

B-isis Kab-a 3rd Quarterly Report

ISU Office of Sponsored Programs
Anthony Stocks
Idaho State University
October 21, 2002

RE: USAID Grant 520-G-00-02-00030-00

Background

The last quarterly report (July 5th) recounted the period of analysis with regard to a new location for the work, the municipality of Chisec. The period ended with a proposal for a new scope of work and a time extension until 15 December 2002. The present report covers the period from July 1 through 30 September. The period involves work on four fronts, (1) The Cuevas de Candelaria management plan, (2) Bombil Pek management plan, (3) the Passion River green corridor, (4) the Jaguar Sanctuary

Activities

In early July, after two months of maneuvering with FONTIERRAS and the Ministry of Culture and Sports, we held a meeting of the communities involved with the Candelaria dispute. FONTIERRAS made an offer of 60 quetzales per hectare for land to the communities affected by the Candelaria polygon. The offer was conditioned on a management plan acceptable to the Ministry of Culture and Sports. For its part, the Ministry of Culture and Sports invited the communities to produce a management plan showing how they would protect the National Cultural Patrimony of Candelaria. The communities agreed to the price and the conditions. A few days later they requested the assistance of the ISU program in producing the management plan.

The process of working on the management plan during this period has involved two major activities, (1) training and fielding a Q'eqchi' technical team, and (2) map work. The training began in mid-July with the selection of five people. These original five were weeded down to two and then supplemented by three more. This group itself has been thinned as the work has progressed. The technical team member must be intelligent, proficient with the navigation equipment, responsible, and involved with the data. Technical team members are trained in GPS and Brunton compass navigation. They are trained to do land-use mapping using a combination of these navigation tools. Training then is carried out on the community level in which the technical team gives workshops in GPS and compass to people selected by their communities to participate. The basic training work was completed by the 10th of August.

The map work began with Albora Engineers who provided technical assistance for placing the monuments for the Candelaria polygon in the field. This work requires geodesic GPS equipment and expensive survey tools (Total Station), as the monuments must be placed exactly where the Inter-Ministerial Agreement specifies them. The work was completed by the third week in August. In the course of carrying out the work, it was

discovered that the community of Sechochoc has no land within the Candelaria polygon, contrary to what was represented by FONTIERRAS maps. It was also discovered the polygon involved land in an area of private parcels that were legalized over 20 years ago.

Our own map crews geo-referenced the community boundaries for Sechochoc, Mucbilhá, Candelaria Camposantos, and Porvenir 2 (Bombil Pek). As Sechochoc was not involved with the Candelaria polygon, we ended the mapping with the boundaries, trails, locations of houses, and the map of the highway. For the other communities we mapped individual parcels and land-use. For the area of private parcels, we mapped the parcels themselves and land-use within the Candelaria polygon. IDAEH conducted meetings with all parcel-holders that we facilitated. This map work was not quite completed at the end of this period. It was concluded the second week of October.

On the front of the Passion River green corridor, a group of consultants was selected and put to work the last week of September. Their task is to produce a map of the properties along the river with their current owners, map and characterize the ecosystems along the proposed corridor, and characterize the best strategies to employ with various kinds of owners in order to make the corridor a reality. Their report is expected in the next reporting period.

With regard to the Jaguar Sanctuary, we have made contacts with all the communities in the northern part of the Sequixpur hills. Of these, we have requests from three of them for assistance in planning for conservation. These communities (Nueva Babilonia, Cerro Azul, Agua Subterranea) are positioned to the north of the main corridor area that connects with the Lachuá National Park. The communities on the south part (Boloncó, Cerro Alto, Rinconcito) were contacted some time ago by the Peace Corps but not recently by our project. An initial visit was made by WCS to investigate the possibility of a study of the prey species for jaguars.