its untouched surfaces for our descendants, so that they could forever see the world in its nascent state. So, this year, I finally did what I’d been thinking about for 30 years. I incorporated World Parks, Inc., a non-profit, public benefit company, to promote the idea of establishing vast preserves, one on each continent. I want to walk in those areas that I believe could be candidates for becoming a World Park.
“If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.” - Albert Einstein

My vision of world parks, represented by orange ovals, one on each continent and one in Oceana, eight in all.4

One such area was the northern Amazon of South America. Putting scale to paper on my map of Venezuela, I measured off 700 kilometers from west to east and about the same from north to south with nary a road to be seen.

When I considered the awesomeness of traveling across it by myself, I was both inspired and terrified. The Meseta as a goal initially caught my notice because it is a large, distinct geographic feature well inside this vast untouched wilderness, and I could find virtually no information about it.
The illustration above shows:

a. The Meseta de Ichún, outlined in yellow.
b. The green lines depict Plan A as submitted to the club. [Plan A: Fly into Asiaito, Mahigia or Manquire strips east of Meseta de Ichún by about 10 to 20 kilometers. Hike up into Meseta to find source of Paragua river.] This plan was abandoned when pilots said these airstrips, although shown on the map, did not exist. That, coupled with my newly-gained knowledge that the Paragua was navigable to the Ichún, made plan B an easy choice. [Plan B: Arrange local transportation from Lake Guri as far up Paragua as possible, then try to reach Meseta de Ichún on foot, look for source of Paragua, then retrace to river and return by river.]
c. The red lines represent the as-yet-unattained route to the headwaters of the Ichún. This is the part of the intended route that was not reached on the 2013 expedition. (As I write, I am planning a return journey in January 2014. See Conclusion at the end of this report for more information.)
d. The actual as-performed route is depicted in blue, up the Paragua River and into the Meseta.
Expedition Birth

Fascinated by the prospect of an expedition in southern Venezuela, in 2010, I visited Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela, a known hub for hire of private planes. I attempted to contract with pilots to fly over the tepui of Sarisariñama and the Meseta de Ichún. This attempt was aborted due to cost. Pilots informed me that the area was impassable on foot except in the dry months from January to March.

Intimidated, I veered south for solo expeditions in 2010 (across the Altiplano on foot) and 2012 (across the Atacama Desert on foot) (using a cart on both trips to haul water). (In 2012, I was accompanied by the writer John H. Richardson for the first half of the walk.)

In January 2013, not knowing how to proceed to access the Meseta and concerned about the possibility of governmental restrictions, I went to the Venezuelan consulate in San Francisco. A staff person said, “You should speak to Guayana. Maybe she can introduce you to Emilio Perez.” Guayana, a long-haired woman, who had written, “Institutional and Legal Framework for Protected Areas Management in Venezuela - Assessment of Strategic Opportunities for the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to Support Conservation in the Venezuelan Amazon,” happened to be standing next to me. “I am named after the region you are inquiring about. It is where I was born,” she said. Later, I checked my map of Venezuela. The word GUAYANA was pasted in letters larger than the state name of Bolivar, spreading from the Sierra de Maigualida to the Paragua River.

Days later, she forwarded me a message she’d received from Emilio, a cartographer familiar with southern Venezuela (copied verbatim below).

“The Meseta de Ichún is a large platteu different to the rest of most known tepuis in Venezuela: it is lower and densely forested on the summit. Very few expeditions (botanical, mainly) has been conducted there, and the whole mountain remain almost unexplore.

There are not anything (that i know) like airstrip on the “meseta”, and i have only fly in helicopter in the area (some 2 hrs west from from Santa Elena in a Bell Ranger).

On the Paragua river, it is however possible, to navigate up to Salto Ichún (Ichún waterfall). After this point i don’t know, but it seems you will have to negotiate many rapids...

The whole area is under the control of the Shiriano, Yekuana and Pemon people. I would just deal with the indians of the particular region...

Reaching the headwaters of the Ichún or Paragua river is something difficult that would require a helicopter, so it can be expensive... otherwise, he will be limitated by gasoline and transit on the indigenous “boats and miners!”
Less than two months later, I met Emilio at the airport in Caracas. In Ciudad Bolivar, Emilio introduced me to Carlucho Nuñez, a man who knew the Shirian. Through Carlucho, in turn, I met Janeiro, Parato and Rafael, the Shirian we were to travel with.

Carlucho Nuñez - Venezuelan, the only non-indigenous team member besides me

Janeiro - Shirian man living in the indigenous village of Kavai Maken

Jeff Shea - American (Organizer, Photographer, Videographer)

Parato – Half-Sape, half-Shirian man living in the indigenous village of Kavai Maken

Rafael - Shirian man living in the indigenous village of Ichún

Honorio - Shirian man living in the indigenous village of Ichún (turned back after four days into the Meseta)

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Support Team

Emilio Perez – Venezuelan cartographer, introduced me to Carlucho and the pilot Octavio; traveled as far as Ichún Falls with expedition team

Octavio Colson – Venezuelan, pilot, flew Emilio and I in a reconnaissance over Ichún Falls from Boca de Carun; traveled as far as Ichún Falls with expedition team

Santiago - Shirian boatman who took us from the town of La Paragua to Ichún Falls

Sylvester - Shirian man, Santiago’s helper
Expedition Team

Carlucho Nuñez (covered with foam from the Ichún river)

Honorio

Expedition Team
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Janeiro

Jeff Shea

Expedition Team
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Parato

Rafael

Expedition Team
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Previous Exploration

Only known literature

I have found only one case of documentation of any type whatsoever that mentions the Meseta de Ichún. (See item 4 below.)

The only evidence I have of prior visits past Ichún Falls is listed here:

1. Parato said that when he was a boy, his mother told him that his grandfather once lived in a village called Wanapa, now lost and abandoned, said to be located near the inner north rim.
2. Emilio said that he once landed on a helicopter pad on one of the high points of the Meseta where the Venezuelan hydroelectric company had erected a tower to monitor rainfall. (The Ichún contributes to the water flowing into Guri dam, hundreds of kilometers north.) According to Emilio, there was no evidence of travel beyond the immediate environment of the pad. The location of where he landed is unknown to me.
3. On Google Earth in 2013, there were two photos shown in the Meseta, but their placement within the Meseta was in error. One was labeled as being from the Canaima area and the other from the Sucre area, both hundreds of kilometers to the north.
4. A 1956 magazine article about a military exploration (written in Spanish by Carlos Montoya, August 1956). (See Appendix B1.) [Douglas Pridham said that Montoya only went as far as Ichun Falls, but not into the Meseta. (See Appendix C1.)]

Although Emilio had written, “Very few expeditions (botanical, mainly) has been conducted there…,” when he, Carlucho and I traveled to Ichún Falls, he corrected his former impression, saying the locals said that the only known expedition party had only gone up to the Falls and not beyond. The Shirian of Ichún village, living just a few kilometers below the Falls, said no one had ever gone into the Meseta, including themselves.

I “Googled” the Search tab for “Meseta de Ichún” on October 25, 2013. There were twenty-one search results. Twenty pertained to fishing. None pertained to the Meseta de Ichún. The twenty-one results were linked to only three websites: payarafishingvladimir.blogspot.com, venezuelafishing.blogspot.com and fr.getamap.net.

When I “Googled” the Images tab for “Meseta de Ichún,” there were sixty results. Fifty-three of them pertained to fishing on the Paragua (or Caura) river (payarafishingvladimir.blogspot.com). Six images were from Turismo.venezuela.net.ve - none of them pertained to the Meseta de Ichún. The remaining one was from my own website (JeffShea.com), where I posted a blog entry about the Meseta de Ichún. Other than my own website, I found no entries with information on the Meseta de Ichún.

There have been expeditions up the Paragua River, which flows to the east of Meseta. Douglas Pridham, whom I met through Carlucho, led an expedition up the Paragua to near the border with Brazil. They portaged inflatable rafts through the forest for days to the Caura watershed southeast of the Meseta, then traveled down the Merevani and Caura rivers.
The Galleon - Cannons At Boca De Carun

When Emilio and I went to visit Octavio Colson at his office outside Caracas, he said that there was a sunken Spanish galleon up the Paragua River to the east of the Ichún. He said he had heard that cannons, taken from the galleon, were in Boca de Carun, downriver from the Ichún. Neither Emilio nor I believed his story. It seemed preposterous.

