



ECO-ALIANZA DE LORETO - INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FIRST YEAR PROGRESS AND REPORT

October 2021-February 2023
LORETO, BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR



www.ecoalianzaloreto.org/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Eco-Alianza de Loreto formally became a Sister Reserve within the University of California Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) in 2019 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Thanks to the diligence and leadership of the Eco-Alianza Board, and then Executive Director, Ing. Hugo Quintero Maldonado and Linda Kinninger, Co-Founders, and the guidance and support of Nicholas Pinter, Ph.D. and Suzanne Olyarnik, Ph.D., of the University of California, Davis, the dream of bringing international research opportunities to Loreto and the Baja Sur Peninsula was born.

An International SUMMIT, held in October, 2021, brought together stakeholders, researchers, government officials, and interested parties to explore the possibilities for our initiative, the Center for Environmental Studies (CEMA). CEMA will serve as a hub where academics, students and institutions from Mexico, the United States, and other countries interact with local stakeholders to guide sustainable management of the rich natural resources of the Bay of Loreto region and Baja California Sur. This document summarizes the SUMMIT itself and the progress we have made in 2022, breathing life into this dream.

We identified as core issues, the importance of the democratization of science, support for the Bay of Loreto National Park and its surroundings, to strengthen the environmental and economic resilience of the community. We also brought new leadership to Eco-Alianza, an Executive Director, L.C.P. Carlos Posadas Solano, who had served for several years on the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors, of Eco-Alianza.

Carlos previously worked for the Loreto Municipality as Technical Director, working closely with both Mayors Prof. Arely Arce Peralta and M.C. Paola M. Cota Davis. He was involved in development, planning, public relations, and coordination with other directors. One of Carlos' many strengths is his ability to create and work with teams, provide direction for maintaining overall infrastructure, and coordinate with other directors.

His passion for education stems from life long-learning, and his positions as both instructor and director at the high school and university levels. Carlos served as the Director of Autonomous University of Baja California Sur (UABCS), Loreto Campus, for six and a half years, and was responsible for the personnel, the administration of courses, and strategic planning for the University. As an instructor, he taught Modern History, Comparative Political Science, Classic and Modern Political Theory, Sociology, and Public Administration at the Federal, State, and Municipal levels. Carlos studied Law at Metropolitan Autonomous University, Mexico, holds a Bachelor of Political Science and Public Administration, UABCS, and a Master's Certificate in Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources.

We are gratified for his leadership skills, enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to Eco-Alianza's mission of environmental education and protection for Loreto and its surroundings.

One year ago, Eco-Alianza de Loreto announced the selection of Sula Vanderplank, Ph.D., as Executive Director, of the newly established CEMA, a program of Eco-Alianza.

Sula has 19 years of experience working in conservation and biodiversity of the Baja California Peninsula and its offshore islands. She studied for her Ph.D. under one of Mexico's leading conservationists, Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra, and has been heralded as a Conservation Champion by the Center for Plant Conservation for her work with rare plants in the region. She maintains an active research program focused on coastal ecosystems, and has published more than 50 scholarly articles and books.

Sula states: “our goal is to democratize science for the Loreto community and the National Park, bringing scientists from around the world to help inform our efforts to conserve and protect the incredible environmental treasures of the Loreto region and beyond.”

The need for CEMA evolved from the realization by Eco-Alianza staff and Board members that the unique geographic location of Loreto provided research opportunities across multiple scientific disciplines, and that a Center to bring together bright minds would lead to discoveries and the ability to disseminate and communicate results across multiple platforms. The CEMA program will connect aficionados of the natural environment in Loreto and beyond, with the region’s top scientific experts, to see how management practices can be adjusted to most benefit and protect species of concern. Eco-Alianza will lead the growth and development of CEMA established from the guidelines developed during the International SUMMIT, hosted by Eco-Alianza in October, 2021. Participants from NGOs, government and academic organizations, educators, private enterprises and concerned citizens gathered to determine the need and feasibility of such a Center.

