

ACOFOP

Association of Forest Communities of Petén

“ACOFOP’s Experiences in the
Sustainable Forest Management of
the Maya Biosphere Reserve,
Petén, Guatemala”

*Mr. Marcedonio Cortave
Executive Director*

Chewing Gum Peak (1940)

Background



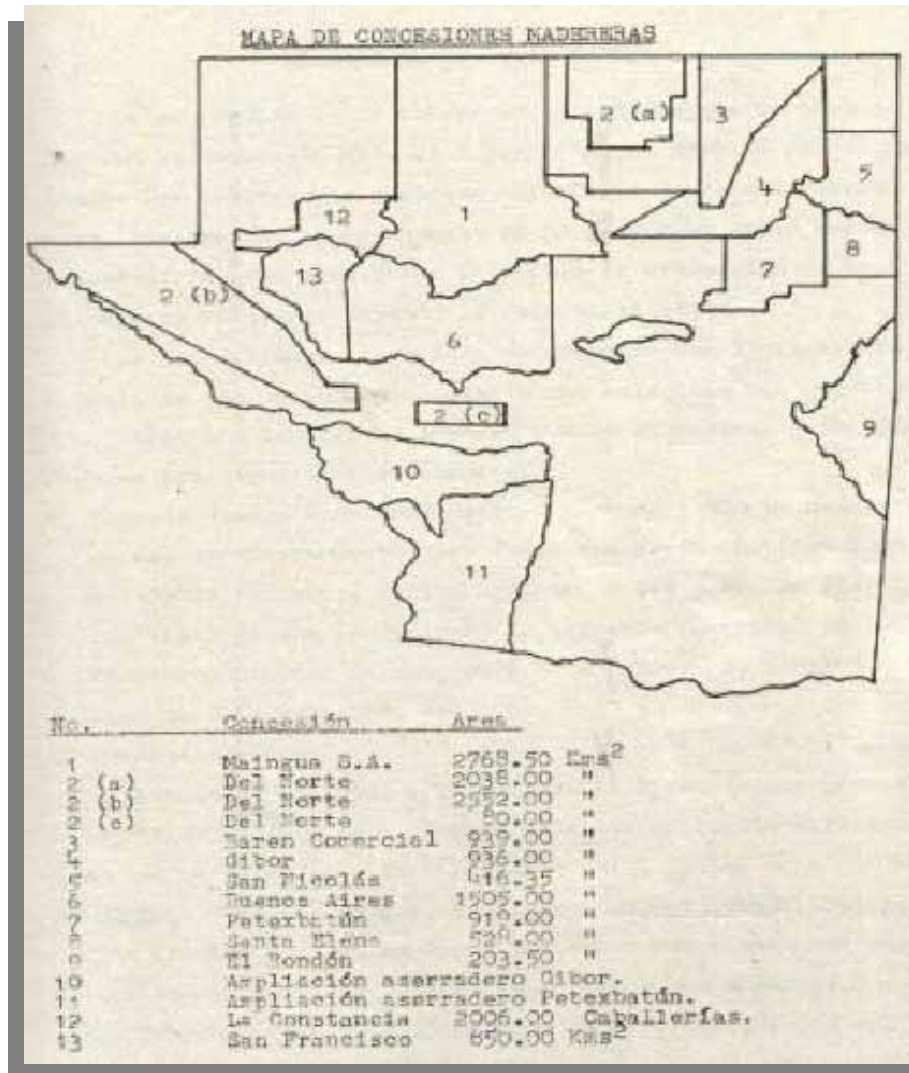
Colonization Policy (1960)

Background



FOREST CONCESSIONS FOR THE EXTRACTION OF MAHOGANY (1980'S)

