“We cannot continue with our current lifestyle and remain indifferent given the deterioration of nature and its resources, because only through them we find a living”

Paola Ruffo Ruffo
President of the Board of Directors
Once again, Niparajá has achieved important results as seen in the following pages. Despite the recent challenges caused by political and economic imbalances we have found new opportunities and strategies to consolidate and develop our programs. We have always been aware of the effort required for success and to achieve positive change. When that highly sought change is reached, it is fully shown in the effects that follow when we are aware of the significance and need to guard our natural resources.

Our programs are reaping benefits that we share and multiply in fishing camps, mountain communities, and urban areas. Niparajá has collaborated with the Baja California Sur society for more than a quarter century conserving nature in harmony with sustainable development and social justice. Those of us, who care for this delicate and thirsty land, are nourished by the informed decisions being taken about the environment, how people show their commitment to conservation and how society is changing its behavior for the good of the environment.

There is a lot to be done. Our commitment with this place and the people that live here is essential in our work. The professionalism and dedication of the Niparajá family continues to be recognized by our donors, which is evident in their trust and determined support, and by the people of Baja California Sur, that see the positive results of our projects reflected in their well-being. Niparajá has a bearing and participates in public policies as invited by political, academic, and social stakeholders from Baja California Sur.

We are proactive in our dialogue, always placing good science and best practices before the discussions that affect the environment. The accomplishments we've reached this year require our continued efforts to guard our natural resources, induce intelligent decisions, and prove that conservation is profitable. Everything we do gives life to our programs in order to continue to fulfill our mission.

Enrique Hambleton von Borstel
Founding Board Member
Sociedad de Historia Natural Niparajá A.C. was founded in 1990 as a non-profit organization, by a group of volunteers from La Paz committed to protecting the environment and society’s organized development.

We chose the name of a regional pre-Hispanic deity for our organization: Niparajá, the Pericú god, lord of the sky, the sea, and the earth, creator of the peninsula, its plants, animals, and human beings.

Throughout the years we’ve established a network of contacts and alliances with different sectors, maintaining a permanent dialogue and collaboration. We understand and are committed to the need of joining forces to spark off the change in status quo and redefine what quality of life, a thriving community, and a healthy environment mean.

To do so, we offer alternative development models seeking transparency and debate with government authorities. We believe it is necessary and urgent to debate and introduce successful economic models based on conservation.

After 25 years, Niparajá has grown and developed deep roots in Baja California Sur. What we have achieved proves the soundness of our work and commitment with our land and the sea that surrounds it.

We conceive environmental conservation as the best tool to transform and enhance the quality of life of the people of Baja California Sur. Only through coordinated work among all sectors of society can we transform our natural capital into a source of prosperity instead of a cause for conflict and disagreement between sectors.

In this report we present the 2016 accomplishments we value the most and better represent our job. Each and every one of them was made possible thanks to an extensive and varied network of partners and allies. We renew our commitment to conserving Baja California Sur’s natural capital and with the region’s sustainable development.
Our mission is to conserve the natural heritage and promote sustainable development in Baja California Sur.

To attain this mission, we promote the creation and implementation of conservation instruments, we encourage a society that uses its resources sustainably, and we generate models that show the value of conservation.

These objectives come to life through our four programs:
LAND CONSERVATION

This Program is the oldest and it encompasses the purchase of land for conservation, the first of our initiatives. We work to protect terrestrial and coastal priority habitats and promote the communities' sustainable development. We support sound conservation instruments and appropriate governance of natural resources. We succeed by collaborating with rural communities, researchers, local producers, the three government levels and other non-profit organizations.

The geographic work range for this program stretches along La Giganta and Guadalupe Sierras, the Loreto-La Paz coastal corridor, and the upper part of the La Paz hydrological basin.

We chose these work areas because of their high environmental, social, and cultural value. The water used in one of every two towns in BCS is captured in La Giganta and Guadalupe Sierras. The sierras and the Loreto-La Paz coastal corridor safeguard unique landscapes and places: oasis, gullies, crags, streams, ranches, lagoons, beaches, and small communities that seem foreign to what occurs in other geographies. When we observe carefully, the threats to the viability of this environment and its communities stand out. However, natural resources are still in good conservation condition and it is the appropriate time to prevent major deterioration.

The La Paz basin is no less important, responsible for supplying water to this city's increasing demands. We seek proper actions in management and conservation that guarantee the vital environmental service provided by the basin.
OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We maintain a management system that guarantees the **CONSERVATION OF 7,301 HECTARES IN EL PORTEZUELO NATURAL RESERVE**, including monitoring emblematic fauna such as bighorn sheep, mule deer, and cougar, surveillance and communication with nearby communities. All plots are certified as Voluntarily Destined Areas for Conservation by CONANP, becoming a federal protected area.

