

Global Conservation Program

Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement

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Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Close-out Report

October 1999 – September 2004

for

World Wildlife Fund

Date Submitted: September 30, 2004

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Revised December 28, 2009

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USAID
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Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Strategic Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this five-year project was to make significant advances toward the long-term goal of conserving the full extent of the globally significant biodiversity of the Atlantic Forest Terrestrial Ecoregion Complex and the Upper Paraná River freshwater Ecoregion of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.

WWF's activities for the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex are directed toward four long-term goals:

- (1) mobilizing conservation action on an Ecoregional scale;
- (2) protecting key sites and wildlife populations;
- (3) shaping regional development to support conservation; and
- (4) establishing the long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation.

This report focuses on actions in Paraguay for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest ecoregion (formerly referred to as the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion).

Collaborators/Partners

- WWF-Brazil
- Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA)
- USAID-Paraguay

Partners implementing activities in Paraguay through WWF sub-grants with USAID funds:

- Fundación Moisés Bertoni
- Alter Vida
- Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental- IDEA
- Guyra Paraguay
- NATURAL, Land Trust
- Pro Cosara
- CICOAM
- ACORDES

Other Selected Partners in Paraguay:

- Fiscalía de Medio Ambiente (Ministerio Publico)
- Carrera de Ingeniería Forestal de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción
- Secretaria de Medio Ambiente (SEAM)
- ITAIPU-Binacional Paraguay
- Peace Corps Environment Program - Paraguay

- MaB (Man and the Biosphere – Paraguay chapter)
- ECOCLUBES
- PRONATURA

Summary: Period 10/01/03—09/30/04

Highlights

- **Generated Social Pact** (see note below). Building on the results of the biodiversity vision completed for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion last year which documented high rates of deforestation across eastern Paraguay, the WWF Paraguay team has embarked upon an ambitious strategy – the implementation of a Social Pact to stop further forest conversion. WWF has worked with the United Nations through its UNDP program in Paraguay and the Vice President of the country to design and promote this pact while the Secretary of the Environment and the Chamber of Publishers of Paraguay are supporting the process.
- **Launched Communications Campaign.** This Social Pact is being supported through a nationwide public awareness campaign focusing on the importance of and threats to the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion in Paraguay. In June 2004, WWF launched the campaign. “Spots” are now being broadcast on more than 55 radio stations (18 stations in Asuncion and 37 stations in the countryside), 54 television channels (four open access and 50 cable stations), six newspapers, four magazines and four cinemas in Paraguay. In addition, four color inserts are included in the main newspapers each week, and WWF flyers about the campaign have been included in national magazines. Four of the largest magazines have written especial reports on the subject. The bulk of this advertising time is being donated to WWF thanks to the generosity and hard work of Walter Biedermann, a leading media specialist in Paraguay.
- **Improved protection** of the Southern Block through strengthened local law enforcement and education. In San Rafael, the law enforcement and environmental education program developed by Pro Cosara is having a positive impact in the area with illegal logging and hunting decreasing greatly from 2003 to 2004. Meanwhile, illegal logging has been very intense for many years in and around Caaguazu National Park, one of the core areas in the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay. With support from WWF and Alter Vida, the Secretary of the Environment has re-opened two control posts within the park. Additional training will soon be provided to these park guards.
- **Drafted legislation** regulating the “Management Resources Reserve” protected areas category. Both Yvytyrysú and San Rafael protected areas, located within the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest, are currently listed under this category. With this legislation, landowners residing within the park boundaries will now have better understanding of what activities they can undertake on their lands and what their obligations are vis-a-vis the protection of these areas.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize and Coordinate Conservation Action at an Ecoregional Scale

Activity I.1: Mobilize and coordinate action in Paraguay for the conservation of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest at an ecoregional scale.

In 2003, WWF and partners from Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay finalized the biodiversity vision document for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. For this vision to be realized, deforestation across the ecoregion must be halted, or at a minimum, significantly slowed. Of the three Upper Parana Atlantic Forest countries, Paraguay has the most alarming rates of deforestation, with current rates exceeding 50,000 hectares per year. With less than 800,000 hectares of dense forest remaining, Paraguay could lose virtually all of its remaining Atlantic Forest ecoregion by the end of this decade. In light of this situation, WWF began assessing the feasibility of a moratorium on forest conversion. The results of this assessment showed that it was feasible for Paraguay to continue to expand its agricultural sector (the major driver of deforestation in the country and as well as a major source of revenue) merely by bringing fallow and abandoned lands into production. WWF believes that without such a mechanism, the biodiversity vision for the eco-region will never be realized. Furthermore, without WWF's involvement and political clout, it is highly unlikely that such a moratorium would ever be implemented.

