

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of International Conservation
Wildlife Without Borders-Central America Program FY 2015
Summary of Projects**

In FY 2015, the USFWS awarded 13 new projects from Wildlife Without Borders- Central America program, totaling \$687,372 which was matched by \$767,436 in additional leveraged funds. Field projects in all 7 countries throughout the region across 8 priority landscapes (in order from north to south below), including bi-national and tri-national projects, will be supported.

MAYA BIOSPHERE RESERVE (GUATEMALA)

LAC 1505

Grant # F15AP00936

Protection of the jaguar (Panthera onca) food web, through strengthening local capacity to exercise best harvest practices in ramon tree (Brosimum alicastrum) seed collection, targeting six women's groups in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, Guatemala. In partnership with Asociación de Comunidades Forestales del Petén (ACOFOP). The purpose of this project is to empower six women's groups, totaling 217 member families of the Association of Forest Communities in the Petén, to increase protections for the jaguar and its food chain within 212,763 acres of the Maya Biosphere Reserve. The project will: 1) identify best harvesting practices of the Maya nut; 2) strengthen local community capacity to sustainably harvest Ramon seeds from forest ecosystems; 3) improve production practices, using a value chains approach for harvesting, primary and secondary transformation processes of the Maya nut to increase competitiveness; and 4) integrate the jaguar and its Maya Biosphere Reserve habitat into local outreach as well as international marketing for the resulting products.

FWS: \$57,000 Leveraged Funds: \$7,624

MAYA MOUNTAINS (BELIZE AND GUATEMALA)

LAC 1548

Grant # F15AP00942

Increasing wildlife security through development of a landscape-wide compliance strategy for the Southern Maya Mountains. In partnership with Ya'axché Conservation Trust. The purpose of this project is to reduce uncontrolled and unsustainable wildlife and timber harvesting and trafficking for species of concern such as the yellow-headed parrot, scarlet macaws, xate palm, mahogany and rosewood within the Southern Maya Mountain Massif. Project activities include: 1) training Ya'axché field rangers on the use of SMART technology; 2) transferring knowledge to other protected area ranger teams through peer-to-peer training sessions; and 3) bringing together the Belize Forest Department, private logging companies, Belize Defence Force, community leaders and other key stakeholders to jointly develop a holistic Compliance Strategy for the Maya Mountain North Forest Reserve, Bladen Nature Reserve, Columbia River Forest Reserve and Deep River Forest Reserve. The strategy will be inclusive of enforcement, education and awareness, training needs and adoption of effective technology.

FWS: \$49,995 Leveraged Funds: \$21,458

LAC 1517**Grant # F15AP00938**

Prevention and control of agricultural incursions in the Chiquibul National Park. In partnership with Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD). The purpose of this project is to reduce the expansion of the agricultural frontier into Chiquibul National Park, largely by Guatemalan nationals, by strengthening monitoring and enforcement capacity of the park ranger force to address large-scale illegal agricultural clearings and raising the visibility of the protected area through public education and outreach. Project activities include: 1) regular ranger patrols within the Chiquibul Forest including operationalizing one conservation post in Southern Chiquibul through a full-time ranger presence; 2) equipping ranger teams and training rangers on SMART patrol systems; 3) engaging national media outlets through site visits to increase public visibility of the area and law enforcement efforts; and 4) convening bi-national stakeholders in order to harmonize efforts with Guatemalan counterparts. The project has a strong complimentary bi-national linkage to USFWS project LAC 1523 in Guatemala.
FWS: \$52,915 Leveraged Funds: \$35,335

LAC 1523**Grant # F15AP00908**

Reducing the expansion of the agricultural frontier in the coniferous and broadleaf forests of the Chiquibul Mayan Mountains landscape, by supporting Guatemala-Belize bi-national cooperation. In partnership with Asociación Balam. The purpose of this project is to reduce agricultural encroachment on broadleaf forest ecosystems of the Maya Mountains Chiquibul in Guatemala by: 1) identifying areas of greatest pressure on the landscape; 2) developing sustainable livelihood pilot projects in hotspot border communities; 3) working with the Agency for Protected Areas to strengthen monitoring and enforcement actions under the Environmental Security Strategy for the area; and 4) implementing a communications campaign directed at local communities via radio to discourage illegal and unsustainable forest use and wildlife extraction and trade activities. The project has a strong complimentary bi-national linkage to LAC 1517 in Belize.
FWS: \$48,246 Leveraged Funds: \$49,520

MONTECRISTO MASSIF AND TRIFINIO CORRIDOR (EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS)