We transferred 350 units of environmental technologies in three prime regions in Sierra La Giganta and Sierra Guadalupe and in coastal communities. In total, this is in addition to previous phases, reducing to half the consumption of firewood in 1,350 homes and the **MITIGATION OF 1,650 TONS** of greenhouse gases every year.

We generated and analyzed biological information for **EMBLEMATIC FAUNA SPECIES** in our state, such as bighorn sheep, mule deer, cougar, and golden eagle. Facilitating the design and implementation of conservation tools in priority sites.

We work with three communities (La Soledad, Las Ánimas and La Higuera) and two associations of Sierra growers implementing **8 PROJECTS** that combine development and conservation, such as: native plants nurseries, wood workshops, handicrafts workshops, honey production, and ecotourism, all carried out by the communities.

We collaborated with associations of regional growers in the operation of **THE FIRST MARKETING CENTER FOR RURAL PRODUCTS** in Baja California Sur, under the brand “Hecho en Rancho” [Made in a Ranch]. This strategy allows a 30% increase in profits and gives an added value to items made under Sierra La Giganta sustainable and traditional practices. More than 160 families are benefited, increasing their income and diversifying their economy.

As a result, we have an impact in the **SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF MORE THAN 350,000 HECTARES**, involving 35% of the population of Sierra La Giganta, and we contribute to the compliance of local growers in sustainable standards and fair trade, benefiting local growers and the environment all the same.
MARINE CONSERVATION

Baja California Sur holds the most extensive coasts of Mexico and the most diverse in marine species. Our Marine Conservation Program works with local communities, tourist service providers, other organizations, and authorities in the three levels of the government to formulate joint actions for managing and protecting the natural richness that lives in the Gulf of California, particularly in marine protected areas and in their surroundings.

Natural Protected Areas are tools to conserve our natural and cultural capital. One of their objectives is to promote the responsible use of marine resources, protect priority species and guarantee the well-being of the communities that rely on said resources. Protected areas’ management is incomplete if it lacks active and informed participation from its users and if there’s no supplementary instruments for conservation and sustainable use of surrounding areas. Hence, our job in strengthening protected areas includes promoting spaces for participation, capacity building, and searching for planning instruments that complement management of the areas.

We focus on three areas: Espíritu Santo Marine Zone Archipelago National Park, Balandra Flora and Fauna Protection Area, and Cabo Pulmo National Park.

Protected areas are an indivisible part of the Baja California Sur identity and provide incalculable environmental services for our state. It is essential that their value be known and acknowledged by society, and that we have actions aimed to preserve these services.
We drive the recognition of **ESPÍRITU SANTO MARINE ZONE ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK** through the celebration of its tenth anniversary with a symposium and making materials stating the rules of the area.

Through the campaign **SE BUSCAN HÉROES, (SEEKING HEROES)** we collaborate with Pronatura Noroeste, Red de Observadores Ciudadanos, and Eco-Alianza de Loreto to generate resources destined to strengthen surveillance actions in the protected areas of La Paz and Cabo Pulmo.

We worked with **CABO PULMO AND LA RIBERA COMMUNITIES** to enhance their participation and organization capacities given the challenges faced by the National Park and those who depend on it.

The sum of these actions allows us to have an effect in the **MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF 57,611 HECTARES** included in three protected areas where we work. This way, we generate the conditions for greater user participation and promote the conditions so that the protected areas are known and valued. These are fundamental ingredients required to fulfill conservation objectives.

For the thirteenth consecutive year, we carried out **COMMUNITY MONITORING IN ESPÍRITU SANTO MARINE ZONE ARCHIPELAGO NATIONAL PARK** allowing us to measure performance in the area. This is a joint effort with CONANP, the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur, and area fishers. By participating in this, fishers become direct witnesses and spokespersons of the benefits and challenges of the protected area.

We improved the **SPACES OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION** in conservation and natural resources management through the strengthening of boards of advisers in cabo pulmo, balandra, and espiritu santo.
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

In this Program we seek to create the conditions for thriving and resilient coastal communities that have the tools to use marine resources responsibly. We also promote the creation and implementation of public policies that will generate the conditions for sustainable fishing. For this, we work with other non-profit organizations, fishers, communities, researchers, and authorities.

Fishing is a complex activity in Mexico and in the world. Baja California Sur is the state that holds the most extensive coasts in the country, where the social, economic, and cultural importance of this activity is reflected in a deep and long-standing fishing tradition on which thousands of people depend on. The Loreto-La Paz corridor offers unique opportunities to implement sustainable fishing schemes focused on the well-being of the communities.

