



Reserva de la Biosfera Sierra Gorda, Querétaro

UNESCO



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A delegation of the Dutch Committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), an important associate of the Sierra Gorda project in Queretaro, visited the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR) from the 17th to 22nd of October, 2007. Accompanied by their own donors, the Netherlands National Post Code Lottery, the IUCN staff came to see firsthand the lands acquired with their economic support. A total of 272 hectares were purchased for conservation through the local organization Joya del Hielo A.C. to make them become private nature reserves. The Netherlands National Post Code Lottery is a private lottery that has functioned successfully in Holland for many years and each year makes important contributions of its profits to a variety of organizations, such as the Dutch Committee of the IUCN. A mixed delegation of both organizations visited the SGBR and 3 of the 4 properties they helped acquire for conservation in the name of Joya del Hielo A.C. The visitors were pleasantly surprised with all of the conservation work going on in the region and they could verify in the field the positive impact on the local biodiversity that was obtained by acquiring properties and dedicating them to strict conservation.



The National Audubon Society is one of the oldest and most prestigious conservation organizations in the United States, publishing the bimonthly prize-winning journal Audubon, which serves as an informational reference on conservation, particularly of birds. During the month of October, we received the distinguished natural history writer Scott Weidensaul, who having published nearly two dozen books was chosen by the editors of Audubon to write an article about our conservation and ecotourism projects here in the reserve. Weidensaul was accompanied by professional photographer Ewan Burns, who has published his photographs in journals like Audubon, Conde Nast, and Men's Health, among others. They will create an article of the highest quality to be published in 2008.





The Sierra Gorda also has a presence on international radio. We received the prestigious American reporter Jason Margolis, who thanks to a co-production of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Public Radio International of the United States visited the reserve to carry out two reports on our conservation work. The first story focuses on the environmental services provided by the forests of the SGBR, and the schemes of payments for conservation that have been developed for the landowners of these temperate and tropical forests, as well as the development of ecosystem service products. The second report focuses on community projects, emigration to the United States, and the social impact on local communities. These reports can be accessed on line at www.theworld.org/?q=node/14559 archived under the 12th and 13th of December.

Consultants and experts from the Katoomba Group have joined Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. and Bosque Sustentable A.C. in developing a pioneering concept of ecosystems products for the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. These products include a gourmet ecosystem product which includes biodiversity, carbon and hydraulic recharge for 15,000 hectares of oak forests and lowland tropical forests. The progress of various research projects are providing the technical platform to build solid proposals of conservation mechanisms that will be applied in the SGBR to involve and directly compensate the local property-owners. For more information on the topic see www.ecosystemmarketplace.com which has an article written by Jim Whitestone titled "Sierra Gorda Taps Voluntary Markets for Carbon and Environmental Offsets – Again."

In their annual meeting on the 26th of November, the Directors Meeting of the Mitsubishi Corporation Foundation for the Americas (MCFA) approved nearly \$700,000 USD in new subsidies for diverse conservation organizations throughout the continent. Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. was the only Mexican organization selected to receive support for a period of three years. The MCFA approved the proposed project to fund the educational activities provided by the Sierra Gorda Earth Center for the local communities, which focus on environmental education, reforestation, and the conservation of wildlife. The funds provided by MCFA will serve to promote conservation activities and the sustainable development strategies of all of the Reserves as well as other areas of Mexico and Latin America. Also, the subsidy from the MCFA will allow for the establishment and maintenance of an on-line virtual campus for the activities of



the Sierra Gorda Earth Center. In collaboration with the Universidad Abierta de Cataluña, the Earth Center will develop the curriculum based on the contents of an educational packet on sustainable development provided by UNESCO. In the course of the project, expert educators will develop new didactic materials based on the local experience of the Sierra Gorda.

As a part of Mexico's National Conservation Week, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects "Conservation of Biodiversity in the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve" and "The Integrated Management Plan of Three Priority Eco-regions" presented a Progress Report this past 30th of November in the renowned Casa Lamm Cultural Center of Mexico City. Ten years after the decree of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, which converted our mountains and home into a Natural Protected Area, and seven years since the beginning of the Sierra Gorda GEF project, the result of a substantive partnership between GES, United Nations Development Programme and the National Commission for Natural Protected Areas. On behalf of the three Priority Eco-Regions, the coordinator Biologist Alberto Laborde Lomelí gave a summary. Later Martha Isabel Ruiz Corzo, director of the SGBR and regional coordinator, proceeded to present the project's advances, and pointed out that the principal partners of the project are the mountain people who collaborate daily in activities of restoration, reforestation, productive livelihood diversification, and conservation of the region. Lic. Verania Chao spoke on behalf of UNDP to congratulate the progress of the projects. Subsequently Dr. Ernesto Enkerlin, National Commissioner of Natural Protected Areas, highlighted the growth and expanded capacity of the Sierra Gorda project as well as pointing out that the management plan of the reserve has been 90% executed, an unprecedented achievement of significant impact value. He also noted that the experience of the SGBR constitutes an example for other natural protected areas in the country.

Nine months since the start of the systematic activities of monitoring the jaguar populations of the SGRB, we have accumulated a large series of registers of this species and the many other wildlife species that form part of the living ecosystems that permit a large predator such as this to subsist in the temperate and tropical forests and scrublands of the reserve. The third largest feline in the world after the Siberian tiger and the African lion, the Jaguar is still present in a large area of the reserve in altitudes varying from 300 meters above sea level in the canyon of the Rio Santa Maria, to 2,400 meters above sea level, providing evidence that the



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jaguar's range of altitudinal distribution is considerably larger than evidence from preliminary studies that have been carried out by personnel of the Autonomous University of Querétaro State. We now have photographs of a wide variety of wildlife species that constitute the base of the jaguar diet, and also that of other felines that are part of the mountain ecosystems. Without doubt this confirms that the Sierra Gorda has the capacity to sustain these great predators, producing an additional incentive to continue with our conservation work.

Martha "Pati" Ruiz Corzo was invited to give a presentation in Paris, France, at the Triple Bottom Line Investment conference (TBLI Europe 2007). The name of this organization reflects its commitment to promote three principals of responsible investment: social equality, environmental quality, and economic prosperity. TBLI Europe 2007 aspired to help individuals and businesses in achieving their objectives of institutionalizing sustainability. Focused on finances, its function is to connect these businesses and individuals in a new sustainable economy through a global network. Al Appleton, previously the Commissioner of Environmental Protection of New York, and expert in the field of payment for environmental services of water, inaugurated the conference and facilitated the panel in which Martha I. Ruiz Corzo participated, with the theme of biodiversity, poverty and environmental services. In the same trip, Ashoka: Innovators of the Public of Spain invited Ruiz Corzo (Ashoka 1996) to share her experience as a social entrepreneur and to give welcome to the Ashoka family the new Spanish Fellows: Antonio García Domínguez, Jerónimo Aguado, José Manuel Pérez and Faustino García Zapico.



GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

UPDATE CONTACT DETAILS FOR SIERRA GORDA

Official website: www.sierragorda.net

We invite you to our new branch office in Queretaro City, please use this address for all mail to be delivered to local partner organizations:

Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. y Centro Tierra Sierra Gorda
Bosque Sustentable A.C.
Sierra Gorda Ecotours
Productos Sierra Gorda
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This location includes installations for workshops, classes and events of Sierra Gorda Earth Center.