

Mexican Partner Communities First to Achieve National Environmental Certification

The EcoLogic Development Fund advances conservation of critical natural resources in rural areas of Latin America by promoting sustainable livelihoods that affirm local cultures and by strengthening community participation in natural resource management.

EcoLogic's partnership with the Regional Council of Sierra de Guerrero is making exciting progress toward our goal of improving the capacity of communities to provide leadership in improving systems for watershed and forest management.

This spring, two towns in the region, Santa Rosa de Lima and Santa Barbara, earned national environmental certification through Mexico's National Environmental Auditing Program. They were the first communities managing communal lands—called *ejidos*—to be recognized in this way. This certification had been traditionally reserved for businesses and municipal governments and has only recently been expanded to include communal lands. Earning this recognition demonstrates the potential of rural communities to be effective natural resource managers and highlights the leadership role they can play in ensuring water quality at a national level through local watershed protection and reforestation activities.

This July in Acapulco, a representative of Mexico's federal environmental agency, PROFEPA, officially recognized local leaders from Santa Rosa de Lima and Santa Barbara for achieving "Environmental Compliance." This designation requires adherence to the agency's environmental auditing standards for sound natural resource management and is the first of three levels of certification in the newly established auditing program for communal lands. The process of certification required the talents and long hours of the Regional Council's forestry managers Victor Betancourt Flores and Juan Carlos Casarrubias Ramirez, who successfully managed the complex process.

Recognition as a Catalyst for Engagement and Capacity-Building

EcoLogic's Mexican Program Officer Ramón Alfonso reflected on the significance of the achievement, noting that these are *the only communities in all of Mexico* that have received this first level of certification and serve as the example to follow.

Through its support of the Regional Council and its natural resource management activities in Santa Rosa de Lima and Santa Barbara for the past three years, EcoLogic played a role in making possible the



Guerrero community and regional leaders display Certificate of Environmental Compliance: (L-R) Arturo de la Rosa Camacho, Secretary for Environment for the State of Guerrero; C. Mauro Morales Jimenez, President of Ejido Commission for Santa Rosa de Lima; and Alberto de los Santos, President of Coyuca de Benitez Municipality, State of Guerrero.

national distinction achieved by these small communities. EcoLogic recognized Santa Rosa de Lima with an award in January 2006 for expanding its conservation zone from 1,200 to 7,000 acres. This in turn drew the notice of Mexico's environmental agency and motivated the inhabitants of Santa Rosa de Lima and Santa Barbara to register for the National Environmental Auditing Program.

Receiving this certification greatly enhances our partner's ability to access national sources of funding essential to achieving financial self-sufficiency and accelerating their linked economic and environmental goals for the region. EcoLogic and the Regional Council will continue to support communities like Santa Rosa de Lima and Santa Barbara to develop their capacity to manage their natural resources in ways that benefit their people and ensure environmental sustainability.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Innovative Models Recognized



Dear Friends,

It is with much appreciation and some amazement that I report that 2008 has been a year when the innovative nature of our work has received unprecedented recognition.

The Energy Globe National Award for Honduras acknowledged our groundbreaking work linking global demand for verifiable carbon credits to the conservation efforts of rural communities. In Guerrero, Mexico, two of our partner communities became the first in the nation to receive environmental accreditation from the Mexican environmental agency.

In addition to the tremendous boost these awards give our local partners (the real winners here!), they also serve to validate the models that EcoLogic uses to promote community stewardship of natural resources. EcoLogic will continue to use these models to strengthen communities' capacity to link the social well-being of their residents to the sustainable management of their land.

Your continued support is crucial to the progress we are making on the ground and in the lives of rural communities in Latin America. I hope that you will share the credit for these successes since our work is only possible through the financial support of individuals and organizations that, like you, are firmly committed to people-centered conservation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shaun Paul'.

Shaun Paul

Bosques Pico Bonito Earns International Recognition

Bosques Pico Bonito was distinguished with the Energy Globe National Award for its work in Honduras. The Energy Globe awards showcase projects that innovatively conserve natural resources or make use of renewable energy. The selection panel consisted of members from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Bank, and the European Renewable Energy Council. For more information, visit our website at www.ecologic.org.



Renowned Tz'utuhil Maya Artist Honors EcoLogic's Work

Born in Santiago Atitlán, Sololá, Guatemala, José Reanda Q. focuses on traditional scenes of indigenous life and portraits. His work has been exhibited in Guatemala, the United States, and Europe. José has been a long-time supporter of EcoLogic's work and graciously agreed to paint *The Land and the People* to commemorate EcoLogic's 15th anniversary. The painting, along with other art, will be available through a silent auction at our anniversary celebration taking place on November 13 at the Peabody Museum of Art in Cambridge. Tickets are available through our website at www.ecologic.org.



Preparing Guatemala's Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

Engaging youth in natural resource management is essential to promoting sustainable practices in rural areas of threatened biodiversity. In the old-growth forests of Totonicapán in the western highlands of Guatemala, Quiché youth will continue the centuries-old traditions of indigenous natural resource management. In the east of the country, the graduates of the Ak'Tenamit School in Izabal are poised to lead their communities to improve food security, expand sustainable agricultural practices, and provide economic opportunity. EcoLogic is working alongside this next generation to ensure that opportunities for youth strengthen community conservation and increase sustainable livelihoods.

