



Support for the Establishment of Effectively Managed Platform Sites as Foundations for Resilient Networks of Functionally-Connected Marine Protected Areas

Meso-American Reef – Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico

FY04 Annual Report

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Draft Outline for GCP Annual Progress Report

I. Summary of Activity Status and Progress

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<p>Support for the Establishment of Effectively Managed Platform Sites as Foundations for Resilient Networks of Functionally-Connected Marine Protected Areas</p> <p>Meso-American Reef - Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico</p>			
Objective 1	Build resilience in the face of local threats and global change into the MAR network of marine protected areas.		
1.1	Identify and monitor priority spawning aggregation sites	On-track.	Page 5
1.1.1	<i>Finalize criteria for prioritizing SPAGs</i>	On-track. Criteria for prioritizing SPAGs completed; awaiting peer review.	Page 5
1.1.2	<i>Define initial field assessment priorities for SPAG conservation in MX and HON</i>	On-track.	Page 5
1.1.3	<i>Spawning aggregation site evaluation and monitoring</i>	On-track. SPAGs monitoring protocol and database completed.	Page 6
1.2	Initial application and field testing of bleaching resistance tools	On-track.	Page 7
1.3	Improved understanding of connectivity within the MAR	On-track.	Page 8
1.3.1	<i>Integrate connectivity information and models into Caribbean-wide and MAR ecoregional planning</i>	On-track.	Page 8
1.3.2	<i>Improve understanding of circulation and fish migration patterns in the MAR</i>	On-track. Preliminary assessment of migratory patterns suggest site fidelity significant fish species range.	Page 8

Objective 2	Help local partners improve the management and effectiveness of five platform MPAs strategically selected within the MAR network.		
2.1	Selection of platform sites	On-track. Platform sites have been identified using interim criteria.	Page 9
2.2	Improve the management of Gladden Spit MPA	On-track.	Page 10
2.3	Improve the management of Lighthouse Reef Atoll	Delayed. Due to transition within Belize Audubon Society, support for management effectiveness of Lighthouse Reef was unfeasible.	Page 10
Objective 3	Establish a “virtual” Learning Center that convenes training courses, promotes exchanges, and facilitates coordination among the four MAR countries.		
3.1	Train MPA managers and planners from partner organizations to apply resilience principles to MPA design and management.	On-track.	Page 11
3.2	Provide fishers and other community members currently engaged in unsustainable uses of marine resources with skills that will enable them to obtain employment in alternative, sustainable livelihood activities.	Delayed. Training events were scheduled but due to transition within Belize Audubon Society, training courses were not feasible.	Page 12
3.3	Complete design of Learning Center	On-track.	Page 12

Support for the Establishment of Effectively Managed Platform Sites as
Foundations for Resilient Networks of
Functionally-Connected Marine Protected Areas in the Meso-American Reef
Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Recognized as the second most important barrier reef system and coral reef complex in the world, the Meso-American Reef (MAR) is under increased threat from unsustainable resource use practices such as over-fishing and cumulative human activities that contribute to coral bleaching. While recent Conservancy efforts have supported the creation of 11 new marine reserves in Belize to help mitigate these overarching threats, insufficient capacity to capture and strengthen local knowledge and improve human livelihoods, limited means to assess the management effectiveness of conservation efforts, and an ongoing need to target scientific research to better understand the conditions necessary for the MAR's long-term protection and viability, continue to pose significant challenges to the conservation of this important ecoregion. As such, the Nature Conservancy's 10-year goal in this region is to support the development of a mutually replenishing network of marine reserves throughout the MAR that together support the resiliency and present resource status of the entire system in the face of increasing local and global threats compatible with human needs.

