



Winter 2006

Message from Doretta



Greetings, 2005 was a varied and productive year for us at PROBEA, flavored with change and new inspiration. We continued to deliver educator workshops throughout the Baja California peninsula (opening two new areas, Guerrero Negro and San Quintín), and in Sonora and Sinaloa. For the first time we transported over 2900 children from the outlying communities of Tijuana to Ecoparque, an ecology park in the city, for an outdoor nature experience. We have designed and are using new evaluation instruments in our workshops

and have trained educators to carry out school projects related to all our curriculum units. We have written two new curricula. We piloted “Household Hazardous Substances” with 45 educators, and have just finished writing “¿Qué me cuentas de la cuenca?” (What Can You Tell Me about Your Watershed), a unit integrating our Tijuana River Watershed video produced last year and five additional educational tools that we provide to teachers who participate in our workshop. We will pilot this watershed workshop early this year.

We plan to continue to expand our collaborations throughout the peninsula and Northwest Mexico and to introduce new programs. Two possibilities are a collaboration with our partners in La Paz to design a new curriculum with field trip experiences and a partnership between PROBEA and Quantum Learning Mexico. Once the funding has been successfully obtained for the latter, our hope is to “quantum leap” the number of teachers we train and provide an extraordinary workshop with teaching/strategies and tools for educators and students in the states surrounding the Sea of Cortés.

We want to acknowledge Karen Levy-Szpiro and her husband, Paul Taylor, for receiving their neighborhood “North Park Community Association Renaissance Award for Best Landscape.” Karen participated in our Backyard Habitat workshop facilitated by Punto Verde, our environmental education partners from Nuevo Leon, last year. She applied what she learned and planted the yard of their new home in ALL native plants. It is spectacular and so beautiful! Thanks, Karen, for putting into action the knowledge gained from our workshop and being an inspiration to your neighbors and us. Congratulations!



The PROBEA/Binational Education staff would like to extend to you our warmest wishes for a glorious and abundant new year. We are grateful for our relationships with you and thank you for your continued support. May 2006 be filled with good health, fulfilling work, prosperity, peace and love.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Doretta

Exciting News!

Watershed Curriculum

PROBEA's new workshop, "¿Qué me cuentas de la cuenca?" (What Can You Tell Me about Your Watershed), presents watershed dynamics and themes such as the water cycle, habitats, biodiversity and the effects of humans on the watershed. Under development, the curriculum is based on the CD-rom, a multi-agency project completed in 2003, a video and resource guide developed by PROBEA last year, and will train educators how to use them as educational tools. All workshop participants will receive the new curriculum, as well as the CD-rom, video and resource guide. Workshops are scheduled for January in Tijuana and February in Ensenada. If you are interested in participating or would like more information about the workshop and/or the materials, please contact Karen at klevyszpiro@sdnhm.org.

Schoolyard Habitats

PROBEA conducted a Schoolyard Habitats workshop in the Sonora region, partnering with Punto Verde who facilitated the training (Azucena Garza and Roberto Navar) and the Ponguinguiola Foundation, our partner organization in Ciudad Obregón, to train teachers in how to involve their students in creating, and caring for a natural habitat in their schoolyard. The native plants of these gardens attract wildlife (birds, butterflies and other small creatures) and provide food, shelter, water and a place to raise the young for this wildlife.



Schoolyard Habitats is a program of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). PROBEA will assist qualifying participants to obtain a NWF certificate when their gardens are established.

Through a grant received from Fundación TELMEX in partnership with PRONATURA we facilitated a variety of workshops in the Sonora region, such as *Ocean Oasis* earlier this year and Schoolyard Habitats in November. Also through our collaboration with PRONATURA we supported the reproduction of PRONATURA's Wetlands curriculum in the region, as well as the implementation of conservation projects.



Wyland Foundation

PROBEA, the Wyland Foundation and International Community Foundation (ICF) partnered to create a beautiful and exciting Wyland mural on the Malecón in La Paz, BCS. To accomplish this mega project PROBEA's La Paz coordinator, Conchita Sánchez, provided leadership for the project, securing the site, managing all aspects of the project and insuring the completion of the mural.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS*

