



Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Program

The Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest – locally called Selva Misionera or Paranaense - is one of the world’s most biodiverse subtropical ecoregions. Spread across three countries – Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay – these forests are one of the planet’s most threatened areas as a result of past and present deforestation. Over the last decade, Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA), WWF’s associate organization, has been working towards the conservation of the forests of the Misiones Province. These forests –located in northeastern Argentina- are one of the largest forest blocks that still remains, and one of the few that still houses a jaguar population. From the heart of the jungle, FVSA-WWF’s office in Puerto Iguazú, just a few kilometers away from the impressive scenario offered by the Iguazú Falls, promotes conservation and sustainable development actions. Some of these undertakings are the Misiones Green Corridor and the Biodiversity Vision, a planning tool for the ecoregion.

The Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest (UPAF) covers most part of the Misiones Province in northeastern Argentina, and expands through the south of Brazil and eastern Paraguay. Due to its importance, it was included in the WWF “Global 200” list as one of the most endangered ecoregions in the world.

Despite its remarkable species richness, the accelerated deforestation expansion has devastated this jungle. Today, only 7% of its original area remains, and that is in a highly fragmented landscape. Since 1999, FVSA-WWF has been working toward the UPAF conservation from its regional office in Puerto Iguazú.

FVSA, WWF-Brazil and WWF’s representative Office in Paraguay worked together in an ecoregional planning document – known as the “Biodiversity Vision for the UPAF Ecoregion” - as a means to contribute with the establishing of this conservation corridor spanning through the three countries. The Biodiversity Vision identifies areas with the highest conservation potential and proposes a landscape design that maintains forest environmental services and promotes natural resources sustainable use.

The Misiones Green Corridor was singled out in the Biodiversity Vision as the most important area where to focus local actions with regional impact. Within this framework, FVSA-WWF continues pressuring for the complete implementation of the Green Corridor Law, which created a 1,1 million hectare Integral Conservation and Sustainable Development Area. This law aims to maintain the connectivity between the Misiones’s protected areas and creates a public fund to support conservation and sustainable development activities within the region.

Making real the Misiones Green Corridor and moving forward in the implementation of the Biodiversity Vision are endeavors that have to bring together the wishes, resources and efforts of many people and organizations in the three countries that share the ecoregion.

FVSA-WWF’s Atlantic Forest Program contributes with concrete projects and actions:

- Our Urugua-í Wildlife Reserve protects part of the Urugua-í River watershed, which has a vital importance in the Misiones Province. The Reserve’s Biological Station promotes training and research in the UPAF. We also conduct restoration of degraded forest areas within the Reserve.

- We carry out a project to restore the native forest cover along the banks of small watercourses in Andresito Municipality. By doing so, we also seek to protect and improve water supply for rural families. This initiative depends on the support of federal public funds for the forestry sector.
- We are monitoring the jaguar population in Misiones, one of the most endangered species in Argentina. We promoted the development – currently conducted by several key institutions - of a Management Plan for this species, aimed at its recovery. If the jaguar population survival is guaranteed, most part of the ecoregional biodiversity will be protected.
- We conduct a project to recover some cultural traditions of the mbyá-guaraní people of Misiones. Five guaraní communities are improving their access to drinkable water (by drilling new water wells and distribution systems), installing new communal vegetable gardens, and organizing gatherings to exchange seeds and other plant products among communities, in order to invigorate current diets.
- Along with FVSA's Wildlife Refuges Program, we work to encourage conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in private lands.
- Together with park rangers at the Misiones Ministry of Ecology / AMIRBY we work to improve the relationships between the local community and the Yaboty Biosphere Reserve. Local residents around the Reserve improve their knowledge about the protected area and are encouraged to strengthen their commitment with the area's objectives and to engage in sustainable productive practices.
- The UPAF Program promotes a participatory process to achieve a province-wide Native Forests Land Use Plan for Misiones, in order to fulfill the requirements of the Argentine National Law 26.331. The Misiones government is demanded to include the society's views and interests in this ongoing process. In addition FVSA conducts a media

campaign to request the Argentine government the effective implementation of the “National Fund for the Enrichment and Conservation of Native Forest”, also included in the law.

- A fourteen-item educational kit called “The Jungle at the School” was developed and is distributed among primary schools of Northern Misiones. A specially prepared vehicle, the “Green Unit”, visits every school conducting promotional activities while delivering the kit.
- We offered open workshops and produced support materials to strengthen the Misiones civil society regarding its knowledge and use of standing environmental regulations.
- We are evaluating and quantifying the environmental services produced by the UPAF in Misiones.
- A Responsible Forest Trade Network is being promoted and created. This network facilitates business among forest products suppliers and buyers who are committed with forest conservation.
- We participate and organize meetings, forums, and workshops that allow exchange of ideas and bring solutions to environmental problems in a participatory process.

Further information:

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