

NATURALIA

Natura Foundation Newsletter N°2/2022



We support **communities** to
protect their **water** sources
and **forests**

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TARIJA FORMS THE LARGEST WATER FUND IN BOLIVIA FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WATER SOURCES

Last May 30, 2022 was a historic day of great importance for Tarija, because after many years the creation of FONAGUAT, the Water Fund of Tarija, finally took place. Its objective is to be a financial instrument for the collection and administration of economic resources for the protection and sustainable management of forests, water sources and water recharge areas that provide this vital liquid to the population of Tarija-Cercado.

José Luis Patiño, General Manager of Cosaalt said : "After 20 years of looking at how to create, how the Tarija Fund should work, today we are making it a reality... today the Tarija water fund was born to give certainty to the water security of our city".

This Water Fund is born with the signature of Cosaalt and Fundación Natura Bolivia, who will be the first two institutions that will implement the fund by allocating economic resources. Cossalt will allocate 3% of its budget and Fundación Natura Bolivia will allocate 30% of the amount that Cossalt allocates.

Both institutions are the pioneers, however, the Water Fund is open to the participation and addition of more actors and institutions who wish to be part of this fund to inject financial resources for the conservation of forests and water sources of Cercado.

María Teresa Vargas, executive director of Fundación Natura Bolivia said: "This fund belongs to the people of Tarija and it is you and your authorities, your cooperative, your municipality that really have to take responsible action to manage your natural resources as best as possible because we are talking about water for the people of Tarija".

From now on Cosaalt will make a redistribution of the income received from the payment of the form replacement (1.50 Bs.) in the water bills. A third part will go to the water fund, which means that each water user will contribute 1 bs. for the conservation of their water resources.



(Left to Right) José Luis Patiño, Eduardo Castellanos, María Teresa Vargas

AGUARAGÜE NATIONAL PARK FORMS AN ALLIANCE WITH THE YACUIBA FUND

Five years have passed since the creation of the Yacuiba Water Fund, whose objective is to restore and protect water recharge areas, which are located within the Aguaraque's National Park, which despite being a protected area, is subject to significant threats, such as hydrocarbon activity and fires.

For this reason, the Aguaraque National Park Directorate, formed an alliance with the Water Fund of Yacuiba, taking a strategic step to safeguard water sources. As a result of this alliance, the first Watershared Agreement was signed between the National Park Directorate and Yacuiba's Water Fund, committing to safeguard 1200 hectares in a strategic area for the protection of water sources.

As an incentive for this action, the park management received a trailer-type mobile fire truck, an irrigation pump, a 1,000-liter tank, 10 signs for the area and boots for the park rangers.

This is the first time that a water fund directly supports a national protected area, an achievement worth highlighting because it is the people of Yacuiba and its municipal and water institutions that contribute economic resources to improve the park rangers working conditions.



Aguaraque National Park



Incentive delivery event in Yacuiba

MORE THAN 9,000 HECTARES UNDER CONSERVATION THROUGH WATERSHARED AGREEMENTS IN BOLIVIA

The health of millions of people depends on the freshwater that flows from forests to rivers. Sustainable management of forest ecosystems is synonymous with the future and water security. In this sense, unplanned development can be detrimental to the integrity of the ecosystems that provide water. Faced with this dilemma, the Watershared Agreements is a tool that was born as an effective response.

Valles Ecoregion

Students of the ARA classroom school held in April participated in the delivery of incentives organized in the municipality of Quirusillas. On this occasion, 6 families voluntarily decided to conserve 514 hectares of forest that protects the Pinero Parrot, an emblematic species of the municipality that is in the Vulnerable category (VU).

In the same way, the Municipality of Samaipata delivered incentives to 8 families living within the Integrated Management Natural Area of Rio Grande Valles Cruceños (IMNA), these new forest guardians signed for the conservation of 308 hectares of forest.



Incentive delivery event in Moro Moro

In June, the Municipality of Moro Moro, the Water Cooperative and Fundación Natura made it possible for 103 families to have safe water in their homes. At the same time, these families will conserve 2,647 new hectares of forest. The delivery of 103 water tanks that will store 62,750 liters of water.

