

**“BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE
BIOSPHERE OF THE SIERRA GORDA
RESERVE” QUARTERLY BULLETIN**
Spring 2004



Special announcement: In a ceremony held at the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City, Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. received the Reason to Be Prize (Razón de Ser) on July 29th along with Enlace, Comunicación y Capacitación, A.C. and the Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense, A.C.

The prize is given to institutions that as a result of daily activities, outstanding commitment and professionalism, provide a holistic service of great social impact to the beneficiaries.

- The International Network of Non-Profit Organizations and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) held a meeting in April at the World Bank, Washington DC. The full-size project “Protection of the Biodiversity in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve” was presented as a case study to members of the network and GEF recognizing the need for multi-sector coordination, and citing the strategy of co-management between the Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda (GESG) and the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR). GEF projects operated by NGOs in Latin America and the rest of the world shared lessons learned and lobbied for a voice within GEF Council sessions.
- On the 8 of April in Washington DC, the prestigious organization Forest Trends held its Board of Directors meeting, to which different groups such as Rainforest Action Network, World Bank, Greenpeace and international corporations like Mitsubishi attended. During this event, Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo was chosen as a member of the Board of Directors. This constitutes a significant recognition of her experience in social participation, the regeneration and protection of forests and natural resources and the implementation of payments for environmental services in the Sierra Gorda rural mountain conditions.
- As part of the expansion of the geographical area of work of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in central Mexico, Rosario Álvarez, the director of the TNC in Mexico, made a visit to the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. During her visit, she observed our activities, especially the Administration of Land for Conservation Program, which has been very effective in ensuring protection through the purchase of 453 hectares of cloud forest and pine-oak forest therefore ensuring the conservation of habitats for a variety of species of threatened endemic flora and fauna.
- In June, a meeting of the subcommittee of Environmental Education of the Advisory Council of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve was held in the presence of Prof. Ernesto Becerra, representing the USEBEQ (State Education Secretariat). In an effort to guarantee sustainability and permanence in the long term, GESG seeks to transfer the Environmental Education program to the schools by directly training teachers. With this project, the GESGIAP would save considerable resources and expand the geographical reach of the program significantly. Ecology and related themes would therefore be integrated in school curriculum. The response of the educational authority was very positive, expressing awareness of the extensive social-environmental effect of Environmental Education.
- The first “Environmental Songs” competition was held on the 4th of June in the municipal auditorium of Jalpan de Serra, in which 333 schools participated. Lots of musical styles were used, (from traditional “Huapango” to rap) with subjects provided by the Director of Forest Culture of the National Forest Commission, institution that also provided the prizes. The event was met with considerable interest, particularly standing out the ingenuity of the costumes and the instructions of their teachers.

- To celebrate the 5th of June, World Environment Day, the traditional Earth Festivals of the Sierra Gorda, in their 12th year, were held in 26 rural communities, which 4,000 children from 81 schools attended. In similar fashion to previous years, these events were attended by teachers, authorities, children and parents. The women prepared typical dishes and foods in addition to presented poems, some of which were written for the occasion. We thank everyone involved for their enthusiasm and interest, their help was invaluable in these festivals.
- As a complementary activity to the celebration of the World Environment day, the First Plastic Marathon was held in the center of Jalpan de Serra. This event was organized by the EcoClub of Jalpan and involved students from various schools to collect bottles and containers of PET plastic. The parents of the students actively participated and the event rounded up a grand total of approximately 50,000 bottles. The winner managed to collect 1,900 bottles and won a bicycle. The outstanding participation produced both good environmental results and family-wide activity that motivates the recycling initiative in the city of Jalpan.
- A report of the project "Conservation of the Biodiversity in The Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve" was presented to the people of Jalpan on the 11 of June in the Historical Museum of the Sierra Gorda by Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo to a diverse audience of local citizens. The inauguration of the exhibition space for environmental interpretation of the Biosphere Reserve begins with a temporary exhibition called "The Orchids of the Sierra Gorda" by graphic designer Jorán Martínez and demonstrates the variety of species and the beauty of this particular plant family. Thanks to the good will and cooperation of the Prof. Junipero Cabrera, the director of the museum and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the GESG.
- The "Roberto Ruiz Obregón" Training Center for Sustainability is in the first phase of construction on the property donated by the Roberto Ruiz Obregón Foundation of Queretaro City. The second phase will be sponsored by Nacional Monte de Piedad, I.A.P. and the new facilities will be finished with resources from the GEF project "Conservation of the Biodiversity of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve." This center will be key to the training of various sectors of the population in the region and beyond, as well as provide the adequate spaces and facilities for equipment and operation of the GEF project local partners.