



El Lider

carifitos

CORNELL TREE CLIMBING
INSTITUTE

PRESENTS "COSTA RICA TREE
CLIMBING"

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3RD OF JANUARY → 13, 2013
TRES PIEDRAS DEL BARU,
COSTA RICA

GROUP JOURNAL

Cat & ketit'a

01/03/2013 : San José → Tres Piedras

Meeting at the airport. Kristin, Wesley, and Laetitia met at 10h and waited together for the rest of the group. How are we supposed to all fit in the van? We're all granted a Yipi by Jeff!

Everyone gathered and departure around 2:30 PM. Near to everyone fell asleep at the beginning of the trip to Tres Piedras. Wee pee and cuodiler-~~the~~ nighting, still a few hours to go. Eric & Cat kept busy spotting birds. Tom complained a lot about his seat ~~the~~ beautiful sunset over "palm oil" plantations.

Dark descended quickly - short days? Sad that we couldn't see the scenery for the final leg of the trip. But all were excited & relieved for:

Arrival in Tres Piedras at dark and under warm rain shower. Dinner was directly after ~~the~~ our introduction to the toilets - quite apt. I resolved to never put toilet paper in the toilets.

Post-dinner cards with Andrew,
ERIC, & Tom: I was nervous
because I still didn't know
their names & I've definitely
met ERIC & Andrew before...
Cops:P

Then sleep! Me, Tara, & Colin
in the Rodeo, the best in the
salon. As I walked over to the
Rodeo, I breathed deep to
swallow my fear of the dark
and my fear of the unknown.
But swallow it I did, and as
my senses grew accustomed
to my surroundings, I knew
I would love my time in
Costa Rica.

Wesley & Tom

01/4/2013: The First Day of Tree Climbing

Everyone was woken up early: 6 am.
Breakfast was ready for us. We collected all of our climbing gear. Jeff gave us a "lecture" about all the different pieces of gear ~~the~~ in the Salon. We moved into the kitchen area where we circled up to play a name game. We then sat down, and ~~at~~ each instructor gave a brief talk about the course. We packed up our gear for the day and went across the river. ~~the~~ three stations were set up for lessons: rope tying, tree climbing, and throwing a line over a tree. We went back a couple hours later for lunch. We then went for a swim in the river down the street. ~~the~~ ~~Some~~ Later, Dave led everyone on a walk around the village to collect fresh fruit and coconuts. When we came back, we had some free time to ~~enjoy the~~ try the coconuts + fruit,

relax, and play frisbee + cards. Meanwhile,
Will came to make homemade pizzas
for dinner.

Today was a day of
coming together. We
started in the morning,
a little groggy, unfamiliar
with each other and our
surroundings, and gradually
started becoming more
knowledgable in the
mechanics of tree climbing
and the knowledge of
each other.

Everything was new and
different! We may have
used ascenders before
in a building on a winter
day in Ithaca but now
we were under a

beautiful lush tree in
the Costa Rican sunshine.
It was way different!

Swimming in the creek
allowed complete relaxation
and brought out the
playfulness in some of
the group while others
explored the creek or
took a nap.

Our trip into "town" was
like visiting a movie set
where every time you
turned around, something
was growing on a tree
that was delicious or
smelled that way. Clouds
had started to obscure
some of the upper parts
of the hills and made

it seem more surreal.

Dinner became a pizza feast when our guest chef "Will" fired up the pizza oven and made enough pizza for days worth of eating - but we finished it all off that night anyway.

(Thanks to Wesley for rallying the troops with her innovative campaign of renaming the leftover crust and calling it breadsticks with tomato sauce)

And finally our trust in our fearless leaders were confirmed when a snake - spotted in

the bathroom by
eagle-eyed Cat -
was dispatched with
deadly precision. The
snake was not able to
be interviewed for his
version of the encounter
but I'm sure he would
agree with this assessment,

- End of Day One -

Don and Becky

January 5, 2013

The following financial transactions have
occurred:

- Dan won one U.S. dollar from Colin with a card
trick
- Dan won one U.S. dollar or 500 colones from
Andrew because Andrew could not eat one
slice of bread in one minute

PAID - Dan won one U.S. dollar from Eric, also with
the bread challenge

PAID - Jeff won one U.S. dollar from Dan by successfully
eating one slice of bread in one minute.

