“Our challenge is to view Nature not only as a valued resource but essential to our survival.”

Paola Ruffo Ruffo
Chairman, Niparajá Board of Directors
PRESENTATION

Niparajá turns 25 years of work with a wide range of allies, including communities, fishermen, businesses, government institutions and other organizations of civil society in achieving our commitment to Sudcalifornia society. The results of our programs and projects speak for themselves and identify Niparajá as a professional organization, innovative and committed to the conservation of our natural resources to ensure equitable distribution of the benefits derived from keeping healthy our ecosystems. This anniversary, the maturity of a quarter century obliges us to work even harder in the tasks to implement good science and applied knowledge on practical solutions to environmental problems. To work efficiently and achieve long-term success, these environmental solutions have to be economically sustainable. We are implementing these solutions to stop the damage to our environment and start helping ecosystems recover because they are fundamental to our existence.

These measures have generated success stories detailed in this report. It fills us with pride and hope when a group of people see with new eyes that natural resources are renewable and in consequence they protect them and give them life. There is nothing more important to Niparajá than to achieve our goals and objectives. This defines us and requires us to proceed vigorously in compliance of our mission.

Enrique Hambleton von Borstel
Co-Founder
The Natural History Society Niparajá CA was founded in 1990 as a Civil Society Organization by a group of Paceños (La Paz residents are called “Paceños”) committed to environmental protection and sustainable development of the region.

The name of our organization, Niparajá, is the name given by the Pericú (pre-Hispanic native Americans from the Baja peninsula) of their god Niparajá, lord of the sky, sea and earth, creator of the peninsula, plants, animals and humans.

Throughout the years of work Niparajá has established a broad network of contacts and partnerships with many sectors of the population. We strive to maintain ongoing dialogues and facilitate collaborative efforts.

We understand and are committed to the need for joint effort to bring about positive change in quality of life, a thriving community and a healthy environment. To achieve these ends we propose alternative models of development, seek transparency in decision-making and dialogue with government agencies. At the core, we believe that it is necessary and urgent to develop successful economic models based on conservation.

After more than two decades, Niparajá has matured and developed deep roots in state and local communities. Our success demonstrates the strength of our work and commitment to the land and water that surrounds us.

We conceive environmental conservation as the best tool to transform and improve quality of life in Baja California Sur. Through coordinated work of all sectors in society we can convert our natural resources as a source of prosperity instead of being a source for conflicts and disagreements between sectors.

During 2015 we executed the first year of our 2015-2017 strategic plan. This involved great changes inside the organization but we are convinced that this transformation will allow us to adapt to new realities and remain relevant, be efficient in the use of our resources and above all, crystallize our visión with everyone.
Our mission is to conserve the natural heritage of Baja California Sur and promote sustainable development for the region.

To achieve this mission, we promote the creation and implementation of conservation instruments, we foster a society that uses their resources sustainably and generate models that demonstrate the value of conservation.

These goals come alive through our four programs:
**LAND CONSERVATION**

The first and longest-running initiative, we seek to protect coastal land and wildlife habitat, promote sustainable development, and encourage regional economies that are a good fit for our ecosystems. We seek there are solid conservation instruments and adequate governance of our natural resources. To achieve this, we work with communities, researchers, local producers, the three levels of government and other civil society organizations.

The geographic range of this work is focused along the Sierras La Giganta and Guadalupe, the coastal corridor between Loreto and La Paz and the watershed that serves the City of La Paz.
Our Achievements

We maintain 5,147 hectares in the natural reserve El Portezuelo which includes monitoring emblematic fauna like bighorn sheep and mule deer, monitoring paths and constant communication with neighboring communities.

Hunting strategy

We developed a management model units of bighorn sheep hunting strategy that will allow the Ejido Tepentú obtain best benefits of this activity and invest more resources in the conservation of the species.

Integrated Watershed Management

We started the early stages of vinculation and opportunities identification to promote an integrated watershed management for La Paz.

Biosphere Reserve

We participate with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) in the opinion consultation process, so that the communities of the Sierras La Giganta and Guadalupe know about the decree through which is disclosed the Federal Government’s intention to create a biosphere reserve in the Sierras. This process ensures all direct users of the Sierras natural resources have the opportunity to express their opinion about the project. As in the definition of core zones and financing and operational schemes.

