

## Short Bio

Founders – Fundación Montecito



### **Felipe Velasco**

Contact: [felipe.velasco@fundacionmontecito.org](mailto:felipe.velasco@fundacionmontecito.org)

*Director, Fundación Montecito*

Felipe graduated as Civil Engineer, however he introduces himself as just an “apprentice of a good citizen”. With his wife Juanita he founded NGO Fundación Montecito in 2010, and it’s been their field of endeavour since, mainly on Lake Tota (largest high-Andean lake in Colombia), and more recently also on Eastern Andes ‘La Hondura’ canyon, in Santander. Their mission is to work on benefit of Andean mounts and wetlands, it’s been mostly at Lake Tota and highland *páramos*. They take a governance and an integrated approach, highlighting a variety of CEPA activities, considering this work mainly as a long-term and complex process. An achievement short time ago was to lead an international award on sustainable tourism as part of the Top-100 Global 2017 Green Destinations for Lake Tota, later (2018) upgraded as Top-3 Green Destinations Americas given at ITB fair, Germany. He has long persevered (from 2012) on leading a designation for Lake Tota as a Ramsar site, since he is convinced on the many benefits it could gradually bring to all (lake included) having this tool on board.



### **Juanita Arango**

Contact: [juanita.arango@fundacionmontecito.org](mailto:juanita.arango@fundacionmontecito.org)

*Deputy Director, Fundación Montecito*

Juanita graduated as Art Restorer, and cannot find easy to introduce herself in a specific manner, although her husband Felipe could say “if there’s someone sensible with art and nature, someone creative and with superior abilities of observation to understand her environment, plus an outstanding artisan, then she is Juanita”. She is also the family attachment, the balance and the ground pole for their NGO work, always ready to support, find solutions and add new initiatives to improve their activities as a complementary team. Since 2019 she has been engaging more and more into bird illustration, and her drawings are already nourishing a number of educative creations from the NGO to support birdlife awareness and environmental education booklets, hand in hand with other artistic means she’s been leading, such as stop-motion stories. To explain nature and environmental issues by using creativity and art is one of the things she loves the most.