Together, Sula and Carlos, have worked with the Board and staff in the process of strategic planning for CEMA. The intense ground work of the past year has focused on strengthening alliances and collaborations with universities, networks, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, local government, and the philanthropic community.

MESSAGE FROM ECO-ALIANZA DE LORETO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR L.C.P. CARLOS POSADAS SOLANO

Our challenge remains to effectively promote and maintain the balanced progress and well-being of the communities that rely on the region’s natural resources. Eco-Alianza has carried out innovative initiatives for the conservation of the environment and the quality of life in our community, through our work in the key areas of Environmental Education, Watershed Conservation, Sustainable Fisheries, Resource Management, and Alternative Livelihoods.

Our Sister Reserve partnership with the University of California’s Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) is a promising initiative that aims to spark international research collaboration with Mexican universities and institutions by establishing a new research Center in Loreto.

This is a unique opportunity to create a Center of excellence in a strategic location. I believe the research center will benefit the community and at the same time enhance academic exchanges between collaborating universities and institutions, allowing for further innovation and progress.

Join us in the effort to establish the research Center - Centro de Estudios del Medio Ambiente (CEMA), and together let us explore new ways of conducting science that will allow the construction of research agendas and projects with non-academic sectors of society, and the design of a cutting-edge research facility to perform activities in the natural laboratory of our region. We appreciate your interest and contribution to the CEMA initiative, as we work together to better serve our community by using science to make long-term improvements in the environment and people's lives.

MESSAGE FROM CEMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SULA VANDERPLANK, PH.D.

Since CEMA's inception at the International SUMMIT in October 2021, we have been passionately committed to its development. This first calendar year of CEMA activities has been an exciting whirlwind adventure as we begin to take all the plans laid down at the SUMMIT and bring them to life. In just nine months we have been able to prove that CEMA can and will change the face of conservation and environmental education in the mid-peninsula region. The latter part of this report details our early accomplishments, but we are excited to look forward hand in hand with you – finding a way forward together.

Thank you for your love of this special place where we live, for your support and dedication, and for seeing the value that science can bring to all of our lives. CEMA exists for you and we look forward to seeing you soon.



ORIGINS OF THE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (CEMA)

In 2014, Eco-Alianza leaders and friends met to discuss complementary and additional ways to support the Bay of Loreto National Park (Parque Nacional Bahía de Loreto [PNBL]), a biological wonder, like many Mexican parks, suffers from insufficient financial and federal support. The idea arose to create a partnership with the Channel Islands National Park in California under the "Sister Parks" system, as a vehicle through which the U.S. National Park Service's Sister Parks program could provide ways to exchange resources and expertise from marine biologists, park managers, and other staff. During the interim, Loreto also became a Sister City of Ventura, California while the two historic missions, Nuestra Señora de Loreto Conchó and Mission Basilica San Buenaventura became "Sister Missions". In 2019, the Sister Reserve relationship between the two organizations was formalized with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the University of California and Eco-Alianza de Loreto.

The Baha de Loreto National Park has a conservation-oriented Management Plan that will shape cooperative projects, and scientific research is urgently needed to guide the management of the area's unique marine, island, coastal and continental environments. In fall of 2022, the Park Superintendent of Channel Islands National Park, Ethan McKinley, exchanged ideas with Loreto Park Director Lic. Rodolfo Palacios Romo. CEMA facilitated the meeting to advance the new work plan between the Sister Parks.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA NATURAL RESERVE SYSTEM

The UC Natural Reserve System is a library of ecosystems in California offering outdoors labs, classrooms without walls, and nature's inspiration.

The UCNRS has 41 existing reserves, including 30 research stations, spanning more than 19,000 hectares of reserve, and facilitating more than 100,000 student and researcher visits each year. The University of California Nature Reserve System is working alongside Eco-Alianza to design and build the Center for Environmental Studies (CEMA), an international research Center for conservation-focused science and education, which will serve the region and the scientific community for decades to come.

