



conservation agreements private partnership platform

GUATEMALA - Helping a village keep its trees standing

ACTIVE
until Aug. 2018

In the southeast corner of Guatemala’s Laguna del Tigre National Park (the country’s largest protected area), the indigenous village of Paso Caballos comprises a 5,710-hectare polygon of the park’s total 335,080 hectares.

Home to 1,500 people, the village signed an accord with the National Protected Areas Council (CONAP) in 1997 to follow certain rules to continue living inside the park’s boundaries. In 2010, the Wildlife Conservation Society engaged Paso Caballos in a “conservation agreement” to help the community meet its commitments to CONAP, as well as to maintain the forest buffering their boundary, all the while improving their livelihoods.

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.

THE COMMUNITY AGREES TO:

- Use an “Early Warning System” to help prevent fires
- Monthly surveillance activities
- Not allow cattle inside the village boundary
- Not allow new families to live in the village
- Not rent or sell lands to people outside of the community
- Not cut down trees in a 3-kilometer buffer around the village boundary
- Not encroach upon protected areas or neighboring forest concessions

IN RETURN FOR:

- Support for education, including infrastructure improvements
- A visiting nurse to provide general and reproductive health care
- Support for the Paso Caballos Development Community Council to make direct requests to governmental institutions, such as the Health Ministry and Education Ministry
- Fruit trees to improve food security for families

INVESTMENT

- CAPPP: \$118,864
- Conservation International: \$3,328
- Government: \$18,000
- WCS: \$217,264
- Other: \$62,038

IMPLEMENTER

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Guatemala began working in Petén 20 years ago and with the Paso Caballos community 10 years ago and has been continually building and strengthening trust with community members and the National Protected Areas Council.

PARTNERS

Paso Caballos Development Community Council

- Local authority in charge of implementing the conservation agreement actions

National Protected Areas Council

- Government entity in charge of protected areas and biodiversity

Integral Forest Association of San Andrés Petén

- Forest concession neighbor to Paso Caballos and witness of the conservation agreement

Asociación Balam

- Local NGO that is a witness of the conservation agreement and manages an ecotourism hotel



RESULTS TO DATE

- Improved capacity to prevent fires
- Strengthened relationship between the Paso Caballos community and National Protected Areas Council
- No cattle have been reported inside the community
- Development Community Council leaders better equipped to make direct requests to governmental institutions, such as the Health Ministry and Education Ministry

MONITORING

On an annual or biennial basis, the Center of Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Protected Areas Council (CEMEC) uses satellite images to evaluate impact deforestation and fires and generate reports. During each burning season, the community pays daily wages to a forest fire prevention committee to assist more than 300 farmers. When the season is finished, a report documents how many farmers were active, where and when they burned, and how many followed fire prevention procedures.

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

In 2017 WCS began engaging with two Guatemalan sustainable palm oil companies. Members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, they are interested in implementing a compensation project in a 28,715-hectare area of Laguna del Tigre National Park that includes the Paso Caballos community, as well as an important Mayan archaeological site and El Peñon de Buena Vista, an vital nesting area for turtles and the scarlet macaw. An annual investment of \$US 15,000 with a community component could include control and surveillance, fire prevention measure and other methods to improve governance of the area.

WHAT'S NEXT?

WCS Guatemala is awaiting CONAP's approval to move forward with the compensation project funded by the sustainable palm oil companies that could partially fund conservation agreements for a 25-year period.



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