

UPDATE REPORT



SEPTEMBER 2013

Mesoamerican Reef Fund www.marfund.org / info@marfund.org

Picture by MAR Fund

Dear Friends,

The year is advancing quickly and we have new information to share with you. The final results of projects approved for the Fourth Request for Proposals are in, and the Sixth RfP was launched. We had a great meeting with the implementers of the Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America Project. Read on!

Conservation of Marine Resources in Central America Project



After a short but productive work plan in 2012, the Annual Work Plan for 2013 started several months ago in each of the protected areas of Phase I of the project:

- Port Honduras Marine Reserve, in Belize;
- Punta de Manabique Wildlife Refuge, in Guatemala;
- Sandy Bay West End Special Marine Protection Zone, in Honduras, and
- Yum Balam Flora and Fauna Special Protection Area, in Mexico.

Monitoring and surveillance programs are some of the main activities for all protected area administrators. In 2013 we continue to support these programs. Other important activities include reparation of infrastructure and purchase of field equipment.

From August 5 - 9, we held the first project implementers meeting in Livingston, a beautiful Guatemalan coastal town. The protected areas that will be part of Phase II of the project also attended the meeting:

- Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS), in Belize;
- South Water Caye Marine Reserve (SWCMR), also in Belize;
- Río Sarstún Multiple Use Area (RSMUA), in Guatemala;
- Turtle Harbour / Rock Harbour Protected Area (THRH), in Honduras, and
- Santuario del Manatí State Reserve, in Mexico.

This meeting was an excellent opportunity for implementers from Phase I to share their experiences each on the project and their results to date. Implementers from Phase II were given an introduction on the project objectives and procedures and were able to obtain a better notion of how the project operates and what opportunities the project provides.



The results of the meeting were, among others, the establishment of the schedule for the following monitoring visits from the member funds to each protected area, the discussion of activities to be included in the 2014 Annual Work Plan, possible exchange visits for each protected area, and the socialization of the final version of the monitoring plan for the project. We feel confident that the protected areas involved in the Project will advance in their management plans and their work with local communities.

Conservation, Management and Sustainable Use of Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Reef Joint Requests for Proposals

Fourth Request for Proposals



The approved projects of the 4th Request for Proposals completed the planned field activities. Their final results were:

1. Improving fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the Port Honduras Marine Reserve, Belize (TIDE)

Managed Access is a management approach based on access rights to fishing that favor traditional fishermen in the area.

- TIDE and other organizations (Environmental Defense Fund, World Conservation Society, among others) organized the first Managed Access Forum, in which over 50 fishers participated.
- A Managed Access Coordinator for Port Honduras Marine Reserve (PHMR) was hired by TIDE to work directly with fishers to increase their participation and to conduct regular trainings as needed by fishers and reserve staff.
- Fifteen new Managed Access fishers joined the program after a visit to Glover's Reef Marine Reserve where they saw the benefits that this mechanism provides to the resource and to the fishing communities.
- TIDE's rangers, as well as over 90% of the Managed Access Fishers, are currently collecting catch data within the Port Honduras Marine Reserve. This information allows establishing the maximum permissible catch quotas.
- Resources from the project were also used to strengthen the rock wall constructed to protect the Abalone Caye Marine Station. This strategy had excellent results as erosion has decreased considerably at Abalone Caye and TIDE looks forward to the continued use of their strategically located ranger station.

2. Enforcement enhancement at the South Water Caye Marine Reserve (SWCMR), Belize (Fisheries Department)

- Two engines and two 23-foot patrol boats were purchased. The boats were equipped with fire extinguishers, steering systems, consoles, switch panels, fuel filter separators, life jackets, compass, anchors, ropes, canopies, bilge pumps, GPS, raincoats and fenders.
- Training sessions on outboard engine maintenance and enforcement were conducted in June. Each of the trainings lasted three days, and the five members of the core South Water Caye Marine Reserve staff attended both trainings.
- A total of 477 enforcement patrols were done, exceeding the programmed calendar and notoriously increasing the staff effectiveness in the detection and control of unlawful acts.
- A total of 23 arrests and 14 warnings were made. Charges associated with the warnings and arrests are: fishing within Conservation Zone 1 of SWCMR, harvesting of undersized lobster, intent to fish within Conservation Zone 1, harvesting lobster out of season, fishing without a valid boat license, and harvesting of berried lobster (lobster with eggs).



3. Negotiation between stakeholders for the design and implementation of a fish restocking area in Bahia La Graciosa, Punta de Manabique Wildlife Refuge, Guatemala (FUNDARY)

After the first fisheries co-management agreement was signed between the fishermen of the communities of Graciosa, Punta Gruesa and Santa Isabel and the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP) in July, 2012, FUNDARY worked with the authorities and fishing communities and accomplished the following:

- Needs and action lines for the co-management of the fish recovery sites and the co-management area were identified with the fishers, and a co-management action plan was developed. Some of the action lines identified were:
 - Community participation in management of fishing resources
 - Promotion of sustainable use of Natural Resources.
- The fishers involved in the co-management initiative were trained in topics such as:
 - Management of coastal and marine protected areas
 - Communication and participatory planning techniques
- A multi-institutional working Committee was established to implement the co-management action plan.

4. **Developing management tools and capacity building to provide the foundation for rights-based fisheries and enhanced efficacy of MPA management in Honduras (UCME)**

- Several databases were designed and they are available on-line. The databases include a fish, benthic and coral AGRRRA interface, a patrol monitoring interface and a fisheries landing interface.
- Fishers from Punta Gorda have started engaging alternative fishing strategies such as lobster shades and lionfish fishery.
- As a result of the project, a municipal law was passed to prohibit fin-fish fishing and the extraction of conch and lobster from within the Turtle Harbour-Rock Harbour MPA, Utila, and its extension out to Southwest Cay.
- The Turtle Harbour/Rock Harbour and Sandy Bay West End managers were trained in usage and interpretation of results of the database and GIS interface for the park enforcement information.

