Mediterranews

CONSERVING THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF BAJA CALIFORNIA

No. 2 Ensenada, Baja California June 2016

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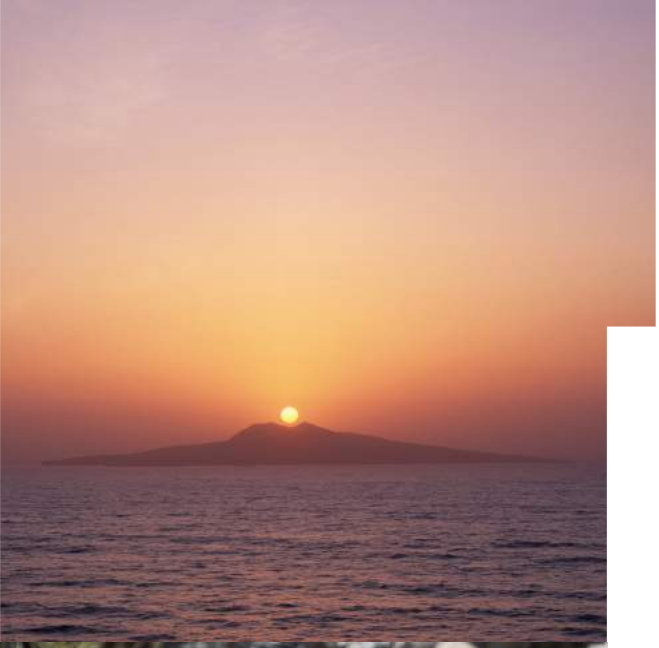

Message from the Director

The space we inhabit

Have you ever wondered what would you do if the place you live in stopped being fit for humans? Where would you go?

The thought of this upsets me, because we would not only have to find a new place to live in, but also to give up the life as we know it and everything we've worked so hard to achieve and protect. Now, this is a very apocalyptic thought indeed, but there is truth in it.

We love the place where we live and we'd like to give something back to nature for its generosity, so as members of Terra Peninsular, we're committed to the preservation of the natural beauty of the peninsula. This doesn't mean that we're against urban development. We know that population growth implies cities to expand and basic needs to be fulfilled to provide habitants with a standard quality of life. Nevertheless, urban development can't happen without regarding the sustainable use of the natural resources.

At Terra Peninsular, our vision is that these resources are protected and managed sustainably and compatibly with the ecological processes, but we know we can't do this on our own. This is why we seek to involve and engage the community through actions that promote the conservation and raise awareness about the sustainable use of the natural resources and their positive impact on their living standards.

Currently, we're facing a complicated environmental scenario, on that ground we'd like to ask you to join us and support our conservation cause.

Every small action adds up to projects of greater scale. I therefore invite you to go through the pages of Mediterranews to learn more about our conservation work and hope you make up your mind today to take care of our home.

César Guerrero
Executive Director of Terra Peninsular

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15 Terra Peninsular ANIVERSARIO

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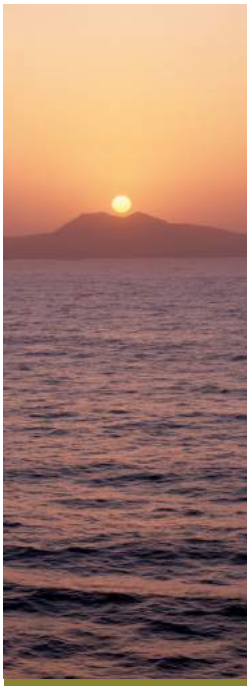
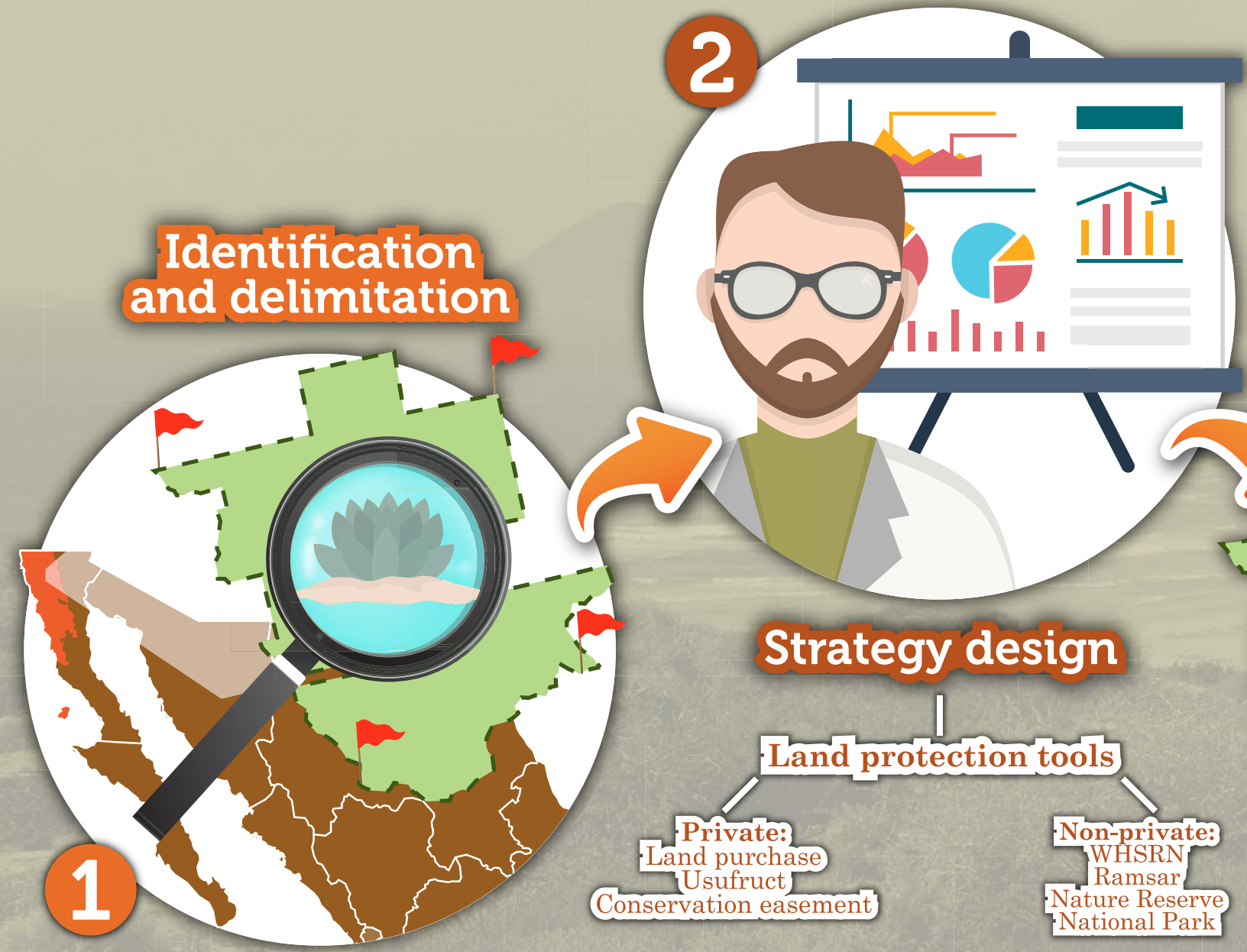