Background

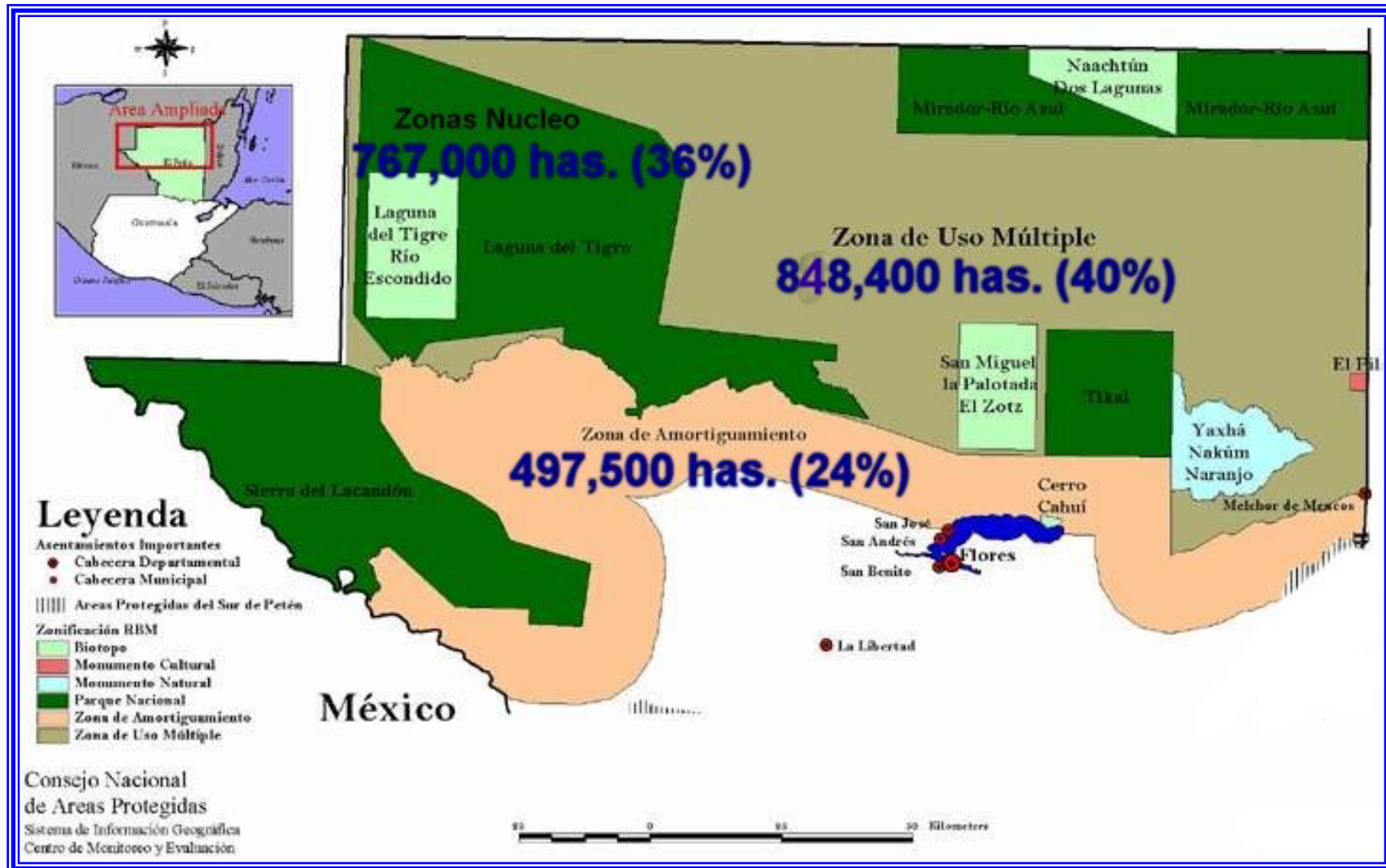


The Maya Biosphere Reserve (RBM)

Background

- **1989 creation of CONAP**
- **1990 creation of the RBM (2.1 million ha)**
- **1992 approval of Master Plan**

Reserva de Biosfera Maya: 2,113,000 has.



Objectives of the R.B.M



- **Conserve the biodiversity and the archaeological values**

- **Promote the sustainable use of natural resources**



INITIAL SITUATION IN THE RBM (1990-95)

- State of being ungovernable
- Deforestation and disorderly advancement of the agricultural front
- Illegal extraction of natural resources
- Sacking of archaeological monuments

STRATEGY



- Share and delegate the administration of the Zone of Multiple Use
- Allocation of **concessions** for “sustainable” use and management of renewable natural resources
- Combine conservation of biodiversity with local socioeconomic development.