CEMA IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING BASIC IDEAS:

- To provide a wide range of research and teaching opportunities, to further and facilitate relationships with universities, research centers, government agencies, local businesses, local teachers and students.
- To provide opportunities where talents come together to prevent the deterioration of ecosystems and mitigate environmental challenges.
- To strengthen the link between scientific knowledge and local influence in the preservation of sustainable socio-ecological systems, promoting better livelihoods through science-driven educational and development actions.

CEMA: CONCEPT AND IDENTITY

Our Mission is to promote, facilitate and make accessible the generation, dissemination and transfer of high-level scientific and technological knowledge, to create capacities, make informed decisions and increase the development of the communities of Baja California Sur. A hub where researchers, students and institutions from Mexico and around the world interact with local stakeholders to combine their skills to prevent ecosystem deterioration and mitigate environmental challenges.

Our Vision is a research/education Center and field station facilitating researchers and students worldwide, connecting science and the community by supporting their social and economic development and long-term environmental well-being.

Our Goal is to create a Center to support scientific research, education and a model for scientifically based sustainable natural resource management. CEMA will provide facilities, equipment, and logistical assistance to promote the region as a natural laboratory for advancing scientific understanding and valuing the resources of Baja California Sur.

REPORT: INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT – CEMA

In October, 2021, a three-day International SUMMIT was developed and sponsored by Eco-Alianza in Loreto, Baja California Sur. The goal was to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to promote collaboration and design a functional research Center for scientists, universities and administrators. The SUMMIT was widely attended by participants and representatives of important national and international institutions, where together in addition to contributing to the design of the field station Center for Environmental Studies, generated commitments support and collaboration (Attachment A).

The main objective of the SUMMIT was to design a research Center and field station that meets the expectations of academics, researchers, managers and users of protected natural areas, as well as other key actors from both Mexico and the United States, to promote the region as a natural laboratory.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS.

Goals:

- Identify and understand the barriers and obstacles that researchers and their institutions face when doing research in the field.
- Define the elements that facilitate research fieldwork.
- The role of a research center and field station.

Science in the Service of Society

Dr. Omar López Cruz, Researcher at the National Institute of Astrophysics, Optics and Electronics, presented the opening talk "Science at the Service of Society", and explained how discoveries of the universe contribute to the benefit and development of society. He discussed his project on Isla Guadalupe for the detection of neutral hydrogen and the importance of dark skies. Dr. López Cruz shared his experience with the project Loreto, Port of Science, which gave attendees the context that science is at the service of society.

Understanding the Barriers and Factors that Facilitate the Application of Field Research.

Dr. Miguel Ángel Ojeda Ruíz de la Peña, Professor/Researcher of the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Sur (UABCS) shared the vision of the UABCS in the value of field work for scientific research, the factors that facilitate, and make difficult the research work in the field. He shared a success story: "Research and University Social Responsibility: San Antonio Case", a community reactivation strategy which analyzed the success factors of the project and the main obstacles overcome.

Collaborative Models for Research

M.C. Everardo Mariano Menéndez, then Director of the El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve of the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP), highlighted the importance of research in the management of Protected Natural Areas (ANP in Spanish). He explained how CONANP promotes scientific research, and the factors that contribute to a successful collaboration between researchers and administrators of the ANP. In June, 2022, we were pleased to learn that Everardo Mariano, Marine Biologist, was appointed Regional Director of CONANP to oversee 19 marine and terrestrial Protected Natural Areas in the States of Baja California and Baja California Sur and the North Pacific Region.

M.C. Felipe Neri Melo, from the Interdisciplinary Center for Marine Sciences of the National Polytechnic Institute (CICIMAR), spoke of the importance of institutional collaboration in the development of scientific research, the factors that complicate institutional collaboration and those factors that facilitate it.