As the expedition traveled upriver from the town of La Paragua, Octavio flew into Boca de Carun, which has the closest airstrip to the Meseta. We met him there. He traveled to Ichún Falls with us, then returned to Boca de Carun.

After the Paragua River expedition, I met Octavio. He related how, upon returning downriver to his airplane at Boca de Carun, he had persuaded the people there, by meeting a demand for cash, to see the cannons. He said he had taken photographs of them. I used my camera to take photographs of the images on his iPhone.

Cannons Purportedly Removed From Galleon On Upper Paragua, as shown to me on Octavio Colson’s iPhone, Venezuela, 2013, Image DSC 60876

Closeup, Image DSC_6083
Since I did not see the cannons in Boca de Carun, I cannot verify that the photographs were taken there. Furthermore, even if there were cannons in Boca de Carun, admittedly, it would not be proof that they came from a Spanish galleon upriver. However, having spent some time with Octavio Colson, including visiting his printing business outside Caracas, flying with him over the Meseta, traveling together to Ichún Falls by canoe, meeting his family in Uruyen and flying over Auyan Tepui and other tepuis in the vicinity of Canaima National Park with him, I believe that he did take those photographs in Boca de Carun. (Boca de Carun is more than 150 kilometers upriver from the town of La Paragua.)

My diary of March 5th from just below Ichún Falls recorded the supposed whereabouts of the sunken galleon:

“One has to go four more hours upriver and then has to cross some rapids (or a small falls) and then it is one hour past that. Apparently the mast and the prow are sticking out of the water but the rest of it has been plundered completely. There is a legend of an Indian that was sometimes seen wearing a conquistador’s helmet and body shield. I tried to help (Octavio to go there), but it was a problem of fuel.

My diary entry from Uruyen on March 25th recorded additional folklore:

“I was amazed when Octavio informed me that after he had left Ichún and went to Boca de Carun, they had actually shown him the cannons from the Spanish galleon (that had sailed up the Paragua River in the 1600s). (He said that at first they had said it didn’t exist, then that they did not have the cannons, then that they had them but he could not see them and finally, for a fee, they let him take photographs.) He even showed me photographs of them that he had taken with his iPhone. (He said he had paid 18,000 Bolivares for the photos.) I asked him if I could take photographs later of his photographs, and he said Yes.

“He also told me an incredible story about how an American had scuba dived and taken everything off of the galleon, including muskets and helmets.

“Not only that, he told me that further up the river, the Spanish had built a fort! There was a church there and the church had a bell. The bell was later brought to the church in La Paragua. An acquaintance of Octavio’s went to the church priest and asked him if he could get the bell and bring it to Caracas to have it carbon dated. The priest refused. [The acquaintance] returned with an assistant and a truck, tied a rope around the bell and drove off with it and the church bell tower fell over in the process. A few days later in Caracas, the ** of *** came to [the acquaintance’s] house and said, ‘Give me the bell or you will go to jail.’ [The acquaintance] refused. The ** said, ‘Give me the bell or you will disappear.’ The bell was turned over to the **. From that point, the bell was never seen again...."
(I note that the story about the bell is rather wild and acknowledge that it may not be true. I have included it in this report for only one reason: to give all the information I have regarding the account that it is alleged a Spanish fort existed in the upper Paragua.)

I found this on a website about Charles Brewer (see page 105):

*When he located a 17th century French shipwreck, the government froze his team out of the salvage, he said. He will wait for an “honest government” before launching an expedition to El Dorado: a real place which spawned the legend of a city of gold.*

**Early European Activity in the Region**

I found the following entry that refers to the geographic area of the upper Paraguay at [http://www.geographicus.com/blog/category/apocryphalplaces/lost-cities-of-gold](http://www.geographicus.com/blog/category/apocryphalplaces/lost-cities-of-gold):

*However, for centuries El Dorado had already been appearing on maps, though quite far from the lower Xingu. Instead most antique maps place El Dorado far to the north, on an island in the midst of a vase (sic) saline lake between the lower Orinoco River and the northern Amazon tributaries.*

This may explain motivation for early exploration in the area.

Available virtually without restrictions for re-use at [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7254/7254.txt](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7254/7254.txt), “The Project Gutenberg EBook of Equinoctial Regions of America, Volume 3, by Alexander von Humboldt, (a) personal narrative of travels to the equinoctial regions of America during the years 1799-1804” discusses the area as it was over 200 years ago.

*The missions of the Catalanian Capuchins, which in 1804 contained at least sixty thousand head of cattle grazing in the savannahs, extend from the eastern banks of the Carony and the Paragua as far as the banks of the Imataca, the Curumu, and the Cuyuni; at the south-east they border on English Guiana, or the colony of Essequibo; and toward the south, in going up the desert banks of the Paragua and the Paraguamasi, and crossing the Cordillera of Pacaraimo, they touch the Portuguese settlements on the Rio Branco. The whole of this country is open, full of fine savannahs, and no way resembling that through which we passed on the Upper Orinoco. The forests become impenetrable only on advancing toward the south; on the north are meadows intersected with woody hills.*

**The Montoya Expedition**

Just before publication of this report, Carlucho Nuñez sent me some of the pages from a 1956 magazine article (written in Spanish) about the Expedition Nacional ”Alto Paragua,” which he had gotten from Douglas Pridham. The article is written in Spanish. I was told it is over 60 pages in length. It deals mostly with the upper Paragua River. It appears that exploration was done near Ichún Falls. (See Appendix B1.)
If in fact the Meseta has not yet been explored, the following conditions may lend an explanation:

1. Remoteness
2. No “reason” to go there.
3. Difficulty of access, particularly in the rainy season.
4. Lack of food.

It is my belief, based on the geography (a raised concentric oval rim of mountains isolating its depressed interior), its remoteness and difficulty of access, coupled with the fact that there are no known scientific studies, that the Meseta de Ichún’s interior contains species of flora and fauna new to science.

I welcome any information that will supplement that given above.

**Searching The Explorers Club Map Room**


Three Venezuelan maps combined:
1. Explorers Club Map Room, (Paris, 1876), right
2. Explorers Club Map Room, hand-notated west Venezuelan watershed map, (not dated or credited), left
3. Shea 2013 Paragua River Expedition route (tan center)
The two main maps of interest that I found in the Explorers Club Map Room are shown above with an overlay of my route map. The 1876 map of Venezuela ("Mapa Físico y Político de los Estados Unidos de Venezuela, Paris") is shown on the right. Not surprisingly, the features do not match more modern maps. The hand notations on the map of western Venezuela (shown on the left) depict detailed studies of the mountains, rivers, rapids and watersheds. At first, I thought the jagged wandering line across the bottom showed an expedition route across part of the vast wilderness that I sought to explore. But later, I noticed these lines were labeled "WATERSHED," so I concluded it was a study of the mountains and to what side of them rainwater flowed. Mostly, it seemed to focus on the watershed contributing to the Orinoco, the large river that the Caura and Paragua flow into.

The map in the middle shows my route up the Paragua and into the Meseta de Ichún.

I did not find any evidence in the Map Room of expeditions in the area of Meseta de Ichún.
The Meseta has a unique appearance from outer space. It is similar to a tepui, but in the vicinity of Ichún Falls - its oval rim lies only about 250 meters above the surrounding forest. Our first camp on the river was at an elevation of 437 meters, about 163 meters below the rim we had just climbed over.

According to the map\(^5\), the Meseta’s high point is Colorado Queipa, standing at 1706 meters. I question the altitude and location of Queipa until I see the topographic tile for its alleged coordinates: approximately latitude N 4° 33’ / longitude W 63° 20’. The topographic map on page 31 is from tile Salto Ichún 7530-III. (That tile shows ridges with an altitude as high as 920 meters.) The information for Queipa may be on the adjacent tile to the south, 7529-IV. On the Meseta’s west rim, Colorado Uquia is shown on the map\(^5\) as being 1435 meters in altitude. If true, these high points mirror those of other tepuis in the region.