We crossed the Rio Guabo back to the area where we practiced yesterday. We broke into 3 groups and ascended 3 trees. Everyone seemed agile as monkeys and happy as clams. Some hang, some sat, some climbed. Surrounded by epiphytic bromeliads, moss, ants, and great views, I think it's safe to say that most people were thinking, "This is why I came here."

After lunch (hey - rice + beans!) we hiked down the road and through the forest, along the beach and over rocks, to Paradise. On the way, we stopped to view a person who has a tilapia (fish) operation. They are raising tens of thousands of them for both their own food and to sell. We also stopped at the Tropical Forest Initiative, TFI. TFI is a private USA-based ~~re~~ organization doing research on tropical re-forestation and alternative agriculture methods.

Paradise is a stretch of Rio Gunba, accessible by walking ~~over~~ lots of slippery rocks. It is a beautiful swim spot with nice forest around it and a fast current. Unknown to us, some of our fearless leaders had gone ahead of us and strung up a Tyrolean Something. It enabled those who wanted to slide out into the middle of the river on a pulley and then drop in.

There was dropping, there was swimming, there was Yoshi the Dog, there were siestas, there were giant spiders, there were cookies.

Coming home, we practiced democracy and ~~chose~~ voted to come back via river rather than road. This resulted in dead-ends, river-crossings, and ultimately, victory.

After dinner most of us went to Fleryn's high school graduation, with dancing, food, merriment, and the same drunken old embarrassing relative shared by all cultures.

- Dan Klein

January 5, 2013

Today we had breakfast and went back across the river to where we went yesterday, split up into three different groups and got to climb into our respective trees. Our group climbed a jobo tree (the one we launched the sling shot at yesterday) and had an amazing view of the river and rodeo. Then we went back for lunch and had potatoes and beans and rice. After lunch, we started our trek towards Paradise. On the way there, we stopped by someone's house with a huge fish tank sort of thing made of rocks and concrete with a wooden stick that had holes in it to create a rain sort of effect. This tank had about 4,000 to 5,000 tilapia in it, and to get most of the fish out, they simply turn off the pipe and all the water flows out. We then went to the Tree Forest Institute and saw another outdoor fish tank, a nursery and a fat rabbit. Also, 3 of the kids from the village tagged along. We then walked through a garden and saw cacao, pineapple, peanut, and other plants/trees.

The next part of our journey consisted of a path of big rocks followed by one of jagged, slippery ones. After getting past three tricky checkpoints, we saw our instructor with a tyrolean traverse set up across the river. We spent a good amount of time in the afternoon swimming, eating flower-shaped cookies with chocolate in the middle, and looking at these wolf spiders the size of human hands as well as ants that looked sort of like bees. As it neared dinner time, we had to vote on a way to get back. All but one of us chose to go a different way from the one in which we came, so we started walking back along the side of the river but discovered that there was no way we could get back that way without crossing the river. We crossed the river three times and had quite a lovely adventure on the way back and even made it back at 5:00pm for dinner. We washed off and ate beans and rice and pasta with cucumber and tomato with pineapple juice. Since a lot of us were in

line for the shower, Dave taught us how to take bucket showers like they do in India. Once this demonstration and dinner and dotes were over we went up to a house for a graduation party. There was good food and candy as well as music except for Gangnam Style. We also had punch and listened to a local sing some Costa Rican songs and danced some on our own. A lot of people were there at the party, and the place was decorated with ^{blue and pink} streamers attached to fake flowers. Now we're back at base and people are playing Rummy while Jeff is giving Cat a brand new haircut.

January 6, 2013

It all began like any other day. 6 AM wakeup. The hustle and bustle didn't wake me until ~6:20 as usual. Luckily we'd done preliminary packing for the long day's adventure the night before. We were privileged

with eggs. This morning in addition to my eternal favorite,
rice and beans. Always appetizing to our fantastic chefs!!
We finished packing, Group gear, what group gear?
--- we finished packing, and we were off.

