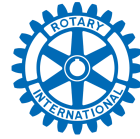




Glacier National Park
CONSERVANCY



Parks Canada
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Developing Cooperative Relationships in Borderland Parks and Reserves: Sister Parks Project Sky Islands Mexico & USA

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Southwest United States and Northwestern Mexico



Participants in coordinating the ongoing transboundary cooperation:

National Government:

- National Park Service (US),
- Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (MEX)

International NGOs:

- Nature
- Culture International

National NGOs:

- Sonoran Joint Venture

Objectives: The major goals of this project are to leverage existing camera studies in border parks to help establish conservation and monitoring priorities for large and medium-sized mammals, as well as to renew several long-existing sister park relationships.

Through our partnership we aim to create a standard protocol that will allow comparisons between sites, and provide support for parks by sharing wildlife cameras and other resources. In addition, this project has provided a baseline of knowledge of mammals in all parks that will allow for comparison among sites.

Values and importance: The national parks and other reserves along the US-Mexico border in Sonora, Baja California, and the southwestern United States share and protect a rich biological diversity. However, wildlife habitat along both sides of the border is under increasing threats related to climate change, human population growth, and the combination of illegal border and heightened border security activities. The common conservation threats and goals of sister parks on both sides of the border facilitates the coordination of monitoring projects to understand and address loss of biodiversity. The purpose of this project is to develop a strong international partnership, based on wildlife cameras, to monitor and protect our great mammal diversity.

Aspects of transboundary cooperation: Wildlife Monitoring, Fire Management, Springs Inventories, Protected Area conservation.

Stage in the process: ongoing

Date Established: 2014

Official Protected Area Designation of the protected areas involved in this transboundary conservation initiative:

- Saguaro National Park
- Coronado National Memorial
- Chiricahua National Monument
- Organ Pipe National Monument
- Casa Grande National Monument
- Tumacacori National Historical Park

- Reserva Forestal Nacional y Refugio de Fauna Silvestre Ajos Bavispe
- Parque Nacional Constitución de 1857
- Parque Nacional Sierra de San Pedro Mártir
- Reserva de la Biósfera El Pinacate y Gran Desierto de Altar
- Reserva de la Biósfera Sierra La Laguna
- Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Sierra de Álamos Río Cuchujaqui
- Área Natural Protegida Bosque La Primavera
- NCI Reserva Monte Mojino

The Catalyst: In wildlife monitoring, wildlife cameras are a relatively new tool. Parks and reserves in both Mexico and the US use wildlife cameras to monitor for medium and large sized animals, however, every park has different protocols and manages their data differently. By standardizing monitoring protocols we are able to analyze trends and movement of mammals at a regional scale.

History: Sky Island Alliance has been working on transboundary wildlife monitoring for 10 years. Sharing projects with Saguaro National Park and Sonoran Joint Venture we realized that wildlife monitoring is something parks and reserves do consistently in both sides of the border. We came together to talk about a way that data from different sites could be gathered and analyzed in uniform way to achieve conservation priorities.

The obstacles that we have come across are mostly related to border crossing. It is difficult for a Mexican individual to acquire a border crossing card to visit the US, even if it's for a couple of days, it is expensive and a long process. For US citizens, they have to deal with special requirements for visiting Mexico due to the fact that they are Federal employees and need a special passport and high threat security training before they do so. We never seem to be able to gather all of our participants, we always have people who can't make it across the border going either way.

The Governance and Management Structures

- **Cooperative relationship:** There is a non-binding agreement between the participating parks and reserves
- **Legal basis for cooperation:** There is an MOU agreement between parks that are currently sharing their monitoring data.
- **Governance structure:** individuals representing their parks
- **Cooperative management arrangement:** Standardize wildlife monitoring protocols that involve wildlife cameras in order to be able to analyze trends and movement at a regional scale.

Results: The project is still in its early stages. We have achieved our goal of developing relationships within our participating parks. There has been data sharing but has yet to be

analyzed. We have also been able to share resources with the Mexican parks, such as wildlife cameras, batteries and computers to support further monitoring work.

Lessons Learned: Through this project we have learned that working with federal agencies across borders is a slow process. Rules and regulations are very different on either side of the border and we have to find a way to work with the system to achieve our goal. Relationships must be formed between the people involved in order for a successful outcome. We have also found that it is essential to have at least one person from each country working on managing the initiative for maximum efficiency. CONANP in Mexico has been having massive budget and personnel cuts over the last year due to changes in political powers. We believe that now more than ever it is important to carry out transboundary projects that support the ones who need it the most, to protect the land and resources we share.

For More Information

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