

conservation agreements private partnership platform

BOLIVIA - Reciprocal water agreements for nature and people

ACTIVE
until Dec. 2019

The inter-Andean valleys of Bolivia boast more than 800 bird species, including the endemic and critically endangered Red-fronted Macaw, as well as other important species. Despite this rich biodiversity and endemism, local farmers often have no other alternative than to deforest their land for agriculture and livestock farming, which also diminishes the quality of downstream water.

To break this cycle, Fundación Natura Bolivia pioneered “Watershared”—known locally as Acuerdos Recíprocos por Agua—a “conservation agreement” to help upper watershed forest and land managers to sustainably manage their forest and water resources. Additionally, while more than 1 million hectares of the valley region is declared under conservation management, the reality on the ground is that these areas exist only on paper. Using conservation agreements, coupled with the Watershared philosophy, we aim to work with local landowners to create a real conservation corridor protecting 50,000 hectares of forest.

What is a “conservation agreement”?

It is a deal between a community and a group or person funding a conservation project. In exchange for making specific conservation commitments, communities receive benefits from the funder.

LANDOWNERS AGREE TO:

- Designate area on their farm for strict conservation
- Prevent forest fires on their land and in the conservation area
- No deforestation in the conservation area
- No extraction of timber
- No logging for commercial purposes
- Keep cattle out of conservation area and water bodies
- No hunting
- No construction of paths in the conservation area

IN RETURN FOR:

- Beekeeping tools
- Fruit tree (namely apple and peach) seedlings
- Technical assistance for beekeeping and fruit cultivation
- Proper cattle management tools
- Material, such as barb wire, to build fences around bodies of water to keep cattle out
- Water storage and distributions systems for consumption
- Irrigation systems

INVESTMENT

CAPPP: \$300,000

Coca Cola Bolivia: \$750,000

12 municipal governments:
\$110,000

7 water cooperatives: \$40,000

IMPLEMENTER

Fundación Natura Bolivia

is a non-profit conservation organization established to develop biodiversity conservation actions and sustainable management of natural resources, and thus contribute to improving the quality of life for Bolivians. Their mission is to “Help communities to protect their water through the conservation of their forests.”

PARTNERS

12 municipal governments

- Provide political authority to the project; co-administer and co-finance implementation of the Watershared agreements

Municipal water providers

- Manage the funds on a day-to-day basis and will eventually become the local project leaders; along with the water users’ contributions, they provide long-term financing to the scheme



RESULTS TO DATE

4 new water funds

5 strengthened water funds

264 families benefiting

14,178 hectares under improved management

MONITORING

Project implementation: Every year compliance with the agreements is monitored and fair sanctions are imposed if necessary. Incentive implementation is also monitored on an annual basis to verify proper dispersal of the agreed-upon benefits.

Water quantity: We have installed six hydroclimatic stations in paired-watersheds (with forest and no forest) in three municipalities, taking into account climatic and altitudinal variations and plant formations. These stations collect data every 20 days on water infiltration, surface runoff, meteorological information and water flow, and calibrations of the are performed every 40 days in order to validate the quality of data collected by the equipment.

Water quality: Extensive livestock farming is one of the main threats to the forest water quality. In order to measure the project's impact on water quality, the presence of fecal coliform bacteria in the water will be measured with "Coliscan Easygel" produced by Micrology Labs.

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Coca Cola Bolivia: As part of their corporate social responsibility, Coca Cola has partnered with Fundación Natura Bolivia and CI to support the conservation efforts in the inter-Andean valleys, specifically in 50 percent of the municipalities of the project. Coca Cola then is the largest private sector investor in the project.

Municipal Water providers (water cooperatives): Our on-the-ground "private sector" representatives, they represent both water users and irrigators and manage the Water Funds on a day-to-day basis. It is the Water Cooperatives technicians who, along with a mentor from Natura, will lead the fieldwork and eventually become the local project leaders. They, along with the water users' contributions, will provide the financial engine for long-term conservation and development in each municipality.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the next year, we plan to scale up the "Watershared" model and create three new municipality water funds that will catalyze local investment for upstream conservation. We also plan to conserve around 17,000 hectares of forest, of which a good percentage covers important areas for the Red-fronted Macaw. At the same time, we plan to benefit around 250 new families with incentives and one-on-one training for the proper implementation of their incentives.



Contact

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