

Fire Prevention and Control in the Groundwater Recharge Forests of Sardinal de Carrillo, Costa Rica

Countries where project is active: Costa Rica.

Eco-Index categories that best describe this project:

Water conservation
Climate and climate change
Environmental education
Fire prevention

Date this survey was updated:

April 2002 [Project directors have not yet updated this information.]

Responsible organization(s):

Brigada contra Incendios Forestales de Artola de Sardinal, Costa Rica.

Project director(s):

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Project summary:

The project is carried out by the Brigade Against Forest Fires in Artola de Sardinal, Canton de Carrillo, Provincia de Guanacaste, and includes the districts of Playas del Coco and Sardinal, Costa Rica. It aims to eliminate the high incidence of forest fires in Sardinal's groundwater recharge area in order to protect the water supply in the surrounding communities as well as the biodiversity.

Project objectives:

- Strengthen the forest fire brigade of Artola, Sardinal de Carrillo.
- Develop and carry out a plan for the prevention and combat of forest fires with the participation of farmers and inhabitants of the surrounding towns in the area of influence of the project.
- Develop a plan for the economic sustainability of the brigade.

Date project began:

2001

Expected duration (or date project was concluded):

One year [Project directors have not yet updated this information.]

Principal funder(s):

Programa de Pequeñas Donaciones (PPD), Costa Rica - Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial ([site](#)); Asociación para el Manejo de la Cuenca del Río Tempisque.

Current annual project budget:

\$3,000

Principal accomplishments to date:

- Procured essential equipment for the brigades to combat fires: chain-saws, radios, backpacks and belts, shoes, machetes and cases, rakes, shovels, lanterns, cameras, torches, first aid kits and special uniforms for the rangers (35 in total).
- Offered a course on combating forest fires.
- Communicated with owners of farms with forest patches to coordinate actions in the event of forest fires.
- Dealt with many of the emergencies that arose in 2001: Controlled 35 fires in the groundwater recharge forests of Sardinal. In this period, 5,000 hectares were burned and 35,000 hectares were protected. The rangers contributed 300 hours of work.
- Women participated in forest fire combat and preparation of meals for the rangers.

Anticipated accomplishments for the next year:

- Ensure that activities in environmental education and the prevention of forest fires are carried out by a trained and equipped brigade.
- Have an equal number of men and women on the brigade.
- Work with a plan that has been developed and implemented for the prevention and control of forest fires.
- Zone the high-risk areas and include prevention and combat methods for each sector.
- Develop a permanent source of income to maintain the operation of the brigade.
- Obtain commitments from owners of farms with forest patches to develop agreements with rangers to monitor the farms and take action in the event of forest fires.
- Obtain commitments from tourism and commercial establishments to provide financial aid to the Asociación de Brigadistas. Full support will safeguard and guarantee water resources, indispensable for any human activity, and protect the natural habitats of animals and plants.
- Subscribe to annual insurance to cover the high-risk volunteer work of the rangers that otherwise would only be covered by basic social benefits.
- Control forest fires in groundwater recharge forests of Sardinal.

Project monitoring and evaluation methodology:

Information not available.

Lessons learned from at least one year's work on this project:

- The timeframe of the project is 12 months. We plan to request an extension of six months to include the activities for the 2002 dry season. It is expected that the project will become permanent.

- Regional traditions make it difficult to eradicate the use of intentional fires. Emphasis on environmental education activities is fundamental to achieve a change in attitude in the medium term.
- Seventy percent of the population believe that natural resources are plentiful and renewable. Water, soil, flora and fauna are not valued. We expect to have resources in abundance but do nothing to protect them.
- The rangers' volunteer work is invaluable. The Asociación de Brigadistas de Artola's efforts to protect and conserve natural resources is worthy of support and solidarity from civil society that benefits, in one way or another, from natural resources.

Other Web sites that have further information about this project:

- www.conserveonline.org/2002/09/m/en/2_caribbean_1_summ1.pdf
"Ecological Function and Fire Management in Pine Ecosystems of the Caribbean and Central America" - A Nature Conservancy and USDA Forest Service report with highlights from a May 2002 meeting in Belize, with maps, photos, list of contacts and bibliography.

Information obtained at:

- <http://www.eco-index.org/search/results.cfm?projectID=270>