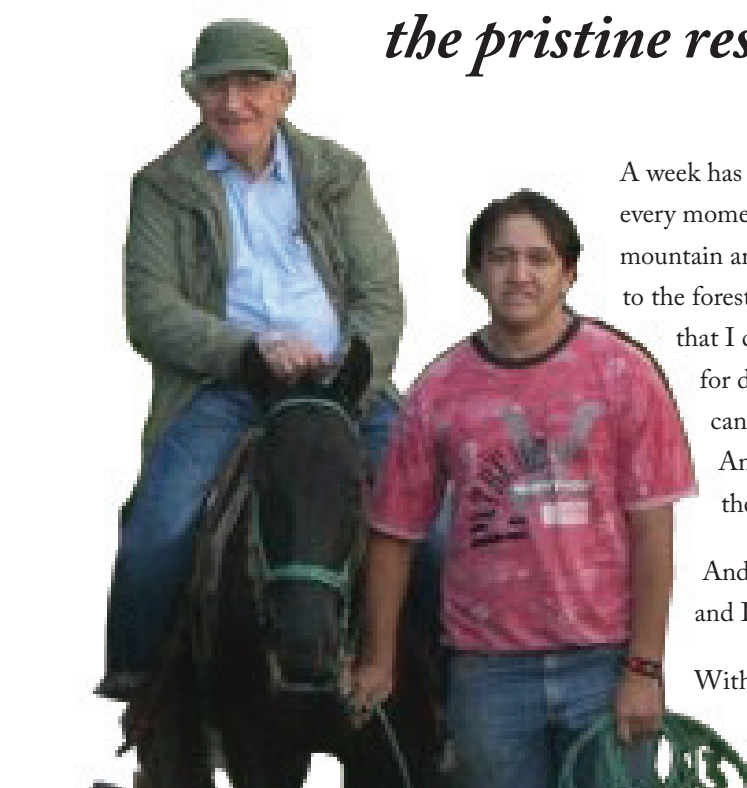




***The great knot of mountains known as the Colombian Massif is the birthplace of the Magdalena, Cauca, Cauqueta and Patia Rivers. Containing 362 bodies of water in the mountains, this area is the source of 70% of the water for human consumption and irrigation in the region. Multi-national mining companies with the blessing of the Colombian government threaten to destroy the pristine resources of this area.***



A week has passed since that magical day of July 14, etched indelibly in my memory, not only every moment but also the emotions, particularly during the ceremony near the top of the mountain and at the sight of the beautiful plaque for La Carolina high in a tree at the entrance to the forest. When I tried to speak at the meeting before going up the mountain, I had to say that I could not find the words to express my thanks for your kindness and compassion, and for dedicating the forest to Carol. I still cannot, so I will not even try. I will only say that I cannot imagine a more lovely place for Carol's spirit to rest, under your gentle care. And I hope, fervently, that her spirit will help you protect the water and the forest and the natural beauty of La Vega from the predatory forces that are seeking to destroy them.

And finally I should apologize for being such an awful horseman, and I have to express my particular thanks to my guide, for his patience and skill.

With great gratitude and affection, **Noam Chomsky**

*Cauca, a province 80% covered by mountains, is filled with beauty, steeped in culture, and rich in natural resources. It is a place of many lovely landscapes, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, hot springs, and even an active volcano. It is also home to more than 200 species of flora, 160 species of birds, and a wide variety of mammals.*

*In addition, the great knot of mountains known as the Colombian Massif spreads across the region, birthplace of the Magdalena, Cauca, Cauqueta and Patia Rivers. Containing 362 bodies of water in the mountains, this area is the source of 70% of the water for human consumption and irrigation in the region.*

*However, the water resources in these mountains are being owerer, threatened by multinational corporations which seek to use them to mine gold, silver, coal and other minerals lying beneath the soil. These international businesses, promoted by the Colombian government, seek to purchase land in the region and utilize its water resources and excavate mines in this ecologically sensitive area in a way which will harm the small-scale farmers' livelihood and their communities.*

*In response to this threat, local residents began an organization called the "Proceso Campesino y Popular del Municipio de La Vega". The goal of this organization is to raise funds to purchase lands to become part of a "Zona de Reserva Campesina", to be recognized by the Colombian government with its rights protected as an area designated for the use of local farming communities.*

*As a start, the residents of the town of Santa Rita and La Vega have dedicated lands above their village to the memory of Carol Chomsky, calling them the "Carol Chomsky Forest". The goals of this dedication are to honor the life and legacy of Carol Chomsky, beloved wife of Noam Chomsky, while also promoting the protection and preservation of the surrounding environment. The people of the region seek support in order effectively to protect the resources and local ecosystems upon which they depend.*