5. **Community based marine reserves in the Banco Chinchorro Biosphere Reserve, México (COBI)**

- Four areas were initially proposed as community-based marine reserves. Of the four proposed areas, fishermen chose one to test the process of establishing fisheries recovery areas.
- A 'no-fishing inside the fisheries recovery areas' pre-agreement has been reached between the three Fishing Cooperatives involved in the project (Banco Chinchorro, Langosteros del Caribe and Andrés Quintana Roo), until the recovery area is officially and legally established.
- A total of twelve fishermen from the three Cooperatives were trained in open water scuba diving, coral reef monitoring and coral reef restoration skills with the support of CONANP and Oceanus



6. **Reef restoration network and integration of a rapid response team for events that impact the Mesoamerican Reef, Mexico. (Oceanus)**

As mentioned in the last Update Report, this project has completed its activities by July, 2012, with the following results:

- The first MAR Restoration Network workshop for the integration of the MAR Reef Restoration Network took place in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from April 18 – 20, 2012.
- A total of 43 participants from Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, United States and the Dominican Republic attended the workshop.

- In coordination with Arrecifes de Xcalak National Park staff, the five coral nurseries that were previously installed were visited during the workshop by the participants.
- The Network was formally integrated by 40 members.
- A document on the strategic lines of action for the network was prepared, including: a) capacity building, communications, sharing and exchange of information and experiences, b) research, c) response to an event, d) monitoring and evaluation, e) legal framework and f) fundraising.
- An on-line platform was developed for the Reef Restoration Network: www.red-rac.org This is a space where people can share documents and links regarding reef restoration.



As follow up to the workshop and Network creation, Oceanus has moved forward to prepare a publication of a special issue on the reef restoration experiences in Mexico and the Caribbean. The publication will focus on the genus *Acropora*. The content will include a presentation of the Network and its objectives, and the information available in each country on the status of *Acropora* populations and impacted sites, as well as the restoration efforts that have already initiated in some sites.

Fifth Request for Proposals



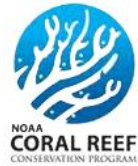
The Overbrook Foundation



The projects approved for our 5th RfP began field activities in March, 2013. The first progress reports will be submitted in September.

We will share their preliminary results in our next update.

Sixth Request for Proposals



On July 22, 2013, we launched our 6th RfP entitled “*Reducing Threats and Improving Management in Key Coastal and Marine Protected Areas in the Mesoamerican Reef*”. This is again a joint RfP with the Government of Germany through KfW, the Overbrook Foundation and the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP)/NFWF. We give a special thanks to the donors for this RfP. Their contributions are making an important difference in the region.

The overall objective of this RfP is to contribute to the conservation of the ecological functions of the Mesoamerican Reef System. The specific objectives are:

- To support the protection and conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems in priority areas.
- To promote the participation of civil society in the best management practices and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.
- To strengthen communication and exchanges for effective adoption of new practices.

The deadline for the presentation of proposals is September 16, 2013, and we look forward to receiving interesting and important projects.

The Mesoamerican Reef Rescue Initiative

This initiative aims to support the long term ecologic and economic viability of the Mesoamerican Reef and the environmental services it provides, by helping develop the human capacity, regulatory environment, local economic incentives and financial sustainability needed to carry out sound, effective and timely science-based coral reef restoration.

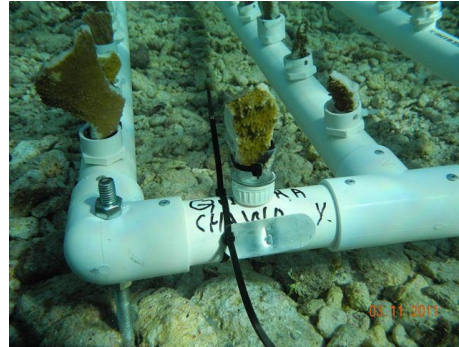
It has four strategies:

1. Foster the nascent science and practice of coral reef restoration
2. Develop alternative livelihoods and new employment opportunities for local communities (especially aimed at youth and fishers) based on conservation rather than consumption of natural resources
3. Secure government commitment to policies and regulations that make reef restoration possible and create the enabling conditions to carry out effective and timely restoration interventions
4. Secure sustainable, long term financing for both ongoing and emergency coral restoration interventions in participating countries

As part of the first strategy we are happy to announce that MEXICHEM, a Mexican company leader in the chemical and petrochemical industry in Latin America, has donated over 2,000 meters of PVC tubing for the construction of reef nurseries along the Mesoamerican Reef.

Our partners and colleagues from Oceanus A.C., experts in coral nurseries and the promoters of the Reef Restoration Network for the region, have the donated material and will prepare a plan for its distribution and use in key sites along Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras.

We thank MEXICHEM for this valuable contribution and look forward to sharing future results with you.



Let's stay in touch!

Feel free to visit our website (www.marfund.org and www.fondosam.org) to learn more about our activities. You can check our facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/MARFund>) as well.

Now you can obtain more details about the MAR Fund – KfW *Conservation of Marine resources in Central America* Project at the following link:

(http://www.marfund.org/en/new_projects/lanzamientokfw.html).

Let us also know your comments and questions. Write to us at the following address: info@marfund.org.