



Intercultural Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans
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PRESS RELEASE

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Mexico's National Commission for Protected Areas honors CEDO Intercultural for its conservation work in the Northern Gulf of California and surrounding Sonoran Desert during National Conservation Day ceremonies

On November 28, 2006 the Centro Intercultural de Estudios de Desiertos y Océanos, A.C. the Mexican partner of the Intercultural Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans, Inc. received an honorable mention from the Mexican government for its work with local communities to protect natural resources and ecosystems in northwestern Mexico. The mention was given as part of the 2006 Award for Nature Conservation competition, sponsored by Mexico's National Commission for Protected Areas (CONANP) of the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).

This Award for Nature Conservation and National Conservation Week were initiated by Mexico's National Commission of Protected Areas shortly after it was formed in 2000 as an incentive for the people and organizations who work towards sustainable development and conservation of Mexico's tremendous biodiversity. CEDO was nominated in the category of civil organizations by the Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve.

The ceremony took place during Mexico's National Conservation week, in one of Mexico's first established protected areas, the Mapimi Biosphere Reserve, located in the heart of the Chihuahuan Desert at the confluence of the states of Coahuila, Durango and Chihuahua. Presided by the Secretary of the Environment, Ing. José Luis Luege Tamargo, Dr. Ernesto Enkerlin, President of the National Commission of Protected Areas, the Governor of the State of Durango, and other dignitaries the event paid tribute to 9 individuals and/or organizations in five categories for their contribution to Mexico's conservation goals.

Awards were given to: Dalia de la Peña Wing in the individual category for her many environmental education activities and to Grupo Modelo, S. A de C. V. in the business category for their 5 year program for conservation and restoration of the Iztaccihuatl-Popocatepetl National Park. Naturalia, A.C. received the civil organization award for their conservation work with endangered species (the Mexican wolf and the jaguar) and in priority ecosystems. In the category of Local Authorities the Common Real Estate Commission of San Miguel Chimalapa, Oaxaca was recognized for their work to deter ecological deterioration and implement Ecological Land Use Planning tools. Dr. Valeria Souza Saldívar, researcher from the Instituto de Ecología de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, won in the Academia and/or Researcher category, noted for her scientific studies and promotion of conservation in the Cuatrociénegas, Coahuila región.

The aquatic park Xel-Ha, the Ejido Sierra Morena in Villacorzo, Chiapas, Dr. Laura Barraza Lomelí, and CEDO, A. C. received honorable mentions for their distinct work in the business, local authority, researcher and civil organization categories, respectively.

CEDO, the Intercultural Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans, is a binational organization, recognized for its work with the intercultural communities of the Sonoran borderlands. CEDO integrates community participation with science for the conservation of the Northern Gulf of California and surrounding Sonoran Desert ecosystems. CEDO operates an office in Tucson, and a public facility and biological field station in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora where thousands of tourists and school groups visit each year. Puerto Peñasco is one of Mexico's fastest developing tourist centers. Though this development brings economic prosperity to some, the impact on others is not so positive. The interests of local fishermen and oyster cooperatives who depend on healthy intact estuaries are being threatened as are endangered species and key habitats that provide other environmental services. CEDO is working to promote a plan that incorporates all of these varied interests.

Recently Tucsonans participated in a "Low Tide in Tucson" fiesta to raise funds to support the center's conservation programs and to help with its legal fight for property rights. This past July 8, 2006 developer Las Fuentes del Mar, bulldozed down the perimeter walls of CEDO's facility in Puerto Peñasco, where it has worked for over 25 years. CEDO is currently involved in what will probably be a long legal process.

The honorable mention awarded to CEDO in the 2006 Award for Nature Conservation competition is an incentive to keep working on building a future for the Northern Gulf of California, where planned development and conservation of natural resources can co-exist.

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Photos might be available upon request.