Land Pro

How does the Land Protection strategy works?

This conservation strat
ority conservation area
tools to ensure that the



otection

egy of Terra Peninsular involves identifying and defining the limits of pri-
as, as well as finding and applying the most appropriate land protection
e conservation efforts are permanent.

Terra Peninsular

What is the cause of sea lion strandings?

By Alejandro Arias del Razo, M.S.

Photo: José "El Güero" Arce Smith.

Photo: José "El Güero" Arce Smith.

Strandings of several marine mammals along the Pacific coasts have reached a record level in the last two years. In 2015, over 3,000 sea lion strandings were registered along California's coasts. This number is equivalent to the sum of the previous five years, which leads to the following question: Why are so many sea lions dying in our coasts?

The biologists and physics' studies have showed us that there are at least three factors that when combined have caused this unfortunate phenomenon.

The first factor is that climate phenomenon "El Niño", common name given to the Southern oscillation related to a rise in sea surface temperature due to a mass of water that comes from the equator near Asia, has been one of the strongest on record this year (2015-2016).

This rise of sea temperatures causes different effects in the ocean and the atmosphere, which is the reason why we hear about "El Niño" on the news. At a biological level, usually colder waters of our coasts sink due to the arrival of these warmer waters. It is important to recall that warmer fluids rise and cooler fluids sink. This is why hot air balloons rise by using a burner to heat the air. Concerning sea water, colder sinking waters often carry the nutrients that phytoplankton (what we could consider to be little sea plants, but are actually bacteria) needs in order to grow.

This loss of resources has a cascade effect. If there is a lack of phytoplankton, there will be less food for fish. Therefore, less food for the sea's large predators, such as sea lions, dolphins, sharks, among others. As a result, they need to invest more time and energy finding their food; and in most cases, they need to dive at great depths to reach the cold water column.

The second cause of marine mammal strandings is "the blob", another oceanic phenomenon that was discovered in 2013. It is a 1,000 mile long and 300 feet deep warm water mass located between Alaska and Baja California. In addition to causing similar effects as those attributed to "El Niño" (causing the immersion of the colder waters), researchers of the University of British Columbia in Canada discovered that this phenomenon supports the growth of toxic algae blooms (such as diatom Pseudo-nitzschia), that produce a neurotoxin called domoic acid.

The excessive growth of these algae also affects mammals that eat toxin-contaminated prey. This has caused a massive poisoning and stranding of California's sea lions in our coasts.

At last, the third factor is the decrease in their major prey population: sardines and anchoveta. While population growth of these two species is cyclical, which means that they tend to dramatically increase and decrease through time, the population has decreased in recent years. As a result, sea lions have had to consume other prey such as squid.

Nevertheless, these animals provide fewer calories and fat, which causes nutritional stress in sea lions, hence the malnourishment of their pups.

In regular conditions, the female sea lion goes through a cycle of foraging at sea and returns every three days to feed their pups. However, under the previously stated circumstances, these trips might take longer, leaving the sea lion pups starving or malnourished. This is the cause why most of the stranded sea lions at our beaches are pups that died of starvation.

Photo: Enrique Alfaro.

Photo: Enrique Alfaro.

Photo: Enrique Alfaro.

Photo: Enrique Alfaro.

We need to know what we can do when we find stranded sea lions at the beach. These animals spend a great amount of their time on land, so they might be just resting when we find them at the beach. However, if they show signs of malnourishment, disease or entanglement (presence of net or other objects in their bodies) we may notify PROFEPA. In Ensenada, the ICMME (Research and Conservation of Marine Mammals of Ensenada) is a civil association that offers assistance in these cases. Unfortunately, we do not have adequate infrastructure for the rescue and rehabilitation of these marine mammals in Mexico, unlike California in U.S.