LAC 1506**Grant # F15AP00931**

Addressing cloud forest management limitations in Volcan Pacayita Biological Reserve to conserve this threatened ecosystem and the hydrologic services it provides. In partnership with Asociación Ecológica de San Marcos de Ocotepeque (AESMO). The purpose of this project is to reduce agricultural encroachment and support sustainable management of cloud forests within the Pacayita Volcano Biological Reserve in Honduras. Project activities include: 1) completing a landscape level biological assessment and threat analysis of the area; 2) evaluating water ecosystem services provided by the reserve and establishing one community agreement for the Water Ecosystem Services Compensation program; 3) convening local communities to undertake land use planning and zoning; and 4) engaging at least 10 local coffee producers on pilot projects to increase productivity and reduce their impact and expansion into the Reserve. Project outputs will contribute towards the development of a management plan for the Reserve.
FWS: \$45,100 Leveraged Funds: \$23,500

LAC 1508**Grant # F15AP00935**

Establishment of the Chingo Volcano Tropical Dry Forest Biological Sub-Corridor. In partnership with *Asociación Salvadoreña Pro Salud Rural (ASAPROSAR)*. The purpose of this project is to contribute to the conservation of the Montecristo Trifinio Region, El Salvador by establishing a critical sub-corridor to ensure connectivity between the area's natural protected areas. The project will: 1) bring together key local stakeholders to complete a landscape level ecological analysis of the Chingo Volcano tropical dry forest biological sub-corridor and identify indicator species for conservation status monitoring; 2) conduct education and outreach with local landowners, schools, and decision-makers on sustainable land use practices and wildlife management; 3) train at least 120 private landowners and community association members, of which at least 50% will be women, on sustainable agriculture techniques through field schools at 5 municipal agroforestry demonstration sites and 12 sustainable wildlife management initiatives; and 4) utilize the information gathered and local public support garnered to complete and present a proposal to the Ministry of Environment for the legal establishment of the sub-corridor.
FWS: \$52,825 Leveraged Funds: \$8,250

LAC 1510**Grant # F15AP00966**

Ecological connectivity and sustainable land-use in the Ostua Dry Forest Biological Corridor. In partnership with *Fundación para el Desarrollo Integral del Hombre y su Entorno Calmecac*. The purpose of this project is to reduce the threat of agricultural and livestock expansion and intensification into the Ostua dry forest, one of two remaining viable and intact areas of dry forest within Guatemala and home to endemic and threatened species including pumas, spider monkeys, quetzals, ocelots, iguanas, bats, and ornamental plants used extensively in trade. This project will: 1) establish a model for connectivity between dry forests and riparian zones; 2) implement a land-use planning and more efficient livestock production systems in conjunction with local communities; 3) engage with at least 10 ranchers to improve practices and submit applications for forest ecosystem service payments; and 4) systemize the pilot model to scale it up throughout the Montecristo-Trinational Biological Corridor.
FWS: \$44,310 Leveraged Funds: \$31,090

LAC 1556**Grant # F15AP00941**

Strengthening the tri-national framework for implementation of the Trinational Montecristo Trifinio Biological Corridor (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras). In partnership with the *Nacional Financiera Fideicomiso Fondo para la Biodiversidad (CONABIO)*. The purpose of this project is to support improved connectivity between protected areas of the Trifinio region by strengthening management and communication tools, and the ability of key stakeholders to use them, for the Montecristo Trifinio Trinational Biological Corridor. Project activities include working with local, national and tri-national stakeholders and platforms to create a series of detailed maps (mapping of all 7 sub-corridors, land use changes, coverage maps by ecosystems to better identify ecosystem goods and services, and water supply and sources) in order to support decision-makers to carry out land-use planning, identify priorities for conservation actions, and guide future funding decisions. This project will also design, carry out and evaluate

a communication campaign directed towards local communities and governments about the critical importance of the biological corridor and the services it provides.

FWS: \$57,373 Leveraged Funds: \$6,093

RIO INDIO-MAIZ (NICARAGUA)

LAC 1526

Grant # F15AP00939

Re-activating the Indio-Maiz Biosphere's forest ranger program to stop illegal cattle ranching encroachment and poaching. In partnership with Global Wildlife Conservation. The purpose of this project is to reduce illegal cattle ranching and poaching in the Indio-Maíz Biosphere Reserve by coordinating with the Rama people, the national Ministry of Natural Resource and the Environment (MARENA) and the Autonomous Secretariat of Natural Resources (SERENA) to develop and implement a sustainable community-based forest ranger program. The project will: 1) conduct stakeholder meetings to complete a threat-identification and priority setting exercise to inform patrol routes; 2) train and activate four groups of five indigenous forest rangers and an indigenous data manager for each group; 3) set up a payment system for forest rangers; and 4) work with authorities to monitor patrolling results and ensure follow-up enforcement action.

