

Achieving mangrove conservation and sustainable use in Mexico through community-based Management Units for Wildlife Conservation within and beyond Protected Areas

Paola Fajardo^{1*}, Juan I. Valdez-Hernández²

¹*McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada*

²*Postgrado en Ciencias Forestales, Colegio de Postgraduados, Montecillo, México*

Abstract: Mangroves are valuable socio-ecological ecosystems that provide vital goods and services to millions of people, including wood, a renewable natural capital, which is the primary source of energy and construction material for several coastal communities in developing countries. Unfortunately, mangrove loss and degradation occur at alarming rates. Regardless of the protection and close monitoring of mangrove ecosystems in Mexico during the last two decades, mangrove degradation and the loss of biodiversity is still ongoing. In some regions, unregulated and unsustainable mangrove wood harvesting are important causes of degradation. In this context, community-based mangrove forestry through Management Units for Wildlife Conservation could be a cost-effective alternative scheme to manage and conserve mangrove forests, their ecosystem services and biological diversity within and beyond protected areas while providing sustainable local livelihoods and helping reduce illegal logging. The objective of the Management Units is to promote alternative means of production with the rational and planned use of renewable resources based on Management Plans. If implemented with a multidisciplinary perspective that incorporates scientific assessments this conservation strategy may contribute to achieving national and international environmental and biodiversity agreements providing multiple social, ecological and economic benefits from local to global scales.

Key words: Wildlife Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Mangroves, Community Forestry, Sustainable Livelihoods, Wood Harvesting, Coastal Wetlands

***Corresponding Author:**

Paola Fajardo

McGill University

E-mail: paola.fajardo@mail.mcgill.ca