TO REPORT STRANDINGS IN MÉXICO, PLEASE CALL:

PROFEPA: (646) 176 50 00 y 172 40 99
ICMME: (646) 197 53 29
icmmeac@gmail.com

Information from:

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Valle de los Cirios, Baja California. Photo: Alan Harper.

The Boojum tree,

an endemic species of Baja California

By José Delgadillo Rodríguez PhD

The Boojum tree is surely the most representative plant found in the central arid desert of the peninsula of Baja California. It is specially, the most representative one in the area called Valle de los Cirios in the Vizcaino Desert which is also known as Cochimí Desert (Delgadillo, 1998). The Boojum tree (Fouquieria columnaris) belongs to the botanical family Fouquieriaceae. It has a single genus Fouquieria and 11 different species, including the ocotillo. Its columnar form has attracted the attention of many botanists. This fleshy stem plant is considered as a unique specimen among Mexican flora and, of course, among a select group of species in the world with such features.

An identical biotype (biological form) can be found in Karoo, Africa, an oceanic desert similar to the Vizcaino Desert. We are talking about the Pachypodium namaquamum, a plant that also has a fleshy stem. Because of this fact, we can deduce that these biotypes reflect an ancient adaptation to a type of climate that did not suffered significant oscillations.

In 1751, Father Fernando Consag published a text that proves the existence of the Boojum trees and their properties. For these were tall, straight and branchless trees, Father Consag and his entourage gave them the name of cirios which in Spanish means candle. On the other hand, Cochimí indians called them milapa (Leon-Portilla, 1988). In the United States, it is known as Boojum tree that refers to "a mythical thing that inhabits desolate and remote places" (Humphrey, 1974).

These plants are like giants, they can measure up to 65 feet, but the tallest one known was 86 feet tall. Moreover, some people compare them to carrots because of their shape. However, it is very common to find plants with branches and capricious formations.

The Boojum tree blooms in August and September. Its flowers are small with creamy-yellow corollas. They have a strong fragrance that smell like honey, and they produce a sweet nectar. Some reports indicate that 15 different species of bees visit these flowers (Humphrey and Werner 1969, in Henrickson, 1972).

The terminal growth of their stems apparently occurs only during the winter-spring period. This never happens during the summer or any other season. During years of unusual winter rains their growth is considerable in contrast with little or no growth during years of extreme drought (Humphrey, 1974). This slow-growing species is found on rocky hillsides and floodplains, mainly in deep soils of granitic-clay origin that facilitate good drainage processes. They are also found in other types of soil such as those of volcanic origin, and humidity produced by fog plays a very important role as their main source of water.

Punta Prieta area, Cochimí Desert, Baja California. Photo: José Delgadillo.

Photo: José Delgadillo.

Photo: Verónica Meza.

Photo: Verónica Meza.

The Boojum tree is a plant with a restricted (and thus endemic) distribution in the peninsula of Baja California, a small portion of Puerto Libertad (Sierra Blanca) in Sonora and Ángel de la Guarda Island. However, the greatest density area is right in the middle of the peninsula, from the south part of El Rosario, Baja California to the northern slopes of the Tres Vírgenes volcano, in Baja California Sur. This arid region has an average of 73 to 140 mm of annual rainfall, mainly from January to April and less rainfall between August and September. Miguel del Barco (León-Portilla, 1988) referred to this plant as "a type of fleshy vegetable, a tree that is not found in another part of America or elsewhere in the world, not even in California."

The Boojum tree is part of a type of vegetation called sarcocaulescente (Succulent stems), and it is associated with the following species of plants: Baja elephant tree (pachycormus discolor), Mexican giant cardon (Pachycereus pringlei), ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens), Adam´s tree (Fouquieria diguetii), datilillo (Yucca valida), creosote bush (Larrea tridentata) and a wide variety of cactuses and agaves. In addition, this species is associated with an epiphytic plant called ball moss (Tillandsia recurvata) and hanging lichens such as the Ramalina menziesii (Lace Lichen), mainly in areas near the Pacific coast populations that present high humidity.

Valle de los Cirios, Baja California. Photo: Alan Harper.

Cataviña area, Cochimí Desert, Baja California. Photo: José Delgadillo.

In this regard, Humphrey (1974) mentions that the key factor that affects populations near the Pacific coast and their establishment are the constant winds that cause soil desiccation. Although the fog contains substantial humidity, it rarely occurs for it to stay for longer than 24 hours to keep the soil moist and prevent drought. Consequently, the hillsides that are well oriented and protected from the wind is where Boojum trees are abundant.

The exploitation of this important resource has been limited to the use of its thin wood to build small houses and decorate walls, and it has become highly demanded for this reason. What is concerning about this is that the law allows the commercialization of dry fallen trees, so people illegally induce their death by using barbed wire to strangle and cut the tree from its base.

This species is endemic to Mexico, yet it is not protected by Mexican norms (NOM-059-SEMARNAT-2010). This means that it is necessary to make sufficient scientific studies that justify their inclusion on the list of protected species. However, it is included in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES for its acronym in English) that Mexico has already signed. This appendix includes species that are not necessarily threatened but may become so unless specimen's trade is subjected to strict regulation.