We made it to where we worked the grapefruit at
the small river down the road. We Auditor led
the way, even though our instructor don't seem to
think we remember our way to Aal spots. We
made our way through some locals' land and came
upon the beauty and challenge of the rolling hills
we had been pleasantly viewing there just a few
days ago. And so began the seemingly 450 incline
in the growing morning heat. But as usual, our
group proved impressive as usual, having little to no
difficulty with almost two hours of the ascent.
As I mentioned at the top, this trip appears to have
self-selected a strong tough group. We came upon
numerous hills early on, but luckily Rob was
back today to scare them all away. He was the
toughest of all today, limping up the hill due to
his motorcycle accident two days earlier. His knee
looked really beat up. We were very lucky to have
him.

We also were able to rest in shady spots

periodically. As we climbed we saw more and more of the valley below. It was quite beautiful.

And finally we reached our destination. Through a thick set of branches we found a fairly good contact of the jungle. The temperature and humidity seemed to immediately shift. There were buttress roots on trees and toe-peg root structures seeming to hold the trees up as well. Luckily we only had to walk about 100 more feet before reaching our base camp. Jeff told us the dangers of the jungle including tree trunks copying cacti and potential ant swarms. This certainly gave the ladies reservations about the nocturnal situation.

We proceeded to get the rundown on the available trees to climb, 4 in total. Our lovely instructors had already spent 2 full days setting up the ropes. We all got ready, gave our tree petting. There was the great adventure of the unclimbed fig tree the tall ~140 ft climb of the Ficus tree, the fig tree, and the Anillo tree which was a more branched tree than the Ficus.

Colin went to explore and prepare the fig tree and the rest began with the Ficus tree base camp tree. The latter is named for its proximity to the Ficus, so it was a fairly short climb.

Many climbed the fast tree before climbing the others.

The big tree became a lot of work, with much of the work done by climbing, but it was a true adventure as he found when he met the resident of the tree. an antelope. He immediately announced his new friend via a yelp to the rest of us. But this seemed to scare our new friend into a neighboring tree. Eventually, after two days, the tree had for too much stuff in it, so it was abandoned for

The anillo tree and the futa verata tree. Beautiful ascension through the jungle canopy with an astonishing vista over the surrounding valleys, hills and trees. The lucky climbers in the anillo tree spotted a lazy sloth on a nearby branch. While part of the group ascended the trees, others would eat lunch (rice, beans, palm heart, all wrapped in a banana leave) and have a siesta on the tarps. The afternoon went by quickly and after everyone had climbed, we gathered our personal and group gear to take off at around 3:45 PM. Shortly before departing it started to rain, although

The canopy protected us for a few minutes. Walking under the warm rain actually became a ^{welcome} relief from the heat and exercising while we worked our way down the hill. Descending was, at times, a bit treacherous with creeping vines, setting traps for our tired feet, slippery wet grasses and much, but we all made it to Tres Piedras - even Rolo who has a painful, bad-looking knee injury. He is a tough Tico.

The late afternoon became evening, while we all tied our gear, bags, took showers and washed our clothes (reservations only, it must be said). The Tres Piedras staff prepared the usual rice, black beans and salad, with fried chicken.

As I was writing all the above, Colin came by and discussed fashion with Wesley and I ~~he~~ - he was ^{especially} knowledgeable, ~~especially~~ about a lace thing - you can ask him for more information.

The Tres Piedras inhabitants came to show their crafted art pieces, displaying carved and

printed

✓ Coconuts, jewels made of local vegetal seeds, a beautiful wooden snake and other.

We then all gathered as a group to share our goals for this trip, read stories and entries in our diary - a cheerful event.

After sharing tomorrow's planning, we went playing cards, chatting and chilling out before a well-deserved night.

January 7th, 2013

Here begins the account of Eric ^(in case you can't read it)

The morning begins with the usual, tired monotony of the 6 AM start, or in my case around 6:25 by Andrews (Thanks!). The parrots and the morning chorus squawk as I stumble out, and everyone hustles about preparing for our day, although relaxation is a priority today. Yesterday's arduous hike has left many tired and exhausted. Breakfast is different though, with pancakes (or as close to pancakes you're going to come by in this valley in Costa Rica), toast, juice, and the usual rice and beans. We load up and leave for the river classroom, and 3 stations were setup. The 1st was a rappelling station, rigged in a tree via the unique false rock and a few bromeliads.

See previous entries!