In the community of El Naranjo belonging to the Municipality of Vallegrande, 11 families committed to conserve 427.35 hectares of forest were given incentive material. In response to their commitment, the families will benefit from access to water for agricultural production through the implementation of irrigation technology.



Incentive delivery event in El Torno

Amazonia Ecoregion

In May, a total of 28 families from the communities of La Angostura, Taruma and Forestal Playón (Municipality of El Torno) committed to conserve 502.7 hectares of forest and thus the water sources of the metropolitan area.

Again in May, 17 families from the La Forestal community pledged to conserve 265.63 hectares of forest. In response to their commitment, they received tanks, corrugated panels and polytubes, according to the needs of each beneficiary.

All this thanks to the contribution of users of the El Torno Water Fund, the Autonomous Municipal Government of El Torno and Fundación Natura Bolivia.



Incentive delivery event in El Torno



Incentive delivery event in El Torno

Yungas Ecoregion

A total of 68 families from the communities of Mangopata, Mayaya Uno and Asilahuara, with the support of the Autonomous Municipal Government of Teoponte, signed an agreement to conserve 1,411 hectares of forest. These three communities received incentive material to improve access to water.



Incentive delivery event in Teoponte

Chaco Ecoregion

The Local Water Fund of Yacuiba, one of the largest in Bolivia, made its first delivery of incentives through Watershared Agreements for the conservation of 1,200 hectares of forests in the Serranía del Aguara Güe.

This first agreement was signed with the Directorate of the Serranía del Aguara Güe National Park and Integrated Management Natural Area, which committed to protect 1,200 hectares of forest and water sources.

As an incentive for this action, they received a trailer-type mobile fire truck, an irrigation pump, a 1,000-liter isotank, 10 signs for the area, and boots for the park rangers.

WATER FOR COMMUNITIES PROTECTING FORESTS

Every day more and more communities, aware of the importance of protecting forests to guarantee water in their regions, decide to join the Watershared Agreements.

They are the first to feel the effects of the decrease in water flows and droughts that affect their basic needs and productive activities, many of these families have precarious water systems or no system at all.

This is why the communities, the Water Funds and Fundación Natura Bolivia decided to dream big and work on access to quality and quantity of water for these new guardians of the forest.

In Coroico, a water system was inaugurated for the community of Siñari, who through the Reciprocal Agreements for Water conserve 246 hectares of forest..

A new water intake was inaugurated in the community of Yolosa, a community conserves 20 hectares of forest under Watershared Agreements.

In the Valleys region, the Autonomous Municipal Government of Moro Moro, the Water Cooperative and Fundación Natura delivered 103 water tanks that will store 62,750 liters of water. This means that 103 families will be able to have water in their homes, solving a large part of the problem of scarcity of this vital liquid in the town of Moro Moro. These families conserve 2,647 hectares of forest.



