

Give gifts that keep giving!

Give a gift of trees or of a cistern to capture rainwater in the rural north of Nicaragua!

From the Nicaragua Network

“Let the Rivers Run”

A comprehensive plan for the intelligent management of water and the re-greening of Nicaragua’s watersheds

In Nicaragua as in the rest of the world, rivers are dying from the deforestation of their banks, water-tables are falling from overuse, lakes are being contaminated by chemicals, and forests torn down. The Federation for the Integral Development of Peasant Farmers (FEDICAMP) has developed “Let the Rivers Run,” a comprehensive plan for the intelligent management of water and the re-greening of Nicaragua’s watersheds.

You can help through your holiday giving!

FEDICAMP works in the northern, mountainous region of “Las Segovias,” one of the poorest sections of the country. Water is a critical problem in the region. The principal watersheds of the Segovias are in an advanced process of degradation as a result of deforestation and the resultant landslides provoked by heavy rains. The region suffered indiscriminate logging during the 1960s-70s. The remaining forests are under heavy pressure from the population living in the region and in some areas residents can no longer even find firewood with which to cook their meals. This legacy of deforestation has resulted in heavy erosion of soils and has impacted watersheds, altered rainfall and microclimatic conditions.



FEDICAMP has planted 1.2 million trees. Among them are these papaya trees at Yalagüina. Photo: Laura Jensen

Over one million trees planted!

In 2002-2004, FEDICAMP planted 1.2 million trees in three departments (Nueva Segovia, Madriz, and Esteli). Members have also enabled the natural regeneration of forests on more than 1,500 acres of land. Since 2002, they have instructed over 2,000 families in building improved cook stoves, which reduce by 60% the amount of firewood used by traditional stoves. FEDICAMP also provides training in gardening, community empowerment, and environmental awareness.

Cisterns capture scarce rain water!

Now FEDICAMP is beginning to build cistern systems which will allow families to have potable water during four or five months of the dry season. These cisterns will be crucial for future community survival, as more and more large land owners deny families permission to obtain water from their land.

Here’s how the cistern system works: Rainwater runs down the family’s sloping roof into gutters at the roof edges. From there it is piped down through a large cement-enclosed filter containing sand, gravel, chlorine, and charcoal. The purified water is then piped to a large underground self-contained cistern. The family uses a simple pump, made from PVC pipes and a ball bearing, to bring up pure water for their use. The

water may also be pumped to an elevated container, for later gravity feed as needed.

Whenever possible, FEDICAMP uses locally available materials as well as the volunteer labor of its project beneficiaries. They plant only trees which are native to the community. Thus, the costs of its programs are kept low, covering only technical assistance and other skilled labor, as well as transport of the few materials brought into the community. It costs them a little over \$35 to plant 15 trees. The entire cistern system costs between \$200 and \$350, depending on the community. This sum includes tools, cement, sand, plastic piping for irrigation or house use,

a low-tech grey water filter, a simple pump - and life for a school or clinic or for a family. Beyond the plans and training, the local community does the physical work.

Adopt a cistern or many trees!

The Nicaragua Network invites you, your family, your committee, your work place, your faith community, your trade union, your school, to adopt at least one cistern.

Adopt a tree (or many trees) in the northwest of Nicaragua. For just US\$36 you can have 15 trees planted in Nicaragua. Give trees in Nicaragua as gifts to your relatives and friends who “have everything!” “Let the Rivers Run” will plant mangoes, avocados, oranges and other productive trees on the banks of streams to protect the flow of water and provide food for the people in the villages in the area.

Or if you prefer, organize a group to raise money for trees and join local Nicaraguans in planting the trees in specific towns or villages in the region. Sister City committees who are partnered with towns in the northwest of Nicaragua will find this an excellent way to interest young people and environmentalists in Nicaragua and its struggle to preserve its water and natural habitat. The Nicaragua Network will also be organizing reforestation brigades to join in this effort where our partners feel they are most needed.

All of these efforts require environmental education and training which FEDICAMP promotes in the region. FEDICAMP is also



A Nicanet reforestation brigade participant demonstrates how a water cistern works. Photo: Laura Jensen.



Volunteers from a Nicanet reforestation brigade join community members in planting trees. Photo: Laura Jensen

Nicaraguan Army and worked with the Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) in the promotion of sustainable agriculture. He has worked with FEDICAMP since its formation in 2002. His speaking tour to the U.S. in April-May 2006 visited seven states across the country.

The positive results of FEDICAMP’s work are already notable, and they can be huge if FEDICAMP garners more support from friends in the U.S. FEDICAMP communities are not only working to heal their environment; they are creating the possibility that Nicaraguans can become self-sufficient on their own land and in their own homes. Participants are much less tied to corporate globalization; for example, they are less dependent on fertilizer and on external food and water sources. Through self-sufficiency, they also have less necessity to emigrate. Women are freed from hours of daily gathering of wood and water; consequently, many of them are now spending time planting vegetable gardens and enjoying their families.

working to address the large policy issues which threaten the environment. The threat of water privatization is addressed through advocacy efforts at the government level and education and training of the local population.

FEDICAMP History

The Federation for the Integral Development of Peasant Farmers (FEDICAMP) was founded in February of 2002, emerging out of a long history of peasant organizing in Nicaragua in coordination with the John XXIII Institute for Social Action of the Central American University (UCA) and Quest for Peace. Elvin Castellon, FEDICAMP Director, comes from a family of small farmers in the Department of Somoto in northern Nicaragua. He served in the

Holiday Gift Coupon for “Let the Rivers Run!”

Fill out this coupon and mail it by postal service with your check made out to *Nicaragua Network/AGJ*
to: *Nicaragua Network, 1247 “E” Street SE, Washington, DC 20003; Attn: Kathy Hoyt*
Or send this information to *nicanet@afgj.org*

Yes. I/we want to make the rivers run. Therefore, I/we pledge to:

___ Adopt ___ cistern(s) @ US\$350.00 each for a home or US\$500 for a school or clinic

___ Plant ___ trees in my name @ US\$36 for 15 trees.

Enclosed find US\$ ____.

___ Plant ___ trees in the name of _____ @ US\$36 for 15 trees.

___ Give a cistern in the name of _____

Enclosed find US\$ ____.

Send a Nicaraguan art card (circle: Christmas scene or nature scene) to this address:

(List more recipients on another sheet of paper!)

___ Send me information about how our sister city project can get involved. The name of our sister community project is: _____

___ Send me information about how our local committee can get involved.

___ I would like to join a re-forestation brigade. Send me information.

___ Donate US\$ ____ monthly to “Let the Rivers Run” campaign for the next ____ months.

___ Donate US\$ ____ as a one-time gift.

Name: _____

Committee: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

e-mail: _____

For more information about the campaign, write nicanet@afgj.org or call (202) 544 9355 or visit www.nicanet.org



*Help
FEDICAMP
preserve
Nicaragua's
natural forest
beauty! Give
trees to your
friends and
relatives who
“have every-
thing!” Photo:
Laura Jensen*