We climbed up and carefully transferred to
ropes, mostly with few errors or mess-ups, then
dave Jeff showed us how to take down the
false crotch and it came crashing to the ground
with some branches. Swiftly we carried on to
the full circle, where Tara demonstrated
coiling and full circle set-up. After a tries
one some mistle ~~tricks~~ and created knots, a full
circle ~~happened~~ above us. We transferred again to the
Double Rope technique station, which is amazing
~~kept beyond belief~~. The ability to move around
the tree away from the ascension rope is a very
unique and fruitful ability, enabling movement to
any which limb. In a set of Ben's Dave showed
me how to use an auto ascender to hold the Blake's hitch
in place. After that, there was a demo on how to rescue
someone out of a tree. I actually got to be the
rescuee during following instruction. The video explanation
of the importance of rescuing was instilled in us. After
lunch, which consisted of more videos, we went
swimming in the river. The log was continued and
many tried the rock wall challenge. As the afternoon
wore on we left the pool and headed out to
Chaparral and back. Chop! The ~~penetrate~~ fore throat

the tree like a rocket, and jokes were more Spanish.
We headed back and returned, and relaxed and played
set! till dinner. After dinner a long and treacherous
night walk ensued, with people scrambled over rock
and water, full of snakes, scorpions, whip scorpions, and
frogs and lizards. At this point, the account must end
for sleep is coming fast. It is coming. There is no escape.
It is coming, see set!

Today we returned to our climbing spot
by the river. There were 3 stations: one taught
anchoring techniques for the full circle, one taught
belaying/repelling w/ a munter knot, useful if
you have dropped your belay device from the
tree. The third station taught double rope
climbing techniques. Somebody put a dead spider
in Jeff's hat, ~~that~~ turns out Jeff likes
spiders more than snakes. At lunch there was
fried plantains & tasty lemonade. Afterwards
most of the group went to the usual
swimming spot. At supper we had a tasty
dish composed of rice & chicken. Then
we went on a night hike. We saw plenty
of toads & frogs, some lizards, spiders &

a few scorpions & 2 snakes. A few people
decided to not risk feet in the river.
Balancing on rocks in the dark when porine
fired proved to be challenging.

Cat '1/8/13

This morning I carefully checked under the cardboard: No scorpions! Yay! No video today because last night was cold: I need to find a better way to keep warm!

Breakfast was delicious: Rice & beans! Yay! My favorite. The empanadas were fabulous! I was pretty stiff this morning too - sketched a few yoga poses while I was supposed to be getting ready. Sorry guys!

Toad in the bathroom startled Andrew. Tip - he lives in the cinder blocks. We poop right next to his house... to the trees

Pretty toucan on the way - gorgeous bright bill, glossy black & yellow plumage, bright red vent.

Little seedly birds in the trees too. I'm super excited for today because we finally get to start in on the meat of tree climbing -

scrambling around ~~to~~ trying
to get to faraway branches
without falling to our deaths
or being smashed against
branches.

~~We~~ ~~was~~ Becky & I climbed
with Dave today - first
off, she ~~so~~ limbwalked & then
swung. Dave was jealous.
~~We~~ ~~all~~ Then I clambered
around awkwardly in pursuit
of the ~~hang~~ turn SRT. Success!
Afterwards, I blake-hitched
~~a~~ toward a branch while
Becky climbed part of the
trunk. I had to pee really bad!
After we were on the ground
safely, I realized I was starving!
... but, we had to wait while
the last ~~tree~~ ^{group} was freed from
~~the tangles~~ its tree's grasp.
On the way back, we saw a
~~group~~ ^{couple} of nice fat cows. They

contemplated us deeply. Lunch
was ~~a~~ fabulous - fried yucca
& veggies on top of rice &
beans :)

"I got stung by 2 somethings
on my left asscheek through
3 layers of fabric!"

~ Colin, 2pm

Now we're late to the waterfall.
Peace, home journal!

Eric - The hike to the waterfall ~~wasn't~~ too bad, but
the rock scrambling to the pool was a little rough. The
Final though, was worth it. The blue water shimmered
below, as the misty wind cooled us off and the water
cascaded over the edge. Many took a shower with the water
pounding down on our backs, and merriment was felt by
all. The hike out was a tad treacherous, although quite manageable.
We had a nice beer break, with some playing beers by
(spell-check please) and others napping. Dinner consisted of

rice and beans, a delicious guacamole, and pineapple.
After that the discussion on high and low points ran
smoothly, and the night concluded with a Lightroom
seminar and star-gazing. The clouds shifted through
the sky, obscuring the 1000's of twinkling little stars,
Orbs, and the photographers had fun. Now I'm
headed off to the room to sleep in a hammock. Night.

