

campuzano-eduardo-2018-01-16.mp4

Eduardo Campuzano [00:00:10] Will usually is not something like.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:00:13] Father to son. In my case, it was not like that. But he bought me my first fishing rod. And, when I have traveled these old roads here from Quito to Papallacta in the first stream that you saw with me coming up, I got my first trout over there. That's how I start fishing. Is not like like father like son is something like I say I like to fish. And I would like to have a fishing rod. That's how it starts.

James Thull [00:00:49] Excellent excellent and about what year would that have been.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:00:54] That was exactly when I was 18, that's 51 years ago. And I think there was no before that. Our in our garden, I caught a carp. That was a handmade hook. A handmade hook with a line that my mother used to knit. Was not a fishing line. The hook was something made out and I caught the carp in our garden. Well, the last 40 years fishing in Ecuador was very good. There is a lake now is a dam called Mica, and I have been getting my trophies in that lake, and in that lake, you can realize how nice it is to fight a big trout. Big trout can be one pound, two pounds, three pounds, and as far as ten pounds. In Ecuador. And the biggest one is always in that lake. And the land around the lake owned by the father of a friend of mine. And when he died all the land that belonged to that family was split, divided between the sons, and daughters, and the rest of the family. And I asked my friend. If it was possible to buy a piece of land close by the lake, but the land over there was so big that came as far as this place so there were two farms one next to the other; it so big that they have almost 300000 hectares of land. And when they asked for a piece of land I always thought a hundred hectares or fifty hectares close by a river or a lake, but over there every piece of land was twenty thousand, eighty thousand hectares so it was impossible to buy that land. Nineteen years ago this old guy died I asked my friends, well do you have a small piece of land? Not so big but any other place because I knew that all of these places were the highlands with water and trout. So one day he told me, well we have something that we want to sell immediately. And he took me to this place. As soon as we came here to this place I remember I saw his father once the first time I came fishing here that he had a small pond with trout that he used to take from here to all his farms to farm some trout in all the streams, and rivers, and lakes. So I knew there should be some trout here because if this stock was here and the stream of water was coming and going out it should be trout here. So I say okay let's talk about the price. How big it is? And was something I could afford. So in the end, we agreed and I bought the land. And as soon as I bought the land I found out that there were some trout, smaller streams of water, to have an idea 20 inches wide three inches depth. But there were some trout. So I start thinking about how I could increase amount of trout how could make fishing out of those small streams. Because I am a water engineer I joined two things: fishing and water investigation regarding the infiltration of water in the highlands to avoid waste of water going down to the sea. So I make room for the water. I make room for the streams to become ponds and almost rivers. And at the same time, I make room for the trout. And immediately you start fishing because the trout are showing up. Is not that they were not here they were here but they were impossible to fish. And the creeks were so steep covered with vegetation not enough wide in the stream and the depth was not enough. But there were fish always. So as soon as we made room for the fish we start fishing. And then we started making everything wider and bigger room for water and room for the fish. And that's how we end up with Campucocha lodge. Campucocha in native language means a small pond from the Campuzano, Campuzano is

the family name. So we have a small pond made a by double purpose water infiltration and fishing. That's what we have here nowadays.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:07:37] Yes. When I bought a property were no roads. No no room for water, no room for fish, not even the pole, electricity pole so I have to build everything myself. Roads, electricity lines, water lines, sewer systems everything is what you see nowadays here. Everything is man made in in the first year and a half.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:08:13] Well I have on the Internet my web page that says www dot Campucocha dot com. And so many people outside they don't think that Ecuador has trout because when they think about Ecuador they think very warm, jungle, and the Galapagos Islands. It's not only that. We have mountains, we have mountains with snow, we have some melting, and we have a lot of streams, we have high lands with fish with trout. So people that got interested to go see for example to visit the Galapagos Islands. They say I want to fish in Ecuador so they start looking and they found out that they can do fly fishing here for trout. So they immediately contact and they make a reservation and well before that they make some investigation ok because you don't believe everything that's on the internet. OK. So there are a few scientific articles in for example scientific angler. There is a little something about this place some important visitors that they write good and so there is a lot of information about trout fishing in Ecuador, trout fishing in this place Campucocha. And after they make the research they show up here. And this year I am going to retire and then I'm going to be a full-time fishing guide so we have more time for guiding and fishing in this area.

James Thull [00:10:23] Is it people from Europe and the United States primarily? Or from all over?