Reception and Welcome Dinner

A reception dinner was graciously hosted at Rancho El Jaral. Participants mingled and discussed the projects they are currently working on with their institutions. Linda Kinninger and Hugo Quintero thanked everyone for their attendance at this important event for the Loreto region.

Jon Rebman, Ph.D., Curator of Botany at the San Diego Museum of Natural History, the Keynote Speaker presented on his binational botany research in Baja California and Baja California Sur. Dr. Rebman discussed the important collaborations he has built with research and education institutions on the Baja Peninsula. He summarized his work on the natural history expeditions he has developed from 1997 to 2018, through which he has managed to build an extensive plant list for Baja California and Baja California Sur which has been a valuable tool for the research, education and conservation of flora.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021: DESIGN OF THE MODEL FIELD STATION

Goals:

- Define the role of a field station for the success of research.
- Know various models of successful field stations in other sites.
- Participants define the benefits of a field station such as CEMA.

The Role of the Field Station in Research and Success Models

Ing. Hugo Quintero and Linda Kinninger co-presented, "Our vision of a field station, Center for Environmental Studies (CEMA)". Ing. Quintero shared the background and origin of the idea of CEMA. Linda Kinninger presented the conceptual design of the CEMA future headquarters and shared conceptual architecture and space planning.

Nicholas Pinter, Ph. D., is the Shlemon Professor of Applied Geosciences and Associate Director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California Davis. He shared his experience with the UC Nature Reserve System as a gateway to field research. His research focuses on earth-surface processes (geomorphology) applied to a broad range of problems. Recent work involves coastal systems, rivers, and flooding. Prof. Pinter and his students work on managing risk from natural hazards, including quantifying those risks, guiding mitigation and other solutions, and providing a scientific basis for sound natural-hazards public policy. He is the author of several geoscience books and has been the recipient of a number of awards, including from the MacArthur Foundation, the Charles Lindbergh Foundation, Fulbright Program, and from the European Commission.

Dr. Miguel Ángel Ojeda Ruiz de la Peña of the UABCS, shared the contribution of the UABCS to the scientific knowledge of the region, how a field station would help the University to fulfill its research goals and the training of researchers. He shared the experiences of the University in the use of a field station to develop scientific research and student training, and finally he told us about what the ideal field station would be like to help the university meet its goals.



Dr. Silverio López of CICIMAR presented the Center's case on the role of field station in scientific research. He explained how CICIMAR contributes to the scientific knowledge of the region, how a field station would help meet its research goals and the training of future researchers and how an ideal field station would help meet those goals.

Suzanne Olyarnik, Ph.D., Director of the University of California Bodega Bay Marine Reserve explained the Natural Reserve System of the University of California and the value of nature reserves for the objectives of the university. Dr. Olyarnik also talked about the role of a field station in the development of scientific research and the training of professionals, as well as explaining the difference between the sites that have a field station against those that do not. Dr. Olyarnik closed her presentation explaining the characteristics of the various models of UC field stations. She also explained how the field station of the Bodega Bay Marine Reserve works and why a field station in Loreto should be considered.

Russell Galipeau, Professor of the California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) and retired Superintendent of the Channel Islands National Park presented the case of the Santa Rosa Island Research Station. Mr. Galipeau explained what the research station is, why it was created, what it offers to research, and how this model of research station can be expanded. Mr. Galipeau helped to establish the CSUCI Santa Rosa Island Research Station and received the Robert J. Lagomarsino Award for his work at the Station. We are grateful for Mr. Galipeau's dedication and support for Eco-Alianza's to become a Sister Park with the Channel Islands National Park approved and signed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress Hawaii, September 2016.

CEMA: Design Challenge

Participants were asked to build together models of operation of the field station. The design exercise consisted of defining and prioritizing the products and services that could be offered by CEMA in the time frame of a following year, based on sources of funding, capabilities, infrastructure and equipment.

Each SUMMIT participant was handed a symbolic building block, and pledged their commitment in support of CEMA.