Most of the rainfall run-off in the approximately 3000 square kilometer interior of the Meseta de Ichún flows out of Ichún Falls, approximately 40 meters wide.
Satellite Photo, Meseta de Ichún
Tile Sat Image 464_MRSID³
Graphics by Jeff Shea
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela
The Ichún River has its source somewhere in the south of the 70-kilometer-long Meseta. It is my dream to reach there. The approach of the 2013 expedition was from the north, over Ichún Falls. The March 2013 expedition penetrated approximately 10 kilometers south (as the crow flies) into its interior from Salto Ichún, the Spanish name for Ichún Falls. (See “Point Reached March 2013” in yellow in the illustration on the previous page.)

Since 70 kilometers in our modern world, little more than 40 miles, can be covered in less than an hour on a modern freeway, the feat of penetrating deep into the Meseta may seem trivial.

The challenges of accessing the interior of the Meseta include not only carrying enough food, but also diplomacy and psychology, respecting the locals, paying tribute to the tribe, and trying to keep from getting looted of gear.

Progress amounted to about two kilometers a day. The Shirian cut trail through dense vegetation with machetes. We all carried supplies, the main bulk and weight of which was food. Sometimes gear was left behind while they cut, only to have to go back to retrieve it.
The Approach to the Meseta

Ichún Falls is accessible by motorized canoe from the small town of La Paragua, two hundred kilometers downstream as the crow flies and probably more than 300 kilometers on the ground. Once leaving La Paragua, I entered into a different world, where few people, want of gasoline, illegal mining camps guarded by government forces and the laws of nature meant that you had better travel with friends. Carlucho was one such person. He knew the Shirian and led me to Parato, Rafael, and Janeiro, who, along with Carlucho and I, formed the core of the team.

On March 3, 2013, Emilio, Carlucho, Santiago (the Shirian boatman), Janeiro, several other Shirian and I departed from the town of La Paragua. On the way upriver, shortly after leaving La Paragua, all of the gear was taken out of the canoe at a rapid. Using poles made from saplings, ropes and many men, the canoe was hoisted to the calm water upstream.

*Diary March 3, 2013  Slept in Anaima*

*Our first full day up the river.*

*We had to go upriver through rapids. Later, we came to a very rough area. This, I was told, was impossible to pass. We pulled off to the shore. Janeiro hoisted the motor up on his shoulders and carried it over and up the rocks. Santiago placed logs across the rocks for the bottom of the canoe to slide up.*

*I held the rope and pulled, submerged half in the water. At one point I lost my hold and was concerned I might get carried away by the water. I hoisted and pulled and grunted. It was tough going.*

*We finally got it up above the rapids and rocks.*
On March 4, we passed the colossal and mesmerizingly beautiful tepui of Guaiquinima (Why-Ki-Ni-Ma) on our left as we wound our way south upriver.

---

**Diary March 4, 2013**  [Flight over the Ichün Falls]  Slept in Kavai Maken, Shirian Village

*The ride upriver was exciting as we traveled on the river around Guaiquinima, a massive tepui.*

We continued upriver. I fell asleep. When I woke, we were already in Boca de Carun. We met Octavio and his brother, who had flown in. We took off on the short runway. Soon we were looking out over a vast dense rainforest. It was rather incredibly large, and it appeared mysterious.

We passed the beautiful falls. Then we were flying over the top of the Meseta. There was no summit, but rather a ridge going off to the east and south. Below was a black river, the Ichün. It meandered in the bowl of the mountain. We flew over a ravine that looked wild, with water crashing. It was long and dangerous, then the Falls.

I was told that the airspace we were flying over was restricted and was under the control of the military. This may further explain lack of information about the Meseta.
Ichúń Falls

Aerial, Meseta de Ichúń Rim, Looking Southwest from Ichúń Falls

Ichúń Falls from the Air

The Approach to the Meseta
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Aerial, Meseta De Ichún, Northeast Rim With Ichún River In Foreground (Falls Hidden In Rim) and Paragua River Left, Looking East-Northeast
The Ichún River Just Above the Falls

We flew back to Boca De Carun and continued upriver. Pilot Octavio and his brother joined us in the canoe to Kavai Maken, the first of two Shirian villages we were to visit.

Diary March 5, 2013  Slept at a beach below the waterfall, Salto Ichún, near Rio Paragua

[In Kavai Maken] Carlucho went to find Parato. I was told he did not hesitate even a fraction of a second, but agreed readily to join our expedition.

[On the way upriver] Octavio told stories of a legend, the Salvajes, a savage half-man half-monkey in the northern parts of Amazonas state. He also told stories of a human-like creature seven feet tall, in the upper Caura River to the West of the Ichún.

As we approached the falls, the river was full of tea-colored foam. Ichún Falls! A goal reached at last. Emilio estimated them to be 70 meters high. They were voluminous. The river widened to the shape of a lake, a body of water full of foam. The river water was a dark, dark amber color, beautiful in the sunlight, and fit to drink.
Ichún Falls, the gateway to the Meseta
In the middle of the night there was the strangest sound, maybe the most strange and moving I had ever heard. It was monkeys. It was a deep sound of whooping and making a clamor. I thought I heard dogs barking. It conjured up images of the untouched ... earth and an unimaginable scene deep in the forest.
Diary March 6, 2013  Slept at a beach below the waterfall, Salto Ichún, near Rio Paragua

Carlucho found an incredible caterpillar that he declared was very dangerous based on the fact it looked like a much bigger creature he’d had an encounter of death with by near-asphyxiation.
At 2 a.m. in the morning the howling monkeys did it again and I had fortunately prepared to record them. And I did. It is one of the most amazing things I ever heard.

Ichún Falls
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Within The Meseta

Paragua River Expedition Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Expedition day</th>
<th>Inside Meseta Walk Day</th>
<th>Place Slept</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Altitude (Meters)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Guadal Bolivar, La Presa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Below Unimam, French Hermit's house, Paragua River</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anaima, the place of the Portuguese family, Paragua River</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Piran's Place (Kayan Maken), Paragua River</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beach at Salto Ichun, Ichun River</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Beach at Salto Ichun, Ichun River</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Day 1: Pig Camp, inner trough, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Day 2: Magic House, a place on the outside of the inner rim of Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Day 3: Sunstream, a small stream that we camped on the side of, inside the inner rim of Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td>437 ft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Day 4: Ichun River, just above rapids, Camp 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 42'53&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 22'37&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Day 5: Salto Pequeno, Ichun River, where we walked to yesterday</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 43'08&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 22'39&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Day 6: Bulla Camp, Ichun River, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 42'78&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 22'71&quot;</td>
<td>458 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Day 7: Dream River, Ichun River, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 41'90&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 22'40&quot;</td>
<td>476 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Day 8: Tapir Baths, Ichun River, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 41'19&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 21'82&quot;</td>
<td>505 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Day 9: Tapir Baths, Ichun River, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Day 10: East Camp, Ichun River, Meseta de Ichun, via fur points, Salto II</td>
<td></td>
<td>N° 4° 40'04&quot;</td>
<td>W° 63° 21'49&quot;</td>
<td>566 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Day 11: Pig Camp, inner trough, Meseta de Ichun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>exit Meseta, Kayan Maken, Paragua River</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Anaima, Paragua River</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Umayan (and on to 700 meters Ayoran Tapu)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green shading indicates canoe travel on Paragua River from Meseta de Ichun
Yellow shading means on foot within the Meseta de Ichun

Topographic map showing route on foot

This map shows the walking portion of the expedition camp by camp (noted in yellow on the log above)

Within The Meseta
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Day 1

I refer to the first day of the walk as Day 1. (It was the 6th day of the expedition.)

Before departing from the sandy beach on the river below Ichún Falls, I had amply demonstrated that the fastest route above the falls was a straight line. But without any announcement, on the first morning of the walk into the Meseta, the Shirian loaded all of our gear into Santiago’s canoe. Carlucho insisted that I must trust their “internal GPS.” It would have been pointless to argue with them. Clearly, they were familiar with a route that would bring us up into the Meseta.

We returned to the Paragua River downstream and unloaded our gear inside a small inlet to the northwest. Then we proceeded on foot to the southwest. Santiago and Sylvester returned to their village in the canoe.

The first night was spent in the inner trough between the northern concentric oval rings. After climbing up the outer rim, we had a view of a thin waterfall some kilometers distant flowing out of the inner rim. We descended. We came to an area that was rather strange, as the jungle floor had pits that were an average of about ten feet across and three feet deep. They speculated it was a natural geography. We made our first camp on a flat area on a small peninsula formed by a creek turning 180 degrees.
Day 2

The next morning, we walked past a muddy area frequented by wild pigs.

