

# Strengthening Conservation in Mexico's Alma Hermosa Estuary

## Progress Report – June 2007



Since July 2006, the Wild Wonders Charitable Foundation has generously assisted the Green Woods Society (GWS) in our work to establish a visitors' center in Mexico's Alma Hermosa Estuary. This center, at the heart of our outreach and education program in the estuary, will provide first-hand exposure to the incredible richness of Alma Hermosa, enriching the public appreciation that is central to conserving this jewel of the Gulf of California. We are deeply grateful for the foundation's generosity, and look forward to sharing the completed center with you later this year.

As of our last report in January 2007, we were laying the proper groundwork to begin construction on the center. That report detailed some hurdles to progress, which we have now overcome. Our previous report also described our activities that complement those funded by the Wild Wonders Charitable Foundation, such as creating a trust fund for conserving the estuary, publishing a field guide, and submitting small-grants proposals to the National Protected Areas Commission (CONAP). This report details our progress on the visitors' center and related activities in Alma Hermosa Estuary.

### Progress Update

#### 1. Construction of the Visitors' Center

We will break ground on the visitors' center site during the first week of July. We have filed all necessary permits, and have received all of the required state and municipal authorizations.<sup>1</sup> During the last week of May, we began preparing the construction site, including transplanting important vegetation; hiring and training construction workers; and marking the site details, for instance the location of the road from the highway to the visitors' center. Construction is projected to take place from June to September:

Construction Calendar for Phase I Construction							
Activity	2007						
	June	July	Aug	Sep			
Site preparation and construction of platform	■	■					
Excavation and preparation for cement work		■					
Erecting walls and supporting columns			■	■	■	■	
Installing water and sanitation systems and constructing roof					■	■	■

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1. Favorable environmental impact statement, municipal construction license, and soil use license.

Progressing to this stage of the project is a great accomplishment—as described in our last report, complications delayed obtaining the permits required to begin construction. We overcame these hurdles by selecting a new site for the visitors’ center in an area that already met all of the state’s ownership requirements.

A further complication arose because the new land is not as level as the prior site, and therefore required some modifications to the building plans. The plans now include the construction of a platform to provide a level surface to support the visitors’ center.

During the construction phase, GWS and partners will raise the funds to build perimeter fencing, a parking area, an access ramp to the center, and an entryway to the park. We will also seek funds to support security personnel for the center.

To take advantage of public interest in the building phase, we will scale-up our education and communications efforts. With funding from CONAP, the Alma Hermosa administrative oversight committee (of which GWS is a part) will hire a park guide to educate visitors about activities at the site and the conservation importance of the area. GWS will lead the communications campaign, updating the media on the progress of construction.

## 2. Alma Hermosa Estuary Conservation Initiative

We are undertaking an array of activities to make sure the Alma Hermosa Estuary is sustainably protected. GWS and our partners are seeking National Monument status for the estuary from the Mexican government. We put the process in motion by submitting a “justification study” of the estuary as required by law, the cost of which was covered by CONAP.

