

CFDA 15.641

Wildlife Without Borders – Mexico

Summary of Projects 2009

18 Grants Total FWS Funding: \$666,292 Total Leveraged Funds: \$1,227,300

Development of a Training Program under the Stewards of the Land Signature Initiative of the Wildlife Without Borders- Mexico Program

In partnership with Instituto para el Desarrollo Sustentable en Mesoamerica, A.C. This project plans to bring together rural peasant farmers and indigenous people grass-roots groups with the objective of developing a training program in biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use, specifically designed for the needs of these participants, which are at the same time the owners and/or users of high biodiversity areas and nature reserves in Mexico. Deliverables include (1) five workshops (two at the national level and three regional ones) for about 30-40 participants each; (2) creation of a Steering Committee, including Terms of References for this Committee; (3) designation of Dr. Victor Toledo as Project Advisor; (4) a training program in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management for peasant farmers in Mexico, including curricula, delivery mechanisms, format, faculty, trainee profile, sustainability plan, certification plan, monitoring and evaluation plan, etc; (5) implementation of a pilot training course. Amount: \$89,992. Match: \$200,000.

Practicum of a Sustainable Model to Recover and Conserve the Wintering Habitat of the Monarch Butterfly in the Monarch Biosphere Reserve in Mexico.

In partnership with ALTERNARE, A.C. Over-exploitation of forest resources, soil erosion, unsustainable agricultural practices, demand from wood-related industry, uncontrolled tourism, and lack of alternative sources of income for local people threatens this habitat, which is particularly critical because the forest shelters the western hemisphere's monarch butterflies during their hibernation. Through this grant ALTERNARE, A.C. will provide training to address five specific needs: 1) conservation and management of resources by indigenous residents of the Rio San Juan valley (including 4 community workshops), 2) community participation in reforestation (including maintenance of 11 greenhouses), 3) continuation of work plans designed by resident farmers and landowners (80 meetings with 20 local farmers), 4) training 20 people as 6th generation instructors/trainers (15 workshops projected), and 5) strengthening ties with other NGOs and assisting other communities in conservation training. Amount: \$45,000. Match: \$245,622.

Regional Program for Strengthening Capabilities for Natural Protected Areas

Management in Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas and Guatemala.

In partnership with Pronatura Chiapas, A.C. Conservation efforts are especially needed in the southern part of Mexico where few organized conservation projects are in place despite the disproportionately large number of species endemic to the region. By 2007, 64 local communities had initiated conservation efforts, but many are still in need of training in natural resource management and conservation. Through this grant, Pronatura Chiapas will take a four-pronged approach to address these training needs: 1) two ten-days workshops for managers of communal reserves on planning, social organization and natural resources management, 2) a workshop for private landowners on legal and managerial aspects of protected areas, 3) a workshop for employees and managers of local NGOs and Natural Protected Areas on legal frameworks, environmental impact assessments and conflict management, and 4) the third installment of the Annual Course on Planning and Management of Protected Areas directed at 25 technical specialists and park guards. Amount: \$40,000. Match: \$79,550.

Creating and Increasing the Capacity of Conservation Professionals in Mexico through a Network of Conservation Educators and Practitioners.

In partnership with Instituto de Ecología, UNAM and the American Museum of Natural History. The extraordinary biodiversity of Mexico requires a cadres of trained biodiversity conservation professionals, but conservation challenges in the country are mounting in part because of the poorly integrated and inadequate supply of local training and educational opportunities. Through this grant, UNAM will train at least 100 people, focusing on federal government employees (CONANP and SEMARNAT) that are decision-makers at a national level or at their individual reserves, in 3 workshops focusing on the biology of conservation. Each participant will leave with a comprehensive CD-ROM to share with colleagues and will have access to an interactive website where members can continue discussions. Amount: \$46,000. Match: \$95,226.24.

Strengthening Local Leadership for Forest and Water Conservation in a Community-Declared Protected Areas Network in Guerrero, Mexico.

