

## Conserving a unique transboundary ecosystem



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### The business case

As part of its corporate responsibility, CEMEX has long recognized the importance of protecting the biodiversity of our planet. It has therefore conducted a multi-stakeholder, long-term transboundary conservation initiative along the Mexico and US border over ten years, thus helping to protect the region's biodiversity.

### The issue

#### Protecting an extraordinarily biodiverse region

CEMEX is a global building materials company that provides high quality products and reliable service to customers and communities throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Its operations network produces, distributes, and markets cement, ready-mix concrete, aggregates, and related building materials in more than 50 countries, and it maintains trade relationships with more than 100 nations.

In addition to the responsible land management related to its extractive operations, CEMEX is engaged in several programs for the broader conservation of nature. A key program that helps raise awareness of and advance biodiversity conservation among a broad cross-section of stakeholders is the El Carmen Transboundary Conservation initiative, located in the El Carmen-Big Bend region (*map*).



This region represents one of the most unique and diverse ecosystems in North America, consisting of a large Mexico – US transboundary ecological corridor vital for bird and mammal migration. The region is a series of mountain ranges surrounded by lowland desert ("sky islands"). These mountain ranges are located in the Madrean pine-oak woodlands, recognized as a biodiversity hotspot. Moreover, the desert lowlands are part of the "Greater Chihuahuan Desert," recognized by the WWF's Global 200 ecoregions.

The El Carmen ecosystem was heavily exploited by logging, mining, and overgrazing in a non-sustainable way for more than 100 years, resulting in habitat and biodiversity loss. During the late 1990s, CEMEX realized the importance of the area's biodiversity, and the necessity to conserve this exceptional transboundary ecosystem.

### The response

#### A multi-stakeholder initiative to protect the region

For 10 years, the company has been working in El Carmen with a long-term commitment that has been growing over the years. The initiative uses scientific research and proven habitat and wildlife management practices to restore and protect the landscape. One of the priority efforts has been the restoration of native wildlife and its habitat. Since the beginning of the initiative, domestic livestock was removed to allow lands to rest, interior fences were taken up allowing wildlife freedom of movement, water systems for wildlife are continuously being developed, and native grasslands are being restored, as part of the comprehensive management plan. Other significant efforts include the restoration of large mammal species, such as desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) and pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*), which had been locally extinct for more than 50 years. The El Carmen staff also provide guidance on habitat and wildlife restoration to its neighboring private landowner partners. El Carmen has now become a new generation conservation model, comprising a unique partnership between the company, the government, private landowners, NGOs, universities, and other stakeholders.

## The results

### A “win-win” initiative- good for the environment, good for the company

Today, the El Carmen area of participation encompasses approximately 200,000 hectares consisting of CEMEX land and other private landowners on both sides of the Mexico-US border, and has contributed to the protection of the whole region’s exceptional biodiversity. Current results of the baseline inventory in the area indicate more than 500 species of plants, 290 species of birds, 80 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 81 species of mammals; many of them are endemic and/or critical for the region’s biodiversity conservation.



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As a result of the implementation of El Carmen initiative, wildlife populations have increased to more stable levels. Examples of this are: the desert mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), the carmen mountain’s white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus carminis*), javelina (*Pecari tajacu*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), and wild turkey, of (*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*) which populations have increased more than five times during the past 10 years.

The initiative demonstrates CEMEX’s commitment and hands-on expertise in land management and biodiversity conservation. It helps CEMEX build relationships with leading global conservation organizations, universities, governments and communities. These partnerships provide strategic guidance, improve CEMEX’s understanding of biodiversity issues, and help the company better address them on a global and local level.

Also the El Carmen Initiative will give CEMEX the opportunity to participate in emerging markets for carbon sequestration and watershed protection in the near future.

Further information on the case can be found on the following site: [www.cemex.com/su/Su\\_ow\\_cc.aspx](http://www.cemex.com/su/Su_ow_cc.aspx)

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

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