

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

Forest transformation modified the Quijos' ancient mountainscapes in three ways: scientific approximation, entrepreneurial investing, and community engagement. We concentrate the study in the Cumandá Protected Forest reserve as exemplar in the Quijos valley. Our objective is to understand forest transition trends and prospects of sustainability by answering qualitative research questions of impact on cloud forest vegetation from a socioecological standpoint. We used ethnographic work, personal interviews, surveys to the community, and queries to authorities; our qualitative methods included critical discourse analyses, onomastic interpretation, and matrix comparison for ecological legacies, focused on three sectors of the economy that we posit impacted these forests, all indicative of a more competitive, globalized framework: forest tourism, retreating forest frontier, and mining forested watersheds. We found that these sectors also helped alleviate poverty in local communities so that ecotourism, non-traditional forest product harvest, and subsistence mining of water could become stewards, despite the fact that such a nuanced approach has not yet been fully implemented by local governments. We conclude that Hostería Cumandá promotes new conservation narratives in positive ways, since it fuels grassroots organizations to incorporate nature conservation into restoration ecology efforts, provides studies on mountain forest species of concern in the area, generates local employment, and converts a transitory, ephemeral attraction into an international tourism destination.