

FOREST CONVERSION INITIATIVE ACTIVITY CONCEPT NOTE

ACTIVITY: Participatory Planning of Sustainable Production and Protection of High Conservation Value Areas in a Community Land in Santiago del Estero, Argentina

Date prepared: 20/11/06

1. Geographical focus

Santiago del Estero, Argentina (Gran Chaco Ecorregion)

2. Objective

To develop a land use planning of a community land in Santiago del Estero in order to improve life quality and livelihood for community, to preserve high conservation value areas, and to be an alternative development model in a zone of current conversion by large scale agriculture.

3. Timing

Start date: December 1st 2006

completion date: November 31st 2007

4. Issues addressed

Cropped surface in Santiago del Estero has doubled in the last ten years, from 478.000 ha in 1995 to 1.020.000 ha in 2005. In the same period soy has become the most important crop, increasing its area a 567% and occupying a 62% of the total cultivated land.

This expansion is the main threat for natural land conversion in large areas of Chaco ecorregion. Annual deforestation rate in Santiago del Estero is 1,18%, and 306.000 ha was deforested between 1998 and 2002, which is almost the half of total deforestation in Argentina in that period. This project is located at one of the most affected areas in the northwest of the province near the Salado River. This area was also identified as priority for conservation at the Gran Chaco Ecorregional Assessment (TNC et al, 2004).

The communities participating in this Project are Manijnioj and San Ramón. There are located in a zone named North Salado, close to the border with Salta Province, 350 km from Santiago del Estero city. The area has a 90% of population have there basic needs unsatisfied, and a lack of basic services as electricity, water, roads, productive infrastructure, phones, transport, education, etc. Families are compound by 7 members, and young people emigrate looking for better opportunities in temporary rural works, or in low qualification employees at big cities

Main job source in the area is forest (charcoal, firewood, and poles) and small scale farming (most for self supply). They don't have access to market nor adequate forest and livestock management tools.

MANIJNIOJ: Located at the Alberdi department, 12 km east from Salado River, 50 km from Campo Gallo. Community is compound by 12 families who has accomplished, after 2 years, the legal measurement of there land (4200 ha), and have obtained approved plans by property registry office. This is the first step to legalize there land tenure status.

SAN RAMON: Located at the Pellegrini department, 5 km west from Salado River, and 70 km from Nueva Esperanza. Community is compound by 6 families who occupy about 2000 ha and has the legal measurement of 1600 ha of it. They have approved plans by property registry office.

Both communities are part of OCCAP (Pheasant Organization of Copo, Alberdi and Pellegrini), which is a regional organization of MOCASE (Pheasant Movement of Santiago del Estero)

These communities and there lands are threatened by a couple of companies that have acquired property titles without considering legal rights of the peoples who have live there for

several generations. These companies have converted most of the surrounding forests to agriculture. One of these firms has been reported because of harassing, illegal landing strip, private guard's abuses, illegal deforestation, and compulsive vacate. Every action developed by these communities in there lands will contribute to a ratification of there occupant legal rights.



4. Activities

- **Activity 1: Ecological zoning for the community land.** A local specialist will be hired to make a preliminary zoning, including preservation zones, low impact use zones, and agriculture and pasture zones. Preservation zones will be identified following High Conservation Value Areas criteria. Preliminary zoning will be based on community knowledge, available cartography, and field recognition. Preliminary zoning will be validated by the community in a workshop.
- **Activity 2: Participatory planning of production systems appropriated for each zone.** Community knowledge will be key information source to determine appropriated and viable activities. Local technicians will help to adapt those alternatives to previous zoning and to social and economic conditions in order to produce guidelines of sustainable production systems. Added value production will be also addressed in order to improve income and jobs. Some products can also include some environmental or social value in a further certification frame. Some of the tentative feasible products are: wild honey, algarroba flour and there products (cookies, candies, celiac food), cow and goat cheese, pork and goat "chorizo", etc.
- **Activity 3: Capacity building and investments to implement planned land uses.** At least 3 training activities will be held with the community, and neighbor communities will be also invited. Training material will be produced. This activity may also include necessary basic investments or inputs purchase to implement planned land uses and added value productions.

6. Related WWF or other projects

- Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Protection of High Conservation Value Areas in Argentina. WWF-Ch - FVSA
- Actions for Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Bajos Submeridionales. AECI – FVSA - Fundapaz
- Gran Chaco Americano Ecorregional Assessment. The Nature Conservancy – Wildlife Conservation Society – Fundación DeSdelChaco – Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina.
- Consorcios rurales para la producción agropecuaria sustentable y la preservación de bosques con alto valor de conservación. AAPRESID – UBA – FVSA. Submitted to GEF, pending for approval.

7. Partners



Asociación El Ceibal, <http://www.elceibal.org.ar>

Potential partners

MOCASE, Pheasant Movement of Santiago del Estero

Santiago del Estero National University

Programa Social Agropecuario, national program on rural development

INTA, National Institute of Agriculture Technology

Red de Pequeños y Medianos Productores del Chaco Trinacional (Net of small and medium size producers of tri-boundary Chaco)

Federación Agraria Argentina (Argentine Agrarian Federation)

9. Activity proponent(s)

Ulises Martínez Ortiz, Project Coordinator

Marcelo Acerbi, Supervisor