



SJV COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH PLAN

Internal

In recognition of the need for a concerted communications, education, and outreach effort, the SJV has launched a website and a bimonthly, bilingual electronic newsletter, created fact sheets on pertinent issues in the SJV region, and published a number of articles about the SJV and SJV partner projects and programs for regional, national, and international publications. The next steps include initiating an education and outreach committee, producing a general SJV brochure, and creating SJV fact sheets. These fact sheets will include organizational information, details about the biological and cultural diversity and importance of the SJV region, and information about SJV partners. Other projects include creating and maintaining a contact database and maintaining the SJV website and e-bulletin.

External

The long-term success of the SJV depends on effective communication with and outreach to existing and potential partners, and the public. With the large size, biological complexity, and cultural diversity of the SJV region, regular communications are critical to the success of our mission. The binational nature of the SJV region adds to the complexity of creating and sharing communications and outreach tools and information effectively. With Mexico in particular, language barriers, staff turnover, unreliable mail delivery, and transient Internet connections all impede communications. The SJV has initiated a comprehensive external communications and outreach effort by publishing articles about the Sonoran Joint Venture in a variety of newsletters and magazines and creating fact sheets and white papers about important conservation issues facing the SJV region (published on the SJV website). Defined target audiences and a contact database help the SJV to better direct and focus communications, education, and outreach efforts.

In order for communications, education, and outreach efforts, tools, and materials to be used effectively, they must be available in the appropriate language (English or Spanish or both) for the target audience. Getting tools and information to target audiences in Mexico can also prove to be a difficult hurdle for many reasons. Staff turnover, unreliable mail delivery, and transient Internet connections, in particular, can hinder effective communications, education, and outreach efforts.

The principal SJV strategy will be to establish ties with organizations already doing communications, education, and outreach work in the region to encourage them to incorporate bird conservation information into their programs and projects. We will also assist them in promoting their work to a wider audience. In addition, the SJV will develop and distribute appropriate materials and opportunities where gaps exist and translate existing English-only resources into Spanish where needed/feasible.

GOAL: Develop communications, education, and outreach strategies that effectively communicate the biological, social, cultural, and economic value of birds and their habitats in the SJV region and encourage active stewardship.

Objective 1. Partners/Internal Communications: Improve the effectiveness of partner actions throughout the SJV region by establishing an Education and Outreach Program to communicate and exchange information about bird conservation issues.

Strategy 1. Present SJV goals, objectives, and program information at partners' meetings and events.

Task 1. Create general SJV PowerPoint presentation.

Task 2. Create SJV PowerPoint presentations focusing on specific aspects of SJV programs and projects.

Strategy 2. Improve internal communications among partners, including maintaining the listserver, website, and E-Bulletin.

Task 1. Update website monthly.

Task 2. Publish bilingual SJV E-Newsletter bimonthly.

Task 3. Invite SJV partners and others to subscribe to E-Bulletin (rather than bulk mailing via listserver).

Task 4. If needed and when feasible, create specialized electronic SJV Updates (science, education, etc.)

Strategy 3. With partners, provide (sponsor or facilitate) training opportunities for professionals and professional-track students. Training will include but not be limited to the following: conservation education, outreach, habitat management, and avitourism.

Task 1. Identify training needs.

Task 2. Start/continue discussions with potential partners (ABA, RARE Center).

Task 3. Assist with Partner-sponsored workshops/trainings where needed/feasible.

Strategy 4. Create and maintain contact database to facilitate communication with SJV target audiences.

Task 1. Work with SJV staff to determine fields to include in Access database.

Task 2. Create database.

Task 3. Enter all current and past SJV partners into database.

Task 4. With assistance of Technical Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, and Management Board, continue to enter appropriate contact information into database.

Strategy 5. Ensure the availability of SJV communications and outreach materials in Spanish.

Task 1. Work with Education and Outreach Committee to develop timely method for translating website, newsletter, and other communications and outreach materials.

Task 2. If necessary, provide funds to pay for translation.

Measurables:

1. Number of presentations given.
2. Number of website hits.
3. Number of newsletter subscribers.
4. Number of members of listserver.
5. Number of workshops/trainings facilitated/sponsored
6. Number of contacts in database.

Objective 2. Public/External Communications and Outreach: Inform our external audiences of SJV goals and objectives.

Strategy 1. Define SJV target audiences.

Task 1. Work with SJV staff, Management Board, and Technical and Education and Outreach Committees to define target audiences.

Task 2. Create contacts database and work with SJV staff, Management Board, and Technical and Education and Outreach Committees to populate database with members of various target audiences.

Strategy 2. Support the development and distribution of habitat-based materials.

Task 1. Determine what is currently available.

Task 2. Identify partner needs and gaps in knowledge.

Task 3. Create or support partners' creation of appropriate communications and outreach materials.

Strategy 3. Support existing communications and outreach programs that advance the mission of the SJV.

Task 1. Identify organizations and individuals that currently have communications and outreach programs.

Task 2. Identify areas for potential collaboration/cooperation.

Strategy 4. Develop and distribute communications and outreach materials to appropriate target audiences.

Task 1. Identify existing communications and outreach materials.

Task 2. Identify partner needs and gaps in communications and outreach materials.

Measurables:

1. Target audiences defined.
2. Materials developed and distributed, including a general SJV brochure.
3. Handbooks or other reference materials produced.
4. Number of handbooks/reference materials distributed.
5. Number of hits on website for web-based communications and outreach materials.
6. Amount of coverage of SJV issues in regional, national, and international mass media

Objective 3. Avitourism: Increase the number of birding trips to the SJV area and assist with improving the economic benefits of avitourism to local communities.