January 9, 2013 by Dan & Wesley

Accounting update: Andrew and Colin
still owe Dan one U.S. dollar & 500
Colones apiece.

This morning we made a great
accomplishment: we were ready on time
at 7:30 am... kind of. Basically all
of us were ready, but the limiting
factor was our lunches not ^{done} being made.
This gave anyone not completely ready
a few extra minutes. Much better
everyone! Keep up the improvement.

Breakfast was ... rice & beans!

While we were waiting for our lunches we ~~beg~~ told stories. It was especially interesting when we came to stories about poop, first introduced by Jeff. ~~He~~ He told us about a lovely time when he dumped his climbing trip poop collection into an elegant & fancy hotel lobby trash can. Wesley then shared a story on a similar topic about maggots taking over a raft trip poop toilet.

We came by some people working in the bean patch who had just killed a snake. They were kind enough to display the snake for us while we photographed it repeatedly, adjusting angles ~~and stops~~, asking the snake-bearer to step out of the shadow, and trying all known F-stops.

We met up with some local kids, undoubtedly relatives of Rolando, and started up the trail through TFI.

We got an overview of TFI's research, and walked through both the re-planted area and the primary forest. Both were nice lowland tropical rainforest, but the primary forest was particularly special. There were some huge trees, with thorns on the trunk over 100 feet in the air. There were unique-looking ferns. There were poison-dart frogs. There was an enormous tree with enormous buttressed roots, that Tom and Dan circumambulated successfully. ~~During~~

When I was in the process of testing gravity, ~~during this hike~~ I heard something coming up the path before me. I looked over to see Ypsi running up the trail with a smile. Even though we locked him up and had been hiking for at least 30 minutes, he decided to catch up to us. He was happy.

We continued our steep, slow, + steady hike up the hillside. My apologies for sometimes going too fast. I promise I was not trying to escape or run away; it's just how I walk. I'm sure we all enjoyed this long climb in the hot sun ~~even~~ while we were drenched in sweat. It was fun!

We continued hiking up through pasture and came upon one of Rolando's uncles working on his property. He brought down some coconuts for us, Colin wielded his machete, and we were all supplied with a coconut-ful of yummy coconut water.

Refreshed, we continued up some more, back onto T&E land, past the site of Carl Leopold's shack, and finally onto a road. We rested at the top, looking out over the Pacific Ocean, ~~and~~ enjoying the breeze.

Dave told us how this ridge had been developed over the last 30 years, since it had an ocean view. It was developed for foreigners. While it has supplied some caretaker-type jobs for locals, it has also caused problems. It has driven up land prices to the point where no locals could realistically buy in. Also, some homeowners have cut-off access to some locals' land ~~in the area~~.

Soon we met up with Rolo, who drove up due to his motorcycle injuries. He brought us to another relative's house. ~~We~~ were offered as many ~~bananas~~ bananas as we wanted. These bananas were delicious! They tasted much different from typical ~~American~~ store bought ones in the states. There were also many sweet & juicy ~~orange~~ oranges available from trees on the property. Next stop was the Sugar Shack! We ~~to~~ first ate lunch which was yet again

rice & beans! surprise!

We all felt lucky to witness the traditional process of making sugar from sugar cane.

The canes are squeezed through a grinder powered by a horse. The grinder itself is about 50 years old.

The juice from the grinder is gathered and transferred to vat to boil. The fire is raging underneath and the heat exits through a unique chimney pipe that is partially buried underground.

Various additives were put into either the boiling liquid or the end-products: milk, oil, peanuts, mint. At the right moment, the liquid was transferred to a trough, manipulated with a paddle until it was taffy-like, then poured into a mold. We all ate all the sugar we could handle, and then a little more.

We also took turns being the horse.

