

Coordination and Inclusion in the Surveillance, Prevention and Fighting of Wildfires in the South of the State of Puebla¹

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Abstract

The State Management Office of Mexico's National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) in Puebla, through the Forest Fire Areas and Payment for Environmental Services program, has implemented a coordination and inclusion strategy for surveillance and protection against wildfires in the southern area of the State of Puebla, specifically in the Tehuacán Valley area. This strategy includes the specific coordination of the different ejidos (communal land areas), communities and technical advisors of the region through inter-ejidal surveillance tours, monitoring and exchange of experiences, as well as the activation of 47 trained and equipped community fire brigades, which are managed and administered from an Inter-municipal Wildfire Control Center.

The above-mentioned inter-ejidal tours are carried out on a recurring basis in different routes and schedules in order to prevent hunting and flora extraction, detect possible forest fires, forest pests and diseases, and become acquainted with local success stories (reforestation work, soil restoration, fuel management, nurseries, ecotourism projects, etc.) within the ejidos visited.

Through the Payment for Environmental Services program, the ejidos and communities have integrated community forest fire brigades which consist of ten trained members. These brigades have specialized equipment to combat wildfires such as backpack sprayers, fire flappers, McLeod rakes, pulaskis, etc., in addition to personal protection equipment, radio communication equipment (mostly) and a vehicle for mobility. In order to improve the functioning and operation of these brigades, CONAFOR provided support to the Regional Association of Foresters in the area for the establishment of an Inter-municipal Wildfire Control Center (CICIF), which serves as a command center and manages the human resources in case of a wildfire in the region. It is worth mentioning that this region has high conservation value since it has a large amount of biodiversity and endemism. It is also part of the "Tehuacán Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve."

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