

nkarst

nkarst_2.0: A platform to broker scientific knowledge on archaeological and natural heritage in Colombia's unique neotropical karst landscapes; acting as an interface between civil society, the academic, mining, and public sectors; addressing conflicts of interest that threaten to destroy abiotic, biotic, and cultural assets of global importance.

Systems thinking applied to the conservation of heritage.

In the center of Colombia's Magdalena River Basin, two of the most dramatic landscapes form in the limestone (karst) areas of Río Claro (Antioquia), and El Peñón (Santander). These special neotropical environments host great biodiversity that is poorly understood. They are also windows into the past, preserving invaluable paleoclimatic and paleontological information spanning millions of years. The strategic location of caverns and rock shelters makes them a unique repository of the only preserved pictographic material left by generations of communities that occupied and moved throughout the region during the last 10 millennia. The information they contain provides a glimpse into the graphic and symbolic systems employed by societies that made use of this corridor between the Amazon Basin, the Peruvian Andes and Mesoamerica.

These two karst landscapes are threatened by large scale industrial mining operations that are mostly unaware of the significance/existence of such material. The goal of the project is threefold: digitize as much high-priority documentary heritage as possible; broker scientific knowledge gathered from the field with the mining industry (to address the conflict of interest between mining and heritage conservation); jumpstart local heritage stewardship processes by channeling resources from corporate environmental responsibility budgets

nKarst Activities include: Asset scouting (50-100 sites); Scientific exploration of assets (10-20 sites); 3D Photogrammetric conservation of High Priority Assets (5-10 Sites); Digital Platform v2.0 development and operation (including corporate outreach, digital asset processing, restoration, and inventory, wiki web interface (for all assets); Local Heritage Stewardship and Capacity Building.

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