~~Right as the sugar negative effects~~
~~came, we started cli~~

When we climbed up more hills
after the sugar shack, I definitely
felt the negative effects of the larger
than normal sugar consumption. My
body was not behaving normally. I was
sleepy from the sugar ~~crash~~ crash. We
came up to a coffee plantation, which
seemed deteriorated & dead. It was
interesting to hear about the value of
coffee as well as its variations due
to different weather & locations. ~~The~~
~~Vanilla plantation~~ We were able to
smell the wonderful scent of fresh
vanilla bean at the vanilla plantation.
I learned that vanilla is the only
orchid we eat.

Back at hollow uncle's house, with
oranges, chickens, cinnamon, anise,
orchids, and chickens, we tried out
the traditional method of de-hulling

rice. No one was hurt except the grains of rice, which we pretty much shattered. It involved ^{2 people} pounding heavily, in tandem, with big wooden mallets into a big wooden vessel.

We had a beautiful hike down via a different route. It was verdant and full of avian encounters.
Quote of the day:

Andrew (to Tara): "Your mustache is sweaty"

Tara: "Thanks?"

Wesley (to Andrew): Well your... unibrow is sweaty!"

Dinner tonight of course included rice + beans.

Thursday Jan 10

The plodding of heavy feet on the wood planks of the rodeo. Was it a dream? Too dark to see anything. Can't tell if it's getting closer but I don't want to use my flashlight to find out. Now I can feel it too - even in my hammock. Definitely not a dream. I wait and wait, finally it stops and I hear the sound of rope sliding across wood. Then a muffled ^{horse-like} exhale from somewhere directly below me. I fade into a dream.

Still dark. A truck speeds by with its driver letting out a boisterous yell.

Or was that
~~before~~?
after?

Was that the same as the
half man half beast ~~my~~ I
heard just before? The
sequence of time and events
is becoming more & more
muddled.

My hammock is shaking again
even ~~more~~^{worse} than before. And
I hear strange sounds -
course hair against wood.
There is a faint light now
in the sky and I can ^{just} make
out a horse tied up below
me to the same post my
hammock is tied to. He
rhythmically rubs his large
head on the post ^{slowly} making sure
every part of his head & neck
are massaged equally. Eventually
he is satisfied & my hammock becomes peaceful
More sleep. Now it is light

My classmates are in various stages of waking up. Dan has abandoned his hammock altogether for the more conventional properties of a flat wooden plank. Others are talking and comparing notes. Wesley is sure she heard something the sounded animal-like in the night and has slept poorly. The group slowly retreats to the cage to get ready for the day.

Breakfast takes a step up with real O.J. ^{fresh} avocado and papaya enhancing the rice and beans. Preparations for the big day continue after breakfast as we

gather our hammocks and wonder how we'll be able to sleep ~~and~~ better tied up 50' in a tree than we did a few feet off the ground in the radios.

The day is sunny and welcoming as we approach our classroom by the river. Dave quickly sets up our full circle rope and individual motion lanyards for me & my partners Dan & Eric. This tree has several good spots for setting a hammock and we choose one in the middle of the spreading trunks and two ^{more outward facing} supported on the other end by a neighboring tree. The hammock installations go

rather well. Dan is the first in his but after a few minutes registers a complaint that his cocktail hasn't been served yet and wishes to speak to the ~~man~~ management. He ~~then~~ mumbles something about how service just isn't the same anymore and that he just might not choose this resort next time.

Eric & I get our hammocks set up and sink in to their comfort. Eric immediately gets out his book and I find I'm suddenly sleepy. A nap ensues and then before I know it, we spell down and pack up our gear to break for lunch and a swim. We shall return.

Over the help tree we slowly but surely set up the anchors in the full sun. While we were very exposed, we knew this would lead to a great view at night. After the hammocks were situated, it was great to just relax our hammocks weight and just lay down. It was also nice that we'd have it set up already that night.

After we finished, before going down, Colin interviewed me about my time so far in Costa Rica, getting some better footage. Then we returned to the ground, and headed over to lunch. I don't remember specifically what lunch was but I'm venturing a guess of rice and beans + fruit.

Then we headed to our favorite swimming hole, although most people took a siesta. Becky and I immediately set forth to the water, though we were sad to see our log in use! We were joined briefly by a few others up at the waterfall/pool, but others eventually left. We patiently waited until the log was free and continued our antics. After some relaxation, others returned to swim.