Birth of ACOFOP



- **In 1995 the Association of Forest Communities of Petén “ACOFOP” was formed**
- **It is made up of 22 community organizations involved in the forest management of the RBM.**
- **Its Main Objective: Promote socio-economic development and the improvement of the quality of life of communities, by way of sustainable management of the Forest.**

Process Of Negotiation

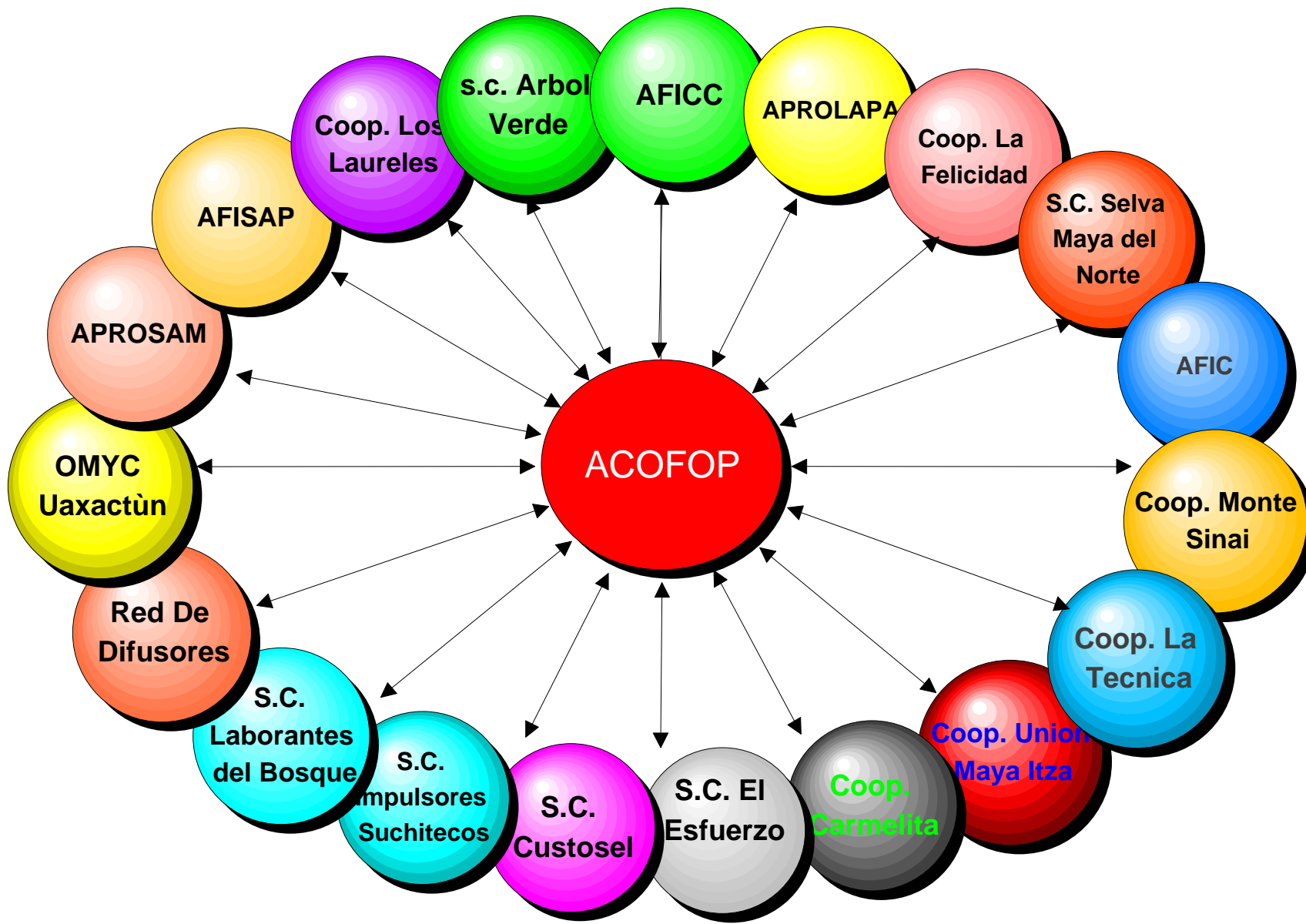
Negotiation between four sectors:

- **The industrial sector.**
- **The governmental sector.**
- **The NGO conservationist sector.**
- **The community.**

Strong Points Of Negotiation

- 1. Who should be given forest concessions?*
- 2. Are communities capable of managing a forest concession?*
- 3. What expanse should be given to the interior of the ZUM?*
- 4. What should be done about communities that were within the ZUM?*
- 5. How to avoid settlement of humans inside RBM?*
- 6. What is potentially worth pursuing?*

Asociacion de Comunidades Forestales de Petèn



Role of ACOFOP



Accompany communities to strengthen the Model of Community Management of Forest Resources.



Guarantee the **Connectivity** of community organizations, of their experiences and their leaders.



Representativeness, negotiation and impact

Execution of Activities of Forest Opportunities



Community Training



Strengthen the power and quality of local management



Respond to requests of the international market

Utilization of Non-Wood Forest Products



Non-timber harvests of leaves, wood, and fruit for local consumption



Medicinal plants and extracts

Non-timber harvests for manufacture and export



Development of the Business Abilities



COMMUNITY BUSINESS OF FOREST SERVICES S.A. “FORESCOM”



BENEFICIARIES

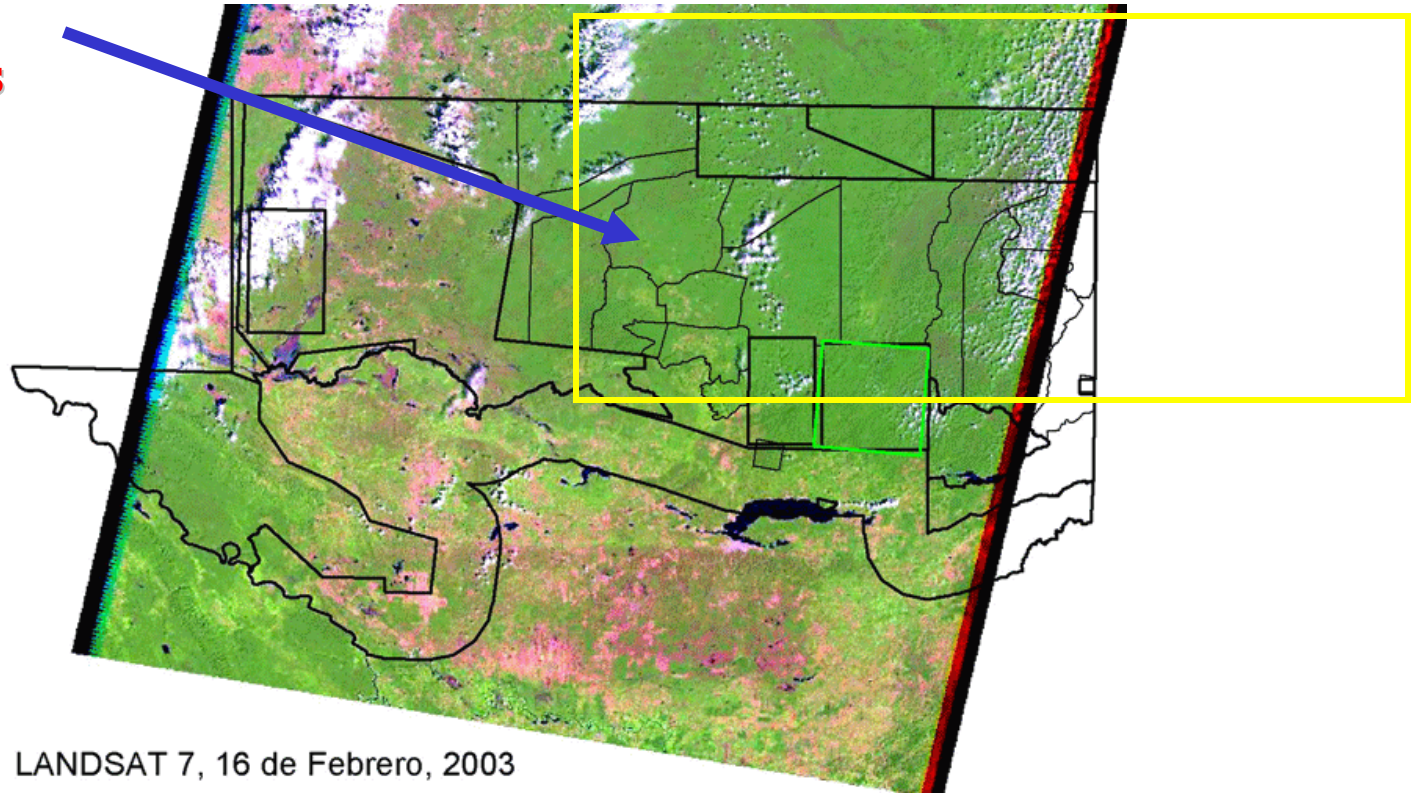
- More than **14,000** people benefitted directly by way of forest management.
- More than **70,000** people benefitted indirectly.

