

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Rodrigo Sierra Corona
<b>Project title</b>	The environmental history of the Janos Biosphere Reserve in Mexico: Critical knowledge for the development of ecosystem conservation strategies.
<b>RSG reference</b>	
<b>Reporting period</b>	August 2012-December 2014
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£ 6000
<b>Your email address</b>	lomogrande@hotmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	December 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2014

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Archival Research			X	The Archive of the University of California at Berkeley proved to be more than enough to provide high quality data about this region. Instead of visiting the other archives, I did decide to expand my stay in UC Berkeley in order to explore more archives and books.
Interviews		X		Because of family health issues, I was not able to stay as long as I needed on the field. I did find specially two highly knowledgeable informants. One of them, Jaime Jeffers (85) is an old-timer cattle rancher. He has been in the region for all his life and remembers when bison roamed freely trough his ranch and small streams of water crossed it. He has been happy to talk to me but had not allowed me to record him, either voice or video. Mario Madrid just recently moved from Las Cruces NM, USA to run the tourist department for the Janos County. He is an amateur historian focused primarily on the pre-revolution period of time. I had really good conversations with him but had not been able to properly interview them on camera. I will keep working on this issue even when this report is delivered.
Congress presentation	X			Because of family health issues, was impossible to me to assist to any meeting during this last two years. I will try my best to present the results of this research in the next international meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology.
The gathered data will be published in specialized journals, and integrated into the Janos Biosphere Reserve management planning process.			X	The management plan for the Janos Biosphere Reserve has been officially published, and information derived from this research was included. (PDF file Attached) The paper entitled "Factors Affecting Fire Use and Socio-Ecological Resilience and Vulnerability of the Janos Biosphere Reserve in Mexico" was submitted to the Rangeland ecology and management

				Journal, from the Society for Rangeland Management. This is the first scientific product to come out of this knowledge. I will keep working this data to produce more academic papers.
For the regional and general public, we will seek for funds in to publish a booklet for the local communities and reinforce the regional pride and love to their land.		X		Our programme was granted with a substantial grant via Fundacion Carlos Slim-WWF alliance. Within this grant we initially asked for funds to produce this booklet. We recently had decided to modify this grant and ask for funding to produce a short video, about biodiversity, culture and conservation. The grant has been pre-approved and we are waiting for the final comments. The objective is the same, and we will use the equipment acquired with this Rufford Small Grant.

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

The biggest difficulties came from family health problems. Between early 2012 to late 2014 both my father and mother got diagnosed with terminal illnesses and passed away. This completely changed my capacity to be in the field during these 2 years, specifically for the recording of interviews. I am currently resuming all my work commitments and will keep working on the unfinished parts of this granted project.

Other difficulties include the still present drug trafficking related violence within the region which has me stopped for visit places of which I was able to get historical photographs. Another constant difficulty has been the negative of some of my historical data informants to be recorded.

While these activities are not complete now, I will pursuit its completion during the incoming 2015.

**3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

First of all, the information collected during this programme was successfully included in the Management Plan for this protected area. This will be evident on more successful restoration and conservation activities on the short and long run.

Second, the first academic paper utilising this data has just been submitted, increasing the knowledge about this region, and being the first one about its socio-ecological dynamics. There will be more papers coming out of this data, enriching the already available conservation tools. The full document about the environmental history of the Janos Biosphere Reserve will be one of my doctoral dissertation chapters and hope to turn it in to a book.

Third, this last year 2015, we were able to start the restoration activities within the Janos Biosphere Reserve, having this historical data as our baseline. Restoration activities included woody vegetation removal (mesquite), erosion control, perennial grass re seeding, and prairie dog colonies supplementation.

**4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).**

The local community has been crucial. The key informants that I had fund was because of my integration within this community. The academic paper we just submitted is based on interviews with the local stakeholders. Without their participation this part of the work would not be possible.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes. During 2015 I will pursuit the completion of the video recordings and the production of a small video focusing on the regional history, biological values, conservation challenges and possible solutions. I will try, depending on funding, to assist to the 2015 Society for Conservation Biology meeting in France. These are the only components not complete in this grant.

**6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

The results will be shared trough different fashions. Peer reviewed papers will be published in specialized journals. The Janos Biosphere Reserve management plan is already available online [http://www.conanp.gob.mx/que\\_hacemos/pdf/programas\\_manejo/2013/JANOS.pdf](http://www.conanp.gob.mx/que_hacemos/pdf/programas_manejo/2013/JANOS.pdf).

