

Expanding the Cerro Prieto-Cerro de La Luz reserve, Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, Querétaro, México.

Organization: Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda I.A.P. (GESG)

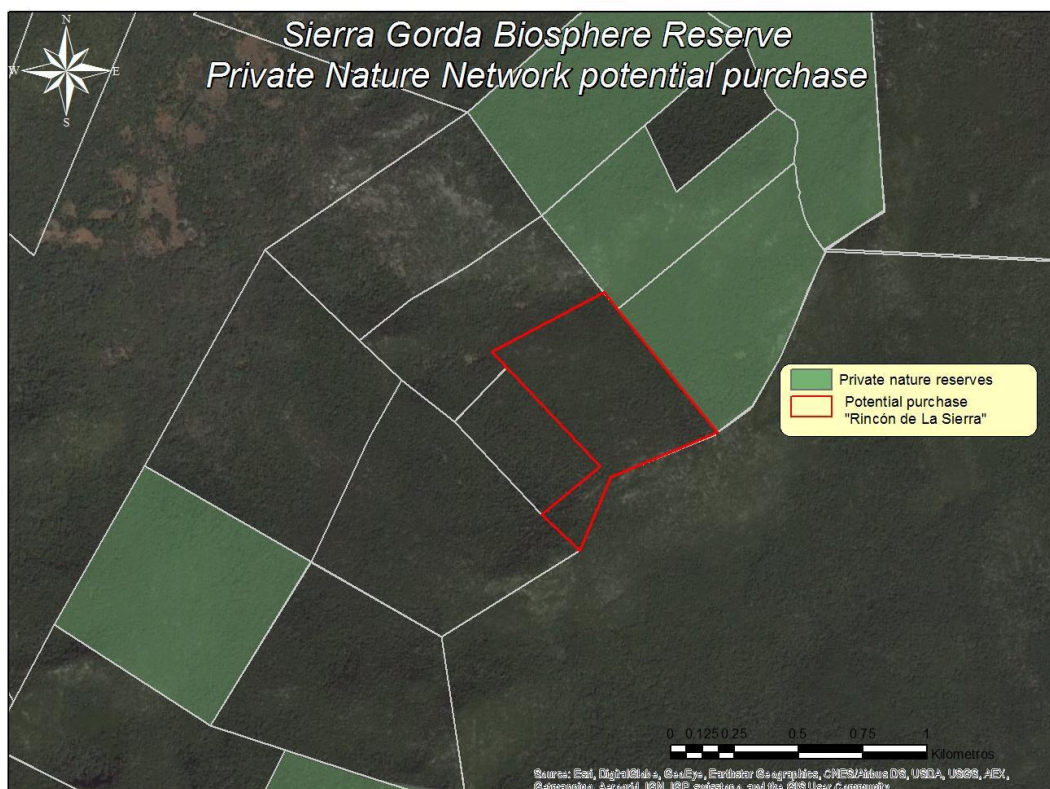
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In March, 2016 GCBO awarded a Tropical Forest Fund Forever grant of \$11,000 to **Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda** – our fifth grant in support of the long-range plan to protect all of the ecosystems of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. This is an 86 acre acquisition expanding the network of properties held in conservation by the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve.

The property most recently purchased, “Rincón de la Sierra”, is located in the southern border of the Cerro Prieto-Cerro de la Luz reserve, previously purchased with support of the World Land Trust and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in 2014. El “Rincón de la Sierra” property is covered with a very unique cloud forest, at an average altitude of 6,800 ft. It is dominated by white cedars (*Cupressus lusitanica*), a highly valued logging species, as well as pines (*Pinus greggii*, *P. teocote*), (*Quercus affinis*, *Q. laurina*, *Q. mexicana*). Because of its location, most of the year the area receives high humidity from the Gulf of Mexico, thus creating a cloud forest that harbours an incredible amount of bromeliads, mosses, orchids and surprisingly, agaves, that thrive in that very wet environment.

The carst and limestone are well developed in the area, so water infiltration occurs immediately and no surface water is available. Although no wildlife surveys have been conducted in the area, puma and jaguar tracks and scat are found regularly. Their presence speaks of the conservation state of the area. Avian species present are Magnificent, White-eared, and Bumblebee Hummingbirds, Mountain Trogon, woodcreepers, euphonias, and Brown-backed Solitaires. Neotropical migrants include Townsend’s, Wilson’s, Black and White, Grace’s, Black-throated Green and Hermit Warblers, Ovenbirds, Hepatic and Summer Tanager, House Wren, and Swainson’s Thrush, among others.





Old growth cedars
with a healthy
bromeliad
community



Bumblebee
Hummingbird – a
rare resident

About our Mexico Partner:

In 1996, **Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda (GESG)** initiated the operation of a network of private nature reserves, via their Joya del Hielo A.C. Foundation. Creating, that year, the very first reserve and placing it under strict protection sites of high biological value among the territory of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve (SGBR). In 1997 the region was decreed a Biosphere Reserve: 33% of the state of Querétaro, 383,567 hectares which are now under management for conservation. It is the only reserve in the country that has been generated from the bottom up. With the support of GESG members, local donors, Mexico City conservationists, The Netherlands IUCN National Committee, the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, and the World Land

Trust (UK). This strategy has been very effective in protecting areas where economic activities (cattle ranching, logging or clearings for agriculture) were common place. To date GESG has been able to protect 5,200 ha, (12,844 acres) covered with cloud, temperate and tropical forest, all of them in the eastern ridge of the SGBR, so tracts of an important biological corridor have been protected, ensuring continuity of forest cover for a number of species, including jaguar, Military Macaw, Great Curassow and Bearded-wood Partridge.