

HURRICANE RELIEF IN GUATEMALA

American Electric Power donates \$2m



¹ Nicole Ballof/ft. A scenic, mountainside view of Lake Atitlan and the Atitlan volcanic chain.

American Electric Power (AEP) is partnering with The Nature Conservancy to help protect approximately 22,500 acres in Guatemala through reforestation and conservation. Under this agreement AEP will provide \$2 million towards this effort and will work with the Conservancy to protect these areas over a two year period. This support is part of the Central America and Mexico Hurricane Relief Fund (CAMHRF) to reduce the harm created by hurricanes that have ravaged this area. In 2005, Hurricane Stan caused \$450M of damage in this area displacing communities as well as affecting the natural resource base.

Conservation in Guatemala

Guatemala is located between Mexico and Honduras and is approximately the size of Tennessee. The country has diverse landscapes with the expansive lowland Maya Forest in the north, the high Sierra Madre volcanic chain in the west, and the Motagua/Polochic system of cloud, tropical and dry forests in the east.

Unsustainable agriculture, unplanned development and unmanaged natural resource use are major threats leading to the loss of forest cover. This deforestation leads to soil erosion, silting, diminished watersheds and altered habitats. The Conservancy has been working with local partners to help decrease deforestation and the loss of the natural resource base, improve local conservation capacity and provide

long-term support to Guatemala's Natural Heritage.

Central America and Mexico Hurricane Relief Fund

The Central America and Mexico Hurricane Relief Fund (CAMHRE) is a US based public-private partnership to encourage financial donations for reconstruction in Central America and Southern Mexico. This was set up in the aftermath of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season which brought an unprecedented 13 storms. The fund will provide relief to over 850,000 people in Central America. Nearly \$4m has been raised so far towards Central America.

caused landslides. Indigenous communities lost homes, crops, productive capacity and in many cases the lives of community members. Reforestation efforts on the 1,500 acres will help protect watersheds and landslide prone areas, which, in turn helps protect the soil, water and other resources needed to live and produce in the Lake Atitlan area.



' Susan Ellis Young workers take a break from sorting coffee berries.

Conservation and Reforestation Efforts

The gift from AEP will help reforest and conserve 22,500 acres along the Sierra Madre Volcanic Chain. One component will help reforest 1,500 acres of critical watersheds in the Lake Atitlan region. The other will focus on conserving 21,000 acres on municipal, communal and private lands around Atitlan and along the volcanic chain during the next three years.

Lake Atitlan is a volcanic lake, which is a key section of the Sierra Madre range and is a major tourist area as well as agricultural area, producing some of the highest quality coffee in the world. Due to severe deforestation in the surrounding mountains the 2005 hurricane season was particularly damaging as inadequate forest cover

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