Eduardo Campuzano [00:10:28] All over the world. I can give you one example of the guide that shows in the picture that's on our web page is one guy from a rock band very famous. You have to find out who it is is a guy that's holding a trout like this. And that guy came in his own plane and he contacted me when he was flying from England to here. And the same thing was flying Prince Charles, with all his people around. But he came in the commercial flying. These guys that came here to his hometown. That's the difference. That is the kind of people that come to fishing.

James Thull [00:11:14] Wow.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:11:15] But as well people from Australia, young kids. Australia, New Zealand with packs on their shoulders that they hear there was fishing here and they show up and they always when they come back home they say there is a place for trout fishing in Ecuador. I will recommend you Campucocha come look it.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:11:52] In Ecuador, in the beginning, the nineteen fifties, is the first trout of their stock here was *Salvelinus fontinalis*. There's more a lake trout. And those were the first one. And in that lake that I took you, Mica, there are still some *Salvelinus fontinalis*. But later on I soon as the government in the years the 1960s took over about taking care of trout. They start bringing only rainbow trout. And you can see that ninety-nine point nine percent of trouts in Ecuador are rainbow trouts and there is nothing more than that. There is no brown trout. Whoever they tell you that in south there's brown trout is not true. It is only *Salvelinus fontinalis* in the Lake what's left, big Trout's very old trouts and rainbow trout everything there is and everything that's produced here in there in Ecuador and then no fish farming is rainbow trout.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:13:15] Ok since our last government introduces some changes in the laws. Fishing is not in the sport. So besides that trout is not a native fish in Ecuador. So there are some groups that are against trout. But some other groups are farming trout for proteins. Because is a good source of protein is very cheap to farm for trout. So these two groups, the farming trout farming is private. The other group that is against the trout its government policy. And besides, that fishing is not a sport. It's not qualified like in the sport. Not hunting not fishing that's seen in the Ecuador. So local fishermen are people that they have to suffer. They have to fight against all local regulations to fish. So what is left is only private places like this where you can still fish and it will be like this I think for some time. Until the government policy changes to open-minded. In most countries, especially in places where they deal with water supplies, the first biological indicator of water quality is trout. Why? Because I as you know trout can live only in places where there is a lot of oxygen. A lot of oxygen means more than 5 milligrams per liter. If there is oxygen less than that, the trout starts dying. It's not like carp that can live with one milligram per liter or tilapia that can live with almost out of oxygen. So the first biological indicator of water quality in all reservoirs in the world are indicated by trout. But our people, they don't understand. The government people, don't understand. The local people that run the municipalities and their water companies the public water companies, they don't understand because here there is a group of "green people". I don't know you have them in the states as well, that is worse than ISIS because they are fundamentalist against something like trout. That's because it's not native from the place. Is not liking other places that they adopt the trout they're ready to use and whatever. Is good for environmental and ecological systems. In this place at this altitude 13000 feet there was no fish before. So the trout are not taking place from any other fish, so there is no argument of saying the trout is taking place from other fish. It's not true. And whatever other arguments they have, it's not true. So fishing for locals is very difficult but it is like I want to do it in they always will do. They always go fishing, they go to the sea, they go to the deltas on the coast and they come to high in the mountains for trout fishing.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:17:42] Okay. I don't know if you ever eat a trout from farming.

James Thull [00:17:51] I don't know.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:17:52] Okay. Well if you live here in Ecuador you'll find immediately one difference. Okay. Native trout or natural trout they live in the streams lakes and rivers. They are strong trout because they fight for food every day they are moving against the flow, so they develop very strong muscles and a lot of meat that worked. Farming means 2000 trouts in the small pool they feed the trout five times a day and they don't swim too much. So there is no muscle so they don't develop the meat like an expression of muscles. So when you taste a trout as coming from farming, the trout is like very soft meat like it is being rotten. Is not rotten but is so soft that you can lose any taste. When you eat natives, I call natives to the ones that they live here. This trout they have a lot of muscle, a lot of taste, and you feel the texture of the meat because they have muscle and they have taste. And usually the taste of the trout here without being salty they have the salmon taste, especially because they eat I don't know some snakes, catacalls snakes? And they give the color of their pink and red meat. So every trout as a native has this color is almost the taste of salmon. And as you know salmon is tasty and our local trout is tasty.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:20:03] Well because of these difficulties of fishing having natural systems with trout. You cannot kill trout anymore because if you kill them it

disappears. So since the last 15 years since we are here, last 18 years we introduced catch and release, mainly to survive. Mainly to keep fishing. Made to make it sustain and sustainable in time because it will start catching fish and killing fish it will be over in six months. All over Ecuador. So there is a new culture now coming here because of this, we have to make catch and release all over in all places. And besides that goes as well for older fish nowadays, it's not only the trout. So this goes a little bit far and even in the sea sometimes people are doing catch and release because now is becoming a culture of while is good for the future to keep you and your sons and your grandsons fishing after 50 years. So now is a culture catch and release.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:21:45] Well our Constitution supposed to be the first in all around the world in rights of the Earth, rights of nature. Our Constitution mentioned, in the beginning, the rights that have humans and the rights that have nature. So because of that, there is a lot of conservation policies and Ecuador is full of national parks. But National Parks where you cannot see, where you cannot travel, where you cannot learn, and you cannot do what you should do in the national park. I think you come from the biggest national park Yellowstone.

