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Development of Collaborative and Inclusive Restoration Plan for La Mar Grande, San Antonio Oeste in Argentina



About San Antonio Bay

- Founded in 1995, Fundación Inalafquen (FI) is based in San Antonio Oeste, Patagonia, Argentina.
- Led by women, FI focuses on environmental education, wetland conservation, and community-based restoration.
- The organisation is recognised for projects such as Wings of Shorebirds.
- San Antonio Bay, part of the San Antonio Bay Natural Protected Area (ANPBSA), hosts more than 18 shorebird species, including the endangered Rufa Red Knot.
- The bay is a vital nesting, resting, and feeding habitat for shorebirds and aquatic birds.
- In La Mar Grande, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and recreational activities like kitesurfing, have severely degraded dunes and native vegetation.

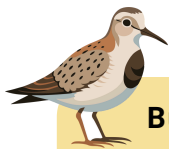
Objectives for Restoration

- Increase awareness of the ecosystem value of San Antonio Bay's flora and fauna.
- Promote conscious and responsible tourism.
- Involve citizens in the conservation of the areas.
- Collaborate with critical stakeholders like local NGOs, governments, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and artists.
- Finalise all phases of the restoration initiative

Restoration Plan: *Prerequisites before the restoration*

- Restoration target the most degraded dune zones, covering roughly 7 hectares.
- Combine social and ecological approaches, engaging communities in dune recovery.
- Mobilise volunteers through active outreach and a clear communication plan.
- Strengthen enforcement of the already regulated activities: sport fishing, hiking, kitesurfing, and the prohibition of motorised vehicles.
- Apply ecological techniques such as dune reconstruction, planting, sowing, sediment barriers, and enclosures.
- Support dune stabilisation through direct seeding and natural regeneration from the reference ecosystem.
- Frame restoration as an act of gratitude, emphasised shared responsibility and community stewardship.
- Track progress using ecological indicators alongside measures of social participation.
- Operate through individual and organisational components coordinated by a Volunteer Management Group.





Building baselines for the restoration plan

- Engagement with provincial and municipal authorities to incorporate the dune restoration plan into the political and institutional agenda.
- Engagement with the academic sector.
- Data collection carried out through the Oystercatcher Census, led by the women researchers of the Inalafquen Foundation.
- Completion of 2 workshops: i) Environmental Education with Gender Perspective, and ii) Shorebirds, Nature and Sustainable Tourism.



Fundación Inalafquen's achievements

- Advanced knowledge of coastal ecosystems.
- Strengthened social awareness and community participation.
- Influenced policies and built long-term collaborative networks.
- Women's active involvement highlighted through festivals and environmental education workshops.
- Foundation's long-standing community-led efforts, often without external funding, ensure sustainability.

Communications Plan: A Cornerstone of the Restoration Process

La Mar Grande's communication strategy distinguishes between different stakeholder groups, treating them not as passive audiences, but as future active participants whose actions directly shape the success of the restoration.



Read the full story in English and Spanish by Fundación Inalafquen

Recommendations

- Develop a strong communication plan engaging authorities, communities, private sector, and NGOs.
- Pair restoration with environmental education and awareness.
- Include local communities in design and implementation to ensure long-term success.
- Engage youth through education, art, and recreation.
- Integrate a human rights and gender perspective for equity and justice.
- Encourage voluntary participation to build shared responsibility and commitment.

For further information:

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