Achievements

- **449,829 has. Of forest in the hands of Communities**
 - **332,006 has. Of certified forest.**
 - **63,712.00 has. Of forest in the process of being certified.**
 - **54,111.00 has. Of forest to be certified.**

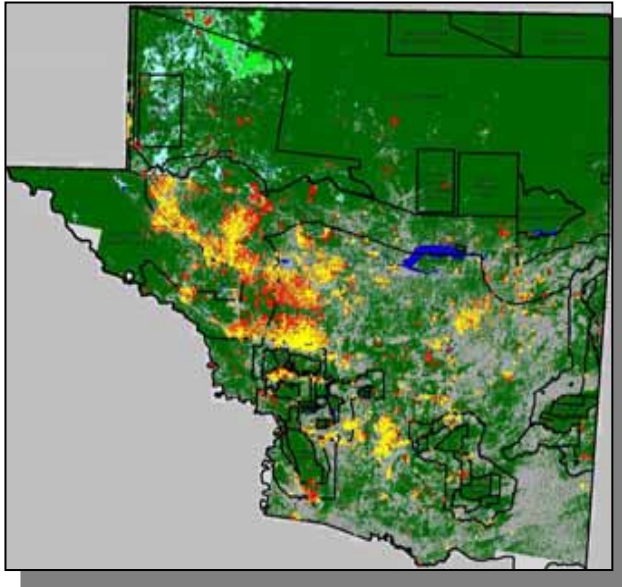
Control of Forest Fires

**Areas
Concessioned
to
Communities**



LANDSAT 7, 16 de Febrero, 2003

ACHIEVEMENTS



- **Territorial division of the ZUM**
- **Stop to immigration and advancement of the agricultural front**

Control of Illegal Removal



ACHIEVEMENTS

- *Community Forest Management generates more than 100 thousand day wages per year.*
 - *Salaries are above the minimum established by Law*
-

Development of social infrastructure





- *We've developed the technical abilities of the communities.*
- *In 2003 we generated in Taxes US\$ 387,000 to the State.*
- *We contributed US\$ 140,000 to combatting forest fires.*
- *We invested US\$ 136,000 in control and security.*



LOGROS



**Change of mentality
(from individualism to
community organizations)**



**Positive attitude in
respect to the forest**

Improvement in the Quality of Life by way of Sustainable Management



One of Our Best Methods of work: Exchange of Experiences



Weaknesses of the Process

- Below the level of education.
- Little entrepreneurial vision.
- Conflict of interests between members and leaders.
- Little involvement by women.
- Information and Communication Problems.
- Few commercial forest species.
- Little installed capacity to give added value.
- Limited capital for initial operations.
- Benefits of certification are too few in the short-term.
- Little consortial unity.
- Confusion from the guild aspect with the business of the organization.
- Little appropriation of the process by some members.
- Little organization to improve non-wood products.