After the expedition was over, Carluco and Janeiro, who had returned early, spent another night at Camp 1. Carluco told me that at dusk, they had been surrounded on three sides by a sounder of about fifty wild pigs. He said they were grunting and seemed restless. Carluco and Janeiro feared for their lives. Carluco took off his sandals and slapped them together briskly. Hearing the sound, they fled. When I asked Janeiro how many pigs he had seen, he said, “One hundred.”

Shortly after leaving camp, we came to a tributary of the Ichún, surrounded by dense forest. Janeiro felled a tree, cutting it in such a way as to make it fall across the water nearly to the other side. Honorio bettered his effort, cutting a larger tree and making it fall so as to cross the first. Parato and Rafael tied branches vertically to the sides of the horizontal logs, lashing them with vine, then stringing vine at a height of several feet to make a railing to hold on to. We traversed the stream one by one.
We crossed the bridge made by felled trees

On the other side, there was a debate. It seemed they did not know which way to go. They started west and I said we needed to go east. We went south.

**Drosera**

We ascended part of the way up the inner rim’s outer side. We camped next to a tea-colored stream. Being early in the day, Parato, Rafael and Janeiro made a reconnaissance for tomorrow. Honorio and I later went up the hill to see what was happening. We climbed up the outside of the inner rim and came to a stream. There was an unusual plant. Its very small flower-like clusters so fascinated me that I spent time photographing them. After the expedition, I was informed that I had photographed carnivorous plants called Drosera, or sundews.
Drosera found on the outside of the inner north rim of Meseta de Ichún
Day 3

The day was very hot. We ascended the steep slope of the inner rim. As we began to descend its south side, we came to an area of flat sloping sheets of rock where no trees grew; water erosion had carved small tepui-like raised protrusions.

![Rocky Terrain](image)

**Rocky Terrain**
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Emilio’s earlier speculation that the red markings on the satellite images were rock outcroppings was confirmed.

Rafael, Honorio and Janeiro dropped their packs. They headed off to the east towards the Ichún River.

[Note: Their form of backpack is made of a curved wood frame to which all is tied with plastic cord. It must be uncomfortable.]

We waited more than an hour. During this time, I filmed Parato relating the tale of Wanapa. He told a story about how there was a problem between people and how a man had made a poison smoke and everyone in the house (or village) had died, except that his grandfather was not there at the time, so he survived. Others may have gone off too, and he suggested the possibility that they may still be living within the Meseta. He mentioned other languages and that he could understand them, and that if we met others he might be able to speak with them. Or so I understood.

Parato, Carlucho and I continued on, following the “path” of cut saplings. We found water on the way and filled our water bottles and drank. I photographed insects, including a remarkable exoskeleton of a spider.
We finally came to another small tea-colored stream, where we made camp. Janeiro, Honorio and Rafael arrived saying they had reached the Ichún River, down to the east. While they went back to retrieve their packs up on the rocky rim of the Meseta, I walked down the little stream and photographed more of the strange and remarkable Drosera.
Drosera Found On Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Within The Meseta
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Reaching The River Again

Day 4

We reached the river. We were far above Ichún Falls and the flat trough between the two northern rims and clearly well within the Meseta. We camped. Since there was plenty of daylight left, some of us went further south upriver.

Looking South Upriver From Camp 4, the First Camp on the River
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

I photographed a purple flower. After the expedition, when reviewing my photographs, I noticed that this flower, and even its leaves, had similar-looking clear tentacles with sticky secretions, making me question if this was also carnivorous.

Within The Meseta
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
We reached a waterfall of about two meters in height.

That night, I heard a frog by the river. I fetched my camera.
It started to rain. Our shelter consisted of a black plastic tarp supported by a frame of cut branches that rested across vertical posts. Some chose to sleep outside, but when the rain came, everyone huddled under the protection of the tarp. Rain pooled in the low points in the tarp and sometimes poured down on the unlucky person below.

Day 5

We noted that the river level had risen a good 30 to 50 cm higher - maybe more. I was not surprised, given the fact that there had been rain.

In the morning, Honorio decided to return. He walked back to the village of Ichún.

The rest of us continued upriver to the south. We got a late start because of the necessity of drying our gear after the last night’s rain.

Even with openings cut by machetes between the saplings, there were many obstacles to deal with, as shown in the photos below.
I wade through a small stream
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Janeiro crosses a side stream on a log
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013
While working our way through the forest, there was often the urge to reach out and grab a branch for stability. This sometimes resulted in being bitten by a “Veinte-Cuatro,” a one-inch long black ant that got its nickname because the sting of its bite takes 24-hours to subside. I was bitten more than once, but apparently they were only partial bites, since the pain lasted only a few hours.

A “Bullet Ant” - Also Known as a “Veinte-Cuatro”
Naively, in Anaima, the second night on the river, I tried to stop a “Veinte-Cuatro” with my fingers so that I could photograph it.
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Another result of moving through the thick bush was getting a karapata in the skin.
It was common to find these small creatures burrowing into one’s skin, causing itchiness. Carlucho recommended using insect repellant, then waiting twenty-four hours to pull it out; otherwise, he said, the head would get stuck inside and cause infection. My 105 mm Nikkor macro lens made detail on this tick possible to see.

Parato began making a shelter early in the day. When I insisted we move on awhile longer, Parato, leading with the machete, raced on while I negotiated the thinly cut gap between trees with my large pack and bigger bodily frame.

Soon, he was gone. I turned around. Not having a machete to assist me, it was all I could do to get through the thick growth. I went in the direction of the sound of the river and met the others. We camped near the site of the first waterfall upriver from Camp 4.

The men speculated that Parato had returned to Ichún village with some of our food. I said to myself that I did not believe he would do that.

That evening, when I got into my hammock, it ripped. I was flung to the ground. In the process of getting up, I noticed a large black scorpion nearby.
There was a substantial difference in opinion as to how dangerous the scorpion was. Carlucho said its bite was like a bee sting. The Shirian said it was deadly.

**Making A Raft**

Day 6

In the morning, Parato walked into our camp. We proceeded as a group until we met a wide channel of water blocking our further progress upriver.

The men immediately started hacking at trees with their machetes. That afternoon, Janeiro, Rafael and Parato each cut down a tree. We hauled them over a hillock and down to the Ichún river, using rollers made from cut branches and a winch made from living trees, cut branches and a rope.
A Log Was Then Cut to a Manageable Size for Moving
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Rafael Cuts Down A Tree
I was told they were special types of trees that would float, possibly balsa.
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Within The Meseta
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Rollers Were Used To Wedge The Logs Forward
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013

Janeiro Built a Winch Using Living Trees, Cut Branches and Rope
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013
Through this means, the five of us (Parato, Rafael, Janeiro, Carlucho and I) moved the logs from the three trees to the Ichún River.

During the felling of the trees, Parato got bitten by a “Veinte-Cuatro.” With his machete, he made shavings from a stick of wood and put it in his mouth. He taught me the name of the wood: Wop Koi.
After a day of hard labor, we made camp. The next day a raft was made using the logs.

Day 7
In the morning, the logs were tied together with vine to make a raft. We used the raft to ferry our gear to the other side of the stream that was perpendicular to the Ichún, which had blocked our path.

Evidence of Wild Pig and Jaguar
After ferrying our gear to the other side, I was shown evidence on the ground of both jaguar and wild pig: jaguar vomit. I would not have noticed this unless the Shirian had pointed it out to me. But once they did, it was obvious: the bristles and toenails of a pig in a dried slurry on the ground.
Contents: Hair and nails of wild boar

Jaguar Skin
Later, in Ichún Village, I Posed Next to Skin to Illustrate Size of a Jaguar
Rafael and Janeiro Go Across the Slow-Moving Ichún in search of Merey

Rafael and Janeiro used the raft to cross the Ichún to collect Merey, the fruit of the cashew nut. I was told that the cashew fruit elsewhere was orangish and bitter. But the cashew fruit here was one of the most delicious things I ever ate. Often looking rather broken and decaying after falling out of the tall cashew trees, the fruit was nevertheless amazingly delicious and refreshing. The aroma of the fruit could be detected from a distance. All of us loved it, Parato perhaps most of all!

It was clear from their foray across the Ichún that it was slow enough to allow travel upriver against the current.
The Fruit of the Cashew, known in Spanish as Merey

Parato Drinking Merey
While waiting for them to return, a jumping spider landed on my pack.