Sustainable Management and Conservation of More Than 180,000 Hectares

We transfered 448 units of environmental technologies in communities of the Sierras. Altogether, this adds up to previous phases of technology transfer, allowing 52% reduction in wood consumption in 700 households and 1,000 tons of greenhouse gases mitigated every year.

We work with 3 Communities

(Santa María de Toris, La Soledad-Tepentú y Las Ánimas-La Higuera) of the Sierras promoting community territorial ordinances that allow joint actions of development and conservation. There are 8 initiatives such as greenhouses, capacity building workshops, productive and conservation model projects, operated by the communities which allows them to obtain complementary income and contribute with conservation actions.

As a result of these complementary strategies, we have an impact on the 3 communities involving 30% of direct users of Sierra La Giganta.

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Overall, these strategies contribute to the conservation of natural resources and the well-being of the communities involved.
The state of Baja California Sur has the longest coastline in Mexico and the most diversity of marine species. Our Marine Conservation Program works with local communities, researchers, legislators and officials from the three levels of government. Together, we develop joint actions for the management and protection of natural wealth that exists in the Gulf of California, specially in marine protected areas and its surroundings.

The Natural Protected Areas are conservation tools to protect our natural and cultural heritage. One of its objectives is to promote the responsible use of marine resources, to protect priority species and ensure the welfare of the communities dependent on these resources. Management of Protected Areas is incomplete if there isn’t active and informed participation of its users and if no additional instruments of conservation and sustainable use are applied in adjacent areas. This is why our work focalizes in promoting participation, capacity building and development of instruments that complement management of Natural Protected Areas. We focus on three geographical areas: Marine Zone Archipelago of Espíritu Santo National Park, Balandra Flora and Fauna Protected Area and Cabo Pulmo National Park.
We support the implementation of the Public Use Program in Cabo Pulmo National Park, so the park has agreed rules that combine conservation and a quality experience for visitors.

For the tenth consecutive year we maintain a Community Monitoring in the Marine Zone Archipelago of Espíritu Santo National Park. Together with CONANP and fishermen in the area, we generate the necessary information to measure the performance of the protected area, but above all, we encourage the existence of capabilities that allow fishermen to participate as diving monitors, which leads them to become direct witnesses of the benefits and conservation challenges facing the protected area.

We generate the conditions so that local leaders in Cabo Pulmo and La Ribera affect effectively on issues of management and conservation in the region, for example territorial ordinances and urban development programs.

We maintain active our Campaign Cabo Pulmo Alive, which has enabled thousands of people of Mexico and the world to be informed and participate in the preservation of the Cabo Pulmo National Park.

The sum of these activities allows us to have an impact on the management and conservation of 57,611 hectares of critical habitat in three protected areas, generate conditions for a greater user participation and promote the use of complementary instruments which enable protected areas fulfill their conservation objectives.

We promote and collaborate closely with CONANP in the publication of Management Programs for the Marine Zone Archipelago of Espíritu Santo National Park and Balandra Flora and Fauna Protected Area. We also participated in the review of the Management Program for Cabo Pulmo National Park and elaborated the new proposal of conservation zones categories.

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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

This program is one of our newest initiatives. After an intense growth of our Marine Conservation Program, we decided to detach sustainable fishing activities carried out since 2006 and evolve to a program more specialized in this complex issue. We seek to create the conditions to develop prosperous and resilient coastal communities with the tools to use marine resources responsibly. To achieve this, we work with local communities, researchers and authorities to generate and implement actions of management to prevent overfishing.

Fishing is a complex activity in Mexico and over the world. Baja California Sur has the largest coastline in the country where social, economic and cultural relevance of this activity is reflected in an ancient fishing tradition of which thousands depend. The Corridor San Cosme to Punta Coyote offers unique opportunities to implement sustainable fishing schemes focusing on the welfare of communities.

This area represents what the Gulf of California was more than 50 years ago: few people in small isolated communities that leverage resources by hand. Fisheries are still at good levels of conservation. More than 80 commercial species sustain the economy of more than 600 people distributed in thirteen small communities, the largest of them with 250 inhabitants. Although there is no mass immigration, day by day there is increased presence of fishermen with different techniques and no knowledge of the area, leading to over-exploitation of resources. There are few regulations to prevent this and monitoring mechanisms are still insufficient to enforce existing regulations.
Our Achievements

For the fourth year in a row we have been working with communities from the Corridor San Cosme to Punta Coyote, the National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries, the National Fisheries Institute, the Federation of Zone Center B.C.S. Cooperatives and fishing communities to promote the smooth operation of the

NO FISHING REFUGIA NETWORK.