National and International Interests (PPP)

Threats



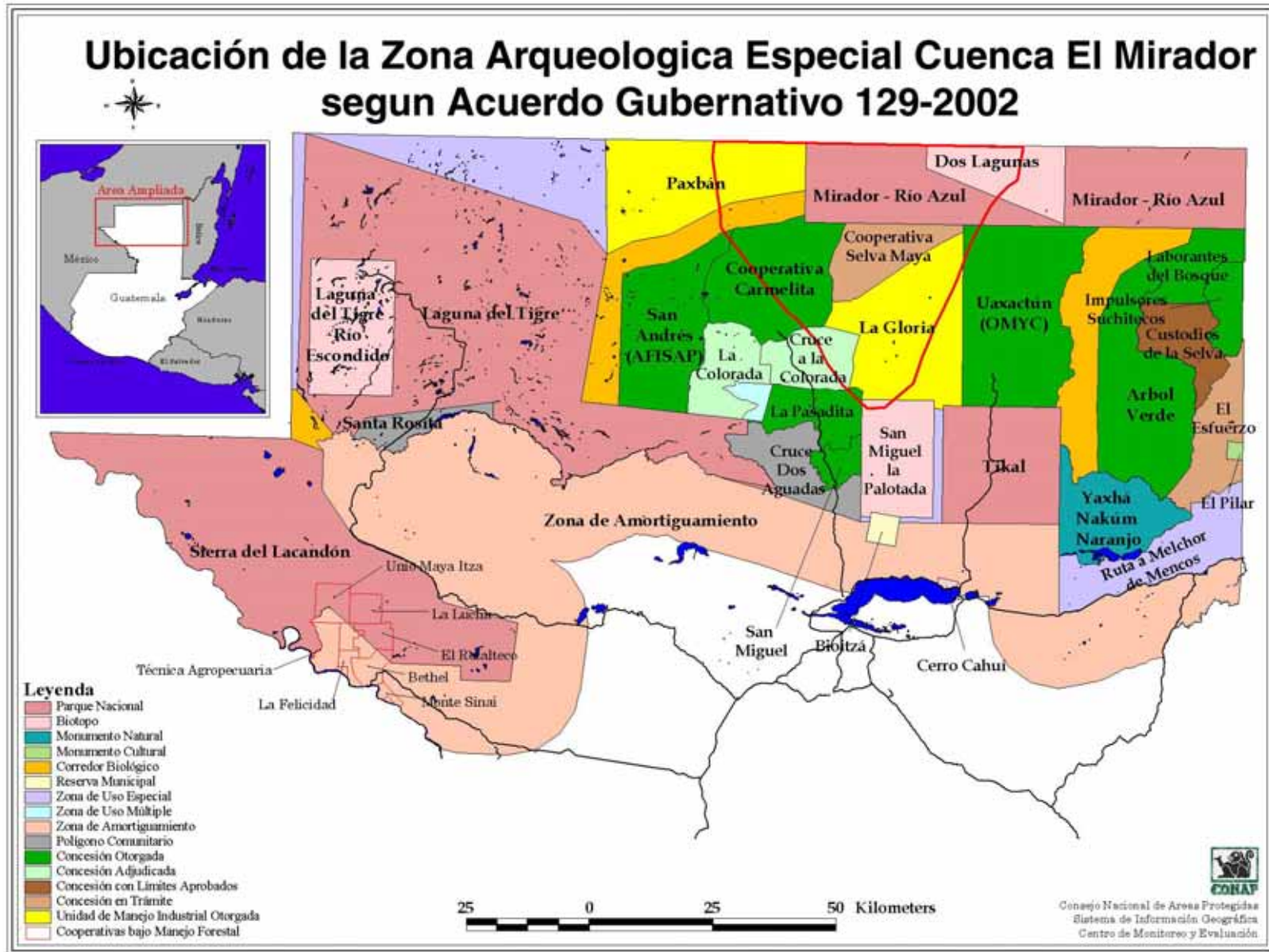
Other threats

Threats

- Conservationists against forest management
- Conditioning of institutions and donors.
- Institutional jealousies.
- Little vision by some technicians on social work.
- Contradictions between State policies.
- Political offerings distort the process.

Inadequate Policies

Threats



Priority Must be Given to Social Aspects

Lessons Learned



There is a Need to Accompany and Prepare in the Administration

Lessons Learned



Processes should not be Forced and
conflicts should be resolved with
special care

Lessons Learned



Reflection

Forest management in the Maya Biosphere Reserve is demonstrating that the most effective way to conserve forests is to involve the population in its management.

Forest Coverage 2003

*Community
Concessions*

