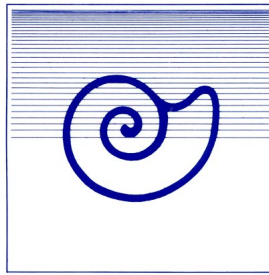


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

American Developer tries to destroy Longstanding Mexican Environmental Organization

The Centro Intercultural de Estudios de Desiertos y Océanos (Intercultural Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans, CEDO) has worked for 26 years in service of the communities and environments of the Northwestern coast of Mexico. On July 8, 2006, the developers of the *Fuentes del Mar* project, the Clifton-Meridian company, invaded and started to destroy the property of one of the most important educational and tourist attractions of the Northern Gulf of California, without appropriate authorization or notification.

CEDO A.C. is a Mexican non profit organization that along with its U.S. sister organization CEDO, Inc. is dedicated to research, environmental education, sustainable development and conservation. CEDO Intercultural initiated its work in 1980 on a property located in the Las Conchas community in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mexico. The property was specifically donated for the research, education, and other activities that CEDO carries out in the region. Within this property, CEDO has built an earthship of recycled materials, a beautiful mural, mounted a whale skeleton, started a botanical garden, and has developed exhibits and resources for schools and the general public.

In complete disregard of the importance of CEDO to local and international communities, and to Mexico, this Saturday, July 8th, the developer of the *Fuentes del Mar* project (working with the Seawater Foundation, formerly Desert Development Foundation) invaded the CEDO property, erected a chain link fence across it, and effectively cut off the only access to the front door, thereby threatening CEDO's operations. Las Fuentes del Mar wants to build 38 condominiums around CEDO's main building. On Monday, July 10th, the developer bulldozed the mural and wall that delimited the property that CEDO has been using for 26 years.

The implications of this act of destruction for CEDO and the community are grave. CEDO's daily activities have been impaired dramatically. Access for emergency or service vehicles (gas, water) has been cut off. There is no space to load/unload educational and research equipment. The Gran Desierto Botanical Garden is targeted for removal. The main entrance to the CEDO grounds has been destroyed along with CEDO's plans to develop a museum and center for sustainable education.

For the community the implications are equally dire: the precedent of a single rogue developer, operating outside the rules and regulations of the region, destroying dedicated roads and a long-standing Mexican institution is not the path Puerto Peñasco should follow. As the second fastest growing tourist destination in Mexico, it is important that developers learn to follow the rules and respect local cultural and social institutions.

The importance of CEDO as a tourism attraction is enormous. CEDO has transformed into an institution that offers natural history talks, eco-adventures and other activities centered on the environment and history of the region, enjoyed by an average of 15,000 people per year. It is one of the few local cultural attractions. CEDO has also become a strong voice for the conservation of coastal resources, wetlands and the region's fisheries. This community needs the all level of government officials to act now and prevent this resource from being destroyed.

Finally, regardless of the invasion and illegal destruction that is occurring right now, CEDO will not be deterred. On July 10th, CEDO staff started a summer camp for kids from Puerto Peñasco's elementary schools. We are also continuing our environmental education program and research on small-scale fisheries and coastal wetlands of the region. CEDO's commitment to the environment, social justice, and the community of Puerto Peñasco is stronger than ever.

For more information and photos, see www.cedointercultural.org, or contact:

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