Three activities are now underway in Paraguay in an effort to coordinate actions for the conservation of Paraguay's Upper Parana Atlantic Forest:

- a) A nationwide communication campaign has been launched to educate Paraguayans about the importance of and the threats to the ecoregion. The launch involved a significant investment of WWF staff time to generate buy-in from key decision makers (government and business leaders) to support the forest conversion moratorium. In a strategic move to garner wider support for the moratorium, WWF is now marking the initiative as a social pact which government and industry are being urged to sign onto;
- b) Institutions, government agencies and NGOs have participated in meeting focusing on the rationale behind the social pact; and
- c) A strategy for the implementation of a social pact has been developed

Activity I.2: Promote the implementation of the Biodiversity Vision in the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, by creating and supporting a network of Brazilian, Argentine, and Paraguayan institutions sharing the same objectives and conservation strategy.

In order to create awareness among the public and mobilize support for the biodiversity vision, the WWF ecoregional office in Paraguay, WWF- Brazil, and WWF Argentine partner, the Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA), developed a communication strategy for the dissemination of the vision document. This strategy includes the development of materials that would target various audiences, the organization of events in each of the three countries launching the vision among key actors, and the distribution of materials. Materials have now been produced in three different languages (English, Portuguese, and Spanish) and include:

- a) A Summary of the Vision;
- b) A double-sided poster of the ecoregion, containing both general and technical information; and
- c) A CD with the complete biodiversity vision document in html and PDF formats..

Public launch events for the biodiversity vision were held in each country. In Paraguay, WWF organized a series of workshops with the participation of all partners involved in the development of the conservation strategy of the Vision. The Vision document was presented at the conclusion of these workshops in public events held in collaboration with local authorities March, 2003. In Brazil, WWF also launched the Vision in March, 2003 in Presidente Prudente, Sao Paulo State. Attendees included representatives of local organizations as well as representatives of Paraguay and Argentina. FVSA-Argentina launched the vision during the WWF-Latin America and Caribbean Subcommittee meeting in Porto Iguazu, Argentina March, 2004. Among the attendees were local and national authorities, members of the international community (US Embassy in Argentina), key actors such as forest businessmen, tourist operators, agriculture cooperatives representatives, academics, members of the scientific community, as well as representatives of NGOs and partner organizations from the three countries.

The complete vision will be soon uploaded for global access onto the WWF web site, www.Panda.org, under the Latin America and Caribbean region section. We will also have a link from panda.org to the WWF websites of each country (Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil).

Objective II: Protect core areas of forest and connect them through restoration of a network of biological corridors and sustainable use areas

Activity II.1 Cerro Corá Priority Area

The USAID National Environmental Reform and Ecoregional Planning of the Northern Block (Priority Area Cerro Corá) of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion project is now being implemented in Paraguay by the Instituto de Derecho Ambiental (IDEA). The objectives of the program are to:

- a) support the establishment of national environmental policy, legal and regulatory reforms to improve ecoregional conservation and sustainable development, and
- b) implement a conservation plan and a management plan in the Cerro Corá Priority Area.

IDEA has invited WWF to participate in the implementation of a conservation and management plan for Cerro Corá. WWF has hired a consultant to work on this project and to determine the possibility of implementing a forest landscape restoration project and/or a carbon project in the area. The consultant's trip report is attached in the annex.

Activity II.2 Mbaracayú Priority Area

With support from WWF, the Fundación Moises Bertoni (FMB) is conducting an analysis of forest cover and land use on 12 privately owned properties in the Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve. FMB is using the Biodiversity Vision to create a biological corridor between Mbaracayu and the Morombi core area using private reserves as stepping stones within the corridor. FMB has successfully negotiated the creation of a private reserve on one property of approximately 3300 ha with 70% forest cover. This property is adjacent to the Ache community Chupa Poú (Indigenous forest land west of the Mbaracayu Reserve) and is connected to the reserve to the east by the Jejui River. Two other private reserves will be created by the end of this year: Private Reserve Don Marcelo and Rama III (see map in the annex).