FWS: \$34,000 Leveraged Funds: \$129,130

OSA PENINSULA (COSTA RICA)

LAC 1515

Grant # F15AP00937

Program for the conservation and sustainable development of the Osa Peninsula through community empowerment, a new trail network and biological monitoring. In partnership with the Costa Rica-United States of America Foundation for Cooperation (CRUSA). The purpose of this project is to create green jobs for rural communities of the Osa Peninsula in order to reduce threats to wildlife posed by over-visitation at existing park entrances and illegal hunting, logging and mining. The project will: 1) create an online reservation system to allow micro- and small tourism businesses to access a broader tourism market; 2) build high-quality infrastructure through the Golfo Dulce Forest Reserve to Corcovado to ensure safe and environmentally-conscious wildlife observation along three paths re-purposed for tourism instead of illegal wildlife and natural resource extraction; 3) train at least 15 adult children of current or former illegal miners, hunters and loggers as certified nature guides who are prepared to lead tourists on the paths; 4) train 10-15 community leaders and park guards on biological inventory and monitoring; and 5) establish long-term community monitoring committees within existing community associations.

FWS: \$90,608 Leveraged Funds: \$165,612

LAC 1530

Grant # F15AP00943

Controlling and monitoring poaching, habitat degradation and other illegal activities threatening the Corcovado National Park in Costa Rica. In partnership with Friends of the Osa. The purpose of the project is to reduce poaching, illegal gold mining and logging within Corcovado National Park, the crown jewel of the Osa Peninsula and an important habitat for jaguars, white-lipped peccaries, squirrel monkeys, and the largest remaining wild population of scarlet macaws in Mesoamerica. This project will support park authorities' anti-poaching efforts

until the Costa Rican government hires 20 new park rangers in 2016. Project activities include: 1) working closely with the Ministry of Environment (MINAE), the National Agency for Protected Areas (SINAC), and the Regional Authority for the Osa Conservation Area (ACOSA) and other partners to identify poaching hotspots and develop a short- and medium-term anti-poaching strategy for Corcovado; 2) conducting law enforcement trainings for park rangers; 3) supporting continuous field missions and 12 special operations by park rangers and police; 4) educating local school children on the negative impacts of poaching, mining and logging and the importance of biodiversity conservation; and 4) garnering public support for conservation of the park through a national media campaign.

FWS: \$29,986 Leveraged Funds: \$140,325

LA AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL PARK (PANAMA)

LAC 1541

Grant # F15AP00940

Biodiversity-friendly economic development through cacao-based agroforestry systems at La Amistad, Panama. In partnership with *Fundación Conservación, Naturaleza y Vida (CONAVI)*. The purpose of this project is to work with small-scale indigenous farmers living in the lower ridges of the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve to convert 5,000 hectares of currently low-production cacao groves and abandoned fields within the reserve to productive cacao-based agroforestry farms and prevent their conversion into pasture land. The project will: 1) provide technical assistance, including farmer exchanges, and provision of equipment to 500 Gnobe Bugle and Naso Teribe small-scale farmers, including 250 women; 2) establish communal cacao seedling nurseries with Frosty Pod Rot resistant varieties; 3) construct or rehabilitate three bulking and storage facilities to ease collection and transportation to markets; and 4) obtain organic certification of at least 1,000 hectares of cacao- and banana-based agro-forestry systems and link farmers to international markets with better prices for their certified products.

FWS: \$25,000 Leveraged Funds: \$75,045

MULTIPLE (GUATEMALA, BELIZE, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA & PANAMA)

LAC 1543

Grant # F15AC00990

5 Year cooperative agreement for the conservation of Mesoamerica's last wild places. In partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society. The purpose of this project is to secure measurable progress towards the protection of Mesoamerica's five largest wild places by 2020, including conserving viable populations of wide-ranging species such as the jaguar, Baird's tapir, white-lipped peccary, and macaws. Through a five-year cooperative agreement, project activities will reduce threats to the Maya Forest, Heart of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor Reserve, Indio-Maiz-Tortugero, La Amistad International Park, and the Darien to ensure regional connectivity and protection of the core strongholds of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The project will: 1) analyze the human footprint and cow's hoofprint in Mesoamerica to understand conservation threats and trends, inform decision makers, and inspire public and political support to transform the human footprint and save the last of the wild places before they are gone; 2) increase law enforcement monitoring capacity, including use of Spatial Monitoring

and Reporting Tool (SMART), in at least 500,000 hectares of protected areas in Guatemala, Belize and Honduras using the Maya Biosphere Reserve as a demonstration site and strengthening CEMEC/CONAP as a center for regional training on law enforcement monitoring and SMART; 3) support efforts of the Honduran national protected areas agency (ICF) to strengthen capacity for protected area governance in Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras through exchanges with Guatemala's Maya Biosphere, incorporation of governance indicators into the Honduran Integrated Monitoring System and implementation of key priority actions for addressing severe governance challenges; 4) scale-up and strengthen adoption of jaguar-friendly management techniques to reduce human-jaguar conflict in the Maya Biosphere Reserve and transfer expertise through training of key actors in Nicaragua's Bosawas Biosphere Reserve; and 5) build capacity of future conservation practitioners by providing real-world conservation training opportunities to one to two Mesoamerica-based students each year.

FWS: \$100,000 Leveraged Funds: \$74,453