

Building the Elena Hut – Progress Report

Fund raising for building the Elena Hut was closed on the month of August 2009. A total amount of 22,400 USD has been collected.

Thereafter the Italian Consulate of Mendoza started requesting proposals and projects for building a high mountain hut in the Aconcagua Regional Park, in a place not far from the Aconcagua summit.

This project has been managed with the cooperation of the “Asociación Argentina de Guías de Montana” (AAGM) and in accord with the public organisations for the management of the Park, i.e. the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente de la Provincia de Mendoza and the Dirección de Recursos Naturales Renovables de la Provincia de Mendoza. The location known as “Plaza Còlera” has been chosen for building the hut, on the basis of a thorough evaluation by the High Mountain Guides, the Mountain and Trekking Guides, the Porters and the Service Suppliers of the Park. This location is at an altitude of 6,000 meters, at the meeting point of the most commonly followed climbing routes to the Aconcagua summit that are known as “Nord or normal route” and “Route of the glacier of the Polish”.

The concerned people agreed that the sole aim of the Elena Hut will be “to give help and support only to real emergency cases occurring on the Aconcagua”. Therefore the hut will be equipped with first help and medical equipment, as will be specified in future communications.

Six projects were submitted by companies specialized in high mountain structures. The selected solution will be made of duplex galvanized steel multi-layer panels with a rigid high density polyurethane core. Outer dimensions of the hut will be 4x3x2 meters. The vaulted roof will have a polyhedral structure, to reduce the build-up of snow, while presenting a reduced cross section to strong winds. Safe fixing on the ground will be given by steel tie beams. The most effective techniques will be used for thermal insulation.

The purchase of VHF-FM radio equipment is being considered. It will be powered by photovoltaic panels, to guarantee a constant and reliable connection with the Plaza de Mulas base camp.

According to the selected project, building operations of the hut are scheduled for the present summer season and the inauguration should be by the end of February 2010.

The enclosed drawing gives a schematic image of the adopted solution.