With technical and financial support from WWF, Alter Vida is creating a new private reserve southeast of the Morombi Private Reserve called “Ycua Pora” (see map). Alter Vida has presented a technical report to the Senate Agrarian Reform Committee and to the House Ecological Commission. This report, available in Spanish, includes a Rapid Ecological Assessment and a demarcation of the area where the ecological reserve would be created.

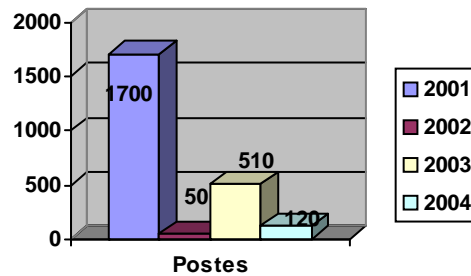
Activity II.3: Rio Paraná Priority Area

In 2002, WWF approached ITAIPU Binacional (the binational managing the Itaipu Dam on the Paraguay and Brazil border) to discuss reforestation in natural reserves and with the communities they work with. WWF prepared an MOU to be signed with ITAIPU, however, the new administration has not yet signed the document, and has shown little interest in working with WWF.

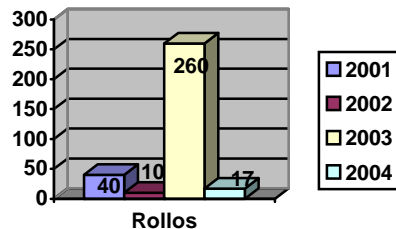
Activity II. 4: San Rafael Priority Area

With support from WWF, Pro Cosara continues to implement conservation work in San Rafael. Recent activities have focused on strengthening the local law enforcement system. The following graphs show that illegal activity in the area has decreased considerably since the initiation of this work.¹

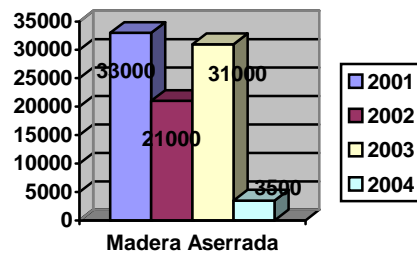
Graph N°1: Number of illegal logs confiscated per year.



Graph N°2: Number of trees confiscated per year.



Graph 3: Cubic Meters of processed wood confiscated per year.



¹ The year 2003 increases are caused by an increase in soy prices that year that led to increased deforestation.

With support from WWF, Pro Cosara is also implementing an environmental education program focusing on the prevention of illegal activity in San Rafael. Several illegal loggers have been charged with illegal logging and wood trafficking. A report is available in Spanish.

In 2004 WWF, Alter Vida and the Secretary of the Environment initiated a project strengthening the infrastructure of park administration post in Caaguazu National Park. The two control posts were closed in 2002 due to a lack of resources. This resulted in an increase in illegal logging in the area. These control posts (Enrramadita and Cristal) were renovated, and the main administration building in Apepu was improved (see the location of these posts on the map included in the annex). A final report will be completed shortly. A training workshop for park guards will be organized in the coming months.

Activity II.5: Establishing a policy framework for improved protection and management of protected areas.

Private reserves represent a potentially significant contribution to protected areas in Paraguay. WWF provided funding to Natural Land Trust for the creation of new conservation easements and a policy framework for such private conservation initiatives. The establishment of these easements, however, has been delayed due to the lack of commitment by land owners and the lack of economic incentive for establishing these easements. The geographic areas that Natural originally contemplated for conservation easements have been changed (see map) and now include:

- Yvaroty and Takuapity in the town of La Colmena, Department of Paraguari, (300 ha);
- Mamorei, Department of Paraguari (173 ha);
- Mbatovi, Department of Paraguari (17 ha);
- Rancho 75 and Santa María, Department of San Pedro (3.500 ha); and
- Nueva Gambach and Guyra Reta, in San Rafael, Department of Itapua (3.700 ha).

Negotiations have been completed for the first three easements (legal documents are available). According to Ana María Macedo, Director of Natural Land Trust, the Rancho 75 and Santa María easements will be finalized in September 2004. The negotiations on the Nueva Gambach and the Guyra Reta properties has been delayed as the owners do not yet have title to the property.

In July 2003, IDEA organized a workshop to develop official regulations for the protected areas listed under the “Resources Management Reserve” category. In July 2004, IDEA officially presented these regulations to the Secretary of the Environment for eventual signature by the President. The decree also includes updated regulations for other protected areas categories that were not regulated by any legislation in Paraguay such as private and public reserves and biological corridors.