![Jumping Spider](image1)

Jumping Spider

That afternoon, we found rocks on the side of the river and made camp. The Shirian went hunting with a rifle and brought back a wild hen. They boiled it with rice.

![Parato and Janeiro Prepare Hen and Rice](image2)

Parato and Janeiro Prepare Hen and Rice
Day 8

In the morning of Day 8, Janeiro and Carlucho returned to the village of Ichún.

Rafael, Parato and I continued upriver. Parato was just ahead of me and Rafael behind. As Parato stepped forward, I saw a snake dart out and stop behind him. We all froze: Parato, me, Rafael and the viper. Parato stopped and looked back.

“Serpiente.”

I asked Rafael, who had also stopped in his tracks just behind me, to get my camera out of my bag so that I could remain almost motionless, lest the snake flee or try to bite me. I cautiously photographed it.

[Image]

Culebra

“Do you want me to kill it?” I asked. They both said Yes. (They later said that where there is a small snake, there is a bigger one nearby.) I asked Rafael to hand me his machete. I held it over my head, and, fearing I would miss, I slammed it down as fast and accurately as I could. A moment later, I looked. There was no head. I held up the poisonous snake on the machete. I wanted to find the head. They said that it was dangerous to look for the head, so I abandoned the idea. We moved on.

*Parato had been bitten twice by poisonous snakes. He said that although they were small, they were deadly. Both times, he had the good fortune of a helicopter coming for him and carrying him to a hospital, where he was injected with anti-venom. The problem for us was that anti-venom has to be refrigerated. It was impossible to do so on our walk. Therefore, the anti-venom that I carried was probably useless. Furthermore, anti-venom must be administered by a doctor to avoid legal complications if the victim dies.*

Later that afternoon, we camped when we found a place on the riverbank with rocks. The rocks made it easy to cook and wash. I waded and swam across to the east bank of the Ichún.

*Within The Meseta*

Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Furthest Point Reached

Day 9

At first light of morning, Parato and Rafa shook me out of my slumber.

“Lanto!” (Tapir!)

I looked down at the water. There, below us, about 30 meters away, was a large animal bathing in the shallows of the river. It probably weighed about 70 kilograms. By the time I got my camera ready, it had fled.

I gave Parato and Rafael my compass and showed them the map. There was a wide bend, I explained, and the fastest way upriver was through the forest, a clear shot directly south. I followed behind, taking photographs. I met them at a stream. They said they had cut a path to another small waterfall on the Ichún.

We returned to camp.

Day 10

To my disappointment, there was no tapir this morning, possibly because the river level was higher and the shore rocks were submerged.

We retraced the path of yesterday, arriving at the second waterfall we’d observed on the Ichún river above Camp 4, about two meters in height.
The river water level had been rising continually. They were concerned that the raft would be gone.

We contemplated our next move.

We would have continued had there been enough food, but since there was not enough, we decided to turn back.

We made it back to the tributary before Balsa Camp that day at dusk. I swam across to fetch the raft.

Two days later we met Carlucho and Janeiro, along with Santiago, on the Paragua and continued down to civilization.
CONCLUSION

I told Parato, Rafael and Janeiro at the end of the March 2013 expedition that I would return in January 2014. Carlucho and the Shirian agreed to try again to gain access to the far south of the Meseta. (Douglas Pridham, Carlucho’s friend, has also said he will join us.)

The goal of the next expedition is to penetrate at least 60 kilometers inland (as the crow flies), to the vicinity of the 15-kilometer wide crater-looking feature near its southern rim. I want to reach as close as possible to the source of the Ichún in the Meseta’s southwest. (See “Source of the Ichún” in the diagram on page 20.) This would entail traveling well over 100 kilometers (on the ground) of river, rapids and small waterfalls.

The slow progress of the 2013 expedition, which used machetes to cut through dense forest, suggests trying a different form of transportation to reach the source of the Ichun. In preparation for the 2014 return, Carlucho conceived of a modified watercraft that is light-weight, can be assembled and disassembled easily and is compact enough to be carried through the forest to the calm waters of the Ichun above the Falls. The raft we built from logs in 2013 was pushed across the river with poles. This proved that the current was slow enough – at least in some areas - to travel upriver with something as light as a two-horsepower motor. Our departure is scheduled for January 27, 2014. We have allotted about eight weeks for the next expedition in order to allow enough time to reach the south of the Meseta.

I believe that there is a high probability of collecting specimens of flora and fauna new to science. It would be fortunate if an entomologist or other expert in specimen collection could join the January 2014 expedition. Permission would have to be obtained to carry insect specimens out of the country (for DNA testing).

I shot over 2000 photographs between the outer rim and the inner sanctum of the Meseta, trying to capture any and all items of interest or peculiarity.

At the end of the expedition, Parato, Rafael, Janeiro, their chief, Augustine (who was not on the expedition with us), and I reviewed most of my photographs of flora and fauna taken in the Meseta. Through this means I was able to get the Shirian name for the species they recognized. Sometimes, they would call one spider by the same name as another spider, so I began asking them if the names were specific or generic.

Many times they all agreed they’d seen an insect or plant before. For one berry/fruit and two fungi/mushrooms, Augustine said he’d seen them but the others said they had not. For three flowers (including Drosera), two fungi/mushroom, one berry/fruit and one leaf growing from a stem, they unanimously said they had not seen them before.

Appendix A1 – shows photographs of flora and fauna with their Shirian names
Appendix A2 – shows photographs of flora and fauna that I did not review with them, which I list as Unidentified
Appendix A3 – Flora Unknown to Shirian except Augustine
Appendix A4 – Flora Unknown to Shirian
Appendix B1 – Excerpts from 1956 article by Carlos Montoya
Appendix B2 - World Waterfall Database
Appendix C1 – Douglas Pridham
Appendix C2 – El Dorado, Lake Parime, Nhamini-wi and The Lake of Milk

I note, sadly, that Santiago died in late 2013 due to an unknown disease. Carlucho who had seen him shortly before he died, told me at the time that Santiago looked sickly and extremely thin. We remember him fondly with gratitude and respect.
APPENDIX A1
Shirian Names for Identified Flora and Fauna

A Lem Kohk (Insect Nest)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2166
A Ras (Orange, Black, Yellow and White Butterfly)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2532

A Rem Ko Nas (Small Fish)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2652

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
A Rno Muick (Multi-Colored Berries)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2827

A Rno Muick (Multi-Colored Berries With Ant)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2842
Aru Meuk (Plant With Long Leaves)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1615

Beu Ma Thot (Succulent Plant)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1543
Beu Ma Thot (Succulent Plant)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1614

Ha Chuk (Red Berry)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1597

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Hi Mos (Bee-Like Insect)
Meseta de Ichűn, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2629

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Hi Mos (Black Fly)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolívar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2793

Ho No Le (Yellow-Brown Bee)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolívar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2691

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Holo Mus Heemo (Orange Colored Nut)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2139

Ka Ta Nas (Grass In Radial Shape)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1556

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Kata Tai In Er Ra Sha (Red And Green Berries)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2147

Ko Me Henh (Insect Dwelling)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2863

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Mahn En (Wild Hen)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2658
Nhe Kot Nhi Himo ((top of) Fruit)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2955

Oh Nosh Nak (Seed of Cashew Tree)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3047

Appendix A1
Paragaua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Nih Mani (Damsel Fly)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1672

Nih Mani (Damsel Fly) Closeup
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1672

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Pa Hi(kh) (Guamo)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2468

Pa Hi(kh) (Guamo)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2490

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Pa Hi(kh) (Guamo)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2491

Peu Mo Tot Himo (Pod)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3041

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Schwena (Moth)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2614

Sha Ma Amok (Tree Fungus)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2997
Sham Lep Mahi (Guama Fruit)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1860

Shiripina (Flying Insect Nest)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1489
Sho Ne Ai (Cashew Tree)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2554

Sho Ne Ai (Cashew Fruit)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2421

Appendix A1
Sho Ne Ai (Cashew Fruit)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2422

Tesh O Nai Nash Ki (Young Plant with Blue Berries and Red Leaves)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1449
Tesh O Nai Nash Ki (Plant with Blue Berries and Red Leaves)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2462

Tesh O Nai Nash Ki (Plant with Blue Berries and Red Leaves)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2868