During 2014 I was interviewed by one of the main newspapers in Mexico for a 4-page article on the Janos Biosphere Reserve. The article focused on the conservation challenges that this region faces and their ultimate causes, causes that this grant has help to fully understand. The article is attached to this report.

The video we are planning on produce and release during 2015 will be online under open access (YouTube and Vimeo), and distributed through social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter) with the objective of achieve as much as possible projection within the local community. As weird as it sounds, the local inhabitants are really active on social media, especially Facebook.

**7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The original plan was to work on this programme for a year. Because of personal problems, besides this programme being very ambitious, I had to extend this time period up to 2 years, with some work still pending. I am planning to finish all the compromises this year 2015.

**8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Digital Photographic and Video (HD) Camera to record the interviews	£904	£904	0	

1 Terabyte external hard drive (to store the digital pictures, archives research and interviews)	£84	£84	0	
Digital voice recorder (for interviews)	£42	£42	0	
GPS	£162	£162	0	
2 Airplane round trips Mexico-Cd. Juarez for field work in the Janos Biosphere Reserve (interviews and archives).	£3742	£3742	0	
Living stipends for 3 weeks stay each visit	£345	£200	£145	The remaining funds will be used to fulfil this project
Local transportation for 3 weeks stays each visit (fuel and maintenance)	£230	£150	£70	The remaining funds will be used to fulfil this project
1 Airplane round trip Mexico-Austin TX for archival work.	£452	£452	0	The Archive of the University of California at Berkeley proved to be more than enough to provide high quality data about this region. Instead of visiting the other archives; I did decide to expand my stay in UC Berkeley in order to explore more archives and books. This money was used to pay for one flight Mexico City-San Francisco-Mexico City.
1 Airplane round trip Mexico-New York City	£452	£452		The Archive of the University of California at Berkeley proved to be more than enough to provide high quality data about this region. Instead of visiting the other archives, I did decide to expand my stay in UC Berkeley in order to explore more archives and books. This money was used to pay for one flight Mexico City-San Francisco-Mexico City.
Living Stipends for 1.5 week stay (TX)	£962	£962	0	The Archive of the University of California at Berkeley proved to be more than enough to provide high quality data about this region. Instead of visiting the other archives; I did decide to expand my stay in UC Berkeley in order to explore more archives and books. This money was used to pay for living stipends in Berkeley CA

Living Stipends for 1.5 week stay (NY)	£1292	£1292	0	The Archive of the University of California at Berkeley proved to be more than enough to provide high quality data about this region. Instead of visiting the other archives; I did decide to expand my stay in UC Berkeley in order to explore more archives and books. This money was used to pay for living stipends in Berkeley CA
Congress Presentation	£775	0	£775	I do still have this money. I am planning on to present the results of this project at the next meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology.
<b>Total</b>	5091	<b>49564</b>	990	

### 9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

First of all, and without being redundant, for me it is very important to finish the interviews and the video recordings. The local knowledge, specially the memories of elderly people is invaluable, and will provide for important clues and answer to conservation and governance problems within the Janos Biosphere Reserve.

At the same time, my teammates and I are already working in different aspects of the conservation of this amazing region. Our work includes the design and implementation of black tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) and Mexican pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana mexicana*) recovery plans. We are helping small-scale cattle producers to create cooperatives and substantially improve their cattle management in order to stop land degradation, increase their income and strengthen their food security. Besides this, we had started a large-scale restoration program, which includes erosion control, shrubs removal, native seeds production, and riparian areas protection.

### 10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF will be included in all the materials resulting from this project. The Janos Biosphere Reserve Management Plan cannot include such data due to government restrictions. I had been giving talks that include the information generated by this project and your logo is in it. Presentations include the College of Natural Resources and The Geography Department at University of California at Berkeley. Besides this, I had been speaking very highly about the RSGF grant programme with outstanding students and conservation practitioners.

### 11. Any other comments?

I am very thankful with the RSGF! Without your trust and support this project would not exist. The data compiled and the opportunity to include it within a policy making process was something that rarely happens. My main interest is to continue developing my career towards hands on



conservation, always based on good scientific information. This grant allowed me to keep going to this direction.