James Thull [00:22:39] Yellowstone.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:22:41] And you have roads you have for hosting places restaurants and blah blah blah and all over the park. Here you have to walk in all national parks. You are not allowed to enter in the truck in the bus or anything. The policies are very close for conservancy and those people are what I call dangerous people the green people that are being introduced here from some technical assistance from [unintelligible] all around the world that comes here because of the Constitution is already the frame we look let legal frame for these rights of nature. So they don't give rights to the human being, they give more rights to nature so human beings cannot enter national parks in the car. Is forbidden. And you cannot do these you cannot do that and everything is top control because you cannot step in the grass because you are killing nature. That far it goes with this group.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:24:08] If you take the newspaper from Sunday in Quito you have one big page like this that said fresh water is lacking in the next 50 years. Freshwater is going to be a source that lacks for human beings. But if you study a little bit the water cycle you know that the water the same amount of water is in this world, two thousand million years ago and it is now. So the amount of water is not going to change because there is a big page in the newspapers saying there is lack of water nowadays. What we don't do is to do the proper use of water. For example, here the average rain precipitation is around 200 to two hundred and twenty-two hundred and forty millimeters per year. There is a lot of water. But because we are in the Andes the slopes to the coast are very steep and freshwater does not being retained in the altitude and is not being infiltrated in the altitude, in 36 hour travels 320 kilometers as far as the coast and in 36 hours it becomes salt water. So the problem is that Green People say hold on you cannot stop water in the altitude because you are changing the environment. So we give them a really an alternative that is OK if you think that we cannot float and make it down, there is the right way to do to stop the water. OK we're going to infiltrate the water for that we're going to make small hundreds of small dams in all creeks and rivers and we force the water to enter to the soil. So this water is going to infiltrate travel around underground and show out say 20 kilometers down or 40 kilometers down or hundred kilometers down. Like frozen water in the Spring fountain. That's the alternative but for that, you have to move and use some machinery in these creeks and these national parks. And if you're not allowed to

move in the car is it possible that you can say to this people, I'm going to bring a bulldozer or an excavator to move these make these dams just with rocks not with concrete or steel bars nothing, just with rocks to stop some water slow down the flow reduce the slope and make the water infiltrates in the ground in the walls of the creeks. That's the main idea the walls of the creeks are soft ground, the bottom of the creeks are rocks. So you have to infiltrate in the walls and for that, you have to increase the water level for top small dams and stuff. So we hope someday that people here and the government is going to understand. Does the solution to optimize to improve water conservancy is have been done in China in the last 200, 2000 years and is being done in Italy by the Romans years ago. In Scotland and England many years ago. So it can be done everywhere just to use all the water that's coming in precipitation you don't want the water to run off the streets to flood all over the rivers to flood the flat areas like the Mississippi River or our places in the Coast. Wintertime next month you're going to see full pages of our paper saying flooding here flooding there. Is because all the water with all those slopes that we have running very fast. Wintertime everything is flooding because we don't want that we want to save the water at high altitude so we can use for water supply irrigation and hydroelectric plant. Easy.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:29:21] Yes. OK. Water that's being used at this altitude after use is waste water. It becomes polluted so it needs some treatment so you can give back that water that you use in good conditions for the people down streams. These they learned in Europe 200 years ago because there are a lot of cities down streams. Here in Ecuador around not too many but the big result of this lack of wastewater treatment is that there is no fish in the water because of pollution. So there is only fish in the Highlands at high altitude. That's everywhere in what you call developing countries. Wastewater treatment is a phase number three in development let's put it that way. So after these industries are growing everybody get this scare because too much water being used too much water being produced wastewater being produced so after that they say OK we'll have to clean the water. So Ecuador is in that phase of start cleaning water and probably in 10 years time, we will have clean water again back in the rivers. But nowadays 95 percent of water being used is sent like raw sewage to the rivers. And that means lack of fish easy, very easy. So for that as soon as we improve wastewater treatment it will improve the quality of the rivers and we will have more fish again in the rivers.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:31:24] Well this is free advertising for our neighbors Colombia. They have the best Peacock bass fishing in the world. Places in the east side of Colombia close by the southern border that has been with gorillas the last 20 years. Now, these are clean and people everywhere know especially people that they like bass fishing to go there. And every year there are more tourists more people going to fish in the area called Orinoco River. There are a few rivers down there. And what's important is that the Colombians are very clever. They understand immediately the benefits of bringing fishermen to that place. They start protecting the rivers, they start protecting the fishing, and they have a lot of tourists coming in to fish in all over the Llanos Colombianos the flat area in the west close by the Venezuelan border. The fishing is very good, peacock bass, the biggest in the world 25 pounds some bigger. And a lot of variety of fish warm very warm for the people that they don't like cold weather like this is beautiful. Besides that, Colombia has as well in the Pacific side, another place that's very famous now a day for sailfish as well in this area closed by the Panama border in the last 10, 15 years was the place for the drug traffic coming out to Central America. But nowadays is almost clean is being protected by the Colombian navy and as well they have a beautiful airport in Bahia Solano. Brand new. There's no road to that place is only you reach by sea or by plane, but as soon as you are Bahia Solana you have the biggest, the biggest sailfishing in the world.