Some of the developments include the establishment of the Fisheries Management Committee, fundraising of public and private resources, installation of information signs of the No Fishing Refugia and monitoring and evaluation of the complete Network.

We organized

FROM FISHERMAN TO FISHERMAN 4.

Event that brought together

100 FISHERMEN FROM 11 STATES IN MEXICO AND 4 COUNTRIES.

Also it allowed us to reflect, share experiences and generate agreements aimed at achieving stronger organizations, able to obtain sustainable management of fisheries resources.

We have a team of

34 FISHERMEN and community members involved as

DIVING MONITORS AND FISHERIES TECHNICIANS.

Their work allows us to evaluate No Fishing Refugia Network and have information to propose management actions at the Corridor San Cosme to Punta Coyote.

As a result of these complementary actions, we induced the conditions for

SUSTAINABLE FISHING TO BE A REALITY IN THE CORRIDOR SAN CONSME TO PUNTA COYOTE,

one of the marine regions most pristine of our state, where the first No Fishing Refugia Network across the country is located.
WATER AND CITY

This program evolved from our Water Conservation Program. We promote and create synergies between different actors to formulate solid strategies to preserve the natural resources that sustain life in the city of La Paz. During this first year we have been focused on water issues and are identifying opportunities to better influence on issues of public spaces.

Baja California Sur has the lowest annual rainfall of any state in México. The great challenge of water management is exacerbated by geographic isolation, population growth, overexploitation of groundwater aquifers, seawater intrusion, pollution and the progressive development on water recharge areas. There is evidence to ensure that challenges can be solved through more efficient management on the use of water resources and better social participation. In the Water and City Program we work to do so.
We have reached thousands of citizens with our campaign **DEFEND THE SIERRA** which has been an effective tool to mobilize public opinion in defense of the Sierra La Laguna against metallurgical opencast mining projects that threaten our water sources.

We collaborate with the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur to implement a **WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM** under the guidance of the PUMAGUA program of UNAM. The aim is for this to become a role model at a regional level.

We support **PILOT RESTORATION SITES** in the basin of La Paz, as El Ciruelito, which shows at small scale the benefits of integrated watershed management and works as a demonstration site to expand these models to other sites.

Through activities as **I LOVE BALANDRA**, its anniversary celebration as Natural Protected Area and the commemoration of Environment Day, we have managed to position this beach as an emblematic issue for citizenship.

The sum of these actions allow us to move towards the consolidation of a vision where the city is the center of conservation actions. From the integrated management of the basin, to the conservation of our public spaces, we seek that La Paz becomes a **MODEL CITY**.

During this year we reported on this advance to about 1,230 pacéños citizens.

We participate in local and national initiatives to promote the creation of instruments that give more certainty of drinking water availability. Some examples include the processes to enact an **ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM** in the municipality of La Paz, and the national campaign "Water for People, Water for Life ".

We collaborate with **WATER AND SANITATION CITIZEN OBSERVATORY**, the first citizen effort dedicated to promoting greater participation in decision-making.
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Water and City

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Alejandra Campos
Amor Fenech
OUR PARTNERS

A proverb says that whoever wants to go fast to walk alone, but who wants to go farther, must walk together. In Niparajá we want to go far. We have a deep conviction that any change in our society requires collaboration and building networks and alliances.

During 2015, as we have done since 1990, we have worked intensively accompanied and accompanying lots of people, organizations and communities. We thank them all for their trust, which we expect to see renewed in the coming years.

It is impossible to list them all without making omissions. We owe our work to coastal and rural communities where we collaborate in the conservation of natural resources which they depend on, to all three levels of government, research institutions that give strength to our work, the thousands of citizens who demonstrate with their involvement that conservation is a shared task, volunteers, our partners from other civil society organizations and national and international foundations committed to the Baja California Peninsula.

We have much to do yet and we can only continue with the generous support of our partners, donors, friends, supporters and critics.

The inhabitants of Baja California Sur, whom we belong and to whom we are committed, we want to give you this certainty: the pitaya that is our symbol is also our heart.