Anne McEnany, Sr. Program Officer of Alumbra Innovations Foundation, and Chris McHone, Chief of the Political and Economic Affairs Section, U.S. Consulate General, Tijuana, BC, Mexico, shared their vision of the SUMMIT and the future of CEMA. Mr. McHone spoke about the value of CEMA to the region and the economic and intellectual growth, both invaluable in promoting the growth of B.C.S. Ms. McEnany commented on the growth of Eco-Alianza as a professional organization with a very important mix of Mexican and international leadership and loyal donor base.

Unveiling of the Designation of: "Loreto, Port of Science"

The City Council of Loreto together with the Consortium of La Paz, Puerto de la Ciencia, represented by Dr. Omar López Cruz, finalized the designation of Loreto as: Loreto, Puerto de la Ciencia (Loreto, Port of Science). Loreto Municipal President, M.C. Paola Cota Davis, presided over a protocol ceremony during which an agreement was signed with the consortium, expressing the pride and satisfaction that Loreto receives from this distinction. Puerto de la Ciencia is a joint initiative between society and government that seeks to bring science closer to the people. The Mayor mentioned that the biological diversity of the municipality makes it an exceptional place in the world; a space conducive to research, education and the dissemination of science.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021: HOW CEMA ADDS VALUE

Contribution of Science to the Sustainable Development of the Region

Participants were invited to explore the waters around Carmen Island, disembarking at Balandra Beach. M.C. Israel Popoca, then Director of Bay of Loreto National Park, welcomed visitors to Carmen Island, and talked about the importance of scientific research for the conservation and management of the protected area, as well as the areas of opportunity for research in the region. M.C. Everardo Mariano Menéndez talked about the importance of the El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve in conservation and scientific research opportunities, as well as the importance of scientific research in the management of protected natural areas.

Dr. Verónica Zamora, researcher with CIIDIR-IPN Durango unit, is conducting an investigation at a bat maternity caves on Carmen Island. She led a walk to the caves and talked about her research with bats on Carmen Island and the analysis of her findings. Sula Vanderplank, Ph.D., shared her work on the flora in Baja California and explained the importance of mangrove ecosystems in Baja California. Jon Rebman, Ph.D., gave an interesting interpretive guided walk on the botany of the area and mangrove taxonomy.

The Municipal President of Loreto, M.C. Paola Cota Davis, spoke of the importance of science for the development of the Municipality of Loreto and thanked Eco-Alianza for its work and collaboration with the municipality.

FIRST YEAR OF CEMA

CEMA activities spiked in May 2022 with the hiring of the Executive Director, Sula Vanderplank, Pd.D. Initial work was to establish a path forward, prioritizing researchers and projects as we open our doors.

The following central tenets for all CEMA projects were agreed upon with the Eco-Alianza Board of Directors:

- Work conducted at the Center will meet community standards for research excellence and will be shared in public data repositories.
- CEMA projects work for the democratization of science in the region, making the results from the Center available for all.
- Data generated by CEMA researchers will be provided to the Park, regional land managers and to the broader community beyond, as appropriate to each study.
- The CEMA program projects align with the Mission of Eco-Alianza to provide community support, public education, and sustainable economic growth in Loreto.
- Projects are prioritized based on a system, which will be developed to include: focus on the Mexican community; larger regional/global application; diversity, equity and inclusion; proportion of national/visiting researchers; and the extent to which the results foster growth in public conscience towards sustainability and environmental protection.

WHAT IS CEMA AL ABOUT? FAQ's.

1. Who will have access to the center and the research?

The center is for the benefit of absolutely everyone. Access to our resources for researchers will be assessed using a prioritization rubric, access to the information we help to generate will be available to everyone.

2. How would non-science-related disciplines interact/participate in scientific research?

Research should be viewed in the broadest sense. Journalists and artists are critical to both the documentation and dissemination of science. Anyone who documents our region or collects data in our region should be considered a researcher in this sense. Photographers are an excellent example of researchers who fall into this category. The broadest interpretation of research is considered.