It's exactly like the Gulf of Panama in the Pacific side. Well this area of Colombia is in that Gulf of Panama and the fishing is beautiful especially last week of April or first week of May. You can fish sailfish 200 meters from the beach you don't have to travel 60 miles inside. 200 meters from the beach you have sailfish, a lot of.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:34:45] Fishing and hunting Argentina. Argentina is a huge country. You have in the south trout, rainbows, and brown trout. And in the middle you have this huge Parana river. There are three main rivers in South America, the Amazon, the Parana, and the Orinoco. So the Parana it starts somewhere in Brazil, crosses certain places in Paraguay. And there are some rivers coming from Bolivia and they end up in in a place called a El Paso de La Patria. Is in the border between Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. And the fish of Dorado is unbelievable. 25, 35-pound fish. Another one you can catch ten a day easily. Catch and release as well because Argentina says well they learned a lot of tourists coming in for fish for Dorado. As well for catfish that's called Surubi, big huge catfish even 200 pounds. And another variety of fishes, love of fishing and a lot of good wine good food. And then you have for trout fishing and fly fishing Chile, South Part of Chile the best trout fishing ever. Go to the south of Chile, I said you can start in Puerto Varas and go all the way down to Aysen. And you can fish all day Argentinian Chilean border full of lakes and rivers. And you can spend during summer time and don't forget summertime over there in January, February, and March, half of April. And then is snow like in Montana but in those months you can have your best fishing ever for rainbow and brown trout.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:37:16] Well I give you some numbers because a year ago we tried here to show the government what's the impact of fishing in the state is 2000 million per year. That means fishing licenses, fishing rods, reels, flies, lures, hotels, renting boats. Everything that's dealing with fishing two thousand million dollars a year in the States. In Argentina last year, 400 million. In Chile, 120 million, Colombia. 50 million this year. So we bring those numbers to our government and say OK you need money nowadays ok these are the numbers think it over, what can break out of fishing a proper use and development to make it like we always say sustainable, and sustained during time so we can use today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, and in 50 years time. It's not like oil; you take out oil and it's gone in two years. If you do it the right way you can still fish and get money out of fishing in the next 200 years. So I think that is the way to make the government say OK, can you explain to me that again. And probably that's the way we have to go nowadays. People that they don't understand the only way they understand is money. So that's the way I think we should go.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:39:26] Okay. And as you know there's a slogan of Ecuador all over the world that says Ecuador loves life. That means that in Ecuador there is no killing. But fishermen sometimes have to kill. Local fishermen in the coast in the Galapagos they have to leave. And in the Galapagos and in the, our coast fisherman leaves out of fishing to survive. And for their families and for developed local industries that we have in our coast. And regulations of course government regulation of these green people don't allow you to fish for example the Galapagos. There are some strange regulations okay you can fish in the Galapagos only with a local tour operator that charge you two hundred fifty dollars per hour per person. Can I say it again? Two hundred fifty dollars per hour per person. You have to use what they do and they are not fishermen, they are tour operators. So the only way to fish in the Galapagos is half legal half illegal. What that means, you hire a what you call pescador artisanal. I don't know the exact name in English artisanal, artisanal is something handmade. The word in English will be I don't know, well but those are allowed to fish for their families and for local markets in the Galapagos Islands. But if

you join them and you fish with them if you are avoiding going with two hundred and fifty an hour, and you're paying probably one-fifth of that price the whole deal with these guys. You help them to fish you teach them to fish. And now you find them Bent Rods bent reels with these local fishermen and they have special lures and they find new techniques in the past they use only nets. Nets that kill all kind of fish. Now they can select the fish they kill. Because if they take out with the fishing rod it's not the fish they want they put it back. They only take the fish they need to sell to the market or to take it to the restaurants or to the hotel. If you fish with those people then you are and you follow these because the fish the fishing is very good especially for tuna fish, yellow, wahoo and another kind of dorado that you call dolphin?

