



NUESTRA TIERRA

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COLLABORATION BETWEEN ECOCE AND THE GRUPO ECOLOGICO SIERRA GORDA (GESG)



ECOCE (Ecology and Business Commitment) is an alliance created between different companies who commercialize PET plastic, and who were concerned with the environmental impact caused by this material. This alliance is an example of co-responsibility between the private sector and the civil society to respond to pollution caused by solid wastes, such as PET plastic. The GESG initiated talks with ECOCE, which resulted in an initial visit and afterwards in a mutual cooperation agreement. The gathering and storage of recyclable solid wastes such as PET plastic, cardboard and glass, constitutes the most complex and expensive part in the recycling process. After its initial visit, ECOCE was impressed with the community-recycling network established by the GESG in Sierra Gorda. This network consists of 54 community-recycling centers, where solid materials are classified and stored to be later transported to the regional recycling center in the town of Jalpan. Afterwards, in the regional recycling center the materials are classified, packed and sent to different recycling facilities. ECOCE became an important alternative to get rid of the large amounts of PET plastic collected in Sierra Gorda and at the same time they guarantee a stable price for PET plastic, because ECOCE is subsidized by important companies. The first shipment of PET recycled by ECOCE took place in the month of November 2002, and until March they have picked up six shipments that sum up to two tons of plastic taken to Mexico City to be recycled.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE SIERRA GORDA BIOSPHERE RESERVE AND CECATI 60

CECATI 60 (Center for Working Skills) is an educational institution from the city of Dolores Hidalgo in the state of Guanajuato – Mexico, working with the Sustainable Production Program in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve.

In March, various meetings were held to evaluate the first prototypes for the future ceramics line of the *Sierra Gorda* trademark. The ceramics workshop located in the community of Soledad de Guadalupe within the Biosphere Reserve has an organized collective of women participating, who receive professional training in ceramic elaboration techniques.

After a period of collaboration and exchange of ideas, the directors of CECATI 60 submitted the first prototypes to representatives of the Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda and the management of the Sierra Gorda



Biosphere Reserve. They evaluated shapes, different models, dimensions and colors for products like: coffee cups, plates and ashtrays. Based on this evaluation both sides will establish the quality profile and characteristic needed for the *Sierra Gorda* trademark.

LAND MANAGEMENT FOR CONSERVATION



A strategy that has resulted especially effective in favor of conservation of biodiversity in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, is the purchase of land in places of special biological value that are threatened by human activity. For this purpose the NGO called *Joya del Hielo A.C.* whose members include local Serranos, academics and private investors, was created to purchase land through donations that are destined for strict conservation purposes. Thanks to various donations, we have been able

to protect valuable sanctuaries of cloud forests and jungles that foster threatened fauna species such as: the bearded wood partridge, jaguars, mountain cats, white tailed and temazate deer and flora species like: magnolias and granadillos.

The most recent achievement has come from *People's Trust for Endangered Species* to purchase an 18-hectare land extension. The terrain located within the core-protected area of Joya del Hielo and contains cloud forest, magnolias and bearded wood partridge among other species.

THE SIERRA GORDA BIOSPHERE RESERVE, PRESENT AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM Davos – Switzerland

The World Economic Forum was held in Davos- Switzerland from the 23 to the 28 of January 2003. The primary goal of this Forum is to lead in identifying strategic global issues and to promote a basis for decision making in favor of constructive global change.



The director of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, Martha Ruiz Corzo, was invited by the Schwab Foundation to participate in this important Forum, as part of a group of 60 distinguished social entrepreneurs worldwide. On this occasion Ruiz Corzo was asked to participate in a panel of climate change titled *Is Climate Change Affecting Our Health?* And was recruited for two more. The panel discussed how infectious diseases have increased with climate change and how the greenhouse effect is influencing human health conditions. In the panels distinguished experts like: Alfred Sommer – Dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at John Hopkins University, Mario Molina – Nobel Prize and Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Julie Gerberding – Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In these panels, the project “Biodiversity Conservation In the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve” was recognized as an example of hope in the face of climate change due to it's the on-going grassroots network and capacity to carry out projects on a local level.

World Economic Forum – WATER AND MOUNTAINS INITIATIVE - WAMI

Fresh water is the key resource of the 21st century for the future of humankind. For this reason the Water and Mountains Initiative was created by the **World Economic Forum** in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program - **UNEP**. The intention is to establish best practices in the management of watersheds, the payment for the environmental services they provide and to serve as an incubator for public-private partnerships that will improve water quality and quantity for the world's population.

In January the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve was present in the first session of this initiative Switzerland and participated in a second session during the month of April.

First Tri-Party annual meeting of GEF celebrated, coinciding with the inauguration of the San Juan de los Duran Ecotourism site



During the last week of March in the town of Jalpan de Serra, representatives of CONANP-SEMARNAT, UNDP, the Foreign Relations Ministry and the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve met for the first Tri- Party annual meeting to review the management of the GEF-UNDP project being implemented in the bioregion. After intense meetings, the Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda Biosphere invited all representatives on a day tour of: reforestations, a carpentry workshop, Soledad de Guadalupe's ceramic workshop, a rural school of the environmental education program and a local sawmill. The tour ended at the new Ecotourism site in the community of San Juan de los Duran where all representatives were received with a delicious dinner, prepared and attended by the community that owns and operates this site. This was the first visit to be held at the cabins and all the visitors expressed their admiration and satisfaction for this valuable project built with the support of: INI, SECTUR, CONANP, PRODESA, ICATEQ, CECATI and with the management of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve and the GESG.

FOREST FIRES IN SIERRA GORDA AND XILITLA

Several forest fires occurred in the month of March as a result of the high temperatures, the lack of precipitation, agricultural fires to clean fields, vegetable carbon production and short circuits in electrical lines. The fires affected the municipalities of Jalpan, Pinal de Amoles, Xilitla and to a lesser extent Landa de Matamoros. The fiercest fires affected the region of Tancoyol around the Cercada community, because it's a zone of difficult access. In the Xilitla municipality around the community of Chalahuite, the fires consumed around 1,000 hectares of well-preserved forest. Due to the lack of federal personnel, the GESG had to assist in the control of the forest fires in Xilitla. Fortunately federal fire brigades of SEDEA and CONAFOR with the aid of the Mexican Army controlled the forest fires that occurred in the other locations.

ROLEX AWARDS for ENTERPRISE - CEREMONY IN MEXICO CITY

On February 21st in Mexico City's Business Club the Mexican-Swiss Business Association hosted a lunch, to present Martha Ruiz Corzo director of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve with the Rolex Award for Enterprise in the *Associate Laureate* category. Thanks to her exceptional qualities of courage and tenacity and to her extraordinary contribution in preserving humanity's biological heritage, Ruiz Corzo was selected among 1,400 candidates, by a distinguished panel of experts.

Distinguished personalities and friends were present at this event, such as: Ernesto Enkerlin, President of CONANP, Steve Knaebel, President of Cummins - Mexico; Alex Benoit, Director of Rolex Mexico; Anthony Turner, President of the Mexican-Swiss Business Association and Marcus Kaiser, Swiss Ambassador in Mexico.

