

2011 Nicaragua Trip Information

Harrison Ko, Sarah Clement, Karen Holway, Francis Vanek and Tim Bond visited Sabana Grande this spring break (March 19th through 26th). Hari, Sarah and I drove overnight from Ithaca to Newark Airport and caught the 6am flight to Atlanta, where we rendezvoused with Karen, then flew to Managua. The flights went well. The marvelous and wonderful Lyndsey Chapman met us at the airport and guided us to Sabana Grande via an express bus. The bus was pretty crowded, requiring one of us to stand in the aisle for the whole trip, though no live chickens. The Solar Center in Sabana Grande was much changed from my last visit (this is Tim writing), with substantial progress on the Solar Restaurant, new gardens to support the restaurant effort, more solar panels and more cookers. Our families gathered us up and took us home for the night. We took a day trip to Somoto Canyon, a totally beautiful canyon on the upper reaches of the Rio Coco, on Sunday. On Monday morning we met the group from MIT working on a charcoal stoves and making charcoal from corn straw and other waste vegetable materials.

The cooker building started with discussions of what to build during the week: a new large cooker with fiberglass insulation (instead of wood planings) and a metal stand was the decision. Hari, Sarah and Karen teamed with Alejandra and Ramulda to build the cooker. Reyna, Maria Magdalena and I worked on the support frame. One of the previous volunteers had worked out the dimensions for an angle iron frame which we adjusted for the larger oven. Cutting the angle iron with a hand hacksaw is lots of work. We set up the miter saw that the PV team uses to cut aluminum for the frames of the solar panels with a blade for cutting steel and had a training session on safe use of the saw. A second miter saw with a blade for cutting wood was donated to the Solar Center and put into operation after a safety training course. The teams worked diligently to finish the new cooker and the stand (support frame with wheels). Francis traveled separately, first to Costa Rica, then to Sabana Grande, arriving Wednesday morning. The Solar Center had a large drill press that was donated some time ago, but never used. We cleaned and lubricated the drill and frame and required the switches to get the press working nicely, then had a safety training class to teach safe use of this very dangerous tool. We finished the cooker and stand on Friday just before our closing party/event at which most everyone performed. The Solar Children put on a couple skits which were the hit of the show.



The team.

For pictures click [here](#).

Links to Grupo Fenix info:

[Grupo Fenix Handbook \(2006\)](#)

[Grupo Fenix Volunteer Supplement \(2006\)](#)

[Spring 2011 Trip Itinerary](#)

[Spring 2011 Flight Information](#)

Links to Government Info

[State Department Information on Nicaragua](#)

[CDC Information on Nicaragua](#)