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Volume 26, Issue 3, July 2009, Pages 715-722

The complex reality of biodiversity conservation through Natural Protected Area policy: Three cases from the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2008.09.008>

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Abstract

The federal policy of Natural Protected Areas has become the main instrument for conserving biodiversity in Mexico. Established in territories representative of different ecosystems but also of cultural diversity, protected areas in Mexico have historically been created and managed with a centralized rationale, creating several conflicts with local communities over the use of natural resources. The country's approach to protected areas perfectly illustrates the complexities, difficulties and challenges entailed in biodiversity conservation. This paper develops a critical analysis of this policy instrument in Mexico, and analyzes three Natural Protected Areas in the Yucatan Peninsula. The authors discuss the results of the analysis and propose some recommendations for the future.

Peninsula: The Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, the Celest n Biosphere Reserve, and the Otoch Ma x Yetel Kooch Natural Protected Area. The case studies serve as examples of the most common difficulties that arise in Mexican Natural Protected Area policy: (1) uncoordinated public policies; (2) the usual conflict between environmental authorities and local people over the management of natural resources; and (3) the exclusion of local people's perspectives, values and beliefs in conservation policy development and implementation.



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Keywords

Natural Protected Areas; Calakmul Biosphere Reserve; Celest n Biosphere Reserve; Otoch Ma x Yetel Kooch; Yucatan Peninsula; Mexico

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