The corridor represents what the Gulf of California was like more than 50 years ago: few inhabitants in small isolated communities that exploited resources using traditional methods. Fisheries are still in good conservation levels. More than 80 commercial species of finfish sustain the economy of more than 600 people distributed in eleven small communities, the largest with a population of 260. Although there is no mass immigration, fishers with different techniques and no knowledge of the area fish there, generating the overexploitation of resources. There are few regulations to prevent this and surveillance mechanisms are inadequate in enforcing current regulations.
51 Fishers and Community Members

We collaborated with a group of fishers and community members that participate in conservation and sustainable fishing actions, such as: underwater monitoring, fishing catch registry, strengthening of leadership capacity, community surveillance, and participation in forums as their communities’ spokespersons. Their work allows assessing the Refuge Areas Network and promoting this instrument all over Mexico.

For sixth consecutive year, we worked with communities along the San Cosme to Punta Coyote Corridor, the Aquaculture and Fishing National Commission, the National Fishing Institute, the BCS Central Area Cooperatives Federation, researchers, and other organizations to promote the smooth running of the Fishing Refuge Areas Network.

Progress includes having a Fishing Management Committee, the investment of public and private resources, installing remote surveillance cameras, and monitoring and assessing the Refuge Areas Network.

After five years since its creation, the Fishing Refuge Areas Network in San Cosme to Punta Coyote Corridor was redesigned.

The new no fishing zone was designed with the fishers from the area, and it is five times bigger than the original proposed. This shows the collective appreciation toward this fishing management tool.

Together with Comunidad y Biodiversidad AC and Duke University, we completed the first National Diagnostic of Fishing Organizations.

We published information regarding the operation of the Refuge Areas Network, which includes species’ biological and genetic information, fishing catch data, and socioeconomic information for local communities.

Como resultado de estas acciones, incidimos para que existan las condiciones para la sustainable fishing in the San Cosme to Punta Coyote Corridor, one of the most pristine marine regions in our state.
We promote and create synergies within different stakeholders to formulate sound strategies that will allow conserving natural resources that support life in the city of La Paz. We focus our efforts in topics of water and public spaces’ governance.

Baja California Sur is the state in Mexico where it rains the least. To the challenge of having good quality water for everyone, we must add other factors such as population growth, the overexploitation of the La Paz aquifer, its contamination by saline intrusion, and the progressive affectation of recharge zones. Facing these challenges is essential for our well-being. Our quality of life is also defined by having public spaces for recreation, coexistence, and contact with nature. Balandra is one of the best examples. In the Water and City Program we work to achieve an efficient management of water and public spaces and we promote the active and informed participation of society.
**Our Accomplishments**

In Loreto, we replaced 100 toilets for water saving ones. Each home benefited by the program can save up to 4,672,000 liters annually.

Through activities such as “I love Balandra”, the Celebration of the 5th Anniversary of Balandra as a Natural Protected Area, and the celebrations for Earth Day, we promote the participation of more than one thousand people in different events and engage citizens in protecting this site. More than 30 partners make this possible.

We make it possible for thousands of citizens to be informed about the risks from open sky metallurgic mining and actively participate in defending our sources of water.

**Our Defend the Sierra Campaign**

is an effective instrument that contributes in maintaining the Sierra La Laguna Biosphere Reserve free of mining.

We published *The First Native Species Plant Catalog* designed for our city. This includes information about the characteristics and care needed for 100 native plant species ideal in the reforestation of the city.

In collaboration with partners and water users in affected areas of Chametla and El Centenario, we succeeded in solving the problem of arsenic in water for domestic use.

The solution consists of a water treatment plan that has started operating. This is a great precedent in our city and in Mexico, because there are few cases where citizen action has triggered similar actions from the authorities.

We collaborated with Urbanería and Morelos High School so that students learn and build green infrastructure modules.

This high school already has a model that can be reproduced and that allows harvesting more than 90 thousand liters of rainwater and with more than 200 native species, giving life to this student area.

The sum of these actions, from securing the quality of the water we receive in our homes to the conservation of public spaces that define our quality of life, we help so that La Paz is a model city with informed and committed citizens that participate in conservation initiatives focused on the city.

Our Defend the Sierra Campaign

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A proverb says that whomever wants to walk fast must do so alone, but the one that wants to go far, must walk in company. In Niparajá, we want to go far. We have the deep conviction that any change in our society requires the collaboration and creation of networks and alliances.

In 2016, as we have done since 1990, we worked in good company and with a great number of people, organizations, and communities. We thank them all for their trust, which we hope to see renewed in the next years.

We still have a long way to go and we will only be able to continue with the generous support from our partners, donors, friends, supporters, and critics. The following are those who had an essential role in carrying out our job in 2016:

**OUR NETWORK**
- World Wildlife Fund Alliance - Carlos Slim Foundation
- National Forestry Comition
- Duke University
- BCS Central Area Fishing Cooperatives Federation
- Mexican Fund for Nature Conservancy
- National Institute of Social Development - SEDESOL
- International Community Foundation
- Marisla Foundation
- Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
- Resources Legacy Fund
- Sandler Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foudation
- The Leona M. & Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Walton Family Foundation
- The Waterloo Foundation

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