

Coordination Mechanisms for Wildfire Management in the Municipality of Distrito Central, Francisco Morazán, Honduras¹

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Abstract

The forest of the Distrito Central (Central District) and surrounding areas is affected in the dry season by wildfires, adding to the damage caused by the bark beetle, which makes it necessary to coordinate inter-agency efforts to address this problem.

The U.S. government through USAID via International Programs was able to bring specialists from the U.S. Forest Service to support the establishment and start-up of the Inter-Agency Wildfire Operations Center (known by its Spanish acronym COIF). COIF is an inter-agency center that coordinates efforts for monitoring, detection, surveillance and deployment of resources for fighting and controlling wildfires in the Distrito Central municipality and adjacent areas.

COIF has a physical location maned by technical staff and equipped with radio communication equipment, telephone lines and Internet. It has its own operational protocols and manages in a general way the response to fires occurring in the municipality and adjoining areas. Its main objective is to provide coordinated management at the inter-agency level for controlling wildfire situations in the Distrito Central municipality.

The Center is made up of institutional links, institutional shift links and crew leaders, trained in COIF's operational protocols and protocols for dealing with wildfires. The institutions participating in the fire control actions are: Forest Conservation Institute (known by its Spanish acronym ICF), the director of forest resource management in the country, non-governmental organizations, the armed forces, the municipality and various state entities. It also has a surveillance system comprised of observation posts and remote cameras.

The Center manages logs, blackboards, and maps to handle wildfire situations. It controls dispatch, mobilization, control and extinguishing of wildfires. In addition, it provides aerial coordination to control fires in priority areas.

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