Water tanks delivery in Moro Moro



Inauguration of water intake in Yolosa



Moro Moro beneficiaries signing their RWA Agreement



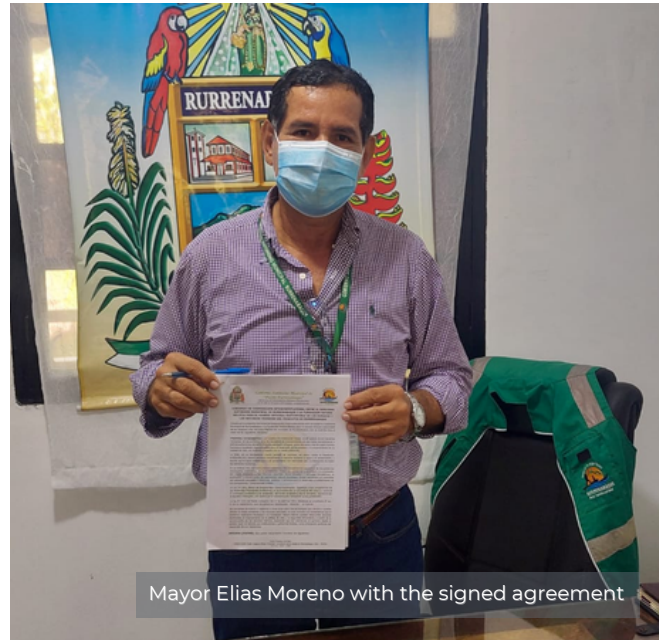
Inauguration of water system in Siñari

RURRENABAQUE, A NEW MUNICIPALITY COMMITTED TO THE CONSERVATION

Rurrenabaque, known for being the gateway to the tropical forests and pampas of northern Bolivia, joins the alliance for water, with the signature of an inter-institutional cooperation agreement with Fundación Natura Bolivia, to work together on conservation actions with communities and other institutions in the municipality.

With the incorporation of Rurrenabaque, there are now 68 municipalities that are committed to the conservation of their water resources through the Watershared Agreements, also adding a new department, El Beni, increasingly extending this ideal conservation model to be implemented by local actors for the preservation of their water factories.

The signature of this agreement marks the beginning to develop all actions for the implementation of water conservation agreements in recharge areas that are threatened and need to be protected by the inhabitants of the region.



Mayor Elias Moreno with the signed agreement

Both the Autonomous Municipal Government of Rurrenabaque and Fundación Natura Bolivia will allocate economic resources to develop Watershared Agreements with the communities that commit to conserve forests of water importance.



Rurrenabaque

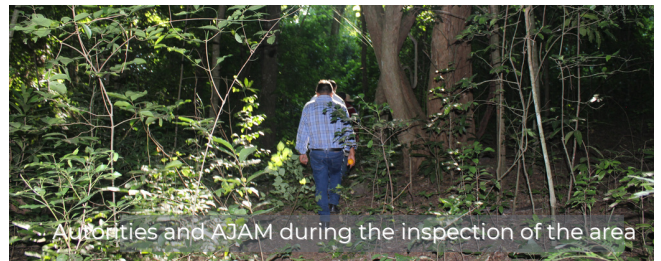
LOCAL LEADERS DEFEND THEIR WATER FACTORIES IN EL TORNO

Traditionally, the extractive sector has been one of the most important drivers of economic development in Bolivia. In 2021, its contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 5.5%. However, today we are far from transcending its classic extractivist model, towards one that seeks to reduce the social and environmental impacts generated by the activity.

This negative scenario in which mining in our country is living, is the consequence of a constant improvisation in state policies that have led to the proliferation of illegal mining. The consequences of unregulated mining without the pertinent environmental studies can have terrible consequences, first for the country's economy and second, for the areas in which this activity takes place.

In recent months, alarms have been raised in the municipality of El Torno due to the appearance of a mining concession near the Alto Espejo community that sought to begin limestone extraction in the area. This concession, which was authorized by the state to begin exploitation, never presented the necessary environmental studies and never socialized with the communities in the area. This is contradictory, since both requirements are indispensable for approval.

But without a doubt, what most caught the attention of the media and experts is that the extraction area was located in a critical area for maintaining the flow of the river, from whose water more than 6 rural communities of El Torno directly benefit.



Authorities and AJAM during the inspection of the area

As soon as this information became known, mobilizations arose from the local people, who categorically rejected any extractive practice, putting an end to the mining company's intervention. This event showed us that activism and citizen leadership can stop actions that go against our rights.

María Binda, a community member of Forestal Playón, was one of the faces that led this struggle. In 2017, María committed to conserve 20 hectares of her property under the Watershared Agreements, so she is aware of the importance of taking care of water. But her stance brought with it harsh consequences, including a complaint from the mining company, which saw its interests in jeopardy. The mobilizations, during the months of February and March, put the debate on the table and questioned whether the rest of the concessions in force in the area really comply with the established regulations.

WATERSHARED AGREEMENTS ARRIVE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

The conservation model called Watershared Agreements, created by Fundación Natura Bolivia and implemented 19 years ago in the heart of South America, traveled more than 11,000 kilometers to Anjouan Island, located in the Comores Archipelago in the coast of Africa.

María Teresa Vargas, Executive Director of Fundación Natura Bolivia and Nigel Asquith, Director of Strategy, made this trip taking with them all the tools to carry out a Watershared School with the people of Anjouan and the NGO Dahari, who work to shape sustainable and productive landscapes for the communities of Comores.