Objective III: Shape regional development to support conservation.

Activity III.1: Implementing activities promoting the value of remaining forest

A strategy has been developed for the establishment of a Social Pact to prevent forest conversion. The United Nations (through the UNDP Program in Paraguay) and the Vice President will sponsor this Pact while the Environment Ministry and the Chamber of Publishers of Paraguay (CERNECO) will support the process. A preliminary mapping of social, private and public organizations has been carried out. These organizations, following consultation with the UN and the Vice-Presidency, will be invited to participate in a discussion/negotiation process leading to a Social Pact.

In August, 2004 WWF met with the Vice President of Paraguay, Mr. Luis Castiglioni. At this meeting, the Vice President accepted WWF's invitation to lead the social pact process. In this role, the Vice President will meet with WWF to review the methodology and plan next steps. Should this social pact be successful, the Vice President has expressed his willingness to visit other countries in South America, Europe and North America to promote social pacts that address and curb deforestation through consensus-building and negotiation (rather than through conflict).

Activity III.2: Assess the current status of the soybean and wood industries in Paraguay and identify key issues for a conservation strategy.

A Memorandum of Understanding with CAPECO, the association of oilseed and cereal exporters of Paraguay, and Guyra Paraguay, a partner environmental NGO, is being finalized. Under this agreement, parties are committing to work together to identify solutions for environmental problems related to agriculture, including issues such as deforestation, pollution of water resources, and the recuperation of idle lands.

Idle lands with potential for soybean production have been identified in two districts (pilot areas) located in two key watersheds. GIS processing and field visits have been carried out. This is part of a DOEN Foundation-funded project which supports:

- A territorial/land use plan for eastern Paraguay identifying areas suitable for soybean plantations that lie outside the forests;
- A feasibility study of the potential of recovering idle and degraded land, and transforming pasture areas, into soybean plantations;
- Implementation of a model plan for the expansion of soybean plantations outside forest areas in two pilot areas, thus reducing deforestation by 10,000 hectares.

Activity III.3: Develop community environmental education programs in rural areas surrounding core areas and biological corridors.

In 2003, WWF, Alter Vida, and Peace Corps published a manual "Discovering the Atlantic Forest". WWF has created a working group of NGOs and the Ministry of Environment to develop a strategy for disseminating this manual. WWF is now negotiating with the Paraguay GEF program to obtain financial support for the implementation of this strategy and supporting Guyra, Pro Cosara and Pronatura in the identification of local leaders in the San Rafael area who should receive the manual.

Activity III.4: Continue to implement the Forest Law and increase the participation of civil society to eliminate illegal logging.

WWF has begun implementing a project entitled “Tradable Rights for Forest Habitats in Agricultural Areas” financed by the Tinker Foundation. This project will encourage the flexible application of the forest reserve law in Paraguay, allowing land owners who have breached the legal requirement of maintaining 25% of their land as forest - to reforest an equivalent, but high priority conservation area elsewhere. WWF has hired a consultant to develop a tradable rights mechanism to be implemented in the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Ecoregion in Paraguay.

Activity III.5: Engage relevant Paraguayan companies in the Forest Conversion Initiative Soy Roundtable.

The Forest Conversion Initiative of WWF has hired Dr. Rodrigo Walsh from Argentina to coordinate the roundtable working group on sustainable soy in the Mercosur countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil. This roundtable will:

1. Identify and collate relevant information on the soy industry for each country,
2. Prepare information on soy for dissemination,
3. Identify key actors from different sectors (government, producers, industry, NGOs, Academia),

Objective IV: Establish longterm conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation**Activity IV.1: Increase public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest****WWF’s communication campaign**

The communications and awareness raising campaign urging the conservation of the Atlantic Forest was launched in June, 2004. The campaign is being broadcast on more than 55 radios stations, 54 TV channels, six newspapers, four magazines and four cinemas. To date, WWF staff have participated in 24 interviews with radio and TV stations (including the most popular TV program on prime time - equivalent to Larry King’s show on CNN, and newspapers,

An average of eight “spots” is being broadcast on open access television daily, with many more on cable stations. In addition, color inserts on the Atlantic forest are included weekly in the main newspapers. WWF flyers with campaign information have also been circulated in important magazines and the four magazines with the widest distribution in the target audience have written especial reports on the subject.