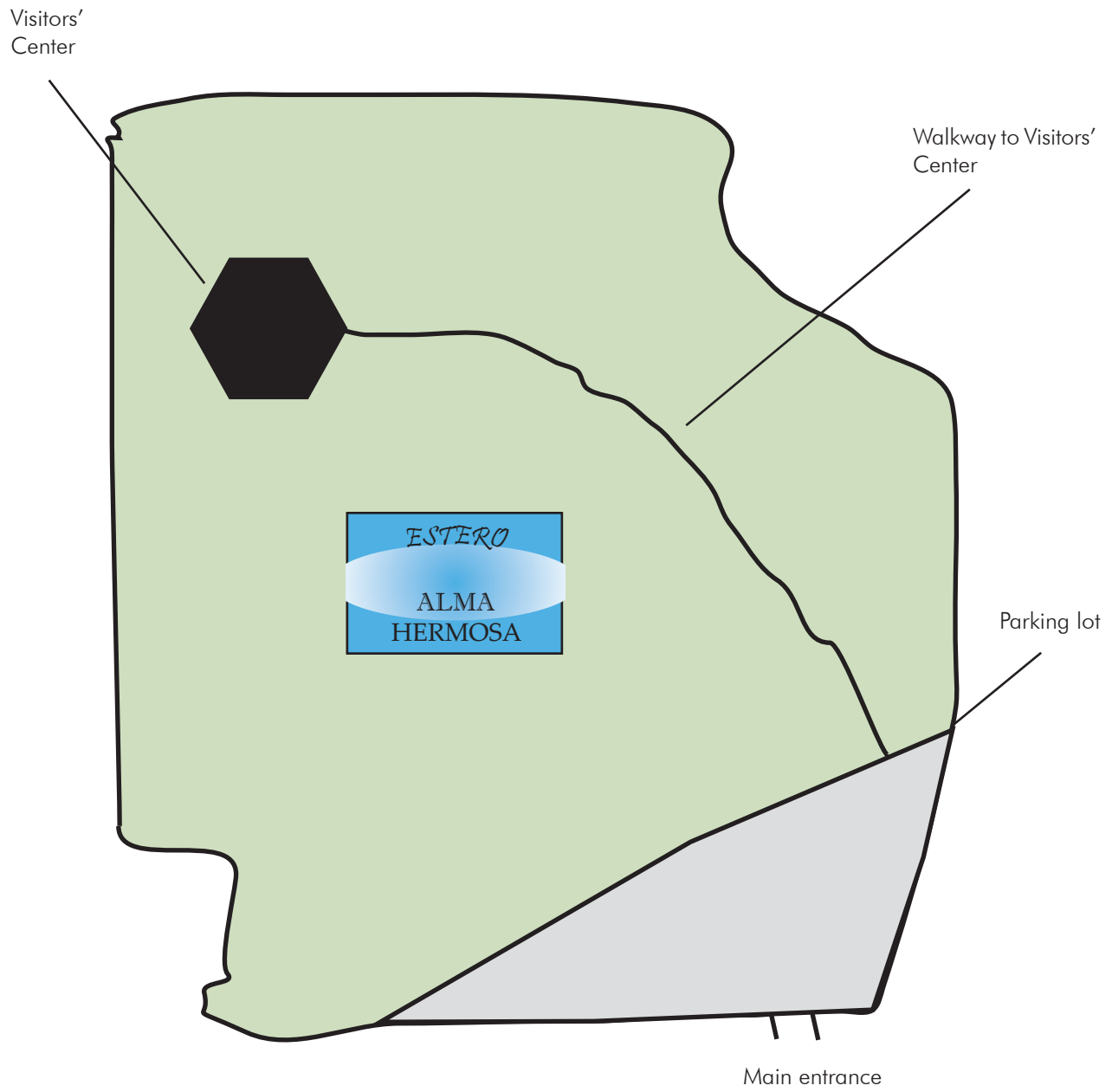
CONAP is also supporting project activities through the small-grants program on conservation and sustainable development (PROCOCODES). PROCOCODES awarded the Alma Hermosa administrative oversight committee \$10,000 to monitor and protect important species in the estuary; produce publicity materials; and build staff capacity in scenic interpretation. Additionally, the State Tourism Commission has provided and will install 30 signs in the protected area.

## Conclusion

We are very pleased to finally be launching the construction of the visitors’ center. We anticipate that the construction covered by the Wild Wonders Charitable Foundation grant will be finished by early fall, and look forward to sending you an update on our progress in October.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to conserve this ecological gem of the Gulf of California.





## Layout of Visitors' Center and Parking Area

## Financial Statement

### Summary of Expenses January 2007–June 2007

	BUDGET	EXPENSES	BALANCE
<b>SALARIES</b>			
Director	\$3,000.00	\$3,090.55	\$-90.55
Technical Coordinator	2,000.00	1,900.20	99.80
Public Relations Coordinator	2,000.00	1,950.05	49.95
Administration Coordinator	1,500.00	1,490.98	9.02
Operations Coordinator	1,500.00	1,300.67	199.33
<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>			
Construction Design and First Phase Construction	60,000.00	29,989.10	30,010.90
<b>OFFICE EXPENSES</b>			
Phone, Rent, Transportation, etc.	5,000.00	5,300.25	-300.75
<b>MATERIALS FOR EXHIBITS</b>			
Printing, advertising	5,000.00	4,155.59	844.41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80,000.00</b>	<b>\$49,177.39</b>	<b>\$30,822.61</b>