The trip began with a visit to the endemic cloud forests that seek to be protected and safeguarded for their high value and to the communities living in these forests. That are considered critically endangered because only 30% of the original vegetation remains and are threatened by agriculture and deforestation that are increasing as the population on this island also increases.



Edwin surveying Comores residents

Subsequently, a short Watershared School was held with the island's inhabitants to learn what the Watershared Agreements consist of, what are the steps to implement them successfully and to analyze how to carry out this scheme in their region.

A month after this first meeting, Edwin Pynegar, who is the coordinator of Natura's innovation laboratory, traveled to Comores to begin the process of implementing this scheme together with Dahari. Edwin will undertake a long journey for many months to work in Comores on the implementation of Conservation Agreements.



Residents of Anjouan learning about the operation of the RWAs

WATERSHARED SCHOOL : FORGING THE CONSERVATIONISTS OF THE FUTURE

Few experiences are as rewarding for an institution as expanding its values and foundations beyond its own entity. Fundación Natura Bolivia is a non-profit organization that, 19 years ago, designed a tool for the conservation of water resources called Watershared Agreements, which has expanded to more than 16 countries around the world through the Watershared School.

Presential Watershared School

The first Watershared School of the year was a 5-day face-to-face event (April 25-29, 2022) held in the municipality of Samaipata, where 26 leaders from different municipalities in Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia participated in the program to learn in depth the steps to implement an Watershared Agreement and to replicate this conservation model in their places of origin, once this training process is completed.



Delivery of certificates to participants

During this intensive training week, participants undergo theoretical and practical training, to see up close and with concrete and real examples, the step-by-step to achieve the success of this conservation mechanism.

In this sense, Samaipata is a strategic place to carry out this training process, where



Theoretical classes - RWA School in Samaipata

participants attend the delivery of incentives and signing of Conservation Agreements between community members and municipal authorities.

They explore the forests and areas of water importance, analyze water quality and, with everything they have learned, make a diagnosis and a project proposal to apply it in their territories, leading to the post-school, which consists of monitoring and advising participants on the implementation of Watershared agreements in their regions.



Student participation in agreement signings

Virtual Watershared School

A virtual Watershared School was held from June 13 to 17, with the aim of expanding the possibility of participation to people from different latitudes who have not been able to take part in face-to-face modalities.

On this occasion, 14 people from different backgrounds participated and inaugurated the virtual platform of the Watershared School, which was carefully designed by the Natura team to provide a didactic, efficient and high-impact platform for this new modality that was created last year in response to the impossibility of holding face-to-face events due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Today, this platform will not only open up the possibility of bringing the Watershared School to people who cannot attend it physically, but will also provide participants with a consultation tool in case they need it.



Students of the presential Watershared School



JUAN CHULO, A NEW PROTECTED AREA FOR SANTA ROSA DEL SARA

On May 12, the Autonomous Municipal Government of Santa Rosa del Sara organized an official ceremony to publicize the Autonomous Law for the Creation of the Municipal Protected Area: Juan Chulo Integrated Management Natural Area (IMNA).

At the foot of the lagoon and at the entrance of the Juan Chulo IMNA, the Mayor of Santa Rosa del Sara, Rímbel Barrón, councilors, community leaders and representatives of the Juan Chulo Union gathered to celebrate this new conservation area in their municipality.

The natural area, with a surface area of **1,678.37 hectares**, will guarantee the protection of the Juan Chulo Lagoon, which is considered a living space for the local populations due to the important biodiversity that inhabits the area and the valuable water resources it harbors.

The protected area was established under the category of "Integrated Management Natural Area," which reconciles the protection of biological diversity and water resources with the sustainable development of the local population.



Mayor of Santa Rosa del Sara and his councilors

Thus, after a rigorous socialization process with the leaders and members of the Juan Chulo Sindicato, it was decided to create the area, thinking of the well-being and future of all.

Thanks to the support of Bos+, Fundación Natura Bolivia provided technical assistance in the **creation process**, first with the preparation of the justification document and later in the process of socializing the draft law with local managers. This result also represents an achievement for Fundación Natura in our mission to **protect water sources** and forests, always under the protection and leadership of the local municipal government.