The Boojum tree was considered as a priority species for conservation in Mexico by the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat in Spanish) with the purpose of developing the national program for its conservation. Moreover, the Boojum tree gave its name to the decree of 1980 that established the Special Protection Area of Flora and Fauna known as Valle de los Cirios.

Biography:

Dr. José Delgadillo

Dr. José Delgadillo Rodríguez is Professor of Botany and responsible of the BCMEX Herbarium at the Faculty of Sciences of the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC for its acronym in Spanish) in Ensenada.

Mail: jdelga@uabc.edu.mx

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Volunteer and Internships Opportunities

Terra Peninsular offers a volunteer and internship program to strengthen expertise, knowledge and skills. We would like to invite them to join our environmental conservation efforts by sharing their time and talent with us.

According to careers and interests, volunteers and interns can join Terra Peninsular in any of our departments. A brief description of the best-suited careers for each department and its main activities are detailed below.

Development and Communications Department:

Translators who are fluent both in Spanish and English.

Activities:

Spanish to English and English to Spanish translations of various documents, such as publications and promotional material for our website, as well as proofreading in Spanish and English.

Communication specialists, marketing students and related careers.

Activities:

Planning communication, marketing and product positioning strategies, writing informative material and reports of promotional activities.

Conservation Department:

This department needs biologists, oceanographers or related careers, also students who are interested in participating in the Habitats Adaptive Management program.

Activities:

Fieldwork, biological monitoring, surveillance tours and support in the preparation of technical reports done with the reserves collected data.

How to apply?

1. Make sure there is a collaboration agreement between the educational institution and Terra Peninsular (to get credit for internships).
2. Send your resume to info@terrapeninsular.org and clearly indicate the area you're interested in, whether you're applying for volunteering or internship.
3. According to your profile and interests, we'll refer you with the person in charge of the department or area.
4. Interview with the responsible person of the department.
5. If accepted, hand in the following documents to Human Resources: proof of address, birth certificate, current government-issued photo ID (Mexican or foreign), and certification of recent studies completed.
6. Sign the contract (for internship).
7. Begin activities.

*The intern will be responsible for completing the requirements for internship accreditation, as well as committing to the established schedule and activities.

Glossary

BIODIVERSITY

The term biodiversity is a contraction of the phrase "biological diversity". It reflects the number, variety and variability of living organisms.

BIOTOPE (BIOLOGICAL FORMATION)

The typical form of an animal or plant. It is considered as the model of their species, variety or race.

AWARENESS AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

One of three programs that Terra Peninsular implements to add efforts and actions to take care and properly use natural resources. This is done through promoting the characteristics and biological richness of the different areas that we protect, training and communicating with different sectors and participating in public policies and different forums related to regional conservation priorities that allow us to lay the foundations of high-impact actions.

ENDEMIC

Refers to flora or fauna that is exclusive of a region or territory.

INTERPRETIVE STATION

Resting area for visitors that has information material on the characteristics of the environment found around it.

EL NIÑO:

Natural phenomenon resulting from the interaction between the ocean and the atmosphere in the eastern and central part of the equatorial Pacific Ocean. It is estimated that this weather phenomenon generates a stream of warm water in the Pacific Ocean which causes an increase in sea temperature along the coast. This produces torrential rains in areas near the coast.

LA CHORERA

Community found in San Quintín Bay, Baja California. It is located at the entrance to Punta Mazo Nature Reserve.

THE BLOB

A mass of warm water that is about 994 miles long. It extends along the west coast of North America, from Alaska to Mexico. The average temperature of the ocean water could increase by more than 36 Fahrenheit degrees in some places.

ADAPTIVE HABITATS MANAGEMENT

Refers to one of three programs of Terra Peninsular. It comprises the conservation actions involving protected areas. It aims to monitor, assess, study and apply different management measures for the conservation of landscapes and habitats proper functioning. It is formed by three components: monitoring and reserves management, restoration and research.

NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACT (NAWCA):

Refers to a United States federal grant program created to support wetlands and wildlife conservation projects in North America.

SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Refers to environmental problems or conflicts that cause difficulties in social interaction such as the lack of dialogue and participation of local people in public decisions. In understanding the socio-environmental problems is the key to the appropriate management and conservation of nature.

THE FEDERAL ATTORNEY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (PROFEPA)

Refers to the government agency that is responsible for the preservation of the environment in Mexico.

HABITAT PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Refers to one of three programs of Terra Peninsular. It integrates the actions of natural areas protection through different legal tools such as purchase, lease or land management, its certification as nature reserves, and the implementation of ecological protection labels.

PUNTA MAZO NATURE RESERVE

Refers to an area that has been protected and managed by Terra Peninsular since 2014. This reserve is located in San Quintín Bay, and it is a 4 miles long sandbar.

SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (SEMARNAT)

It is responsible for the protection, conservation and use of Mexico's natural resources and the creation of national environmental policies for sustainable development.

VALLEY DE LOS CIRIOS

This place has been a Natural Protected Area since 1980. It is located in the municipality of Ensenada, south of San Quintín. It is characterized for having a high number of endemic species of flora and fauna including the boojum tree.

▲ *The executive director, César Guerrero, with the president of the Board and founder member, Alan Harper.*

Terra Peninsular's Anniversary Celebration in San Quintin Bay

By Bárbara Ramírez and Antonieta Valenzuela

On Saturday April 23, more than 40 people, including members of the board, staff, associated researchers and friends of Terra Peninsular got together at Molino Viejo in San Quintín Bay to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the organization.

Making the best he could to give his speech in Spanish, the Board President, Alan Harper, recalled the origins of the organization and how just over 15 years ago everything began with the idea of creating an organization committed to the conservation of natural areas in Baja California, as well as its flora and fauna.

Alan also recalled the names of those who helped to found Terra Peninsular fifteen years ago on April 20, 2001 with the mission of conserving and protecting the natural ecosystems of the Baja California Peninsula. The same environmental conservation work that began 15 years ago has continued to date.

"With the help of many people, most of them are here, we worked on a very strong organization. I think that this bay is the most conserved in 5,000 miles of the Pacific coast of North America," said Alan Harper about San Quintín Bay.

"It's amazing that I can work and visit this place and see what I saw 20 years ago, and I am hoping that in another 20 years from now it looks just the same," he said.

After his message, Alan Proposed a toast to the anniversary, the accomplished achievements so far, and the successful road ahead of Terra Peninsular. He also said he is confident that Terra Peninsular still has a long way to go, certainly one filled with many successes.

▲ *Alan Harper said a few words about Terra's 15th anniversary.*

▲ *The executive director, César Guerrero, expressed his gratitude towards the staff, Board, associated researchers and donors for the support these past years.*

Terra Peninsular's Board members and staff.

Terra Peninsular's Board members and staff at Monte Ceniza, San Quintín.

The Board president, Alan Harper, during his anniversary speech.

The executive director, César Guerrero, with Marco Navarro from the Board.

The executive director with Rosi Bustamante, founder and Board member.

Jerre Stallcup, Board member.

Jim Riley, a great friend of Terra Peninsular, took the opportunity to take the word and pointed out that such beautiful places like San Quintín Bay are no longer found elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, he acknowledged the hard work that members and collaborators of Terra Peninsular have made to protect the bay from the threats it faces.

"It is really an honor to be part of this organization, I am very fortunate to have met such incredible, powerful, committed people, people who really make a difference, who fight to make this difference and who are truly committed," said the Executive Director, César Guerrero, at the beginning of his speech.

He also emphasized on the commitment and work of the staff members and thanked each of them for the organization of the event, for the achievements of the recent years and for their commitment to the association.

"I have lead a team for almost 3 years. We took the leadership and the truth is that we also took a risk. Today, I am completely convinced that it was the best decision of our lives," he said referring to when he assumed the post of Executive Director.

To conclude, César handed the Board Members a small token of the staff's appreciation for their constant support and recognized the four founding members who continue to protect the natural ecosystems of the peninsular of Baja California.

The executive director with Horacio de la Cueva, founder and Board member.

Eduardo Palacios, founder and Board member, next to César Guerrero.

With Rosario Alvarez, also a Board member, and her son Leo.

Photos: Verónica Meza

Interpretive Stations:
La Ola and Mirador Valle Volcánico

La Ola station is located at the end of Punta Mazo Nature Reserve. Photo: Antonieta Valenzuela

By Verónica Meza and Antonieta Valenzuela

As a project conceived by Terra Peninsular A.C., two interpretive stations were built in 2015 with the support of the communities of La Chorera and Chapala, Taller Ciruela, Escala Arquitectura and donors. This project was part of the goals of the Temporary Employment Program (PET for its acronym in Spanish) of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat),

The stations are called La Ola and Mirador Valle Volcánico. Both of them function as interactive and informative sites for visitors, and they are located in San Quintin Bay. The first one is found within the Punta Mazo Nature Reserve, and the second one, on the road that leads to La Chorera community, the entrance to the reserve.

With enthusiasm and pride to materialize an idea that conceptualizes the environmental conservation objective, Terra Peninsular sought the support of a creative team to turn this project into reality. Terra Peninsular participated from the conceptualization of the project to the construction and maintenance of both stations.

The Temporary Employment Program (PET) was carried out along with the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat) and started in June 2015 in San Quintín Bay.

The rehabilitation of signs and building of the interpretive stations were part of the objectives of PET, and the participation of the communities of La Chorera and Chapala was mainly included. By fully involving the communities, it was intended that the sense of responsibility and respect for the two stations was awaken by their inclusion in the project, for this constructions are now part of their surroundings.

After months of planning, designing, and building, the construction of the interpretive stations was accomplished. La Ola and Mirador Valle Volcánico are a different and interactive proposal whose purpose is to provide information about the natural features of each site, as well as the flora and fauna that can be found there. Visitors can scan the QR code at each station for more information.

Due to the fact that Terra Peninsular had previously installed informative signs in the area that were destroyed or worn out because of the climate, these interpretive stations were conceived as a project that that did not cause any damage to the environment and involved the residents of San Quintín Bay.

It's important to mention that without information and scientific advisers, the construction of the interpretive stations would have never been made.

La Ola

La Ola is located right at the end of Punta Mazo Nature Reserve. The station has a wooden structure with metal joints. When designing and building La Ola, the construction was conceived taking care of the environment so that it did not ruin the landscape nor damage its surroundings. This is why, it's elevated over the ground. The interior serves as a rest area for visitors and in some bars there is printed information.

Two sides to highlight two amazing environments: La Ola, seen from South to North highlights the terrestrial features of the Punta Mazo Nature Reserve, the main conservation objective and of scientific priority; and seen from North to South, the station highlights the marine qualities that make this place special for having amazing waves to surf.

La Ola (The Wave)

Location:

Punta Mazo Nature Reserve, San Quintín Bay.

Features:

Wooden construction with metal joints.

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cemASx3l2M

Mirador Valle Volcánico

The Mirador Valle Volcánico station is located near the road before reaching La Chorera community which is the entrance to Punta Mazo Nature Reserve. From the station, located at the top, most extinct volcanoes in the San Quintín Bay can be seen. From its center there are imaginary lines that lead to the volcanoes and there you can find information about the environment. The station resembles a volcanic crater. Its construction was made out of volcanic stone gabions and it has seats for visitors to rest.

Las dos estaciones representan y materializan cualidades de la región de San Quintín que el trabajo científico de muchos investigadores ha desvelado a lo largo de muchos años. Para su construcción se tomaron en cuenta artículos y datos científicos que representan aquello por lo que se trabaja en Terra Peninsular: la protección de los hábitats y paisajes de la península de Baja California.

Both stations represent and materialize the features of the San Quintín region revealed by the scientific work of many researchers throughout the years. For its construction, articles and scientific data were considered, and the stations represent all the efforts for which Terra Peninsular has worked for: protecting the habitats and landscapes of the peninsula of Baja California.

Mirador Valle Volcánico
(Volcanic Valley Lookout)

Location:

Left side of the road to reach La Chorera, in San Quintin Bay.

Features:

Gabions baskets filled with volcanic stones and rest benches.

Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_808XdLfktw

Interpretive stations were built without damaging the environment or interfering with nature. Photo: Antonieta Valenzuela.

At the entrance of La Ola it can be read Punta Mazo and its bars have printed information about the site, flora and fauna. Photo: Antonieta Valenzuela

Before arriving at La Chorera, visitors can enjoy the rest area and know the characteristics of the site. Photo: Alan Harper.

Mirador Valle Volcánico station is built out of volcanic stones that combine with the landscape. Photo: Antonieta Valenzuela

You can appreciate San Quintín Bay from Mirador Valle Volcánico station. Photo: Antonieta Valenzuela

The participants received acknowledgements for the Participatory Strategic Planning Workshops, at La Chorera in San Quintín.

Participatory Strategic Planning at La Chorera

By Jorge Andrade and Antonieta Valenzuela

Introduction

The world and its rural areas are in a deep global crisis that has many dimensions: ecological, economic, cultural, political and ethical.

Rural areas, including the area of San Quintín Bay in Baja California, are between the urban societies and nature, and it's through their production processes that relations among humans and ecosystems are established (Morales Hernandez, 2010).

Today the crisis in the rural context has resulted in an extensive and intensive exploitation of natural resources. This is considered one of the most important causes of the majority of the visible planetary changes, the loss of natural ecosystems and their environmental services (Carabias, 2001; Landa et al., 1997 and Didier., 2002).

In addition to this, the loss of ecosystems results in the deterioration of the life quality of people who live in rural areas: "Social problems and ecological problems are indivisible and interdependent."

Understanding this, civil society organizations have sought to create a network with San Quintín Bay inhabitants who share the same concerns in order to address different socio-environmental problems, and by doing so raise awareness about the use of natural resources to generate solutions that have a positive impact on the bay ecosystems and its inhabitants' life quality.

In this context and with this vision, the Participatory Strategic Planning Workshops were held in the community of La Chorera in San Quintín, as part of the Social Awareness and Participation program.

And what is participatory? This approach seeks to increase the participation of people based on the dialogue of knowledge. This posture recognizes that the locals' knowledge is extremely important, and it also facilitates its exchange among the people involved.

Laura Martínez, executive director of Pro Esteros, and Jorge Andrade, Social Awareness and Participation Coordinator.

There were several participatory activities to analyze problems and plan solutions.

The event was held at La Chorera with the attendance of the staff of Pro Esteros and Terra Peninsular.

The workshops were designed to last 16 hours distributed in 4 sessions of 4 hours, and were taught by staff of Terra Peninsular and Pro Esteros.

Planning

objectives, goals and methods

These workshops intended to provide, through participatory methods, new knowledge and tools to consolidate a group that addressed social and environmental issues. This with the intention of having a positive impact on the community and to contribute to the conservation of the ecosystems of the region.

The goals of the workshop included that La Chorera inhabitants learned to identify, analyze and prioritize their problems, find solutions and plan projects to implement this solutions. That is, to do strategic planning.

There were several participatory activities during each workshop such as: brainstorming, problem trees, solution trees and action plan matrixes. Based on these dynamics, we all learned how to analyze problems and plan solutions. It's worth to say that the issue with which we worked was the solid waste management of the community.

Upon completion of the workshops, we celebrated with a pleasant meeting at La Chorera. Afterwards, participation acknowledgements were given to the people that were involved. The event was the perfect ending for these quite productive and enjoyable meetings during the Participatory Strategic Planning Workshop.

Results

The workshops were attended by 19 people, from which 18 were women and 1 was a man. The total duration was of 16 hours distributed in 4 sessions of 4 hours. The workshops were taught by staff of Terra Peninsular and Pro Esteros as part of the environmental education objectives of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

The results were varied and interesting. All of the causes and consequences of the problem of poor solid waste management were identified. As well as the diversity of tasks to be implemented in order to address the causes of the problem. This was how the inhabitants were able to identify solutions to the problem, its costs, if they require help and from whom.

The participants showed enthusiasm and disposition during the workshops sessions.