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
“Visitas Ecológicas “ Workshop for Promotoras, Ecoparque 3000	Jan. 12, 19, and 26	Tijuana, BC
“¿Qué me cuentas de la cuenca?” (What Can You Tell Me about Your Watershed) (3 sessions)	Jan. 21, 28 and Feb. 18	Tijuana, BC
Eighth Annual Meeting of the Grupo Tortuguero	Jan. 27–29	Loreto, BCS
Visitas, Ecoparque 3000	Jan. 30–Jun 9	Ecoparque, Tijuana, BC
“¿Qué me cuentas de la cuenca?” (What Can You Tell Me about Your Watershed) (3 sessions)	Feb. 4, 11, and 25	Ensenada, BC
School and Community Gardens Workshop	Feb. TBD	Fundación Esperanza Tijuana, BC
Meeting EECC/CEAC	Feb. 21	Tijuana River Estuary Imperial Beach, CA
Spring Festival	Mar. 24	Ecoparque, Tijuana, BC
Day of the Child Festival	Apr. TBD	Ecoparque, Tijuana, BC
Aquatic Adventures Binational Clean-up Event “Mission Possible”	Apr. 29	Parque de la Amistad Playas, Tijuana, BC
Meeting EECC/CEAC	May 16	CETYS, Tijuana, BC
World Environment Day	Jun. 5	Ecoparque, Tijuana, BC

***Dates subject to change.**

For more information, please contact Karen Levy-Szpiro klevyszpiro@sdnhm.org

San Diego Natural History Museum

619.255.0228

Programs

PROBEA implements a new curricula: “Household Hazardous Substances”

How can we tell which household substances pose a threat to our health and to the environment? And how can we safely use and store them? Or better yet, what safe alternatives exist?

PROBEA’s Household Hazardous Substances workshop, based on our newly completed curriculum, made possible through a grant from US EPA, Region 9, answers all these questions and more. Through hands-on activities, participants learn to identify which products are dangerous, how they can cause harm to humans and to the environment and how to properly store and dispose of them. And finally, participants actually prepare safe alternatives, such as window cleaner and insecticide.



Araceli Fernández and Judy Ramírez—with logistical support from Karen Levy-Szpiro and Alejandra Vargas—facilitated trainings in Ensenada and Tijuana. In Ensenada, 17 educators attended a workshop hosted by the Centro Educativo Tipai. In Tijuana, 29 Fundación Esperanza *promotores*, volunteer community workers, attended a one-day training, and then implemented selected activities with their families. In a follow-up session, they shared their experiences and clarified questions. Both groups expressed their appreciation in receiving this very important information and their intention to immediately apply what they learned to their home environments. In the fall, teachers will deliver the curriculum to their classes, and the *promotores* will share the information with their communities.

“We All Take Care of Water” Follow-up Workshop

In 2002, PROBEA created a workshop to train *promotores* of Fundación Esperanza in Tijuana to carry a message about domestic water use and conservation to community members. Since then, *promotores* have been visiting families to share such things as where their water comes from, how they can ensure that their drinking water is clean and how they can conserve water. In September 2005 Araceli Fernández and Judy Ramírez—with logistical support from Heidi Sánchez from Fundación Esperanza de México—facilitated a follow-up workshop to provide training that included hands-on activities to demonstrate how much water we use for various activities and a “water meter” to measure how much water we consume at home. In addition, *promotores* deepened their learning about how to work together in teams to present the information to community members. Since there are many *promotores* new to the program, they will attend a follow-up workshop provided by Fundación Esperanza on how to use their materials in presentations, as well as the presentation content. All 29 *promotores* in attendance are enthusiastic about communicating their important water message to the community.

ESCAI Program



It is always a challenge to incorporate environmental education into the high school curriculum. On the other hand, there currently is a lot of pressure to fulfill the need to create an “environmental culture.” We know that taking an environmental science course is not enough. To respond to this need, CETYS Universidad, Tijuana campus began the **ESCAI** Program in April 2002. The objectives of the program are: (a) Raise awareness about water quality, (b) Encourage student participation in a common project, and (c) Promote a work

environment that fosters the development of an interdisciplinary scientifically rigorous project. At present, teaching-learning processes have obstacles that include the difficulty to understand the reality we live in, consumerism, rejecting values such as effort and perseverance. The speed of modern life snatches away our ability to reflect and this is the reason why we, at CETYS, strive to find alternatives to address science studies.

In February 2002, with *PROBEA*'s support and their generous loan of 19 water-quality monitoring kits containing an observation manual and field tests, Argelia Teón, Claudia L Flores, Octavio Cárdenas and I were trained to use the kits and wrote a proposal to:

"...Undertake a study of the water quality at the CETYS water treatment plant. The invitation is open to students taking the subjects of chemistry in the 2nd semester of their freshman year, ecology and environmental education in the 4th semester of their sophomore year, Selected chemistry topics or selected ecology topics in the 2nd semester of their senior year. The group of participating students shall not exceed 25..."

