



The Community Foundation
Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund Grant Evaluation Form

Grant Period:

Organization: The Nature Conservancy

Contact Name: Julie Bondi

Title: Donor Relations Manager

Phone Number: 949-244-2748

Grant Period: Jan. 1, 2012 through Dec. 31, 2012

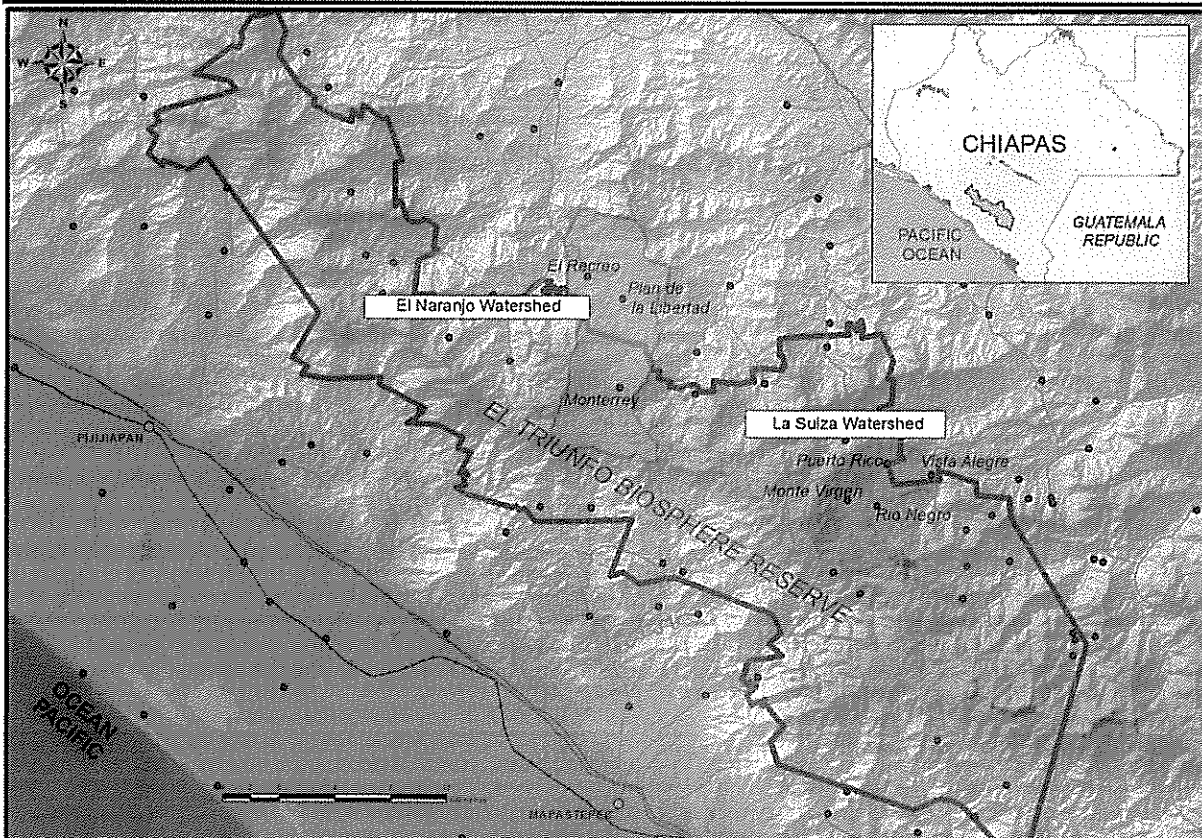
Award Amount: \$50,000

Grant Number: 2011829

- Describe the project's key outcomes and results based on your goals and objectives. Provide the number of clients served and other relevant statistics.

With support from donors such as the S. L. Gimbel Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and the National Institute for Forestry and Agricultural Research (INIFAP) have been able to launch a climate change adaptation project in El Triunfo Biosphere, which addresses Sustainable Livelihoods and Watershed Protection as well. The idea is to demonstrate that integral watershed management and ecosystem-based adaptation are tools that prevent floods and mudslides, provide food and water security and climate change adaptation.

COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED WITH GIMBEL FUNDS, AS PART OF EL NARANJO AND LA SUIZA WATERSHEDS, CHIAPAS, MEXICO.



Since January, we have worked with 334 producers and their families, adding up to 1,670 people, in two micro watersheds: El Naranjo and La Suiza. The specific communities where we are implementing the program are: Monterrey, Plan de la Libertad, Rio Negro, Vista Alegre and Monte Virgen.

Producers in the region received 5,729 fruit trees, of which 4,505 were for El Naranjo and 1,224 for La Suiza. With these, 247 producers from El Naranjo and 87 producers from La Suiza managed to diversify the production of 178 acres, integrating fruit trees within coffee and corn fields. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the watersheds will be able to improve their livelihoods by expanding their diet and integrating sustainable agriculture methods that promote forest cover and soil regeneration (both climate change adaptation strategies).

In order to be prepared for climate change adaptation, the communities received orientation by INIFAP on watershed integrated management, so they could understand the link between their productive activities and flooding and mudslides, and therefore be able to prevent those risks. From that standpoint, 1,300 acres were reforested with pine trees as a strategy to stabilize hillsides and protect land from erosion. Furthermore, at least two communities, Monterrey and Plan de la Libertad, are now implementing sustainable agricultural activities and have designated 3,700 acres for conservation.



Harvest area

Water also received special attention during this project. Drinking water was polluted, as a result of the agrochemicals used in corn and coffee plantations. Several actions were taken to improve water conditions. Producers agreed to move their operation to a new area provided by the community. INIFAP obtained a small purifying plant, as a gift from Healing Waters, a nonprofit organization which provides safe water solutions in rural communities. In order to protect water recharge areas, the National Forestry Commission, CONAFOR provided a payment-for-environmental-services program in some communities within La Suiza watershed.

Climate change is already taking a toll on food security. A late rainy season means lower harvests. To address this, INIFAP provided a variety of corn seeds which require shorter cycles which in turn allows better harvests. This also provides more time to grow other crops such as beans, which constitute one of the major components of the diet in the community. Due to this, corn crops were produced in a shorter period and, combined with conservation agriculture¹, productivity was increased, ground fertility was maintained and mudslide risk was reduced.

¹ Conservation Agriculture is a set of soil management practices that minimize the disruption of the soil's structure, composition and natural biodiversity.

Producers were also trained to use conservation agriculture methods, such as contour barriers, rotate crops, disturb the soil as little as possible, keep the soil covered with mulch and cover crops. With this, they learned that slash-and-burn agriculture comes with a high soil loss, which increases flooding risks.



Retention area

As this model proves to be functional, it will be used as a demonstration site on community development, sustainable production, watershed management and vulnerability reduction, and the methodology will be replicated in other regions and watersheds in Chiapas.

The current project is part of The Innovative Mechanisms for a Cooperative Climate Change Adaptation Program in Sierra Madre and the Coast of Chiapas, Mexico, with funding from Federal

Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the International Climate Initiative (ICI). Other productive reconversion and forestry restoration are also being developed by this program. Resources from S. L. Gimbel Foundation Fund add up to increasing the impact of these efforts. The project is therefore part of a much larger program that will benefit 1.8 million people in 7 watersheds.

- What were the challenges and obstacles you encountered (if any) in attaining your goals & objectives? How did you overcome and/or address the challenges and obstacles? What were the lessons learned?

During the first stages of the project, bleak weather conditions and poor communication routes impeded any developments within the communities. The region has high precipitation levels, which damage rural roads. In order to overcome this, agreements were reached with members of the communities to deliver the fruit trees up to vehicle access points. From there, each community carried the trees to the corresponding farming lots. The lesson learned was that cooperation among communities and organizations can be easily accomplished if they feel part of the solution and understand the positive outcomes on a local and regional level.

