

ONE FUTURE

Together, We Find a Way.



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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN

The Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef

A Biocultural Legacy From Land to Sea

The Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef harbor biological and cultural treasures. Spanning Mexico, Guatemala and Belize, the region is mesmerizing with its vast tropical jungles, white sandy beaches and vibrant coral reefs – all interlinked by underground rivers that emerge as dazzling pools of freshwater dotting the landscape.

Generous resources gave rise to the wise and mighty Mayan civilization. Today, its descendants continue giving the region cultural and spiritual meaning. Nature is the bedrock of their community livelihoods, while a regional economy depends directly on a burgeoning tourism industry captivated by the region's plentiful and distinct natural features.

Nature Under Threat

Today, nature in the Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef faces competition from unsustainable human activities like agriculture, ranching, fishing, and tourism. Policies, financing and market opportunities that favor sound sustainable practices are limited. Meanwhile, time is running out as climate change generates water shortages, increased temperatures, and more frequent and extreme storms.

THE MAYA FOREST AND MESOAMERICAN REEF ICONIC PLACE

second

largest tropical forest
in the Americas

World's largest underground

river system

second

largest coral reef
system in the world

8 million

people (including 1.8M Mayans)



LATIN AMERICA'S ICONIC PLACES

Forging Ahead into A Decisive Decade

We are at a unique moment in time. We are facing the biggest, most complex challenges of our lives in the shape of unprecedented climate change and biodiversity loss. And that calls for our biggest, most ambitious plans—for people and nature. Our scientists have identified a suite of Iconic Places in the region that will show the world that a low-carbon, resilient future where people and nature thrive together, is possible. As we scale conservation in the The Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef — and all our Iconic Places — we can help the planet reach our shared climate, biodiversity and human wellbeing goals.

The Maya Forest is at a critical point. It loses some 81,000 hectares of forest every year. Accelerating deforestation threatens the region's ancestral way of life, fuels climate change and massively undercuts biodiversity – nature's vital and complex web of life. As for the Mesoamerican Reef, 80% of the region's live coral cover has already deteriorated, depleting the reef's power to protect the coastline against storms and diminishing its capacity to provide food and livelihoods.

A New Opportunity for People and Nature

Can the Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef continue providing food, water and resources to people without depleting its natural capital?

Our science says it can, through a new development paradigm that merges conservation, human wellbeing and economic prosperity. And by going beyond traditional conservation to balance the needs of people and nature across the region.

We are ready to leverage our in-place experience into sweeping transformational change. We know how to lead this transformation based on our record of regional successes.

30 Years of Successes

3.5 million
hectares protected

1.3 million
hectares sustainably managed

policy frameworks
guiding sustainable rural production

an insurance policy
to protect coral reefs

a fishing traceability tool
for sustainable ocean management



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Unlocking Natural Solutions

Ensuring a healthy future for the Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef requires a holistic approach that values and stewards nature alongside development that is inclusive, sustainable, regenerative and resilient to climate change.

TNC is brokering this shift by leveraging 30 years of partnerships and results on the ground, expanding access to nature-based solutions and activating key levers to unleash systems transformation that places the region on a truly sustainable path to a nature-positive economy. Our interventions span:

- **PROTECTION AT SCALE:** TNC is collaborating with partners to expand and improve management of 16.4 million hectares of PAs, equivalent to 34% of the Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef across lands, freshwater, and coastal and marine habitats.
- **SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS:** To support conservation, we must work where human activity pressures are highest; we are working with producers across the region to implement sustainable livelihoods (in farming, ranching, forestry, fishing, mariculture, etc.) that help enhance and regenerate nature.
- **INNOVATIVE FINANCE:** We are securing access to funding and leveraging innovative business models that favor sustainable production at a scale that can effectively promote landscape-wide ecosystem protection and restoration. This requires secure and innovative financing that can be a lever for greater and more durable protection; we are designing a Public-Private Tri-National platform to expand ecosystem protection and address transboundary issues like restoration, fire management, tourism, infrastructure, fishing, agriculture and livestock.
- **SUSTAINABLE POLICIES:** It also requires accelerating sustainable policies; we are planning a Policy Accelerator to shape effective environmental policy, legislation and incentives for sustainable livelihoods.
- **LOCAL GOVERNANCE:** Finally, to accelerate the transition towards sustainability, we must increase communities' capacities to protect, sustainably manage and defend their territories; we propose to set up a broad coalition of stakeholders including NGOs, banks, businesses and government agencies, to create an Accelerator for Territorial Solutions that would deliver large-scale, high-impact governance solutions (legal, administrative, market, organizational and technical capacities) to shift production practices and to strengthen local resource stewardship.



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Scaling Impacts, Changing the Future

We can ensure sustainability and resilience are woven through the very fabric of life in the Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef. Solutions that are beneficial to both nature and people are at our reach to achieve healthy ecosystems and thriving communities. If we can convene and work across sectors, we can scale these solutions to create a nature-positive future. As we hurtle towards a new decade in which climate change will make or break life as we know it, the region is ripe with potential to become a lighthouse for a new world standard of sustainable growth.

We have a grand-scale vision for 2030:

OCEANS

13.4 M ha of ocean protected or under improved management

LANDS

16.4 M of lands protected or under improved management

FRESHWATER

2.5 M ha of wetlands
38 K km of rivers protected, under improved management

PEOPLE

4.6 M people with place-based sustainable livelihoods

The Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef Needs the Best of Us

Together we can transform the systems that degrade nature into ones that restore and nurture it. We can show that it is possible to create a world where people and nature thrive.

But no one can do this alone. This movement requires care and connection from all of us. We need governments, industries, communities, nonprofits, and partners like YOU, to come together to achieve a bright future for our world.

The Maya Forest and Mesoamerican Reef can help lead the way, as we transform its bountiful forests and oceans into a lighthouse of conservation with development.

Join us in shaping the future of the planet



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Together, we find a way.

Fueled by diverse perspectives, a fiercely collaborative spirit and our relentless pursuit of solutions, we know that together we can overcome obstacles to progress and achieve our most ambitious plans yet.

We develop breakthrough tools and ideas.

When people face barriers, we provide the science, tools and partnerships to help break through.

We amplify local knowledge.

When Indigenous Peoples and local communities speak, we listen, learn, and support their conservation leadership.

We influence decision-making.

When change needs a champion, we work with governments, businesses and communities to scale solutions.

We forge new paths to funding.

When resources don't rise to the challenge, we create new financial solutions to get results.