Amigos de Sian Ka’an Receive Honorable Mention from the President of Mexico.

Projects Coordinator Gonzalo Merediz Alonso, M.S., in representation of amigos de Sian Ka’an, receives the Honorable Mention of the Ecological Merit Award from President Fox.

Three reasons to celebrate June 5:

- 18th Anniversary of the founding of amigos.
- World Environmental Day.
- National Recognition of amigos’ work.

With much pride, we include you in these events and successes achieved in the past few months.

Congratulations!

The Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) awarded Amigos de Sian Ka’an with an Honorable Mention in the Social Category of the Ecological Merit Award 2004. The award was given to our projects coordinator, Gonzalo Merediz Alonso by President Vicente Fox Quezada. The event took place on June 5, 2004 in San Carlos, Sonora within the framework of the World Environment Day celebration. amigos was deserving of the honor for its efforts in environmental education, environmental policies and promotion of community development. This was the second time in a period of six months that amigos had received one of the most prestigious acknowledgments in the environmental field given by the federal government, since last November it also received the Nature Conservation Award 2003 for its commitment to, and work in conservation, in our country.

amigos extensively congratulate Dr. Alfredo Careaga who received the Ecological Merit Award 2004 in the individuals category for the creation of the Research Center in Quintana Roo, and for the development and the promotion of scientific studies for the establishment of Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve.

Conserving Today Living it Forever; The Amigos Fundraising Campaign.

To date, amigos has collected more than US$ 3,000,000.00 to protect critical lands, to establish a Center for the Conservation of Biodiversity and to begin a Heritage Fund for nature conservation in our state. amigos is the first group to launch a fundraising campaign in the history of conservation in Mexico.

With the support of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), through the "Wilson Challenge," amigos opens a new door that promotes philanthropy for conservation in Mexico. The Wilson Challenge is a fund that matches any donation of more than US$25,000 contributed by a person or family foundation to projects that we develop in the region in collaboration with our partners at TNC.

Constructing Bases for the Conservation of Water and its Related Biodiversity on the Yucatan Peninsula

Some of the country’s most important wetlands are found on the Yucatan Peninsula. These unique hydrologic systems connect the terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems and keep them alive. For their adequate management it’s necessary to know their dynamic in an integral way. Due to the existence of isolated and sometimes incomplete information on water and its effective management, amigos, in collaboration with TNC and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas, organized the “Constructing Bases for the Conservation of Water and its Related Biodiversity on the Yucatan Peninsula” workshop which was carried out on November 10 and November 11, 2003 in Cancun, Quintana Roo. This forum served as an arena for those dealing with water in the region to obtain and exchange information on the topic. A CD with information from the workshop was put together and distributed in hopes that it would be a useful tool in decision making, as well as a support for public participation with regards to water in the region.

The most significant thing about this workshop was that for the very first time, an important group of more than 40 participants from research centers, civil associations, the private sector and the three levels of government came together with a common vision of hydrology to solve the regional problem of water.

Cooperation for the Protection of the Coral Reefs of Quintana Roo - "A Visit to the National Park"

With the objective of developing environmental education tools that promote the conservation of the coral reefs in Cancun, amigos, in collaboration with Ocean Voice International, the government of Canada through the Canadian Agency for International Development and the National Park of the Western Coast of Isla Mujeres-Punta Cancun-Punta Nizuc (PNC), carried out the creation of an immersible brochure called “A Visit to the National Park.” With this guide, dive masters have a tool that expands their knowledge about the PNC and allows them share it with their clients. The material contains a map of the PNC, images of the most common organisms found in the coral reefs and the rules they should follow while within the PNC limits. This product represents the first step in an integral distribution campaign aimed at the conservation of the coral reef ecosystems in Cancun.
Amigos Forms a Strategic International Alliance

This year, amigos joined the International Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, a very important association formed by the Gillette Company, the United Nations Foundation, UNESCO and the Nature Conservancy. Amigos’ participation is focused on developing the “Conservation Actions on the Sian Ka’an Biosphere Coast” project, the first one that the above-mentioned association is involved in. Based on the work proposal presented by amigos, the project will be financed by US$750,000 which will allow for conservation actions to be carried out on private coastal lands in Sian Ka’an.