Within this vision, the Nature Conservancy is working in collaboration with a coalition of stakeholders from the public and private sectors to achieve specific conservation objectives in the near term. Through the Global Conservation Program these include:

- A MAR ecoregional plan is adopted and implemented that reflects agreement by all key conservation partners (local and international NGOs, government agencies and donors) on priority programs and activities, adoption of conservation best practices, and sharing of scientific and program data.
- Three MPA platform sites are well managed by local partners and serve as examples of effective conservation and management for other protected areas within the MAR regional MPA network.
- All high priority reef fish spawning aggregation (SPAG) sites throughout the MAR are identified and monitored, and stocks of target fish species are stable or increasing at priority SPAG sites.
- Bleaching resistant areas of suitable sizes, scales, and distribution to replenish corals within the MAR system are identified and protected.
- The technical, managerial and marine science skills of at least 2,000 people are enhanced and result in improved MPA management, new economic opportunities for fishers and their families, more effective community leaders and conservation

2. Overall Assessment of Progress and Management Issues

The Nature Conservancy has made significant progress on its core objectives for the MAR over the past year - a year mostly characterized by the need to:

- 1) Go to scale and expand conservation efforts beyond the Conservancy's initial MAR focus on Belize;
- 2) Stabilize and strengthen capacity for conservation along the MAR despite numerous TNC and partner transitions;
- 3) Consolidate and focus the Conservancy's science and research program and ensure it was effectively applied toward conservation outcomes;
- 4) Build on the success and momentum generated through the establishment of 11 marine reserves based on spawning aggregations in Belize.

Given these considerations, the Conservancy, in collaboration with key conservation partners and stakeholders, achieved the following:

- 1) Enhanced structure and capacity to identify and monitor the health of critical spawning aggregation sites throughout the Meso-American Reef through the publication (in both Spanish and English) of the Spawning Aggregations Monitoring Protocol and the release of the Spawning Aggregations database 1.0 which will ensure the standardized entry of SPAGs-related monitoring data for consolidation and analysis;
- 2) A preliminary framework for developing the innovative MAR Learning Center and TOR for a contract including a capacity and needs assessment, analysis of appropriate delivery mechanisms, inclusion of best practices of similar efforts in other regions, and curriculum has been completed;
- 3) Completion of resilience and coral monitoring training sessions that will lead to the integration of resilience principles into standard management effectiveness methods and management plan design for two platform sites - Gladden Spit and Sian Ka'an;
- 4) Revised circulation oceanographic model for the MAR Region critical to understanding and developing predictive models for larval transport important to protecting the full life cycles of target reef fish species completed;
- 5) Preliminary assessment of potential for spawning aggregations completed in Mexico and Honduras.

While these were important results in the first year of implementation, there have been important challenges and other management issues and lessons learned that will be incorporated in year two implementation. The Conservancy will ensure that effective strategies are in place to mitigate or plan for the often inevitable loss of critical staff in partner organizations and government agencies, in particular those upon which our work heavily relied. Furthermore, considering an external assessment

of SPAGs monitoring methods and data generated, the Conservancy will revise, refine and focus its approach to SPAGs monitoring to ensure that these efforts are yielding the information needed to support conservation priorities and outcomes. Finally, based on an internal capacity assessment, the application of platform site criteria and stakeholder consultations, the Conservancy will consolidate and leverage efforts to effectively conserve three in lieu of five platform sites originally planned for while utilizing the virtual Learning Center as an ideal delivery mechanism to share best practices and improve livelihoods along the Meso-American Reef. Finally, Nestor Windevoxhel was selected as the new MAR Director and took over the reigns of the MAR Program in mid-September.

Objective 1: Build resilience in the face of local threats and global change into the MAR network of marine protected areas.

Activity 1.1: *Identify and monitor priority spawning aggregation sites*

Activity 1.1.1. Finalize criteria for prioritizing SPAGs

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Criteria developed for prioritizing spawning aggregation sites for monitoring and protection

During FY 04, The Nature Conservancy adapted previous prioritization criteria used for marine protected area selection while integrating other biotic, socio-economic and capacity indicators in order to finalize a draft of prioritization criteria for spawning aggregations. In order to maximize their acceptance and adoption by critical stakeholders from the MAR and beyond, the Conservancy is completing a peer review process for the criteria utilizing internal and external experts not only from the Caribbean, but also from groups in Asia and from the Society for the Conservation of Reef Fish Aggregations (SCRFA).