Next we returned for free time and dinner, as well as preparation for tonight. We set out after our group dinner, through the back to our trees. With our sleeping

germ head, we sweetly avoided the tree and
crossed our hole, enjoying the stars. Taking
off our boots, ~~and~~ helmet was glorious and we settled
into our hammocks. Girls sat in fear of peeing at
night. Then we all drifted to sleep, either by bedtime
story or stargazing.

Jan 11th

I woke up early in the morning
around 1 AM in my hammock in the
tree w/ Kat, Andrew & Tora. I had
fallen asleep during Colin's bedtime
story w/ my shoes & helmet still on.

I now had to pee & unfortunately
did not know the location of my blanket
as I had thrown it off & apparently
out of the hammock while asleep. After
^{frantically} scanning the ground w/ my headlamp
~~looking~~ trying to locate my missing
blanket I finally gave up as I really
had to pee. I chose a location & hoped
for the best. Luckily $\pm$ & everyone else
not knowing the status of my blanket & now a bit

~~rest~~ chilly I did not sleep well the rest of the night

On our walk we saw a ^{very} nervous ^{inured} skunk ^{to be able to help} ^{to be able to help} in my group managed not to pee on my blanket. Everyone in my group woke up starving in the morning. Instead of eating at the usual time of 6:30 AM we did not get breakfast until 9 AM. ~~After~~ Breakfast consisted of rice beans toast & plantains. We then had an hour or so to rest, do laundry & shower. We packed a lunch consisting of rice & beans, egg & yucca. ^{most} ~~some~~ of us headed to Rolo's place; the rest went to a gigantic tree by the river. While we relaxed at Rolo's place, ~~we~~ saw all of his chickens and ate a leisurely lunch. The group members by the river worked up to ~~set~~ try to set up a line in the tree. Everyone gave their letters to a skinny dog at Rolo's. The dog scarfed up all the food we gave him. He was very happy. We then joined the rest of our group by the river.

While most of the group went to Rolando's house, Andrew, Tom, and I stayed by the river with Jeff and Colin to rig the saba tree. Before leaving in the morning, Jeff had told us that no students had ever successfully rigged their own tree in Costa Rica, so I didn't think we had much of a chance, ~~since~~ especially since I'm awful at shooting. Luckily, Tom's skills with the big shot are really impressive, and he made the shot on his very first try. We were all ecstatic, but then we realized that we had left the Wegman's bag of zing-it back at the salon and had to think up a new way to get a rope up into the tree. We ended up tying two throw bags of zing-it and the spool of pea cord together to make it completely across the branch ~~forward~~ and back to the ground again. The other group came back from Rolando's house as soon as we finished setting this up, so we broke for lunch which was

Today was a pretty
chilly

Today was a pretty
chill day because we
were all ^{and from} spending
the night in our
hammocks.

the usual rice and beans with yucca, ^{eggs} and
crackers wrapped in banana leaves.

After lunch, we went for a swim in the
river while some people repositioned ~~the~~ and
finished setting up the line and Colin interviewed
some others. This new swimming place next to
the saba tree had a mermaid rock which some
of us posed on, a fallen tree which unfortunately
didn't float, and some strong currents which
were really hard to swim against. Tara and I
failed to dunk Andrew in the water again today,
despite our combined ~~a~~ effort, but Cat managed
to get him. After some time, the full circle was
finally set up, and Jeff and Tom climbed up ~~the~~
saba.

We gathered our gear and headed back
to base to shower, play cards, learn rope tricks,
and eat coconuts. Dinner today was rice, beans,
potatoes, ^{and} cabbage with iced tea and coconut
water. Sadly, we all had to say goodbye
to Rolando after dinner. Then we had circle
time, listened to Cat sing, and played mafia.

When we were in the big tree up
the hill, Tara asked me to write
something about it in the journal. I
jokingly said I would do it in iambic
pentameter. Here it is:

Atop the moss-covered tropical tree
Tara, Eric, Becky, the wind, and me
A sloth appears and moves in sloth-like ways
The only other motion: the tree - it sways
A pocket of rainforest saved from cuts
Old growth is grand - no ifs, no ands, no buts.
- Dan Klein

Last day in Tres Piedras

Adieu Tres Piedras

Sur ~~este~~ note finale

Sol, tortillas y pollo.