3. Why is inter-disciplinary research needed and important?

To further synthetic conservation and education efforts in the region, it is important to make our research more synthetic. Interdisciplinary research is a great start and can involve very little deviation from primary foci, but transdisciplinary research leads to understandings of shared challenges. Ideal situations include marine-terrestrial linkages, art-science linkages, natural and social science linkages and multi-taxonomic studies.

4. How does CEMA serve the Loreto community?

CEMA exists in service of the Loreto community. CEMA supports the Eco-Alianza mission by supporting community outreach with teachers, students, and the community at large, in the form of knowledge generation and sharing, and in service of social change. CEMA builds solutions to tie scientists to the local community, supports sustainable businesses in Loreto, creates and supports local jobs for service providers and scientific tourism. CEMA serves the community through improvement of the local environment, through long-term social and environmental change.

5. How does CEMA serve students?

CEMA provides a location where students can find research opportunities and urgent research needs can find students. CEMA will further undergraduate and graduate research projects, and promote student exchange opportunities. Specifically, CEMA will provide student access to national and international researchers and offer near-peer mentoring opportunities, as well as shared experiences with students from other institutions, local schoolteachers, and younger students in the community.

6. How does CEMA serve researchers/scientists?

Scientists and Researchers are freed to conduct research, not taxed with logistics, navigating permits, arranging lodging, setting up meals and guides. A preliminary list of services to be offered includes: permits, park access, transport, lodging, meals, office and meeting space, access to service providers, local relationships, access to educators and community leaders, opportunities for outreach, dissemination and local impact.

7. Why build CEMA in Loreto?

Bahia de Loreto and the Gulf of California represent a natural laboratory, recognized as a prime location for field research to support ecological advancement and conservation. Loreto's airport connects to three cities in Mexico and has international connections to multiple cities in the United States and Canada, and is also accessible by bus and by boat. Previously, science on the peninsula has been focused on Ensenada and La Paz, with a significant absence of research in the center of the peninsula. The proximity of Loreto to the Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve, The Islas del Golfo Biosphere Reserve, the Sierra La Giganta proposed biosphere reserve, and the Valle de los Cirios Biosphere Reserve, makes it a central location for nationally recognized conservation priorities for Mexico.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE THE SUMMIT?

In 2022 CEMA has

- ✔ Interacted directly with 21 academic and/or conservation institutions,
- ✔ Hosted eight different research groups conducting studies in Loreto,
- ✔ Supported the applications of four post-doctoral researchers,
- ✔ Hosted seven public science-based community events,
- ✔ Hosted five workshops to build capacity in the region,
- ✔ Participated in three public education programs with Eco-Alianza,
- ✔ Received three grants for research and progress, and
- ✔ Worked closely with the Park, including five joint field trips and to collaborate on baseline data for the islands.

CEMA – Looking ahead in 2023

Major Public Events



Our “First Annual” Science Street Fair was held in January on the outdoor promenade leading to the Loreto zócalo. Twenty participating scientific demonstrations/displays we set up under tents, with over 50 scientists present and over 800 attendees. Subject matters ranged from whales, geology, biology and astronomy. Microscopes, video presentations and a telescope trained on the moon provided the overflow crowd with many options to engage in conversation and pose questions.

<https://youtu.be/scUczIHpbUQ>

This winter and spring, Eco-Alianza and CEMA will host many corresponding workshops, such as:

- 17 February – Roseann Hanson, Field Arts Institute of Arizona will talk about wetlands and work with local students,
- 23 February – Visiting Scientist talk on Coral Restoration,
- 1-2 March – Workshop with the Bay of Loreto National Park on the use of drones in the Park,
- 18 March – Massive Beach Clean Up in coordination with the Bay of Loreto National Park and Eco-Alianza's Waterkeeper program,
- 23-25 March – Environmental Film Festival,
- 27- 28-April – City Nature Challenge. A city- and county-wide flora and fauna count involving citizens and scientists.