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Toh Hi (Black Scorpion)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2082

Toh Ri (Tick)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2902

Appendix A1
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Wali Che Hek (Water Spider)
(I note: it appears that the 8th leg fell off, but I am not certain.)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2989

War Check (Jumping Spider)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2382CU

Appendix A1
We Te He On Ap (Tree Fungus)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2810
APPENDIX A2
Flora and fauna that I did not review with Shirian, which I list as Unidentified

Unidentified, Crimson Flower
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2092

Unidentified, Pink Flower
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2106
Unidentified, Delicate Spider (One to Two Inches Long)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2459

Unidentified, Delicate Spider (One to Two Inches Long)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2481
Unidentified, Delicate Spider (One to Two Inches Long)
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2486

Unidentified, Golobular Growth on Underside of Leaves
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2231
Unidentified, Gold/Tan Mushroom
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3020

Unidentified, Green Tree Fungus
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2990

Appendix A2
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Unidentified, Green Tree Moss  
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3032

Unidentified, Molasses-Colored Fungus  
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2991
Unidentified, Purple Tree Fungus
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3039

Unidentified, White Tree Fungus
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2357

Appendix A2
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Unidentified, Yellow/Green Moss
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1444

Unidentified, Green Tree Fungus
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3043
APPENDIX A3
Flora Unknown to Shirian except Augustine

Fungi
Unknown To Shirian Except Augustine
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2998

Red And White Berry
Unknown To Shirian Except Augustine
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3002

Appendix A3
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Red Parachute Fungus on Tree Trunk
Unknown To Shirian Except Augustine
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2216CU
APPENDIX A4
Flora Unknown to Shirian

Yellow Mushroom
Unknown To Shirian
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 2033

Possible Carnivorous Plant
Unknown To Shirian
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1812CU

Appendix A4
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Leaves on Branches  
Unknown To Shirian  
Found Within Inner North Of Meseta De Ichún  
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DCS 2116

Drosera  
Unknown To Shirian  
Found On Inner North Rim Of Meseta De Ichún  
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1599

Appendix A4

Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Drosera
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Inner North Rim Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1604

Drosera
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Inner North of Rim Of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1607

Appendix A4
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Drosera
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1619

Drosera
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1474

Appendix A4
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Drosera
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Top of Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1480

Two Attached Fruits
Unknown To Shirian
Found on Top of Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1454

Appendix A4
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
Fungi
Unknown To Shirian
Found Outside of Outer North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 3143

Flower
Unknown To Shirian
Found Inside Inner North Rim of Meseta De Ichún
Meseta de Ichún, Bolivar State, Venezuela, 2013, DSC 1632
APPENDIX B1

Excerpts from article by Carlos Montoya (August 1956) from unknown periodical, given to me by Carluchon Nuñez, who obtained it from Douglas Pridham
Paraguay River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
pero a los pocos metros hubimos de desistir ya que la humareda de polvo erizada en el cauce era tan grande que imposibilitaba totalmente la marcha. Contuvimos, con un hombre, el camino a pie por el lodo, los otros internándose en aquel suelo negro-azulina que forma placas en los playones de Guinfiquinque, Cayrapo, etc., y tras la que muy poco el viaje fue un refrilamiento aproximado del 14,21 diente porque en nuestros ordenes. Más arriba, en la margen derecha, un desprendimiento de arena, hecha pequeña, un camino inexistente y con varias ríos, que se materializan con varios ríos, y el pequeño espacio que teníamos despejado. Tan sólo un paracaidas azul, con un aviso de seguridad, fue devorado por la brisa y cayó sobre el río, cerca de la orilla, donde, en prevención de esto, teníamos dos lancas de alumbrado girando y girando con la velocidad. Fue así el que el saco de arrastre prácticamente cayó toro el agua; sólo lo teníamos protector de la lona del cauce y se humedeció literalmente.

Desde las 6:15 am. teníamos encendido una gran lamparilla de lumbres, y las sombras, hechas en el momento, un resplandor de cuajos blancos y lumbres de Yaguar que daban un humo negro y espeso. El piloto fue finamente maravilloso. Teníamos un monitor de gran emoción y alegría cuando el bombero dio la "pulsa" de salto al Campamento, más bajo que la asa de la Brújula Nacional y se la lanza de Yaguar, en uno de los cauces ríos con una morada irreal. Al día siguiente, en el Cauca, fue el primer afluente de la margen izquierda, hasta culminar con las Cabeceras del Paragua, con el Rio Momposí, bajo de la cuenca del río Momposí (Cislares), primer afluente de importancia del río Paraguas por su margen izquierda. Selectivo 12 hombres con la mínima impunidad, 3 lunes, 6 europeos "morochos", 3 pachacús o reglamento y 2 meses cartuchos de dinamita, preparados en forma de pequeñas bombas de mano. Una camara pequeña, y la cápsula de alumbrado, con un botón de cauce, son nuestros medios de transporte y protección. Entre los hombres van 4 indios. 2 shiribas y 2 Guariscones (Guaribos), conocedores de esta región hasta los Saltos de Manantial; pero también para ellos son una incógnita tanto el río Okaslar como la parte superior de los Saltos Manantial y las dos grandes barreras que forman las fuentes del Paragua: Manantial y Kusmodni.

En estas condiciones, a pesar de lo interesante que para mi sería disponer de la grabadora-radio, las circunstancias no necesitan preverse de ese servicio antes que esperemos a perder los aparatos en esas peligrosas zonas. Mi esperanza duró aproximadamente 20-12 días y la orilla izquierda a la hidrocarburo Rosas, se unía con todos los ríos, ocho días después de nuestra partida.
Mahigua – Crucero Paramichi
Organizador de un Campeonato "protagizado" es el Crucero. Entrevistas con indios Shiriannas, Sapes y Guajajeros. La familia Sapi, indios Shiriannas venezolanobrasileños.

Esta fase de la expedición se inicia con un trabajo muy físico, con la ayuda de los indios Shiriannas. Se realizan largos recorridos en canoas por el río, navegando entre las islas y arrecifes de coral. Los indios Shiriannas, conocidos por su bondad y amabilidad, ofrecen su ayuda en el viaje.

La familia Sapi, indios Shiriannas venezolanobrasileños, nos proporciona un acogedor lugar para descansar y recibir nuestras provisiones. Su hospitalidad y gentileza nos permiten recuperarnos de la fatiga del viaje.

Durante el viaje, nos encontramos con diferentes criaturas marinas, incluyendo focas y delfines, que nos acompañan en nuestro viaje. Los indios Shiriannas nos comparten su conocimiento sobre la fauna y flora del río, ayudándonos a entender mejor nuestro entorno.

A medida que avanzamos, la experencia de navegación se vuelve más peligrosa, con corrientes fuertes y aguas profundas. Sin embargo, la amistad y la cooperación entre los indios Shiriannas y nosotros nos permiten superar estos desafíos.

Por fin, llegamos al final de nuestro viaje, con el crucero Paramichi esperándonos en la orilla. La escena es de gran belleza, con el sol poniente armando el camino. La tranquilidad del viaje finaliza y nos preparamos para una nueva etapa de nuestra expedición.

Appendix B1
Fase Septima

Crucero Paramichi — Cabeceras Paragua

Dificultades del transporte. — Diluminación y construcción del CAMPO Nº 3. — Exploración de las Quebras Manakuali y Manakuali, verdaderos "puentes" del río Paragua, — Recorrido hasta el río Obispo y exploración de éste hasta cerca de sus confluencias. — Diluminación de un futuro Campo para aviones grandes.

Vamos a interrumpir por unas horas. Aunque a veces nos encontramos con un poco de olvido en el camino, siempre estamos dispuestos a seguir adelante. En este viaje, nos enfrentamos a varios desafíos, como la falta de alimento y el exceso de trabajo que nos impone el camino.

Esta parte del viaje es muy arriesgada, pero también muy emocionante. En las montañas, el camino es estrecho y peligroso, pero la belleza de la naturaleza compensa ese riesgo.

Todas las noches, en la luna, nos encontramos con un mundo nuevo. Cada vez que cruzamos un nuevo territorio, nos enfrentamos a nuevos desafíos. Pero también nos permiten descubrir aspectos de la naturaleza que aún no conocemos.

Al final de esta parte del viaje, llegaremos a un nuevo lugar, donde nos esperan más desafíos y más oportunidades de aprendizaje.

