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## Ron Mader

The 1999 Private Sector and Government Award



It is a particular pleasure to be able to outline briefly the career of the first awardee of the Private Sector and Government Award of CLAG established this year. After graduating with a B.A. in Communications and Film Studies from Indiana University, from 1988 to 1990 Ron studied at the University of Texas, Austin, obtaining an M.A. in the Institute of Latin American Studies that, as he states publicly, led to no job. He was, however, wise enough to take one geography course! Ron then moved to Ecuador to polish his Spanish before settling in Mexico City, where he worked at *The News* from 1992 to 1994. Then he returned to Austin to work as an independent journalist until the Mexican peso crisis of 1995. While in Austin he established a lasting connection with the "Green Builder" website of Bill and Jeanine Christensen.

He next moved to Miami and spent 1995-96 as editor of *The Summit of the Americas Center Monitor* at Florida International University. However, a year or more in Miami reinforced his longing and preference for Mexico, where he has been based since 1996. Two years of extensive travel in Mexico and Honduras provided the evidence for two superb and ecologically sensitive guidebooks on each of those countries (*Mexico: Adventures in Nature*, John Muir Publications, 1998; *Honduras: Adventures in Nature*, [with James Gollin], John Muir Publications, 1998). He is now busy on preparing two more books, *Exploring Ecotourism in the Americas* and *Sustainable Development in the Americas*. He has also given more than a hundred presentations on travel and ecological topics during the last two years.

But, perhaps as important – or even more important – since 1994 he has established and consistently developed an innovative, beautifully designed, and content rich Internet website. In this era of e-commerce, it is good to report that his *Planeta.com EcoTravels in Latin America* site has received numerous awards, including the prestigious 1999 "Lente de Plata" award from Mexico's President Zedillo.

It is thus with great pleasure that CLAG presents its first Private Sector and Government Award, in recognition of his contribution to enhancing and disseminating knowledge of the geography of Latin America, to Ron Mader.

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David J. Robinson
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