

Community Restoration Network

Project Profile: Mixteca Alta - Oaxaca, México

Project Location:

Mixteca Alta - northwest Oaxaca, Mexico

Project Manager/Coordinator:

León Santos, founder of the Centro de Desarrollo Integral Campesino de la Mixteca (Cedicam - Mixtecan Small Farmers' Center for Integrated Development)

Project Duration:

ongoing since 1983

Ecosystem to be Restored:

pine-oak forest

Area to be Restored:

No target has been defined. Cedicam hopes to restore as much of the Mixteca Alta as possible.

Primary Cause of Degradation:

overgrazing, unsustainable agriculture and deforestation

Project Goal:

To reverse the severe ecological degradation of the Mixteca Alta and improve local livelihoods by restoring healthy forests and providing greater ecosystem services.

Restoration Treatments Used:

The project is working to plant hundreds of thousands of trees on denuded hillsides of the Mixteca Alta and is encouraging local farmers to expand the use of traditional indigenous agricultural techniques—such as the excavation of runoff ditches called “trincheras” that slow erosion and improve groundwater absorption. A community-run nursery has been established in the village of San Isidro Jaltepetongo to produce native pine saplings for the reforestation effort. Each July and August, a group of 100+ townspeople carry saplings overland to plantation sites.

Community Involvement:

A 120-member reforestation committee has been organized in San Isidro Jaltepetongo to coordinate the restoration activities.

Benefits to Local Ecology:

More than 1 million native trees have been planted since the project began. The fast-growing pine saplings stabilize the soil with their root systems, create absorbent topsoil through the deposition of organic matter, and help loosen hard subsoil to allow greater penetration of rainwater.



As a result of reforestation activities, villagers of San Isidro Jaltepetongo have noticed a considerable increase in the output of a nearby spring that provides much of their water. The improvements made in local ecology, and the resultant benefits to local livelihoods, have inspired other villages in the region to begin adopting more sustainable management practices.

Directions for the Future:

Cedicam will continue working with local communities to improve their resource base and create viable economic options that, it is hoped, will reduce the number of villagers migrating to large cities and emigrating to the United States.

Funding/Support:

Funding for Cedicam’s work has been provided largely by international aid organizations.

References/Contacts: