



Local Risk Management in the Otoch-ma'ax Yetel Kooch Protected Area

The Yucatan Peninsula is located within the Atlantic Hurricane Belt and it's vulnerable to very strong winds, tropical storms and heavy rains. The 2005 Atlantic Hurricane Season was the most active hurricane in recorded history with two category 5 hurricanes (Emily and Wilma).

The Otoch-ma'ax Yetel Kooch Reserve, located in the hurricane trajectory, resulted in high damages caused by sustained winds between 150 and 200 Km/h (categories 2 - 4) and heavy rain. The hurricanes Emily and Wilma destroyed thousands of trees in the protected area -about three tons of wood by hectare- becoming a serious fire menace to forests during the dry season. Given this situation, the Community Base Organization Najil Tucha requested the support of the Small Grants Programme to implement a project aimed at diminishing the risk of forest fires by reopening the paths closed by the trees; creating a fire prevention path surrounding the Protected Area; and extracting and using the deadwood.

The Najil Tucha community-based organization received a grant of USD \$21,941 from SGP and raised a similar amount in co-financing from the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) to prevent and avoid forest fires and recover the vegetable cover. Visitors will be able to observe some of the effects of the hurricanes Emily and Wilma and appreciate the efforts of the community to avoid forest fires and conserve the protected area.

This project helps to avoid the emission of approximately 295,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalent.



LOCAL RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

In 2002, after the impact of the hurricane Isidore in the Yucatán Peninsula, the Small Grants Programme in Mexico with the support of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme started the Local Risk Management Program. The Program aims to mitigate climate change by decreasing the possibilities of forest fires after hurricanes; and increasing the resilience of communities to climate change by including risk management considerations in the project design.

ABOUT THE RESERVE



The Otoch-ma'ax Yetel Kooch (House of the spider monkey and the puma) is an effort of the local community of Punta Laguna that started in 1979 to preserve the forest and the existing Mayan archaeological remains of the area. The Otoch-ma'ax Yetel Kooch Reserve was recognized by the Mexican Government as a Protected Area of Wild Fauna and Flora in June of 2002.

The Otoch-ma'ax Yetel Kooch Reserve has 5,367 hectares covered by different vegetation types such as tropical sub-evergreen forest, flooded forest and flooded grasslands; and contains one to the more important superficial hydrological systems of the Yucatan Peninsula. In addition, the reserve is home to 215 bird species (114 resident and 44 migratory) and a population of approximately 300 spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*). The Punta Laguna community provides guided tours where visitors can observe birds and spider monkeys in their natural habitat.