In partnership with EcoLogic Development Fund. The 1.5 million hectare Sierra Sur de Guerrero region is home to great, but threatened biodiversity: many threatened and endangered species, including limited distribution species, 27 rivers of national importance, 9 of which are essential to local residents' incomes, and 1 million hectares of forest, 20,000 hectares of which are lost every year to fire, logging, and agricultural clear-cutting. Fortunately, the Regional Council of the Sierra Guerrero (CRESIG), a community based organization has declared 235,000 hectares of land as a collectively managed Protected Areas Network. These subsistence farmers and local resource-users need training in conservation management and environmental protection, acquire financial, technical and political skills regarding natural resource management. Through this grant, EcoLogic will train the local farmers and resource users in community-based

watershed conservation and land management, focusing on the watershed, soil erosion and deforestation. The grantee will train 50 local leaders in 2 different communities in natural resources protection, including project monitoring techniques, and will prepare 2 communities to participate in global water and carbon markets. Amount: \$25,000. Match: \$190,500.

Nongovernmental Alliances to Evaluate and to Fortify a Process of Training in Environmental Education for Rural Promoters in Mexico.

In partnership with Centro Campesino Desarrollo Sustentable, A.C. The proponent approach to natural resources management training is unique. Its methodology has evolved as a result of comprehensive discussions with other “campesino” or peasant organizations in the country regarding challenges, goals, and techniques that work. This methodology has been used successfully in Mexico, significantly impacting land use practices throughout the country. Topics include strategic planning, adaptive management, capacity-building, communication methods, leadership, and problem-solving. Through this project, Centro Campesino, along with the help of two other grantee NGOs, will develop 4 workshops to train 20 promoters/trainers from 7 different NGOs and community groups from around the country on how to train land owners in four distinct areas of protected area conservation: The profile of the promoter in environmental and sustainable development, leadership in managing social and environmental conflicts, methods and tools for communication, and the management of watersheds. Amount: \$35,000. Match: \$28,216.

Strengthening the Technical Capacity of Federal Protected Area Managers through Decision-making Training in Management and Conservation.

In partnership with PROFAUNA-Chihuahua. In 2003, the National Natural Protected Areas Commission (CONANP) created a complex data collection system (SIMEC) as a tool to standardize monitoring practices in all protected areas. The program has been running since 2006, but CONANP has not trained reserve managers and personnel in how to collect and analyze data for monitoring. Through this grant, the proponent will design and implement a comprehensive course to teach monitoring techniques to reserve personnel, consisting of 2 separate workshops, each a week long, which will train 32 participants in total. By the end of the course, participants will be able to recognize the importance of monitoring species and habitat management, and will master the use of quantitative tools that allow more technical and high-level management and conservation of protected areas. Amount: \$31,800. Match: \$14,174.43

Alebrijes from Oaxaca: Use and Conservation of Woodcarving Species.

In partnership with Grupo de Ecología de Poblaciones, UNAM. In the central valleys of Oaxaca, local artisans produce alebrijes, or small woodcarving figures, as an artisanal

product sold to tourists in local markets. The alebrijes are made of “copalillo” trees, a local name for different trees in the *Burseraceae* family. Exploitation of these trees is essential to the local economy, but overexploitation has caused environmental threats, such as soil erosion. Through this grant, the proponent will support and promote the conservation of the “copalillo” tree in areas of the state of Oaxaca dedicated to the production of “alebrijes” through the implementation of two workshops. The first will teach at least 20 local authorities and residents about adequate use of forest resources and the second of which will teach 20 local residents how to reforest the “copalillo”. The second workshop will be given five times in different locations. In addition to these workshops, the proponent will build a demonstrative greenhouse to teach local residents hands-on reforestation skills and will also produce an informative manual for local communities and artisans. Amount: \$30,000. Match: \$44,489.

Latin American School for Reserve Guards.

In partnership with Instituto de Historia Natural (IHN). Declaring a reserve does not guarantee its conservation as personnel face a plethora of problems (logging, illegal wildlife trade, forest fires, human settlements). Confronting these challenges requires training, rarely available for park rangers in Latin America (often the only institutional presence physically in a reserve). In 1995, this program supported the “1st Course for Park Rangers of Nature Reserves of Chiapas” to provide basic tools to enable park rangers to face these challenges, changing their image from “ecological police” to “outreach agents”, establishing the Training Center for Park Rangers. By 2006, almost 200 individuals, from 40 reserves from Mexico and Central America have received training, establishing partnerships with the International Federation for Park Rangers and the Association of Park Guards of Argentina. Through this grant, the recipient will institutionalize this course by creating a permanent school, utilizing space donated by the Zoological Museum Miguel Alvarez del Toro in El Zapotal, Chiapas. The proponent will 1) promote formal and non-formal education programs to improve management skills of the park rangers, 2) strengthen strategic alliances with other NGOs, foundations, associations, and government institutions to consolidate and amplify the impact of the project, 3) create didactic material, a web page, and during the coming year 4) it will train 15 technical specialists and 100 park guards. Amount: \$35,000. Match: \$78,685.

Capacity-Building in Biodiversity Monitoring and Tarahumaran Ethno-biological Information in the Royal Pathway Urique-Batopilas.

In partnership with Consejo Ecoregional Sierra Tarahumara, A.C. A new approach to conservation is providing key lessons on local participants in nature reserve management in Mexico. Indigenous people are managing their lands as “Peasant Reserves” based on their cultural and economic needs. This is especially true in the Tarahumara region where indigenous groups are separated culturally and linguistically from national conservation efforts. Through this grant, the proponent will define an ecological corridor between the Urique and Batopilas communities’ reserve, produce a technical manual documenting

biodiversity monitoring techniques adapted to the indigenous communities' cultural background, in particular traditional forms used by community members to observe wildlife species. The recipient will also train 12 promoters in biodiversity monitoring techniques, who will replicate conservation workshops using the manual produced in 5 separate communities and at local schools, impacting up to 3,000 people in the region. Amount: \$40,000. Match: \$85,243.

Consolidation of a Network of Communal Natural Protected Areas in Southeastern Mexico Phase II.

In partnership with Instituto para el Desarrollo Sustentable en Mesoamerica A.C. (IDESMAC). A general problem with protected area management in Mexico is the fact that there are many stakeholders involved and little organization among them. This is especially true in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, where communities are remotely located and culturally distinct from much of the country. The federal agency that manages reserves, CONANP, has had little success organizing local, rural communities. Through this grant, the In partnership with will create a network among all stakeholders, federal and local, which will facilitate training and the eventual creation of legal protection certifications and formal work plans regarding the management of the protected areas. This project has 3 phases: first, the recipient will hold a workshop to train all regional CONANP personnel in the methodology of creating and implementing a management work plan, which includes the publication of a manual for CONANP personnel; second training will be provided to 9 separate communities located in reserves to design management plans for each one of them; and finally, a forum will be held for CONANP personnel and community leaders to formalize the network and to strengthen legal recognition of the 9 communities' protected status. Amount: \$35,000. Match: \$34,220.

Certificate Program in Conservation of Wilderness.

In partnership with Unidos para la Conservacion A.C. (UPC). CONANP, the federal agency that manages Mexico's protected reserves, has announced that in 2009 it hopes to decree half a million hectares of wilderness as protected areas, a scheme that necessitates greater capacity of CONANP's personnel to manage reserves. Through this grant, the proponent will create and implement a 4-week course, supported by a university or research center, that will provide high-level technical training in methods and conservation techniques, management and administration of wilderness areas to CONANP personnel in particular, and also other state and federal government officials, NGOs, private land owners, communities, and others stakeholders to protected area management. The recipient will train at least 35 students through the course, which is timed to inaugurate the 9th World Wilderness Congress (WILD9), and produce a training manual, with each chapter written by a professor in the course and a directory of wilderness specialists as a tool for exchanging information and networking. Amount: \$55,000. Match: \$151,117.

PROBEA/Fundacion La Puerta Mt. Cuchuma Stewardship Project, Tecate, Baja California, Mexico.

In partnership with the San Diego Natural History Museum. The globally important natural resources of Baja California are highly threatened by uncontrolled development, and the cross-border Cuchuma Conservation Easement – a private binational 200,000 acres easement that is also one of the world’s top 25 biodiversity hotspots – is particularly threatened by lack of binational coordination. Long-lasting conservation in this region requires linking existing environmental education classroom learning with actual project implementation by teaching local people in Tecate, Baja California, and especially youth, in the fundamentals of sustainable use. The proponent will raise awareness of the Cuchuma conservation easement and increase appreciation of the importance of the area as a biodiversity hotspot and encourage its sustainable use among the Tecate citizenry. Through this grant the recipient will 1) train at least 25 local youth and young adults as environmental educators who will in turn teach environmental education to 2,000 local school children, 2) train a youth coordinator who will be in charge of outreach for the entire region of the easement, and 3) conduct a discovery tour for 12-15 leading Tecate citizens with a related art exhibit. Amount: \$30,000. Match: \$22,543.

Development of Abilities and Knowledge in the Sierra Gorda Earth Center.