This shows one of the consequences of such workshops. Participants understood that there are tasks that can not be implemented without the help of Civil Society Organizations. In this way, the network of those who share the San Quintín Bay conservation dream is strengthen.

During the conviviality where acknowledgements were handed over, we were able to understand one of the major achievements of the workshop: everyone, including locals and people from Terra Peninsular and Pro Esteros, value the tranquility, flora, fauna and the feeling of enjoyment that San Quintín Bay offers. We all want that this attributes remain here for future generations to enjoy them.

The main objective of these workshops is the first step towards the autonomous growth of La Chorera. We expect that in the near future this community no longer needs the help of Civil Society Organizations to solve their socio-environmental problems.

The intention of Terra Peninsular and Pro Esteros is to give tools to our most important allies when it comes to conserving the bay: the locals. This means to be close to them while growing, as well as to grow with them and to enjoy the process of creating new awareness on the use and conservation of nature. All of this, to improve the life quality of the bay inhabitants.

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Urgent Bulletin

June 2, 2016

Dear Friends of Terra Peninsular,:

The Board of Directors of Terra Peninsular has asked me to write you this letter.

We have worked toward the conservation and protection of the natural ecosystems and wildlife of the Baja California peninsula for fifteen years. To date, we have managed to permanently protect 22,000 hectares (54,363 acres) of dunes, beaches, wetlands, forest, and coastal scrub in Baja California.

Throughout this time, we have had the active and ongoing support of researchers, scholars, community members, business owners, government representatives and donors. Today, our most prominent conservation project is being threatened and it is extremely important for us to share with you the background of this situation and the steps we are taking in order to protect the natural heritage of the peninsula for the Mexican people and to defend the work of our organization.

In 2012, Terra Peninsular, thanks to the support from Mexican and international conservationists and donors, was able to acquire a property of 830 hectares (2,050 acres) in the San Quintín Bay known as PUNTA MAZO. Likewise, early this year we managed to protect Monte Ceniza, an 860 hectares (2,125 acres) land in central San Quintín Bay. Together, they form and protect the bay, which is home of endemic species such as Anthony's live-forever (Dudleya anthonyi) and the fascinating legless lizard (Anniella geronimensis). Its vegetation includes some of the richest and most intact coastal scrub in the region, and it is the winter home to nearly 25,000 migratory birds. As with any other land purchase for conservation purposes, the legal research of the property titles was conducted with due diligence and extreme precaution.

In 2012, Terra Peninsular, A.C. became the official guardian of this natural space, which was certified as an Area Voluntarily Destined for Conservation (Área Destinada Voluntariamente a la Conservación, ADVC) by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) in 2014. Conservation actions have been conducted in the nature reserve, such as continuous biological monitoring and the construction of two interpretive stations. We have involved the surrounding communities in activities regarding sustainable development, festivals and workshops that have raised local awareness and community support for conservation projects.

On May 17, 2016, we went to the local Land Registration Office to pay the annual property taxes. To our surprise, we were informed that the property office codes (claves catastro) we have been using to pay our taxes ever since we acquired the property had been cancelled and ten new codes had been created. In addition, false property titles of these lands had been issued, in November 2015, to nine individuals who have no relation to us.

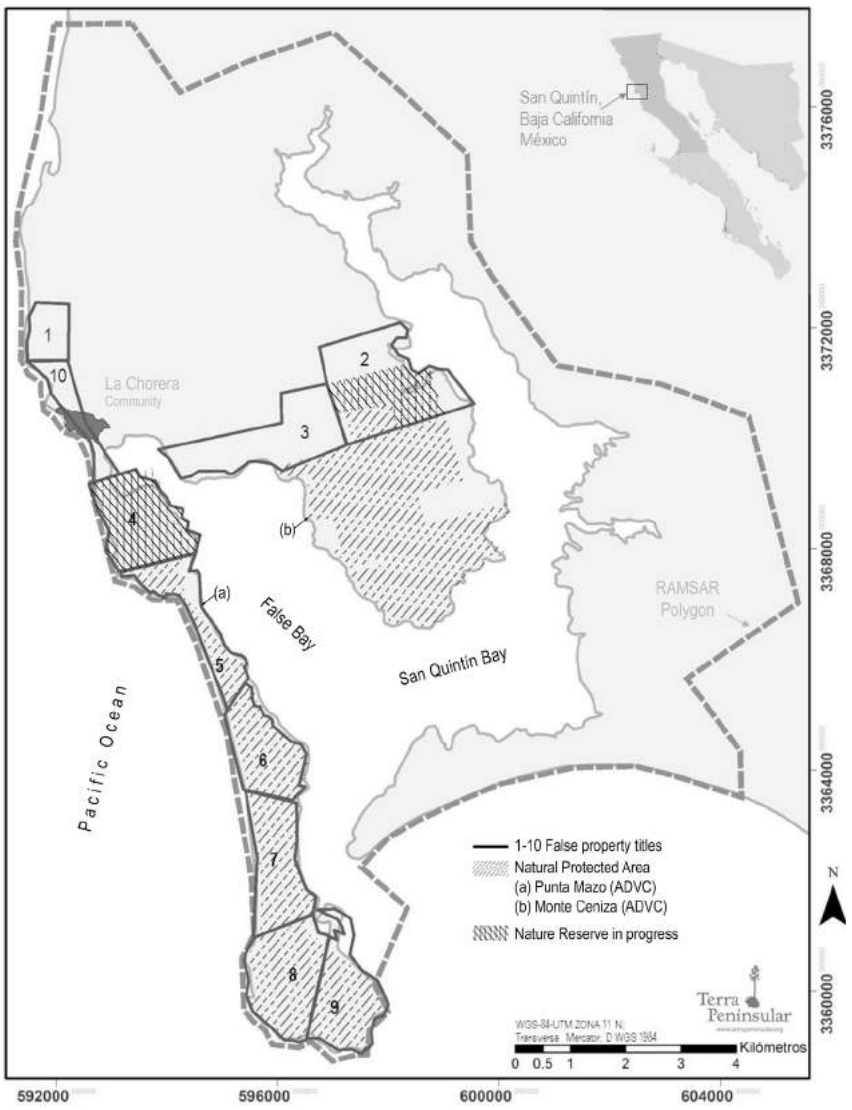
These false titles were issued without the proper order of a judge and were signed by the Secretariat of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (Secretaría de Desarrollo Agrario, Territorial y Urbano SEDATU). This is an act of corruption, impunity and cynicism that jeopardizes any conservation project in the bay.