Bridging Traditional Memory and Modern Demands

The Quiché majority in Totonicapán are caretakers of a rich culture that survived the recent decades of conflict relatively untouched. As part of their heritage, Quiché communities actively protect the 52,000-acre old-growth forest of San Miguel de Los Altos. Today, however, economic survival needs often push youth to the cities in search of jobs. The resulting gap between youth and community elders threatens the transmission of the unique traditional knowledge and practices that have resulted in the survival of their ancient forest.

At the request of the Quiché community leaders, EcoLogic and the Center for Indigenous Studies in Quetzaltenango have launched an initiative to document and transmit indigenous knowledge to young-



EcoLogic's outreach manager José Domingo Caal Caal (R) works with farmers to promote sustainable agriculture practices.



Inspecting seedlings that will be used in agroforestry projects throughout the Sarstun region.

er generations. Interviews with elders describing traditional Mayan watershed and forest management practices are under way and will be published in a comprehensive manual. Through a series of workshops, elders and youth leaders from 50 communities will explore ways to use traditional environmental practices to create attractive livelihood opportunities for today.

Increasing Capacity and Opportunity

Many of the indigenous communities displaced by the civil war established new homes by the Sarstun River in eastern Guatemala. The organization Ak'Tenamit (Q'eqchi for "New Village") was founded to provide health and education services to these isolated villages. EcoLogic's expertise in creating sustainable livelihoods and promoting community-led natural resource management is helping to carve out concrete opportunities for Ak'Tenamit's high school graduates to apply what they've learned about community development in their communities. Projects in five villages include training in agroforestry practices, environmental impact monitoring, and community leadership.

Two Ak'Tenamit graduates illustrate how EcoLogic's work is beginning to improve livelihoods and strengthen community participation. José Domingo Caal Caal is EcoLogic's project outreach manager. Under his leadership, five pilot communities have begun using agroforestry to diversify their food and income resources. Ana Florinda Beatriz Xol Pop has played a key role in organizing her peers to establish the Sarstun Watershed Youth Com-

Ways to Give

Our work is made possible by your contributions. Here's how you can help:

- Become an EcoLogic Ambassador and pledge to raise \$1,000 or more. You can fulfill your pledge by making a personal contribution and reaching out to your networks.
- Have your employer match your contribution.
- Honor a birthday, wedding, or anniversary with a donation to EcoLogic.
- Make a gift of stock or other securities.
- Share your talents by donating professional services.
- Participate in workplace giving.
- Donate via our website. Simply go to www.ecologic.org and click on Donate Now to give through our secure online donation form.

To find out more, please contact Barbara Vallarino, Director of Development, at 617.441.6300 ext. 109.

Thank you!



munity Association, with whom EcoLogic will partner going forward. Through this partnership, EcoLogic will increase Guatemalan capacity to engage in cross-border collaboration with the Belizean Sarstun Temash Institute for Indigenous Management in order to conserve the shared Sarstun Basin Watershed.

Initiatives to engage youth in sustainable environmental practices reinforce the core of EcoLogic's mission to strengthen community participation in natural resource management now and in the future. Working with this next generation of stewards, and through your financial support, EcoLogic will continue to align the need for improving local living standards with the global demand to protect the fragile ecosystems in which these rural communities make their homes.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Helping Communities to Recast Themselves as Leaders

Francisco T'zul was trained as an agricultural engineer. Prior to joining EcoLogic, he worked for the Guatemalan government, World Neighbors, and the European Union. A native of Totonicapán in the western highlands, he speaks Spanish and Quiché.

What led you to EcoLogic?

In previous jobs, I distributed funds and required certain results, but gave communities little or no guidance on how to achieve those results. EcoLogic distinguishes itself in the field through its active engagement with its partners. We don't hand out funds and wait for results. We are there alongside our partners, providing assistance as required and ensuring that projects have the resources necessary to achieve their goals.

What is the most common challenge you encounter in the field?

There is tremendous poverty, both in terms of economic resources and mindset. This places severe limitations on food security, one of the fundamental issues we address when partnering with a community. Taking care of the forest is harder when people are weak from hunger. In the past, government programs gave away grain, creating a dependency. EcoLogic's work counteracts



Francisco T'zul, Program Officer for Guatemala

dependency by giving people a broader perspective and tools that will serve them all of their life. In order for conservation to be sustainable, a community needs to feel ownership for achieving food security. That is why so many of our projects have a sustainable agriculture component in parallel to reforestation and conservation.

What is it that inspires you in the face of this challenge?

I know I am a part of a process I believe in and that I am not alone. EcoLogic staff, our partners, the farmers—we all make up a team. We find solutions in a collaborative style. Our approach gives communities a tremendous sense of empowerment as they see what they can accomplish. Also, seeing that

change is possible even in the poorest, most closed communities inspires me.

If tomorrow EcoLogic were to find millions for its work in Guatemala, how would you invest it?

Nelson Mandela said that education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. Even though our mission isn't directly education, it is about helping people rethink their relationship to their environment and recast themselves as leaders. Our methodology of engaging in community consultations to determine needs has produced a list of projects we currently don't have the funds to carry out. So, I would probably start there.

Is there something we haven't discussed that you would like our readers to understand?

I hope I have helped them to better understand the realities of the communities. In the same way that EcoLogic uses community partnerships to carry out its work, I hope that our supporters see the valuable role they play in protecting these beautiful places and cultures. I hope they see themselves as the extension of a line that goes from farmer, to partner, to EcoLogic, to them.



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