Activity 1.1.2. Define initial field assessment priorities for SPAG conservation

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Initial priorities for field SPAG site assessment defined for Belize and Honduras

At a national level, MAR Program efforts focused on leveraging the spawning aggregations monitoring protocol and best practices in Mexico and Honduras. In Mexico, meetings were held with National Commission for Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) fisheries and monitoring staff, the University of Quintana Roo SPAGs monitoring staff and with Amigos de Sian Ka'an to identify monitoring priorities for spawning aggregation sites along the Mexican part of the Meso-American Reef. While an initial draft of conservation priorities was completed, the departure of key CONANP staff led to delays in finalizing the outcomes. In Honduras, spawning

aggregation assessments were held with Fundacion Cayos Cochinos, Bay Islands Conservation Association (BICA), PROLANSATE, Digipesca, MBRS National Committee in Honduras and fishermen from northern Honduran coasts to identify known spawning aggregation sites, determine where other sites could exist based on scientific hypotheses and determine verification parameters for the future. Furthermore, building on the efforts and experience of SPAGs monitoring introduced in Belize, a Honduran delegation of key stakeholders was trained on SPAGs monitoring in coordination with the Belizean Department of Fisheries.

Activity 1.1.3. Spawning aggregation site evaluation and monitoring

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Monitoring protocol updated and published in English and Spanish
- SPAGs data base version 1 completed, copyrighted, and in use; data sharing agreements in place in Belize and under discussion in Mexico and Honduras
- Monitoring protocol being used to identify and evaluate at least 8 new SPAG sites (in addition to 16 identified already, for a total of 24 potential priority sites identified and evaluated throughout the MAR system).
- At least 8 sites being monitoring bi-annually by at least 8 organizations

The SPAGs monitoring protocol was designed to standardize the methods through which spawning aggregation sites are identified and monitored in order to ensure effective data collection and analysis critical to defining baselines to demonstrate increases and decreases in target reef fish population (as one of many proxy indicators for biodiversity health of the MAR). In conjunction with key stakeholders, the Conservancy vetted and finalized the SPAGs monitoring protocol and obtained its adoption by the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) project - which in turn, has taken on the responsibility of translating into Spanish and publishing/disseminating it to all four countries. Through this dissemination approach, the protocol will be adopted through the national committees of the MBRS project which are comprised of most, if not all, of the critical NGOs and government agencies responsible for marine conservation and fisheries management in each respective country.

Once the information is collected according to the standards set forth in the SPAGs Monitoring Protocol, it should be entered consistently across the four countries to ensure data integrity, transparency and facility for later analysis and consolidation. In this vein, the Conservancy, in coordination with the Belize SPAGs working group, finalized the completion of the Spawning Aggregations Database version 1.0. This Access database has been approved for use by the working group and as such has been adopted by MBRS for use and dissemination in all four countries. The Conservancy is in the process of ensuring that the database is web enabled, that data sharing agreements are finalized with all key partners, that management and security protocols to safeguard data integrity are completed and that upgrades (driven by additional consultations with local stakeholders) will be finalized during the course of

year two. Training sessions for key technical staff within partners and stakeholders in the use and maintenance of the database is currently in discussion with MBRS.

With regard to SPAGs monitoring, through Conservancy efforts, at least 6 sites (Gladden Spit, Halfmoon Caye, Southpoint, Sanbore, Sapodillas, and Caye Glory) are being monitored by three major organizations (Friends of Nature, Belize Audubon Society, Belize Department of Fisheries) in Belize. The Conservancy is currently working to improve and standardize monitoring methods with local partners.

Monitoring exercises in Honduras and Mexico were not supported this year due to internal transitions within TNC that temporarily hampered our capacity to expand efforts in both countries. However, in the coming season, the MAR Team will be better positioned with a new Senior Scientist, a Coastal and Marine Program Manager for Mexico and a dedicated Conservation Specialist in Honduras on board to coordinate and implement monitoring activities.

Activity 1.2. Initial application and field testing of bleaching resistance tools
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Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Pilot coral monitoring initiated by at least three local partners coordinated with bleaching resistance principles

A critical element to supporting the establishment of effectively managed platform sites as foundations for resilient networks of functionally-connected marine protected areas involves the identification and inclusion of bleaching resistant areas in MPA design. Through the participation of Conservancy scientist Dr. Rod Salm, regarded as one of the leading experts on coral reef resilience in the world, the Conservancy conducted a preliminary assessment at Halfmoon Caye with Belize Audubon Society to identify potential bleaching resistant sites. Based on this assessment, BAS agreed to reconsider the design of its co-managed marine protected area and integrate resiliency principles accordingly. Furthermore, a comprehensive training in resilience principles and evaluation of existing data sets was held at Sian Ka'an in conjunction with Amigos de Sian Ka'an and CONANP in Mexico. More than 14 years of coral data was analyzed in order to assess the status of coral reefs in this platform site, determine the areas that have historically been resistant to exogenous events, and include them in future redesign of the marine protected area.