Contributing to the Exploration of the Sian Ka’an – Tulum Underwater Cave System (Ox Bel Há)

During the last 20 years, thanks to the underwater exploration of the underground hydrologic system in Quintana Roo, more than 108 cavern systems and 450 cenotes have been described in the Riviera Maya and around 480 kilometers of caves have been explored. In November of 2003, amigos and TNC showed support for the Quintana Roo Aquifer Investigative Center (CINDAG A.C.) in continuing its investigation of the Ox Bel Há (underwater basin located between Sian Ka’an and Tulum). Thanks to this project, today Ox Bel Há has 122 kilometers mapped out, making it the largest underground river system in the world.

The information collected has contributed to a better understanding of the hydrologic system and the reef, and has provided vital information that will serve in the process to formulate ecological land regulations as well as urban development plans in the area.

Analyzing the Ecological Regulations of Sian Ka’an’s Coastal Territory.

In January of 2004, amigos organized a workshop involving key participants to discuss the implementation of this environmental policy tool that regulates Sian Ka’an’s coastal area. Members of TNC, Yucatan Peninsula’s Pronatura, Mexico’s Pronatura and the Commission of Natural Protected Areas, among others, participated in it. The results of the workshop contributed to clarify the application process of such an important regulatory tool for coastal development; the transference mechanisms for development laws (a unique system in Mexico contributing to the continuous conservation of critical areas within the reserve), and the responsibilities of the authorities to apply them competently.

Atlas and Geographic Information System for the Costa Maya

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The University of Quintana Roo, amigos de Sian Ka’an and the Coastal Resources Center for of the University of Rhode Island took it upon themselves to produce an “Atlas of the Costa Maya,” with the objective of creating a series of maps aimed at contributing to the making of territorial decisions for that area. This atlas provides a precise and current description of the quantitative and qualitative state of different physical and geographical characteristics, as well as a basic idea of the socioeconomic atmosphere of the Costa Maya. The project was financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Special Bulletin about Xcalak

This bulletin was published in September of 2003 and summarizes the advances that, as of 1995, amigos has made in the Integrated Management Program for Coastal Resources applied in the southern part of the state, in collaboration with the University of Quintana Roo, the Nongovernmental Network of
Organizations of Coastal Resources Integrated Management and thanks to financing from the United States Agency for International Development, through the University of Rhode Island.

**Publication of the Book “Le Noj K’aax Maya”**

As part of the regional Environmental Education program for children, adolescents and adults in Quintana Roo, amigos has created and printed, in Maya, a book called “The Big Mayan Jungle.” This is the second edition of this part in the series entitled: “Sian Ka’an, Introduction to the Ecosystems of the Yucatan Peninsula.” The printing was made possible with help and financing from the Small Donations Program which is part of the United Nations Development Program, as well as the Fund for World Environment, and the Secretary of Education and Culture of Quintana Roo and the Community Participation in the Conservation of Sian Ka’an Program (COMPACT).

**18th Anniversary of Amigos: Recognition of the Administrative Council**

During the celebration of amigos’ 18th Anniversary, at the FONATUR Visitors House, Gabriel Escalante Torres, received a special recognition for his leadership, conviction, dedication and support of the conservation work done by amigos de Sian Ka’an during his time as President of the 2000-2004 Council. Biologist Marco Lazcano Barrero, acknowledged the excellent volunteer work contributed by the Administrative Council 2000-2004, particularly the efforts of Alberto Charles as Vice-president, Esteban Martinez as Treasurer, Alejandro Rosenstein and Jaime Llanos as Councilmen.

The Board of Directors for the 2004-2007 term, is made up of Jaime Llanos as President, Jose Pablo Simon as Vice-president and Ricardo Segura as Treasurer. Likewise, two new members joined the Administrative Council: Eduardo Ocelli and Jose Alfonso Bayon, as well as five associate members: Rodolfo A. Paz Villaseñor; Juan Bezaury Creel; Joyce Coleman; Emilio Reiner; and Alfredo Medina Chemor.

amigos also recognized numerous foundations and individuals for their valuable contributions to the first Fundraising Campaign of our organization.