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**Community-based studies of
territory and habitats to
support traditional
management and
biodiversity conservation in
a Chinantec community in
northern Oaxaca, Mexico.**

**Claudia I. Camacho,
David Jimenez Ramos,
Carlos Del Campo,
Gary Martin, Fidel
Eduardo González**

Geographical context

The community of Nopalera del Rosario owns and manages a territory of nearly 5,000 ha of tropical forests, habitat for hundreds of animal species of great biological and cultural importance.

In 2010, Nopalera received a government certification for a voluntary conserved area of 4,200 ha, including zoning similar to the exclusive conservation zones normally created by outsiders to communities.



Objectives



mi-líä/ orquídea

The case of Nopalera del Rosario, which carried out a process of territorial study, based on **community research** and **integration of traditional ecological knowledge**.

The objectives were:

- a) to understand local comprehension and classification of local territory and habitat classification within a broader process of habitat management and community conservation.
- b) to understand how Nopalera's people understands and protects their territory;
- c) to compare local classification of territory vs conservationists categories.

Methods

- **Participation** of 50% of community members.
- **Mapping process** to identify geographic and hydrographic features, habitats and landscapes (village, territory, conservation area)
- **Field transects** and **interviews** to evoke the history of land use and local landscapes.
- **Focus groups** to integrate a bilingual database of biological, cultural and ethnoecological data of sites.
- Identification of a **local classification** of the territory according to its use, along with different spatial concepts used.



Results – Vegetation profile



- 10 Km long, ranging from 700 and 2800 m.a.s.l.
- Recording and/or identification of each point's altitude, microclimates, vegetation type, land use, soil types
- Characterisation of micro-habitats, *i.e.*:
 1. Cold weather (gü-á') with snow (kiá-mün), wind (ai-ye'), clouds (di-ó-äjnáng) and rain (jög-moiá) - associated to pine forest, conservation area, between 2000 and 3000 m.a.s.l.
 2. Hot weather (söm-ye'-näng) and sunnier (söm-ye'-iu') - associated with the river side, open vegetation, between 700 and 900 m.a.s.l.

Results – Transects and geographical points

A database of the biological, cultural and ethnoecological data of **76 geographical points** was generated, illustrating the relationships between plants, animals and place.

Transect	Point	General description	History
3 - 03/03/2011. Cerro de fruta a cerros cerca de las ruinas	2. Mä-guio/ monte cerca de las ruinas. 1257msnm, 14Q 0772665, UTM 1957183	Lleva más de 30 años sin usarse, es bosque de conservación. Mä-tía; ma-niá, ma-guï'lë'; ma'-müe-li-nö; mue-li'-trá; win-sü, moa'ta'joag, mä-gü-ä, wïn-tä-näng, ma'mö-daió, ma-chio-kiá-mä; Faisán, tejón, ocofaisán, tucán, paloma, codorniz, tepezcuintle, ardilla, jabalí, jaguar, cabeza de viejo, gato.	Existen ruinas de los antiguos en varias partes de Nopalera, esta es una de ellas.

Results – Local organisation and use of landscape

- Nio/House: The immediate space for daily activities.
- Ja-yii/“The space”: the homegarden where the animals and plants are raised.
- Nü-ei/Acahual: cultivation zones, in use or resting during cycles of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 30 years, on which is cultivated maize, beans, squash and chilies in a cyclic way, plus some vegetables (coriander, radish, cabbage, tomatoes).
- Ja-gnö/forest: natural vegetation zones, mature trees, medium tropical forest, cloud forest, pine forest, pine-oak associations.

Results – Local organisation and use of landscape

- JayMui/Water spring, Muin-güu/Water stream, Müi-jü-gá/River: bodies of water, used in different for water supply to drink, clean, recreation, etc.
- İ-a'/piled stones or piramids: historical places, ancestor's places.
- Yëgkia-küi/ Milpa
- Samajui/ Medium tropical forest and Cloud forest.
- Ma'-kafëe/ Coffee plantation
- lah-veh-mula/Pasture fields
- Má-gaä/ Conservation lands



Priemer transect.

Relevance – Local understandings of the environment have a significant practical use for indigenous communities

When studies on the territory with its landscapes and habitats, their values and associated knowledge, are conducted from and by the communities who use and inhabit them, official decisions concerning conservation management may be more informed, respecting the local culture and systems of traditional knowledge and use.

At the same time, local people can take ownership of the process of formalizing conservation, using the socio-cultural elements of their own.



**THANK
YOU**

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Tania, Diana, Samuel, Irene, Guillermo y
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