Juan Chulo Integrated Management Natural Area (IMNA)



VILLAMONTES CREATES ITS FIRST SUBNATIONAL PROTECTED AREA, THE IMNA QUEBRACHO COLORADO

The Autonomous Municipal Government (AMG) of Villa Montes, located in the Gran Chaco province (Tarija), created by law, the **Quebracho Colorado Integrated Management Natural Area (IMNA)** that will ensure the protection of the ecosystem of the Chaco plains, which is home to wildlife species of great ecological value.

This process, carried out by the Municipality of Villa Montes with the support of Fundación Natura and World Land Trust, today consolidates the protection of **52,460 hectares** of Chaco Forest.

The Quebracho Colorado IMNA will be a response to the two main threats facing the territory, such as cattle ranching and uncontrolled hunting. Although extensive cattle ranching is the main economic activity of the La Trece community (the only community within the protected area), it generates a significant impact on the forest, so it will be necessary to seek sustainable alternatives for this activity. Likewise, hunting is not a minor problem, as there have been reports of wild animals being hunted in the border zone with Paraguay.



Gabriela Prieto, head of environmental management for the Villamontes AMG, also highlights the importance of the area for water supply: "A study was carried out to identify numerous streams within this area... in the Capirenda watershed. It is one of our water recharge areas that can supply water for future generations," she mentions.

The actions planned for the area are not limited to conservation without thinking about the needs of the local population. Therefore, the sustainable development of natural resources will be promoted in the productive activities of the local community, respecting the uses and customs of the population.



DISCOVERING INCAHUASI, A CAMPAIGN PROMOTED BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF VILLA VACA GUZMAN

As part of the campaign "Along the Jucumari Route", Fundación Natura together with the Autonomous Municipal Government of Villa Vaca Guzmán (AMG) and the Culture and Tourism Unit of the municipality developed two important events to highlight the importance of the Serranía de Incahuasi Integrated and Community Management Natural Area, promote the value of the water resources that are born in this place and the biodiversity that inhabits the area.

The first event, called "Jucumari track", was a mountain-bike championship, which was attended by participants from different regions of Bolivia, to compete in the categories of Down Hill and Avalanche, which had as a final stop the town center.

Later, the Environmental Fair "Discovering Our Protected Areas" was held, where SERNAP also participated, to provide information on the fauna and flora that protect these forests and the care of the water sources that are born in Incahuasi, Igüembe and Iñao, in addition to promoting recreational activities for children to learn about the protected areas of Villa Vaca Guzmán.



The organization of these activities also aims to generate a sense of belonging on the part of the municipal authorities, who from the beginning were involved in the entire organization, leading this initiative.

In this regard, the mayor of the municipality of Villa Vaca Guzmán, Germán Herrera Barja, mentioned, "As a municipality we feel very proud to carry out this type of activities together with Fundación Natura, activities to activate sustainable tourism and conserve our natural areas... we will allocate resources, we have a great interest in taking care of our protected areas and making these parks sustainable through tourism".



Cyclists participating in IMNA Incahuasi

ENVIRONMENTAL FAIRS : TALKING TO CITIZENS ABOUT OUR PROTECTED AREAS

To defend something, to appreciate it and love it, it is necessary to know it first. That is why through our participation in fairs, as Fundación Natura Bolivia we want to bring people to know a little more about the protected areas that surround them and about the work we have been doing as an institution both with Watershared Agreements and in supporting the creation and management of protected areas.

That is why during this quarter we participated in 3 fairs held within the framework of the "International Environment Day".

One of our participations was in the inauguration of Curichi La Madre, an event organized by the Autonomous Municipal Government of Santa Cruz where we interacted with school students, ordinary citizens and municipal authorities who took pictures in our interactive stand.

On the other hand, our team from the Chiquitanía region participated in 2 environmental fairs held in San Ignacio de Velasco and Concepción, highlighting the importance of the Bajo Paraguá San Ignacio and Concepción Protected Area, created only 1 year ago.





EVERYTHING WE DO IS POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS

