Mexican Secretariat for Natural Resources Encyclopedia Article

Mexican Secretariat for Natural Resources

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Mexican Secretariat for Natural Resources

The Mexican Secretariat for Natural Resources (La Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales or SEMARNAT) is the government office in Mexico responsible for creating sound national environmental policy, reversing existing damage to the environment, and establishing programs for sustainable development. SEMARNAT oversees the management of natural resources and coordinates development with other agencies. It works to restore ecosystems while taking into account the social and economic needs for natural resources.

Environmental policy in Mexico began in the 1940s, but was often overshadowed by the push to industrialize the country. Little attention was given to protecting natural resources until the 1980s. At that point, the Mexican government created a series of agencies charged with protecting various natural resources. Finally, in November 2000, SEMARNAT was created to oversee the different agencies addressing environmental issues and establish national environmental policies.

In 2002 SEMARNAT and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established a program called Border 2012. It is designed to strengthen the management of the environment and resources along the 2,000-mile border between the United States and Mexico. The program calls for the open exchange of information relating to natural resource issues and pollution prevention along the border. Border 2012 also involves regional workgroups so that ancillary programs may be tailored to individual needs and problems at a regional and local level.

Internet Resources

"New U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program: Border 2012." Available from http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder.

SEMARNAT Web site. Available from http://www.semarnat.gob.mx./web_ingles.