James Thull [00:42:55] Dolphin or mahi mahi.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:42:56] Mahi mahi. Yeah and a lot of other kinds of fish. And it is the fishing in Galapagos is beautiful you can get tired all your shoulders, your arms, your hands because the fights are so hard. Fish that leap from the ocean are very strong and they have they can fight for five minutes, 10 minutes and is it something that you should do once in your life. Fishing for tuna. The bigger the tuna the bigger your satisfaction. And in our coast as well we have in all the deltas we have Red snapper. It's not chinook it's a silver fish with a black line in the middle.

James Thull [00:43:58] Oh like a Jack?

Eduardo Campuzano [00:44:00] No. And the meat is very good. Well, I will remember later on. Sea bass and a lot of sea bass and other kinds of fish. And I have to remind you that until the year 2000 Ecuador had the world record in black Marlin. 12 hundred pounds caught in Salinas. Our place on the coast is famous because of our Marlins. We have three kinds of Marlins; striped, blue, and black. Striped goes two hundred and fifty pounds, blue goes to 300 pounds, and black is more than 350 pounds. And as far as I remember old the world record was in Ecuador I think now is in Panama they caught a Marlin, but there was no hang it they didn't kill they estimate the weight something like 13 Hundred pounds but the one that was caught in Ecuador in Salinas was killed and was hang it was the year 1960 something was 12 hundred and something. We have as well another kind of good fishing in the mountains of Ecuador. High and High lands for trout only trout and if you like fly fishing come to Ecuador because trout fishing is very good.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:45:49] Okay. Snook is what the name the fish.

James Thull [00:45:57] Oh the one that you were thinking of earlier?

Eduardo Campuzano [00:45:59] Yeah, yeah the one with the line in the middle. Yeah I want to tell you the story of this snook. The first time I went to Rio Cojimies, is a Delta here in North parts of Ecuador, Rio Cojimies is very famous for snook, and red snapper, and sea bass. The night before I'm talking to you about 30 years ago. There was no road from one town to the other so you have to use the beach when the sea level was low. You use the sand like a pavement road and you go from one town to the other. But we were so anxious, so happy to reach to the sea and to go to the other town that we decided to go across land. And was dark it was late at night and there was one small stream of water coming into the sea and was something like ten feet down. And during the night we saw only a pool of water and we thought that was just a pool of water say six inches or so and we came with a car glug, glug, glug and went down. The water was at this level. The electrical windows of the car got in contact and they start closing. And because of the

pressure of the water I could not open the doors. So I had to jump through the small opening of the window and the window keeps making pressure against my ribs. So I broke two ribs that night trying to get out of the car because during the night we saw that not all just small the stream coming in. We thought that we were in the sea, gate going down so. We were a little bit anxious and desperate to get out of the car and the windows were closing so I got two ribs broken. Next morning the other guys that came fishing with us, they came in the beach early morning 6:00 and they help us to take out a car and go to the other town. Reach to the other town. Two broken ribs, I could only breath like like that. And I say well we have two here fish were here for fishing. So let's go fishing. As soon as we start fishing is Snooks 20 25 pounds getting on the line. And I was so happy.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:48:53] That all my friends as soon as they had on the line one snook they give it to me the rod and I start pulling. But after five of those I felt the broken ribs and was the first time in my life that I have to quit fishing because I have pain. And later on when I caught my first Marlin, I broke this string here the muscle goes with the string here tight end of this shoulder. So I broke that one because I didn't know how to fight. For a big fish you have to use your legs.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:49:39] And you have to sit in a fighting chair is not something that you fish in the sight of the boat. You need to fighting chair for something. And I didn't know how to use and I use only my arms and I broke one string.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:49:56] And later on and one other fish one of the less I broke another string. So I have one fix with a staple. And another one is broke. So now I fish with my left hand. And I do it very quite well fishing fly fishing with the left. I had to learn now to fish with the left hand.

Eduardo Campuzano [00:50:28] Just come to Ecuador. You will find that surprising fishing and do your investigation and Don't. If you come for tourists to Ecuador, don't forget to fish. There's a lot of places where you can fish.