After one month, the preliminary results from the campaign are very positive. Before the campaign less than 5% of the population knew anything about the Atlantic Forest and the problems it faces. In a survey carried out in late July by telephone, 50% of respondents identified positively the campaign messages of the Atlantic Forest and the threats it faces.

Most of the media space is *pro bono*, obtained thanks to the dedication and hard work of Walter Biedermann, our communications consultant.

Guyra Paraguay communication campaign

WWF provided funding to Guyra Paraguay for a communication campaign designed to increase awareness about the San Rafael Multiple Use Area with national and international audiences. Materials included pamphlets on the San Rafael and the San Rafael Conservation Alliance in English and Spanish, a CD about San Rafael and about the Conservation Alliance in English, Spanish, French and German, and both a poster and a banner about San Rafael. While the campaign was designed to increase awareness about the area, through this work, Guyra was able to acquire 2270 ha of intact forest in San Rafael.

Fundacion Moises Bertoni (FMB) communication campaign

WWF also provided funding to FMB for a communication campaign entitled “Mi ambiente, Mi vida” (My Environment, My Life). This campaign stressed the linkages between environmental issues and Paraguayan culture and economy and focused on soil, water, forest, biodiversity, and cultural diversity. Messages were broadcast on radio and television and published in the national press. As a part of the campaign, 20 workshops were held in the countryside to identify environmental promoters who will help continue the campaign over time. These workshops were coordinated by 79 volunteers.

The materials produced for the campaign included five TV spots, eight radio spots, four advertisements for local newspapers, pamphlets on soil, water, biodiversity, and forests, 10,000 garbage bags for cars and busses, 4500 bumper stickers, and T-shirts. A Paraguayan assessment company measured the impact of the campaigns and found that 45.8 % of the population retained the key messages from the campaign.

Activity IV.2: Develop funding mechanisms to provide sustained funding for conservation actions to achieve the Biological Vision for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest.

WWF responded to a pre-proposal issued by the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and the Ministry of the Environment (SEAM) for the design of a National Environmental Fund. The Nature Conservancy and IDEA were included as partners in the WWF proposal. WWF has designed National Environmental Funds in several countries around the world and in Latin America and we are optimistic that we will be selected to design the Paraguayan Fund. This fund will play an important role in any future Tropical Forestry Conservation Act (TFCA) debt for nature swap that Paraguay might qualify for from the US Government.

Table of Final Accomplishments

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
I.1	The biodiversity vision document for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest has been completed. A	On Track

	communication strategy for the dissemination of the vision has been developed and is being launched in each of the three countries of the ecoregion.	
I.2	The Biodiversity Vision document is available on CD in English, Spanish and Portuguese. In addition, the executive summary publication is available in Spanish and Portuguese, though final edits have delayed the publication of the English version.	Delayed
II.1	A WWF-funded consultant visited the Cerro Cora area to determine the potential for a climate change project in the area.	On Track
II.2	Creation of a 3300 hectare private reserve with three additional private reserves in progress.	On Track
II.3	The signing of an MOU between WWF and Itaipu Binacional has been delayed due to a lack of interest on behalf of Itaipu.	Delayed
II.4	Incidences of illegal logging have been reduced through training for park guards and the improvement of park guard infrastructure.	On Track
II.5	Three conservation easements have been created on Atlantic Forest lands and two additional easements are in the process of being established. The lack of incentives for landowners to establish conservation easements has delayed this process.	Delayed
III.1	A “social pact” calling for a halt to deforestation developed by WWF has been endorsed by UNDP and the Paraguayan Government. The Paraguayan Vice President is actively encouraging industry to sign on to this pact.	On Track
III.2	An MOU has been signed between Guyra Paraguay and the Oilseed and Cereal exporters of Paraguay. Under this agreement, these two groups will work together to address environmental issues caused by agricultural production. Two pilot areas have been identified for initiating agricultural trials.	On Track
III.3	An environmental education manual has been published, however, distribution of the manual has been slowed due to delays within the Paraguay GEF project.	Delayed
III.4	Tradable rights legislation has been drafted and is now being vetted within the Paraguayan Government.	On Track
III.5	A roundtable meeting is being organized with major soy growers in Merco Sur. The objective of this meeting will be to develop standards for	On Track

	sustainable soy.	
IV.1	A series of public relation campaigns has been launched to increase awareness about the importance of and threats to the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest.	On Track
IV.2	In March 2004, WWF responded to a call from the IDB in Paraguay for preproposals for the development of a National Environmental Fund for Paraguay. WWF has yet to hear back from IDB on this issue.	Delayed

- Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Project Evolution

When this GCP project was initiated, the publication of the biodiversity vision for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest was seen as the primary product. While WWF knew that Paraguay was undergoing high levels of deforestation, no one expected the analysis to find that 30% of the nation's forest had been lost in a 12 year period. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of the soy frontier in Paraguay in the late 1990's and early 2000's (when the biodiversity vision analysis was in progress) made the complete loss of the ecoregion a real possibility. While the findings of the biodiversity vision were alarming, they also provided the scientific argument for swift and broad scale action to save remaining intact tracts. Without the biodiversity vision, it is doubtful that WWF would have the support of the Paraguayan Government for its conservation initiatives. The implications for these initiatives: a social pact for halting deforestation, tradable rights, incentives for private lands conservation, regulations for various protected area categories are huge, but at the same time their effective implementation is critical if the remaining elements of the ecoregion are to be saved.

In addition to spurring unprecedented support from the Paraguayan Government, the Biological Vision and its findings has also drawn support for WWF initiatives from new donors. Namely, WWF Switzerland and the Dutch Doen Foundation are supporting the Social Pact while the Tinker Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations are the major drivers behind WWF's Tradable Rights work.

Results

USAID's GCP support has been critical for the completion of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Biodiversity Vision. This document, which involved a multi-stakeholder discussion process across Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, lays out a 50-year vision for the ecoregion that evaluates the root causes of forest deforestation that led to their current highly fragmented state. During this process, WWF and its partners undertook a critical analysis of the threats and opportunities to the landscape, which allowed for the design of the best plan for long-term conservation of the region's biodiversity. Although the plan requires regular evaluation and adaptation as well as a more detailed analysis of critical sites, the overarching 50-year vision has identified goals, specific targets, and key sites for action.

Results from the Biological Vision indicate that Paraguay is undergoing alarming rates of deforestation (30 percent between 1989 and 2001). In a concerted effort to save remaining priority areas, WWF, together with Paraguayan partner institutions, is now in the process of launching a series of groundbreaking initiatives in Paraguay. A public relations campaign is educating Paraguayans about the importance of and threats to the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest, while a Social Pact initiative is being led by the Paraguayan Vice President urging the soy industry to bring fallow and abandoned fields back into production (vs. deforesting lands). Meanwhile, a tradable rights pilot project is underway whereby private land owners who have not abided by the requirements outlined in Paraguay's forest law are being allowed to invest in conservation initiatives on other lands of higher conservation value. At the same time, legislation is being drafted to establish regulation for various levels of protected areas as well as incentives for private conservation initiatives including private reserves and conservation easements.

The biodiversity vision has also helped leverage additional support and funds for WWF and its partners. The Paraguayan Government has actively supported WWF's work in the country and Paraguay's new Vice President Luis Castiglioni has endorsed an environmental agenda presented by the NGO community. In addition, WWF helped leverage \$300,000 from the Global Conservation Fund (GCF) to partner Guyra for land purchases in San Rafael. WWF and partners supported acquisition of 13,325 hectares of priority forest parcels acquired for strict protection: 5,642 ha purchased by the NGO Alliance in the San Rafael Core area; 4,601 ha acquired by the Paraguayan government for an Aché indigenous reserve Koe Tuvy, and 3,082 ha demarcated for the government-owned Capiibary Ecological Reserve. Both Capiibary and Koe Tuvy are important stepping stones in creating forest corridors to connect Mbaracayú and Morombi Core Areas of Strict Protection. The Biodiversity Vision also spurred the development of an MOU between WWF and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Paraguay in 2002. A series of cross visits have been organized, and we are analyzing the possibility of expanding this MOU to include the entire ecoregion.

Through work on the Biodiversity Vision and the resulting initiatives underway to implement the vision, the WWF office in Paraguay has grown considerably over the last five years. In March, 2002, WWF obtained legal status in Paraguay, and the office now employs 11 staff.