- Describe any unintended positive outcomes as a result of the efforts supported by this grant.

One of the unintended outcomes was a capacity building workshop on fruit tree cultivation. This activity became part of the productive reconversion strategy, since it was a significant action to take, in order to ensure long-term results using conservation agriculture. Producers learned about the fruit trees growing under the corn crops system, where trees prevent erosion and help stabilize hillsides through land and water conservation practices.

Furthermore, a demonstration site was established to illustrate how fruit trees could interact within a corn field. The latter was developed in La Suiza.

- Describe the overall effect this grant has had on your organization.

The Project was crucial in the way it helped us approach the communities, gain their trust, and therefore produce an impact on their own livelihoods. It was also a positive experience since it joined efforts from TNC and INIFAP and began an initiative to reach three linked objectives in the area: sustainable livelihoods, climate change adaptation and watershed protection.

For many years, TNC has supported communities that live within Chiapas watersheds, specifically on the coastal areas, yet political changes in local administrations were a continuous obstacle in the progress and continuance of conservation actions. Decision making was a matter handled by public officers and not by the community. This project has been key to modify those trends.



Watershed view

Additionally, La Suiza proved to be one of the most integral Projects being developed with our partners. It includes integral watershed management, ecosystem-based adaptation, conservation agriculture, water and food security, reforestation and restoration, community health and organization, environmental services payments, carbon sequestration, among others.

- Tell us a few success stories that made an impact on your organization and/or community as a result of this grant.

Mr. Fernando Pérez Díaz, from Puerto Rico community is certain that there is a positive difference after the support we provided. In his own words: *"Before, the soil was washing out, it was poor, with low outputs and corncobs were becoming smaller. Corn was easily plagued. After the advice from INIFAP personnel, who proposed to use conservation agriculture, I have noticed that the land is more productive and there are less plague problems. Our soil is more fertile now. I also hope to see these trees grow and be fruitful"*

Isaías Cárdenas Sánchez, from the same community is also aware of this change. Before this intervention, he had several harvest losses due to climate change, since the rainy season arrived too late. Staff from INFIAP provided different seeds which required shorter cycles, so that the community could harvest crops before the rainy season ended. *"Well... we tried it and it worked! We have learned to use this seed and follow conservation agriculture methods. Now we are ready to face climate change"*, said Cárdenas.

- Provide a financial report on the use of your grant funds (expenditures).

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Sep-12

	Budget	Actual Expenses	Projected Expenses to January 2013	Total expenses	
Personnel & fringe**	22,000	15,000	7,000	22,000	**
Contractuals*	18,500	15,638	3,842	19,480	*
Communication	2,000	187	2,000	2,187	
Travel	4,000	330	3,376	3,706	
Supplies & equipment	1,000	189	1,000	1,189	
Occupancy				-	
Other expenses	2,500	248	1,189	1,437	
TOTAL EXPENSES	50,000	31,593	18,407	50,000	

* Pending charges to be reflected in November

**Pending financial adjustments to be reflected in November

In conclusion, we hope the above report demonstrates the great progress we have made in the past year in large part through the support of the S. L. Gimbel Foundation. We plan to continue to expand our impact over the coming years using proven methods, evaluate best practices and build the potential for conservation agriculture, reforestation and restoration practices to be permanent within the communities of this area.

Thank you for your investment in our vital work.

- ❖ Please send copies of publicity and other promotional materials.
- ❖ All variances or time extensions must be approved by The Community Foundation's Grant Committee. Please contact us at 951-684-4194, ext. 114 immediately if a variance or extension becomes necessary.

Please return the completed form to:

Celia Cudiamat, Vice President of Grant Programs
 3700 Sixth St., Suite 200, Riverside, CA 92501 or fax to 951-684-1911
 Or email to: ccudiamat@thecommunityfoundation.net