We know the names of these individuals because in 1995, the same nine men requested these property titles to themselves, claiming that they belonged to national territories. At that time, after a long legal process of ten years, in 2011, the Superior Collegiate Tribunal, the highest judicial authority below the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, ruled in favor of Rafael Orendain, the owner of the land at that time. It was because of this ruling that Terra was ultimately able to acquire Punta Mazo.

In the present case, there is not any legal basis to dispossess Terra Peninsular of this land; we have all the documents that confirm that we are the sole owner of this property. We are confident that we will succeed because all of our actions have been carried out with honesty and strict adherence to the Mexican laws, and are in accordance with our primary objectives of conserving and protecting the natural ecosystems of the peninsula of Baja California. We are working very hard to solve this situation and we will take all the necessary measures to ensure that Punta Mazo remain as a nature reserve.

As friends and allies of our organization, it is important for us to inform you about the following actions we are being forced to take in the next few days:

- We have submitted an amparo (a legal proceeding for the protection of constitutional rights in Mexico) to a District Court in Mexico City to plead that SEDATU void the property titles and that the Land Registration Office remove these false titles from the records.
- We have also submitted a civil lawsuit seeking to hold the responsible authorities liable for any damages.
- Once the amparo and the civil lawsuit are completed, we will consider the possibility of filing a criminal complaint against the responsible authorities and the nine individuals that appear in the false property titles for fraud, dispossession and forgery.



As an additional action to our legal defense, we are building a boundary fence with permanent security at the entrance to Punta Mazo Nature Reserve. This action was never in our plans, but today we feel it is necessary to make clear that we possess the land.

We want to make clear that visitors who want to respectfully enjoy the Punta Mazo Nature Reserve will continue to be welcomed; we only intend to control access to those who mean no good.

Please, do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information, or if you have any recommendations that might strengthen our case.

If you would like to visit the reserve,
please contact us by email:
reservas@terrapeninsular.org
Or by phone:
Office: (646) 177 6800
Cellphone: (646) 947 7742

Sincerely,

César Guerrero
Executive Director of Terra Peninsular
and on behalf of the Board

WHAT AND WHERE?

JUNE 5

World Environment Day

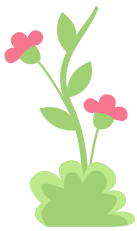
This date was created with the purpose of raising awareness about the need to protect the environment by inviting people to become agents of change and caretakers of the planet where we live and to reflect on the consequences of our actions on the environment.

JUNE 8

World Oceans Day

Oceans produce half the oxygen we breathe, and they cover two thirds of the planet's surface. This is why, this date was created to celebrate the richness and beauty of the oceans and to remember their importance and the role they play in making possible the various forms of life found on our planet.

JUNE 17



World Day to Combat Desertification

This date intends to draw attention towards making a change in land use, to promote sustainable agriculture that adapts to climate change, to create greater access to technological advances, to respect the environment and to achieve a better balance between ecological actions and food consumption.

JULY 3

International Plastic Bag Free Day

On this day, society is invited to protect the environment by not using plastic bags. Besides, actions that reduce the consumption of bags are encouraged, and other options that do not pollute are also promoted.

JULY 14

Arbor Day (Mexico)

Trees capture water and carbon dioxide, they produce oxygen, conserve habitat biodiversity, prevent soil erosion and protect from wind. In Mexico, Arbor Day is held during the second Thursday of July. This date seeks to raise awareness about the importance of protecting trees and the environment, as well as to remember that their existence is vital for humanity.

For more information, please contact us to **info@terrapeninsular.org**

15 Terra Peninsular ANIVERSARIO

Nobody can change the world **without friends**

BID Mejorando vidas

The Consultative Group on Biological Diversity CGBD

CONABIO Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad

CONAFOR Comisión Nacional Forestal

Resources Legacy Fund Creative Solutions. Lasting Results.

Threshold Foundation

CONANP Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas

Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative

Environment Now® Action. Results. Change.

FASOL Fondo Acción Solidaria, A.C.

EHL

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Department of the Interior

Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, A.C. Institución privada FMCN 20 años

ICF

FONNOR Fondo Noroeste

JiJi Foundation

SEMARNAT Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

Waterkeeper® Alliance

MacArthur Foundation

Marisla Foundation

North American Wetlands Conservation Act NAWCA

PROFEPA Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente

Sonoran Joint Venture Binational Bird Conservation

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Without Borders