Products

Through this USAID grant to WWF, a wide variety of documents and promotional material focusing on Paraguay's Upper Parana Atlantic Forest has been developed. These publications include:

- News articles resulting from the event with Eco-clubs;
- News article on cases prosecuted by the Paraguayan Attorney General's office;
- News article and pamphlets from the Community-Based Conservation Workshop held 6-12 August 6-12 in Mbaracayú;
- News article and pamphlets from the meeting "First Regional Congress of Regional Producers Cooperatives for Sustainable Development in the Interior Atlantic Forest" ("Primer Congreso Regional de las Cooperativas de Producción para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Bosque Atlántico Interior");
- New map of the biodiversity vision of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest ecoregion.
- Pamphlets on the Amambay and Mbaracayú Forum;

- Maps showing concentration of public and private funding per municipality in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil (source: Quem faz o que pela Mata Atlantica project);
- "Forest of the Jaguar" *Living Planet* Issue 5, Fall 2001;
- News articles (2) resulting from the event at the American Embassy to launch the Biological Vision;
- News article on Ambassador Greenley's visit to Mbaracayu Forest Biosphere Reserve;
- Map of priority sites resulting from Guyra's field project;
- Map of Biological Vision of the Interior Atlantic Forest; map of remaining forest of the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion;
- Conservation blocks, corridors, and protected areas of the Biological Vision in Paraguay;
- Maps of deforestation of the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay over time;
- A Summary of the Vision;
- A double-sided poster of the Ecoregion, with general and technical information about the ecoregion;
- A CD with the complete biodiversity vision document in html and PDF formats; and
- Final report on Climate Change Potential in Cerro Cora area.
- A CD including radio "spots" focusing on the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest.
- In 2001, Lucy Aquino, Miguel Morales of USAID Mission, and Mr. Richard C. Boly, Economic and Commercial Attaché of the American Embassy gave a presentation of the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest Biological Vision to some 100 authorities from Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.
- WWF sponsored the "I Congreso Regional de Cooperativas de Produccion para el Desarrollo Sustentable en el Bosque Atlantico Interior" held in the Department of Alto Parana on October 4-5, 2001. 100 cooperative members from Alto Parana and Itapua attended the meeting that had the objective of discuss how to increase production in an environmentally friendly manner and how to recuperate degraded areas in this threatened ecoregion.
- In an effort to create synergies among municipalities for the implementation of conservation and sustainable use programs, in April 2002, Lucy Aquino gave a presentation to 50 mayors in the Departments Alto Parana and Canindeyu on WWF's Biodiversity Vision for the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest.

Conclusion

The lack of land use planning, weak government institutions (the Paraguayan Minister of Environment changed six times over the course of this GCP grant), weak law enforcement mechanisms, an unstable political situation and the constant threat of invasion of forest land by landless people continue to be the most important challenges to implement conservation work in the Paraguay's Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. In order to make the Biodiversity Vision a reality in Paraguay, over the next few years, WWF will focus on:

- Establishing a policy framework (tradable rights, a social pact) to improve the protection of forests and eliminate forest conversion;
- Creating incentives for conservation of high value forest and watersheds;

- Raising awareness and funds to acquire more public and private land for protection; and
- Continuing to strengthening the capacity of partner institutions and civil society to support conservation work.

Current WWF collaboration with the Paraguayan government is unprecedented. If successful, WWF will replicate the lessons learned from the Social Pact to other countries in Latin America and beyond. WWF looks forward to continued collaboration with USAID Paraguay on an associate agreement with the Mission that will further WWF's efforts to conserve the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest.

Update December 2009

Building on the momentum generated by GCP support through FY04, WWF and partners continued the campaign for a Social Pact to stop deforestation in Paraguay as well as to achieve a coordinated policy for conservation of the Atlantic Forest across the borders of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.

During a special ceremony at the XIIIth World Forestry Congress in 2009, the governments of Paraguay and Argentina announced an agreement to work towards zero net deforestation in the Atlantic Forest, and to implement a package of measures that include national legislation to enforce those commitments. To preserve the Atlantic Forest, Argentina will implement new land-use plans that will ensure the conservation of approximately 1.1 million hectares of the forest. Meanwhile, Paraguay had already passed a zero deforestation law for the Atlantic Forest and extended the law through 2013, and is working to introduce economic alternatives to people who depend on the Atlantic Forest for their livelihood. In Brazil, the government already established a zero deforestation target by 2010 for the Atlantic Forest. Brazil has also pledged to establish protected areas covering at least 10 percent of the forest. These important commitments demonstrate how coordinated policies developed between countries over the long term can succeed in addressing biodiversity loss as well as climate change.