Finally, in order to leverage the application of these principles in two MAR platform sites, the Conservancy in conjunction with World Wildlife Fund organized a broader training event in Belize focused on integrating resilience principles as part of the conservation assessment and marine protected area prioritization for the Belize National Protected Areas Policy and Systems Plan. Through these efforts, the Conservancy has ensured that in the current redesign of the Belizean national system of protected areas, resilience principles would be considered key criteria for effective protection.

Activity 1.3: *Improved understanding of connectivity within the MAR*

<u>Activity 1.3.1.</u> Integrate connectivity information and models into Caribbean-wide and MAR ecoregional planning
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Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Integrated analytical and fund-raising strategy for incorporating connectivity information into TNC-led ecoregional planning efforts in the MAR and wider Caribbean

A meeting was held with Conservancy experts from the MAR and from the wider Caribbean and researchers from the University of South Carolina to determine the most effective way to integrate connectivity data into large scale planning and priority setting efforts. The results of this meeting led to the refinement of the Princeton Oceanographic Model that has been used to determine the oceanographic features of the Western Caribbean critical to understanding the linkages and dynamics between geographically separate biological systems that serve as either sources or sinks for biodiversity as well as the nature of water-borne threats including pollution, contaminants and changes in ocean temperature. Integration of this information will be tested in the MAR Conservation Blueprint development process scheduled in FY05. Furthermore, a comprehensive budget was developed that detailed the costs of completing a full scale oceanographic model and complementary activities for the MAR and the wider Caribbean.

<u>Activity 1.3.2.</u> Improve understanding of circulation and fish migration patterns in the MAR

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Revised circulation model with enhanced predictive capability that is being used for real-time simulations of circulation and larval transport
- Improved understanding of migration patterns and site fidelity of snappers and groupers based on tagging data from SPAGs in Belize

In collaboration with University of South Carolina Professor Dr. Bjorn Kjerfve, a revised circulation model was completed for the Western Caribbean that provides real-time simulations of circulation and larval transport. The circulation model, modified from the Princeton Oceanographic Model (POM), provides useful information as to the broad scale circulation of eddies and gyres that affect the Meso-American Reef. Complementary assessments are necessary to define circulation models for the inner lagoon of the MAR which would have the most relevance toward understanding the potential nursery grounds for fish larvae after spawning events. Understanding the relationship between ocean currents and larval transport will ensure that

conservation efforts can be targeted to protect all critical stages of their life cycle, not only their spawning sites.

Another important consideration in understanding the effectiveness of protecting spawning aggregation sites is to understand if fish are faithful to these sites and also what their range is. In many parts of the Caribbean, fishers tend to catch fish along migratory routes to spawning aggregation sites and not necessarily at the sites themselves. As such, the Conservancy implemented a fish tagging program to determine their range and site fidelity. Preliminary data analysis suggests that some species are faithful to spawning sites and do return to the same location to spawn. Furthermore, in terms of migratory patterns, there is evidence that fish tagged at Gladden Spit in Southern Belize travel as far as Akumal, Mexico within very short periods of time. Further research will be needed to have conclusive evidence of migratory patterns of reef fish and site fidelity of snappers and groupers needed to inform both regional and local protected strategies which will be ongoing in FY05.

Objective 2: Help local partners improve the management and effectiveness of five platform MPAs strategically selected within the MAR network.

Activity 2.1: Selection of platform sites

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Criteria for identifying platform sites agreed upon
- Candidate platform sites evaluated and socio-economic baselines established

The Nature Conservancy completed and is using interim criteria to determine platform sites along the MAR which include indicators such as biological significance, representativity in terms of habitat type, capacity to conserve, and resilience. These criteria will be refined during the completion of the ecoregional assessment schedule for completion during year two. However, in applying these criteria to guide programmatic efforts, it was determined that only three platform sites (Cayos Cochinos in Honduras, Gladden Spit Marine Reserve in Belize and Sian Ka'an Marine Reserve in Mexico), as opposed to the five previously intended, can be practically and sustainably improved to adequately demonstrate management effectiveness. This decision was made based on an adaptive strategy that will enable TNC to deepen instead of broaden its support to platform sites that will, in turn, magnify the impacts of the management effectiveness strategies. This reduction is based on an assessment of the enabling environment and existing and potential capacity for effective management of these sites. TNC's approach for platform site development requires considerable investment both from the co-managers, local communities and other critical stakeholders. It is clear from this assessment that to effectively implement the aforementioned strategy of going deep, this is simply not achievable to the required level with the current level of investment and the remaining four year framework. As such, TNC decided to reduce its platform portfolio to three sites -

those most likely to be able to be considered “demonstration” or “platform” sites. Conservancy investments in these selected will continue on schedule.

In terms of socio-economic baselines, the Conservancy is building on results from social and economic assessments conducted by partners for Sian Ka’an Marine Reserve and Port Honduras Marine Reserve. These socio-economic assessments have been critical in helping define the appropriate strategies for alternative livelihood training, understanding the distribution of income between both genders, and seeking more robust information to target women in communities through training activities in year two. Through complementary funding, TNC is currently working with Amigos de Sian Ka’an and CONANP to establish baseline measures that will allow them to determine the impacts of community-based strategies. An assessment for Gladden Spit Marine Reserve focused on seven communities that utilize its resources is currently ongoing and will be completed by the second quarter of year two. Finally, TIDE, using independent funding, is implementing IUCN/WWF’s Management Effectiveness module to improve management of Port Honduras Marine Reserve. TNC will draw upon the lessons learned from piloting this module.

Activity 2.2: Improve the management of Gladden Spit MPA

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Conservation and management improvement activities initiated at Gladden Spit

Gladden Spit, considered one of the most important platform sites along the Meso-American Reef because of its intact reefs and multi-species spawning aggregations, has been a priority focus of the Conservancy’s efforts over the past year. While specific efforts have been implemented focused on the improvement of the conservation and management of the reserve, Friends of Nature, the co-manager of the site, has also been the target of a broader capacity building and institutional development effort through in partnership with the Conservancy. Over the past year, the Conservancy has completed the following key activities to improve the management effectiveness of Gladden Spit:

- 1) Evaluation and technical assistance (using Conservation Area Planning methods) to support the improvement of the Management Plan for the Gladden Spit Reserve;
- 2) Assessment of spawning aggregations monitoring program and provision of updated methods to streamline and focus monitoring to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness in future years;
- 3) Establishment of baselines for SPAGs, coral reel and other critical targets;
- 4) Implementation of key strategies for ecotourism, threat-abatement and SPAG monitoring Gladden Spit Marine Reserve.

Support for these efforts will be ongoing and further refined in year two activities.

Activity 2.3: Improve the management of Lighthouse Reef Atoll

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- 5) Conservation and management improvement activities initiated at Lighthouse Reef Atoll

Lighthouse Reef Atoll is co-managed between the Department of Fisheries and Belize Audubon Society. Over the course of the past year, the Conservancy focused on developing a conservation area plan for Lighthouse Reef and Half Moon Key as part of the effort to improve the management effectiveness of the reserve. These activities included the development of a detailed workplan that included training in and implementation of the Conservancy's conservation area planning process (Enhanced 5-S) and resiliency principles training and ground-truthing of target occurrences and threats.

Unfortunately, Belize Audubon Society underwent a series of organizational transitions that limited their ability to participate in and implement the aforementioned workplan. More specifically, key staff including the Executive Director and MPA Coordinator, who were critical to the implementation of joint efforts with TNC, departed BAS, thereby leaving a void in leadership and counterparts in the organization. Staff who remained had little authority to make decisions and implement activities and had to focus on maintaining the organization's day-to-day administration. In addition, with the organization in transition, the Belize Audubon Society Board took the opportunity to re-evaluate and assess the status of key partnerships with various institutions including the Conservation Partnership Agreement with TNC. All joint implementation activities were put on hold for the duration of the review. At this time new leadership has just been reinstated at BAS and TNC has had preliminary discussions regarding renewing our partnership. Although TNC has been made aware of some changes that the Board would like to make to the agreement with TNC, formal notification of these changes have not been forwarded per the stipulations of the existing agreement. In the interim, the Conservancy and BAS are currently evaluating, through a series of dialogues, if and how these collaborative efforts might continue in the future.