In partnership with Grupo Ecologico Sierra Gorda. The Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Mexico is the richest in the country in terms of ecosystem diversity and the 2nd richest in biodiversity, an internationally recognized UNDP pilot program in regional development, and a model on how to reconcile environmental and socio-economic priorities. Threats include extensive livestock ranching, inefficient agriculture, wildfires, inadequate forest management practices, and poaching. The proponent has had such great success in its community through the years that it is now focusing on replicating its conservation successes in other communities that are rich in natural resources. Through this grant, the Recipient will: 1) train 120 community members in workshops on how to replicate the Sierra Gorda environmental education project, who will then be required to replicate workshops and projects in their own communities, training 150 to 300 people each, 2) train 30 directors, management personnel and public relations personnel of the reserves and NGOs in fundraising techniques, 3) train 30 teachers in environmental education, and 4) create 30 micro-businesses, and 5) strengthen the alliance for the protection and conservation of the jaguar throughout the training of 30 additional technicians, Amount: \$20,000. Match: \$3,905.

Promotion and Development of Community Reserves in the Chilapa, Guerrero Region, Phase II: Training Children, Youth and Adults in the Importance of Conservation.

In partnership with Grupo de Estudios Ambientales, A.C.. The Chilapa region of Guerrero is one of the poorest regions of Mexico, and protected areas in this region are largely owned and managed by peasant groups. Today there are 9 official reserves, each managed differently according to the community's culture and organization. Sometimes, however, conflicts arise in the communities, especially when a ban is adopted to protect a specific resource. Through this grant, GEA will address these conflicts by using GIS to assess each reserve and exploring sustainable alternatives to make them more productive and eliminate conflict. The program will address this in two manners: 1) through promotion of sustainable production of firewood, palm and agave, and 2) environmental education and tourism directed at the communities' youth. The project will train 4 regional promoters in environmental education, 30 teachers and 500 youth in sustainable production through school greenhouses, and didactic material for the teachers of all the participating schools. GEA will also work with at least two other grantee NGOs to utilize their counterparts' knowledge to improve activities. Amount: \$37,000. Match: \$105,831.25.

Restoration of the California Condor to Baja, California, Mexico.

In partnership with Zoological Society of San Diego. Once numbering by the thousands, the California condor was found from British Columbia to Baja California, Mexico. By the 1980s the species reached near extinction. The proponent and partner organizations are on-track to reintroduce 20 pairs of condors to the San Pedro Martir mountains in northern Baja California. However, an integral part of the project's long-term success is fostering Mexican "ownership" of the project, both through Mexican NGOs and awareness of the condor's plight by local residents. Through this grant, the recipient will implement a local educational campaign and awareness program; produce effective educational materials for use in schools and community programs; support collaborative training for Mexican biologists in release sites to expand their contacts and skill development; and develop a partnership with Wildcoast/Costasalvaje, a local Mexican NGO, for coordinated outreach and education projects. Amount: \$30,000. Match: \$366,295.

Cuenca Los Ojos Stewardship and Outreach Project in the San Bernardino Region of Northwest Mexico.

In partnership with Cuenca Los Ojos Foundation. While both the U.S. and Mexico face a number of conservation challenges, conservation in cross-border hotspots is particularly challenging for a number of reasons and is a priority of the Mexican government. In 2008 the proponent initiated a binational conservation corridor initiative for the protection and wise development of the San Bernardino/Rio Yaqui watershed region, which includes numerous private and public protected areas and wildlife corridors. The initiative now includes 25 partner organizations from both countries. Through this grant, the proponent will: 1) train at least 30 landowners of lands adjacent to priority reserves

and hotspots in soil and water conservation, grassland restoration; 2) train at least 15 reserve managers in riparian restoration practices; 3) train at least 30 employees of the Mexican Forestry Department (CONAFOR) in soil and water conservation and grassland restoration; 4) support binational researchers in the creation of a GIS-based research database showing conservation being done in the area; and 5) outreach lecture series in schools, particularly high schools, in topics such as buffer zones issues, invasive species, etc., training at least 150 students. Amount: \$30,000. Match: \$221,645.

Support for U.S. State Agencies to participate in the Wildlife Without Borders-Mexico Program & in the Trilateral Committee.

In partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). Through this project, support will be provided for U.S. state agencies (California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas) to conduct field evaluations of projects funded under the Wildlife Without Borders-Mexico Program, as well as participate in the annual meeting of the Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, to take place in Miami, Florida on May 11-15, 2009. Amount: \$11,500.