These events are designed to educate and create awareness in the public's mind of the richness, variety and social and economic value of the local terrain and marine life.

Visiting Scientists and Supporters

January was a busy month for CEMA, with visiting scientists and supporters engaged in our program. Dr. Lorena Durán, Researcher, Dept. Marine Biotechnology CICESE. Michelle Thompson, Ph.D., the new Director of Conservation for the San Diego Natural History, reviewed collaboration opportunities to develop biological baselines in the region. Sarah Ratay from the Nature Conservancy offered to teach a workshop on non-native species eradication. Vinod Sasidharan, Ph.D., Director of International Programs, San Diego State University, discussed a diploma program and a return of the sustainability class with Paul Ganster. Paul Hamilton, Ph.D., Jo Bowman, and Adrian Munguía met to plan the multidisciplinary education expedition (schedule for May 8-12), which will focus on social conservation issues and stakeholders with young students from Loreto.

Public Lectures and Presentations

The first lecture scheduled for 2023, February 2, coincided with International Wetlands Day. Eco-Alianza and CEMA co-hosted an event with the Municipality on wetlands, to kick-start the Wetlands course organized by Arizona Fish and Game. Gerardo Marrón gave a visiting scientist talk on the conservation of the oases.

Other proposed and upcoming lectures (not yet specifically scheduled) include, a discussion of elephant seals by the Mexico Marine Wildlife Rescue Center, an Astronomy night with Dr. Omar López Cruz, an overview of scuba diving in the region with Chuck Mitchell Ph.D. , Eco-Alianza Science Advisor, and Dr. Lee Fitzgerald, Ph.D., Texas A & M University to discuss monitoring in the Loreto Bay National Park.

Later in the year, Dilia Meza will present an overview of La Paz's Balandra Beach management plan, which has been designed to lessen the impact and numbers of visitors to the amazing aqua-colored bay. Their plan may be applicable to the Bay of Loreto National Park. Eco-Alianza has one book launch event planned with Jim Riley, a self-made naturalist/botanist with an intense curiosity in all things natural, on his upcoming CHANNEL ISLANDS FIELD GUIDE and one by our CEMA Director Sula, a report of an expedition to the Gulf of California Islands, including the Loreto Islands.

Invitational Events

In October, Eco-Alianza and CEMA will host a Science Fair specifically for the children of Loreto.

An Education Expedition is in the planning stages for May, a meeting to further the plans and development of our Field Station.

Several training workshops will be hosted in areas such as: GIS, Drones, Bird Identification, and other biodiversity classes. In our schedules is also a meeting the CONANP to discuss management and diversity practices for Balandra Beach, La Paz and Espiritu Santo Island.

In October, the San Diego Zoo Global, will lead a botany expedition in the Loreto area. Also in October, representatives from our Sister Park, the Channel Islands National Park, will be in Loreto to expand ways in which we can further research and science between the two parks.

Ongoing Projects with the Bay of Loreto National Park

A baseline inventory of flora and fauna of the Park has begun, starting with Isla Coronados and Isla Danzante. Isla Carmen will be added as time and resources allow. We have many partners in this project, including the Natural History Museum of San Diego and the San Diego Botanic Garden.

Eco-Alianza is working with the Park to prioritize wetlands for restoration, eradication of invasives, and development of bird-watching trails and signage throughout the coastline of the Park (mainland and islands).

Projects in Development

- Herbivory in Sierra La Giganta (SLG) and Sierra San Pedro Mártir,
- Research collaboration with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance,
- San Diego Botanic Garden, Diploma in Conservation and collaborations on cross-border rare plants Biodiversity (Land-Sea) as part of a larger initiative to connect field stations to universities and provide field opportunities for learning,
- Baja California State law for rare plant protection.
- Study abroad programs (underway for 2024):
 - University of California Davis – Geomorphology,
 - University of San Diego – Island Biogeography,
 - Notre Dame University - General studies



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The community of Loreto and the members of Eco-Alianza are grateful for the support of our many generous donors and volunteers who have joined together with us as “Amigos de Eco-Alianza” in their commitment to protect the coastal, marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Loreto region and our mission to build a sustainable future for generations to come.