Llevamos una rica variación de productos de la tierra, que nos permiten sobrellevar el viaje. Los alimento que comemos son frescos y sostenibles, y nos proporcionan la energía que necesitamos para seguir adelante.

En este viaje, nos enfrentamos a un mundo que nunca antes había visto. Cada vez que cruzamos un nuevo territorio, nos enfrentamos a nuevos desafíos. Pero también nos permiten descubrir aspectos de la naturaleza que aún no conocemos.

A la mañana siguiente, nos enfrentamos a un nuevo día, lleno de oportunidades y desafíos. Vamos a seguir adelante, dispuestos a enfrentar cualquier desafío que nos encontre en el camino.

Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report

Appendix B1
Débemos estar ya a unos 20 kilómetros de la frontera con Brasil. La región va cambiando sensiblemente. Se empieza a ver grandes ejemplares de Bambú gigante —por primera vez desde que abandonamos Ciudad Bolívar—. La escena es más abundante: la mata de Tabacoe, así como los lagos invernantes y de montaña; jalonan el río varios árboles del género "Anagafo" y numerosos árboles de "Guajos" y "Garitas". Por contra, van disminuyendo los Gyuayalos, dando paso a nombrosos seches de Meray de montaña. Las Palmas son ya las típicas de Brasil; algunas recuerdan nuestros Chaguaros, pero el aspecto del tronco es aquí exageradamente grande. Frecuentemente encontramos zonas de selva plana, pero raras veces de grandes dimensiones. El turismo en las zonas con vistas a posibles estancias, como Campo de Emergencia para Helicópteros, es evidente. Se pueden ver en las fértiles tierras de rosa, algunas espinosas que pueden ser utilizadas en la construcción de aceites, y algunas que son utilizadas en la construcción de barcos pequeño tamaño. Por esa razón, se deben tomar medidas para prevenir cualquier daño a estos recursos naturales.

Desde este punto se hace más duro el camino, pero se puede apreciar la riqueza de la fauna y flora. Se pueden ver aves de gran tamaño, como el guacamayo rojo, que es una especie que se encuentra en estas zonas. También se pueden ver animales como la jaguares, que son una especie amenazada de extinción.

La fauna es diversificada, con una gran variedad de aves, mamíferos, reptiles y anfibios. Las aves son especialmente notables, con especies como el guacamayo rojo, el loro y el pavo real. Los mamíferos incluyen especies como el mono de cola larga y el jaguar. Los reptiles como la serpiente de cascabel, y los anfibios como la rana de la selva tropical.

La vegetación es principalmente tropical y subtropical, con una amplia gama de especies de árboles y plantas. Los árboles son de gran tamaño y tienen una copa densa. La selva es muy densa y es difícil de penetrar. Las plantas incluyen especies como el guayacán, el pino y el rododendro.

La región es rica en recursos minerales, especialmente petróleo y gas natural. El petróleo se encuentra en grandes depósitos subterráneos, que son explotados para la producción de energía. El gas natural se utiliza principalmente para la generación de electricidad.

La región es también rica en recursos hidrográficos, con ríos y lagos que proporcionan aguas corrientes y estancadas. El río Amazonas es uno de los más grandes del mundo, y es conocido por su riqueza de flora y fauna marina.

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En el lúgubre central de esta sabana de casi 300 metros de largo y 160 de ancho, tenemos el campo N° 4, limpiando al sur, una especie de complejo rectangular de unos 70 metros de largo, bien apantallado en su parte central, y en la que se encuentra la casa de campo, que servirá de acomodamiento para el trote de la avenida. El campo se encuentra en la margen izquierda del río Paraguá, y está en donde se encuentra la casa de campo.

Por lo tanto, en este campo se encontrará el campo N° 4, que también es el de la expedición de 1913. Este campo está en la margen izquierda del río Paraguá, y está en donde se encuentra la casa de campo, que servirá de acomodamiento para el trote de la avenida.

En cuanto a la exploración, en la parte superior de la razón, y en la margen derecha, se pueden ver las dos rutas de avance, que se cruzan en un ángulo de 90 grados, y que forman un triángulo.

En lo que respecta a la exploración, en la parte superior de la razón, y en la margen derecha, se pueden ver las dos rutas de avance, que se cruzan en un ángulo de 90 grados, y que forman un triángulo.
pesca, caza y asado en la “troja”

Fayras (pez tigre), de peligrosa y aliados cósmicos, venado montañero del Alto Paragua y asado de Danto en la “troja”.

* * *

Img antes de la Crucero Paraguari en el ocho de año y, si no regresó, comunícámos por radio para que de vuelta, a las 5 mm., las novedades que escuché, con el apañador en batería. Deberá dejar las duras grises y los motores 55 hp al pie del Salto, para el regreso, alternando los trabajos de recogida de Cuerpo No. 4, con el cañon de toda la carga. Estos fueron los trabajos de los días 3, 6 y 7 del mes de abril.

El día 8, domingo, a las 7 am. había encargado al Sargento Rojas de la jefatura provincial de la Expedición durante mi ausencia, emprendiendo la marcha, iniciando así la
In October 2013, Carlucho introduced me to Douglas Pridham on the telephone. I found out that he had done an expedition up the Paragua River, almost to Brazil. Pridham had searched for Montoya Falls. The data given by the World Waterfall Database for Montoya Falls: 505 meters high (1656 feet), latitude 3.73 N / longitude 62.9 W, and its watercourse, “Rio Paragua.” This would make it the 6th highest waterfall in Venezuela.

The coordinates given place it slightly to the east of the Meseta de Ichún. Douglas Pridham found no such waterfall at those coordinates.

There is a question as to whether Montoya Falls exists or not. The World Waterfall Database states: “This waterfall is known to exist but its stature and/or location have not yet been verified by the World Waterfall Database.”

I asked Carlucho what he thought. He said that Montoya was sent on the 1956 expedition at the order of a dictator. Accordingly, Carlucho feels that the veracity of the claim of Montoya Falls is questionable, since Montoya may have been motivated to provide a “successful report.”

In December 2013, Carlucho told me that a woman he knows said that she had gone in search for Montoya Falls with the grandson of Montoya. He said that they had gone by helicopter and that the pilot’s name was Raul Arias. She said that they had sighted Montoya Falls. We are planning to contact Raul.

The search for the truth about Montoya Falls and the Meseta’s interior continues.
It was not until October 2013, seven months after the expedition, that Carlucho introduced me to Douglas Pridham on the telephone, a non-native British Ugandian that has lived in Venezuela for the last three decades. Pridham is the most informed person on the region that I have spoken with to date. He has led more than one expedition to the Upper Paragua to the east of the Meseta de Ichun, further south upriver than its confluence with the Ichun.

[The information below is taken from a Skype conversation I had with Douglas on December 10, 2013. I am including this because of the rich and colorful information about the area. However, I cannot confirm this information. I have not had sufficient time to research and/or there is nothing I can find on the internet on many of these subjects.]

Pridham’s early interest in the Upper Paragua
The judge of the town of La Paragua gave Douglas Pridham the Montoya report. (See excerpts from the Montoya report in Appendix B1.) Pridham developed an interest in exploring the upper Paragua river.

Looking for the Sape and Finding The Shirian
He was in the village of Boca De Carun (a Pemon village on the Paragua downriver from Ichun) and asked if they knew anybody from the Sape tribe. A woman named Doña Elena lived in an upriver village of “really bad Indians.”

“We went to look for the Sape and we bumped into the Shirian. We were in the village and they looked like they were going to (kill us). My girlfriend said, ‘This is fantastic.’ I told her, ‘What will be fantastic is if we get out of here alive.’ This was 1997-98. There were no cooking pots, nothing. It was the village of Kavai Maken.”

The Miner and The Guaica
He told me that there was a miner named Octavio in the town of La Paragua. He said that the miner has been frequenting the area of the upper Paragua for 45 years. According to Pridham, the miner said that formerly, the Shirian nation was ten to twenty times bigger than it is today.