Strategy 1. Support and help publicize avitourism efforts of SJV partner organizations (articles in publications, SJV website.)

Task 1. Identify appropriate publications for article submission.

Task 2. Write and submit articles.

Strategy 2. Develop partnerships with other ecotourism organizations that can help facilitate conservation-based birding trips to the SJV region.

Task 1. Identify major bird-based ecotourism operators, U.S.-based bird guides, and others leading birding trips to Mexico.

Task 2. Identify birding destinations in SJV region (particularly in Mexico).

Task 3. Identify local bird guides at Mexican destinations.

Task 4. Identify lodging, food, and transportation information for Mexico destinations.

Strategy 3. Work with other organizations to provide ecotourism training opportunities for local communities and individuals interested in becoming birding guides.

Strategy 4. Develop web-based birding guides and checklists for different portions of the SJV region.

Task 1. Identify key people in Mexican states.

Task 2. Work with key contacts to create list of birding hotspots in each state.

Task 3. Identify SJV partner with ability to aid in map creation.

Task 4. Create web-based interactive map for each state.

Task 5. Post birding map on SJV website.

Strategy 5. Work with SJV partners to develop birding festivals in Mexican portion of SJV (Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California and Baja California Sur).

Task 1. Make contact with staff of existing birding festivals and review their strategies.

Task 2. Identify potential locations for birding festival in Mexico (SJV region).

Task 3. Look for funding sources.

Task 4. Communicate potential partners.

Strategy 6. Create and publish “Guidelines for Traveling in Mexico”. This resource, with a version to be created for government employees and a version for the general public, will be posted on the SJV website and available to anyone wishing to travel to Mexico.

Task 1. Revise existing draft.

Task 2. Layout existing draft.

Task 3. Publish guidelines on SJV website.

Strategy 7. Assist with finding/providing financial and technical support for SJV partners conducting avitourism (Awards Program, building relationships with other programs/funders).

Task 1. Identify potential funding sources for avitourism efforts.

Task 2. Work with SJV partners to develop and submit grants.

Task 3. Create revised SJV award program submission guidelines to focus on avitourism projects and programs.

Measurables:

1. Number of grants awarded supporting avitourism projects.
2. Number of articles published.
3. Number of training opportunities offered.
4. Number of hits to various parts of website (birding guides, Mexico travel guidelines)
5. Birding guides and checklists completed and posted on SJV website.
6. Mexico travel guidelines posted to website.
7. Number of proposals received/grants awarded.
8. Number of relationships started/grants received.

Objective 4. Identify and promote existing education materials and opportunities focused on habitats and birds in the SJV region.

Strategy 1. Create, distribute and regularly update a guide to existing education materials and programs focusing on birds, habitats, and conservation issues of the SJV region.

Task 1. Compile list of existing educational materials, programs, and organizations working in the SJV region or with materials that could be adapted for use within the SJV region.

Task 2. Post web-based guide of these materials/opportunities on the teacher and students section of the SJV website.

Strategy 2. Promote volunteer opportunities for members of the public.

Task 1. Contact SJV partners to determine volunteer needs.

Task 2. Create list of volunteer opportunities.

Task 3. Work with Master Watershed, Master Gardener, and similar groups to place volunteers with SJV partner projects.

Measurables:

1. Education materials guide created.
2. Number of volunteers involved in SJV projects.

Objective 5. Encourage the development of new educational materials focused on birds and habitats of the SJV region.

Strategy 1. Identify groups that have developed or are currently developing bird/SJV habitat-related conservation materials.

Strategy 2. Assist partners in the development of teacher workshops focused on the natural resources of the SJV region.

Strategy 3. Facilitate partnerships, funding, and technical expertise for established environmental education groups working in the SJV region.

Objective 6. Increase opportunities for partners and the public to become involved in bird conservation within the SJV region.

Strategy 1. With partners, provide (sponsor or facilitate) training to education professionals and professional-track students (teachers, environmental educators, interpreters, etc.) on conservation education and other topics relevant to the SJV region.

Task 1. With assistance from Management Board, Technical Committee, and Education and Outreach Committee, identify training needs for SJV partners.

Task 2. Identify potential funding sources for trainings/workshops.

Task 3. Cultivate partnerships with organizations such as the American Birding Association to facilitate trainings/workshops.

Task 4. Identify potential workshop leaders.

Task 5. Identify potential venues.

Strategy 2. With partners, provide (sponsor or facilitate) public education workshops, seminars, or trainings to allow citizens to learn more about the SJV, the importance of the region to birds, and how they can become involved in conservation efforts in the region.

Task 1. With assistance from Management Board, Technical Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, and members of the general public identify topics of interest.

Task 2. Identify potential speakers.

Task 3. Identify potential venues.

Task 4. Identify potential funding sources, partners.

Task 5. Develop and submit proposals.

Strategy 3. Support existing education programs that advance the goals and objectives of the SJV.

Strategy 4. Develop education-specific guidelines for proposals to SJV Awards program; create Education and Outreach Subcommittee to review these proposals.

Task 1. Develop draft grant submission guidelines.

Task 2. Work with Education and Outreach Committee to refine submission guidelines and develop ranking guidelines.

Strategy 5. Encourage submission of education proposals to SJV Awards Program and assist SJV partners with seeking other funding sources.

Task 1. Identify SJV partners and others working in education within the SJV region.

Task 2. Target these audiences when advertising Awards program.

Measurables:

1. Number of professional trainings sponsored/facilitated; number of participants.
2. Number of public seminars/workshops sponsored/facilitated; number of participants.
3. Number of proposals received by SJV Awards Program.
4. Number of education proposals submitted to outside funders with help from SJV, number funded.