



This presentation explores issues involving conservation biology, the emergence of novel ecosystems, and the historic production of humanized landscapes in Ecuador's Galápagos National Park. It considers the development of a unique and internationally renowned biota and the inevitable materialization of a "Galápagos Paradox" when human interest undermines those features of the ecosystem that originally attracted human interest. The image of a people-free natural laboratory for seeing and understanding evolution is essential to the existence of a lucrative ecotourism industry, yet it obscures a temporally deeper and more complex association with humans which can be explored through archaeological and historical sources. The presentation summarizes recent research undertaken at El Progreso, a 19th century industrial scale sugar plantation in the interior highlands of San Cristóbal island that explores landscape transformation in the middle of one of the world's premier nature destinations.