In the late 60s, the Shirian would hold feasts that lasted many days. One year, over 100 canoes gathered. After four or five days, the Guaica came in and killed the men and took the women. They had special sticks that they used to tie up the women.
Villages of the Upper Paragua
In order, upriver (south) from Boca de Carun:
a. Kavai Maken, Shirian village  
b. Cosoiba (the center of the Venezuelan Shirian)  
c. “Maija, a set of set of seven, really dangerous, nasty rapids”  
d. A little village (where Pridham got into trouble with the chief, a man named Montorosa)  
e. The tributary named the Paramichi, which goes directly north, while the Paragua goes 90 degrees east.  
f. Near the confluence of the Paragua and the Paramichi, there is a village Naranjal. In Naranjal, there is an airport with wrecked planes. That is where Parato lived when his family got yellow fever. On the other side, the river comes down into the Uriaquera (that flows to Boa Vista, Brazil). The miner Octavio says there are all sorts of machines left over from miners in Naranjal.

The Galleon
Pridham said he has been up the Paragua river yet never seen the galleon. Nevertheless, he believes it exists and lies just above Maija.

He believes the galleon was coming down the river, not upriver, because the Maija rapids (downriver) are impossible to pass. He said there was a movie made about a Spanish conquistador that started in Peru and came out into Brazil, hauling his galleon over the mountains, as a testament to the fact that things like that were actually done.

“That galleon there is really fascinating; the fact that they looted the galleon is (a shame). Apparently, this galleon exists, because people have told me they have seen it and those are people that don’t tell lies.”

The Waica/Guaica
“They still exist. In 2001-2002, we were coming down the Paramichi from a burial ceremony near a town called Manashquara. Suddenly they materialized with Montorosa. They didn’t speak Spanish. It was a group of about eight, with classic bowl-cut, black hair, about 4’6”-5’0”. The chief of the Guaica took a liking to me. He would laugh his ass off when I couldn’t find the trail. He would squat and put one foot out above the fire to warm it. Luckily the Guaica were with Montorosa. They were wearing red loincloths…. I think they don’t exist anymore in the numbers that they used to.”

“When Montoya was there (1956, See Appendix B1), they were terrified of those guys.”

Charles Brewer and Botany
Charles Brewer Carias, studying under Volkmar Vreshki, founded the school of Botany (at a university in Caracas). On a final exam, Vareshki gave him an 18; he wanted a 20 so he could graduate cum laude. Vareshki would not change it, so Brewer became a dentist instead. “But his love was botany.”
Expeditions were sent to the area in the early 1950s to study the botany of the tepuis. *Flora and Fauna of Venezuelan Guyana* is the most authoritative work.

**The town of La Paragua**

“Town of La Paragua formed in 1700s is not the Paragua of today. The original town was flooded in the late 1970s when Guri Dam was built.”

**Books**


“In May 1595, a hundred Englishmen - “gentlemen, soldiers, rowers, boat-keepers, boys, and of all sorts” - rowed up a river in South America in search of the lost golden city of El Dorado. They were led by Sir Walter Raleigh, forty years old, ready to hazard his fading reputation on this doomed gamble.

“…The Creature in the Map is an effort not only to analyse but also to call into presence the lived experience of the voyage Raleigh undertook in 1595 to the Orinoco Delta in what is now Venezuela.”— Stephen Greenblatt, *Times Literary Supplement*

**The Meseta de Ichun**

(Excerpted from my conversation on December 10, 2013)

Douglas Pridham: “Maybe these wild Indians (the Guaica) are up there (in the Meseta) protecting the forbidden. “

Jeff Shea: “I can’t find any information about anyone documenting the interior of the Meseta.”

Douglas Pridham: “No, no, I agree with you. Octavio (the miner) would know. I never heard him talking about anybody that went up there. Montoya did not explore the Meseta. He went up to Ichun Falls and turned back.”
El Dorado
El Dorado … is the name of a Muisca tribal chief who covered himself with gold dust and, as an initiation rite, dived into the Guatavita Lake. Later, it became the name of a legendary “Lost City of Gold”, that fascinated explorers since the days of the Spanish Conquistadors and was supposedly located on Lake Parime in the highlands of Guyana, South America.

Lake Parime
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Parime

Parime Lacus on a map by Hessel Gerritsz (1625)

Lake Parime is a legendary lake located in South America. It was believed that on its shores was located the city of Manoa or El Dorado. The lake was searched for by several explorers such as Sir Walter Raleigh and Alexander von Humboldt. The lake was printed on maps in the 17th century up until the 19th century. It was believed to be somewhere in Guiana for several years. Then later cartographers like Robert Schonburg and Van Huevel moved the lake more to the southeast of the Orinoco River and north of the Amazon river, often being situated south of the mountains that border Venezuela, Guiana, and Brazil.
However explorers were unable to find the magical and mythical lake, and so they declared the lake as being imaginary.

**The Nhamini-wi and the Lake of Milk**

The Tukano and Piratapuia tribes of the upper Negro River tell a story of the Nhamini-wi. The Nhamini-wi was a pre-Columbian road that traveled from the mountains in the west where the house of the night was located. The trail began at axpeko-dixtara, or the lake of milk in the east. Explorer and artist Roland Stevenson found ruins north of the Negro River in the Uaupés basin that are believed to be the remnants of the Nhamini-wi.

Stevenson followed the vestiges of the extinct pre-Columbian road eastward to find the lake at its beginning and ended up in Roraima, Brazil, in the plains of Boa Vista. Upon examining the region Brazilian geologists Gert Woeltje and Frederico Guimarães Cruz along with Roland Stevenson found that on all the surrounding hillsides a horizontal line appears at a uniform level approximately 120 metres (390 ft) above sea level. This line registers the water level of an extinct lake which existed until relatively recent times. Researchers who studied it found that about 700 years ago this giant lake began to drain due to tectonic movement and slowly over the centuries dried up.

Foreign explorers who have come to the plains of Roraima to explore the area with Stevenson have included the Paititi investigator Gregory Deyermenjian, who in 1997 documented Stevenson’s finds, and the likely correctness of Stevenson’s conclusions concerning the pre-history of the region, in expedition reports filed at the [Explorers Club headquarters in New York City.](#)

The lake’s previous diameter measured 400 kilometres (250 mi) and its area 80,000 square kilometres (31,000 sq mi). It is believed by many modern searchers of El Dorado that the plains of Boa Vista may be the location of Lake Parime. Though due to the drainage it was not found, and therefore considered a myth.
Parime Lacus on a map by Hessel Gerritz (1625) with an overlay of Shea 2013 Paragua River Expedition route map (tan inlay on far left center) and arrow showing where the fabled lost city of gold - El Dorado - allegedly lay on the western shore of Lake Parime

Appendix C2
Paragua River Expedition 2013 - Flag #60 - Jeff Shea MN’92 Report
FOOTNOTES

1. Page 1 - The three satellite images, 464_MRSID, 465_MRSID and 466_MRSID, were given to me by Emilio Perez, Venezuelan cartographer. He wrote, “Image comes from a NASA Landsat 7 ETM+ satellite sensor provided as a mosaic by GLOBAL LANDCOVER FACILITY from Maryland University.” When I type this phrase into Google, the first result directs me to the following University of Maryland website: http://glcf.umd.edu/data/landsat/. This site states, “Use is free to all; effectively held by USGS & NASA; but ultimately held by US public.”

2. Page 4 - The CIA map used as a basis for the illustration on page 4 is available on the internet; graphics by Jeff Shea.

3. Page 4 - (Same as 1)

4. Page 6 - World Map used as a basis for graphic of World Parks by Mighty Minds Publishing Ltd Singapore (1995); graphics by Jeff Shea

5. Page 7 - Venezuela map used as a basis for the illustration on page 7 by ITMB Publishing, Vancouver, Canada (2000); graphics by Jeff Shea. I note that the map incorrectly states the Meseta de Ichún’s high point is Colorado Oueipa. The correct spelling is Queipa.

6. Page 14 - Photos of cannons on page 14 by Octavio Colson, Venezuelan

7. Page 14 - (same as 6)

8. Page 19 - (same as 1); graphics by Jeff Shea

9. Page 20 - (same as 1); graphics by Jeff Shea

10. Page 31 - Map used as a basis for the illustration on page 31 by Instituto Geografico de Venezuela Simon Bolivar; graphics by Jeff Shea

11. Page 95-102 Appendix B1 – article by Carlos Montoya (August 1956) from unknown periodical given to me by Carlucho Nuñez, who obtained it from Douglas Pridham. Douglas Pridham said he does not know the name of the periodical it came from.

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(with thanks to Douglas Pridham for this list)

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Footnotes and References
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