At the beginning of the program we were expecting three to five students. However, the response was overwhelming and by April 2002 we had a group of 28 participants and four teachers. In October 2002 we had 53 students, in April 2003, 15 students; 31 in October 2003 (some of them from Secundaria # 51), nine during May and October of 2004 and 2005.

In October of 2004 and 2005 we also participated as co-organizers of the binational events Snapshot Day and World Water Monitoring Day, coordinating efforts with other students from the Preparatoria Lázaro Cárdenas, Preparatoria UIA, CONALEP, and Preparatoria CETYS Universidad, Tijuana campus. Again the support provided by *PROBEA*, as well as Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental, Sister Schools of San Diego, Baykeeper San Diego and the Coalition for Watershed Studies (CAS) in San Diego was invaluable. The event took place on October 15, 2004, at the Casa de la Cultura in Playas de Tijuana with 10 participating schools from the 8th National CAS Meeting, and students from CONALEP II and High Tech High International in San Diego. A total of 130 individuals counting students, teachers and exhibitors participated in the event.

In August of this year we decided to participate in an event organized by the National Water Commission "Towards the World Water Forum" which took place in Mexicali on September 22, 2005. This event calls for recording successful actions and experiences to be presented at the "Fifth World Water Forum" (March 2006 in Mexico City).

PROBEA participates in EECC project



After three years of planning and lots of work, the Environmental Education Council for the Californias (EECC) completed the first phase of one of its most ambitious and important projects—producing the Catalog of Significant Ecological and Educational Sites—which has as its main objective to offer general guidelines for field trips based environmental education on both sides of the San Diego/Baja California border.

To introduce teachers to the catalog, the EECC organized a workshop and field trip to the Punta Banda estuary in Ensenada, Baja California. The program was designed and facilitated by Araceli Fernández with logistical support from Karen Levy-Szpiro, as well as Kama Dean and Lindsey Peavey from Pro-peninsula, another EECC member organization.

The workshop took place on October 1, 2005, with 24 K–12 teachers from San Diego, Tijuana and Ensenada. Twenty volunteers participated as co-facilitators of the workshop and field trip. This extraordinary team was comprised of biologists, teachers and graduate students from the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC), as well as members of conservation groups such as Pro-esteros, PRONATURA, the Tijuana River Estuary, and a Montessori teacher. At the beginning of the event, both teachers and volunteers formed teams and, for the duration of the workshop, worked side by side doing the pre-, during- and post-field-trip activities of the curricula and using the interpretive trail as an educational tool. Educators also had the opportunity to learn and practice the general guidelines for field-trip-based environmental education. These guidelines encourage teachers to take their students on field trips, insuring the success of the learning experience.

At the end of the workshop and field trip, participants were tired but very happy and, according to their comments, totally convinced of the educational benefits offered by the Catalog of Ecologically and Educationally Significant Sites. They are more than aware now that this is an important tool for using the environment as an outdoor classroom and integrating all the subjects of their formal education programs. This undoubtedly points to the successful achievement of the goal set forth by the EECC.

Each educator received a catalog to share with others and made a promise to bring their students to Punta Banda at least once. The EECC will be in contact with all the participants in the workshop and will offer follow-up support so that in six months time, those who kept their promise can get their diploma.

PROBEA congratulates all the teachers and volunteers as well as the EECC for working so enthusiastically in supporting environmental sustainability through environmental education.

Environmental Education, Training and Communication Plan for Baja California (PECCA BC)

Environmental education in Baja California is coming to the top of stakeholder agendas. Mexico's environmental protection agency and its educational arm (SEMARNAT/CECADESU) and the State Office of Ecology (Dirección General de Ecología del Estado) are working with other agencies and non-governmental organizations to design the Environmental Education, Training and Communication Plan for Baja California (PECCA BC). The plan will link efforts and take advantage of existing assets of formal and informal education.

A follow-up committee consisting of environmental education experts from the social, academic and environmental sectors will design the plan. The content is mainly from information gathered in public forums conducted in each of the municipalities, as well as the result of document research and interviews of important stakeholders.

The Environmental Education Needs Assessment is ready, and the follow-up committee is working on the strategic action to be completed before the end of the fiscal year. PROBEA has been present in several of the meetings. We have contributed to design the PECCA BC to the end that Baja California's environmental education plan include the environment as an integrating element of learning.