



# NEWS FROM HONDURAS

## Honduras Community Support Corporation

HELPING RURAL HONDURANS TO LIVE BETTER ON THE LAND  
AND TO PROTECT THE LAND THEY LIVE ON

December, 2013



COMMUNITY MEETING AT NUEVO RIO TULIAN

### Watershed Protection

Since the publication of our 2012 newsletter, HCSC and FECOVESO have completed the purchase of four parcels of land in the watersheds serving four separate gravity-feed community water systems. Three of these acquisitions provide immediate protection for water sources over which the affected communities – **Nuevo Rio Tulian, Nueva Concepcion, and Los Mejias** – had previously had no control. The fourth acquisition added a small but important parcel to land previously acquired to protect the watershed of the community of **San Francisco**.

Nuevo Rio Tulian is a small but well organized community in which an agricultural cooperative supports many of the families. It is fortunate to have a spring that provides clean water for its system, so the acquisition of only 4.3 acres immediately around the spring was sufficient to protect against livestock encroachment. FECOVESO paid for materials and the

community quickly completed the fence.

The largest of the year's acquisitions consisted of approximately 26 acres, purchased from 4 different owners, to protect the water source serving the community of Los Mejias, high in the mountains. (The community is named after its residents, most of whom share the surname Mejia.)

The water source for another high mountain community, **Nueva Concepcion**, was protected by the purchase of 11 acres of watershed in December of 2012. Protection for the watershed serving the community of San Francisco, also high in the mountains, was expanded by acquisition of 3.5 acres adjacent to the 19 acres purchased previously. With these acquisitions completed in the past 12 months, HCSC has paid for, and FECOVESO now owns, crucial portions of a total of 13 watersheds.



NUEVO RIO TULIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS ADMIRING THE SPRING

### THE HCSC-FECOVESO PARTNERSHIP

HCSC is incorporated in New York State and is recognized by the IRS as a "charity" under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal tax code. Its mission is to raise funds in the US and to see that these funds are used to meet community development and land conservation needs acknowledged by rural Honduran communities.

FECOVESO (Fundacion Eco Verde Sostenible) is a grassroots Honduras institution organized with HCSC support. It owns and protects all lands acquired, directly or indirectly, with HCSC funding. In addition, HCSC now makes annual grants directly to FECOVESO to support its efforts and to allow it to respond directly to requests from local communities.

## Rio Chiquito Watershed Needs More Protection

Last year we purchased 9 acres of land to provide partial protection for the watershed from which the community of Rio Chiquito draws its water. Efforts are under way to negotiate the purchase of more land to provide badly needed additional protection, but in the meantime, despite the fact that the government has declared the area to be a “Protected Zone,” deforestation continues, opening the land to agriculture and grazing, and promoting sedimentation and pollution of the water. Here as elsewhere the challenge is to gain sufficient protection before it is too late. These photos were taken by HCSC board member Chris Casey and her Honduran husband, Delmer Matute, when they visited the site this summer.



PROTECTED AREA SIGN AT RIO CHIQUITO'S DAM



CHAINSAW DEFORESTATION IN THE WATERSHED OF RIO CHIQUITO



ONE OF RIO CHIQUITO'S WATER SOURCES

## A Better Stove

Most rural Hondurans do their cooking on the same kind of simple unvented wood-burning clay stoves that their ancestors have used for centuries. But there are serious problems with these stoves. Without a chimney, there is no draft, so wood is burned very inefficiently and a lot of wood must therefore be gathered from the surrounding forests (usually by women and children), which adds to the problem of deforestation. Also, without a chimney, smoke is released indoors, which is obviously bad for the health of everyone in the home – especially for the women doing the cooking.

This year, to demonstrate a better alternative, FECOVESO purchased materials for an Eco Fogone stove, which has a chimney and burns a fraction of the wood used by the traditional stoves. It has been constructed in the building that houses both the FECOVESO office and the home of FECOVESO board member Nasaria Gomez Prince (aka Chayo) and her husband Felix, who serve as caretakers for the property and will make use of the stove. As the stove was being constructed, FECOVESO sponsored a workshop for others interested in learning how to do it.



## Computer Classes

This year HCSC arranged for a local person to provide six months of Saturday computer classes for three FE-COVESO board members. Others were invited to look over their shoulders and listen, but only 3 computers were available. In October the three were given tutorials in internet use by HCSC board member Susan Alanraig.

We can use more modern computers to replace our very old, very slow machines. If anyone has a "gently used" PC laptop that they would like to donate, please get in touch. We can arrange for a Spanish language operating system and keyboard.



INTERNET WORK: VICTOR, SUSAN, NESTOR AND SUPERVISING KITTEN



Tubos (pipes) ready for the trip up the mountain to Nueva Concepcion to help with building the water system. The municipality provided materials for the water tank and FECOVESO provided other materials.

## Small, But Important Protections

Buenos Aires received cyclone fencing to protect the school and office/bodega.



Nueva Vida's school door succumbed to tropical conditions and was rotting away. A metal door was contracted for, with the leftover metal cut for a new FECOVESO sign.

Engineers Without Borders are back! Milla Tres has resolved its internal problems, described in the 2012 Newsletter, and the Engineers have designed and are in the process of constructing (with the community providing labor) a new water system which will serve everyone.

We hope now that we can play a role in securing protection for the watershed.



BUENOS AIRES SCHOOL WAITING FOR FENCING

## FECOVESO's Work Presented at Project Honduras Conference

For several years representatives of HCSC and FECOVESO have joined other Hondurans and North Americans at the annual "Project Honduras" conference in Copan Ruinas (a tourist attraction on the site of an ancient Mayan city). This year's conference – focused on the theme of sustainability in community development work – was attended by HCSC board members Nola White and Susan Alan Craig, FECOVESO board members Nasaria Gomez Prince and Juan Alberto Pinez, and FECOVESO staff person Nestor Lainez.

In the past, Project Honduras has sometimes dealt with the subject of rural water systems but has never dealt with the important question of how to preserve and protect the watersheds from which such systems draw their water. This year, however, Nestor and Nola delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the assembled group on the work of HCSC and FECOVESO in acquiring and protecting watershed lands on a permanent (sustainable!) basis.

### Birds for Honduras

A delightful plus at the conference was the opportunity to view the release of rescued and cage-raised Scarlet McCaws. This is the national bird of Honduras, and has been threatened with extinction.



BEFORE RELEASE...



ENJOYING SNACKS DURING BREAK

FROM LEFT: NASARIA (CHAYO), JUAN ALBERTO, NESTOR & NOLA. PHOTO BY SUSAN



...FREE AS A BIRD!

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP...

We are an all-volunteer organization, and we operate with very low overhead. We put your tax-deductible donations to work directly for the people of Honduras – and we depend completely on those donations to support our work. You can find more information, including past editions of this newsletter, at our website

[www.hcsc-honduras.org](http://www.hcsc-honduras.org)

Your contributions can be sent to...

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