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Photographs Courtesy of:



ATTACHMENT A - PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT

(In alphabetical order by name)

1. Alan Harper, Terra Peninsular, AC
2. Anne McEnany, Sr. Program Officer, Alumbra Innovations Foundation
3. Anthony Kinninger, Orange Commercial Credit. Olympia, WA – Eco-Alianza Advisory Board
4. Carlos Posadas Solano, Loreto City Council and Eco--Alianza Advisory Council
5. Caryl Cantrell, Eco -Alianza of Loreto AC
6. Catalina López Sagástegui, Director of the Gulf of California Marine Program, Institute of the Americas
7. Catharine Cooper, Member of the Board of Directors of Eco-Alianza
8. Charles Mitchell, MBC Aquatic Sciences – Eco--Alianza Advisory Board
9. Chris McHone, Chief of the Political & Economic Affairs Section, U.S. Consulate General, Tijuana, BC, Mexico
10. Conrad Smith, Amazon AWS and Eco--Alianza Advisory Board
11. David Younkman, Vice President of Conservation, American Bird Conservancy
12. Everardo Mariano Menéndez, Director of the El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve – CONANP
13. Felipe Neri Melo Barrera, Deputy Director of Educational Services and Social Int. CICIMAR-IPN
14. Gaspar Bautista Figueroa, Organización Vida Silvestre AC
15. Israel Popoca Arellano, Director, Loreto Bay National Park – CONANP
16. Jim Callard, Eco-Alianza Advisory Board
17. Jon Rebman, Curator of Botany, San Diego Museum of Natural History
18. Karina Isabel Ramírez Trevizo, spokeswoman for the #LoretoIdeal movement
19. Kathryn Mitchell, Secretary of the Eco-Alianza Board of Directors
20. Linda Kinninger, Treasurer/Co-Founder of Eco-Alianza
21. Lorena M. Durán Riveroll, Researcher, Dept. Marine Biotechnology, CICESE
22. Marisol Plascencia de la Cruz, Executive Director – Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation
23. Miguel Ángel Ojeda Ruiz de la Peña, Professor-Researcher at the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur
24. Nicholas Pinter, Shlemon Professor of Applied Geosciences - University of California, Davis
25. Omar López Cruz, Senior Researcher - National Institute of Astrophysics, Optics and Electronics
26. Paola Cota Davis, Municipal President of the City Council of Loreto, BCS
27. Rafael Villegas, President of the Advisory Council of the Bay of Loreto National Park.
28. Russell Galipeau, Superintendent (Retired) - Channel Islands National Park, United States NPS
29. Sergio Flores Ramírez, Professor-Researcher at the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur
30. Sergio Hernández Trujillo, General Director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Marine Sciences (CICIMAR-IPN)
31. Sergio Jiménez Lezama, Executive Director - Organización Vida Silvestre AC
32. Silverio López, Deputy Academic and Research Director - CICIMAR
33. Sula Vanderplank, Director of the Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation Program - Pronatura Noroeste
34. Suzanne Olyarnik, Director of La Bodega Marine Reserve - UCNRS
35. Teresita de Jesús Oñate Ocaña, Network of Environmental Educators of Loreto (REAL)
36. Tom Elewaut, Pastor of Mission Basilica San Buenaventura California
37. Verónica Zamora Gutiérrez, Researcher - Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral Regional (CIIDIR), Unidad Durango
38. Victoria Díaz Castañeda, Senior Researcher, Dept. Marine Ecology - CICESE
39. Yenitze Elizabeth Fimbres Acedo, Researcher Dept. Communication and Outreach – COSCYT