Objective 3: Establish a "virtual" Learning Center that convenes training courses, promotes exchanges, and facilitates coordination among the four MAR countries.

Activity 3.1: Train MPA managers and planners from partner organizations to apply resilience principles to MPA design and management.

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- At least 15 managers and planners trained in applying the resilience principles to their MPAs

Upon participating in the completion of the Coral Reef Resilience Toolkit (published on CD Roms last year), the Conservancy developed several training modules and events on integrating resilience principles into marine protected area management plans, systems of protected area design, and measures of success. A preliminary assessment was carried out at Halfmoon Caye with Conservancy partner, Belize Audubon Society, to identify potential bleaching resistant sites and begin to integrate these into the management plan for this critical reserve and UNESCO site. Furthermore, as part of the MAR Program's commitment to expansion of its activities into Mexico, a comprehensive training program in resilience principles and evaluation of existing coral reef data sets at Sian Ka'an was completed. Overall, more than 20 managers and planners from several agencies and partner organizations were trained. Finally, preliminary identification of bleaching resistant areas has been integrated into the national protected area systems plan in Belize - a government-led process to redesign the Belize system of protected areas given the completion of a gap assessment and new information (such as the bleaching resistant areas along the MAR identified as a result of these training events).

Activity 3.2: Provide fishers and other community members currently engaged in unsustainable uses of marine resources with skills that will enable them to obtain employment in alternative, sustainable livelihood activities.

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- 20 people trained, and 10 employed in more sustainable livelihood activities

As part of the Conservancy's effort to provide alternative livelihoods to those communities most affected by the restrictions placed on and/or protection of spawning aggregations, Lighthouse Reef/Halfmoon Caye was targeted as an ideal pilot effort, given the importance of the multiple spawning aggregation sites within the reserve and the number of communities affected. Belize Audubon Society, the co-manager of the area, was to engage their target communities to facilitate this training opportunity in collaboration with the Conservancy. Despite numerous attempts to schedule this training, due to the transition and loss of capacity within BAS, this activity was not completed.

However, the Conservancy has obtained socio-economic assessments for two platform sites (Sian Ka'an and Gladden Spit) that will be critical to defining the effectiveness, sustainability and appropriateness of future training courses at the community level while gauging the scale of the threat of communities dependent upon the Reef's resources.

Activity 3.3: Complete design of Learning Center

Results Anticipated in FY04:

- Technical and institutional needs and capacity gaps identified and prioritized
- Strategic plan for the Learning Center completed with stakeholder participation and operation plan in place to begin implementation

During the course of FY 04, the Conservancy held internal and external consultations, desktop research and an assessment of other similar models to define a preliminary conceptual framework for defining the Learning Center. Furthermore, as a result of the approval of a protected areas program of work by the Convention on Biological Diversity at COP-7 in February, and the expectation under National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP) agreements to implement this program of work that signatories would conduct comprehensive capacity assessments, the Conservancy has decided to delay the final conceptualization and implementation of the Learning Center until year two in order to maximize both the opportunity and potential for leverage of this concept. As such, terms of reference for a contractor for implementing the first critical steps of the framework has been completed.

Objective 4: Assure that field activities are effectively and efficiently supported and coordinated.

Activity 4.1: Program Coordination and Management

Results Anticipated:

- Effective coordination and management of the cooperative agreement
- Overhead necessary to maintain effective support of the project

Nestor Windevoxhel, former Director of PROARCA/APM, has been hired to lead the MAR Program as Director. He has officially assumed his responsibilities as Director as of October 1, 2004. A new Senior Scientist for the MAR Program is currently under recruitment and will be on board by October 2004. This replaces the position of Dr. Will Heyman who left the Conservancy in June 2004.