

# Lake Chapala



Dra. Raquel Gutiérrez Nájera

## Location

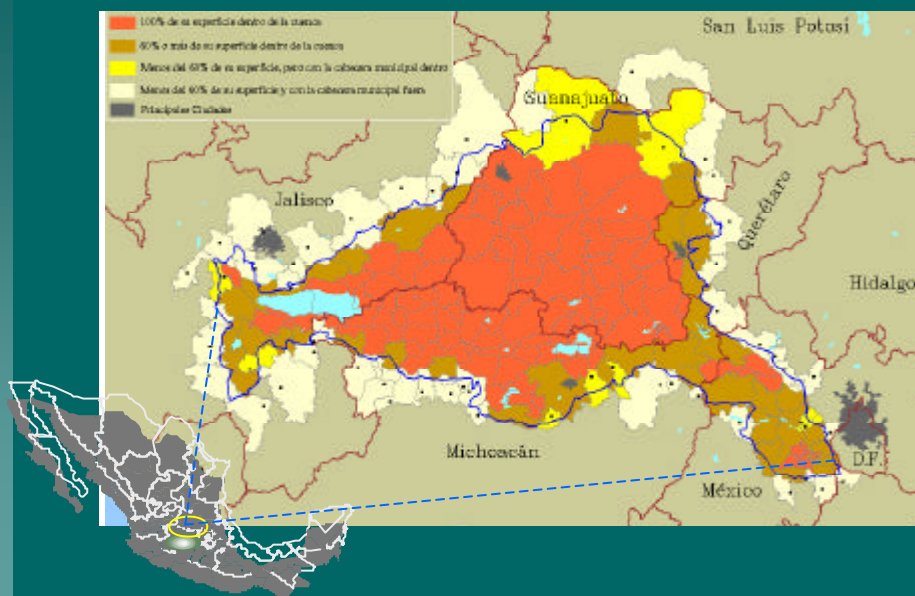


# Administrative Division

- ◆ The hydrological region formed by Lerma and Santiago rivers constitute a natural hydrologic river basin which covers an area of 123,532 km<sup>2</sup> , distributed in the estats of Mexico, Querétaro, Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Michoacán, Jalisco and Nayarit.
- ◆ To achieve a better administrative, environmental and hydrological management given the importance referring to federative entities which cover the hydrological region, the National Water Comission, has divided it in two river basins:
  - Lerma-Chapala river basin
  - Santiago-Pacífico river basin.

## Lerma Chapala river basin

## LOCATION



## General Characteristics of the Lerma-Chapala river basin

- ◆ The Lerma-Chapala river basin has an area of 53,591 km<sup>2</sup> , that approximately represent the 3% of the total extent of the national territory.
- ◆ In it inhabits the 11% of the mexican population, and it covers the territories of five estates in the following proportions in relation to the total area of the river basin: Guanajuato(43.8%); Michoacán(30.3%); Jalisco(13.4%); Estate of Mexico(9.8%) and Querétaro(2.8%).
- ◆ Water uses, agricultural, industry, domestic public and generation and electricity

## Santiago-Pacífico river basin

- ◆ The Santiago river basin, which includes the ravine of the same name, covers an area of 78,809 km<sup>2</sup> by itself and which partially covers six estates: Aguascalientes, Durango, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Nayarit and Zacatecas.

# Santiago River



# Santiago River

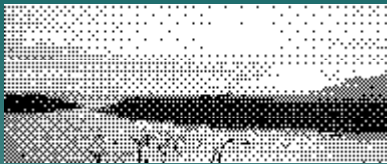


# CONSERVATION PROBLEMATIC

## 1. WATER QUALITY



## 2.- WATER QUANTITY.

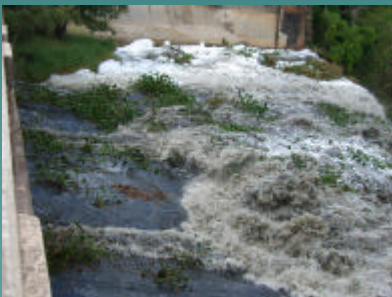


### 3.- ERRONEOUS POLITICS

- ◆ Decrees of prohibition, protection and availability of water of the Lerma-Chapala river basin.
  - ◆ Technical studies about the Lerma-Chapala river basin.
  - ◆ Agreements regarding the distribution of the superficial and subterranean water of the Lerma-Chapala river basin.
  - ◆ Resolutions of International Courts:
    - Latinamerican Water Court(TLA)
    - Environmental Cooperation Commission of NAFTA
- Hydrologics programs without river basin vision manamengt in each state



### ERRONEOUS POLITICS



# PROPOSITION

- 1.- The establishment of a conjunct and differed administration of both river basins, meaning of the Lerma-Chapala and Santiago Pacífico river basins.
- 2.- The approval of Master Programs for the short, medium and long term use, conservation, protection, preservation and restoring of the Lerma-Chapala and Santiago Pacifico river basins, with anual operative plans.
- 3.- The implementation of a public registry of the water for each river basin where all the permits, concessions and authorizations of use are established in each river basin.
- 4.- The implementation of monitoring programs, monitoring of discharges and water measurement in each river basin to order the water uses in each one.
- 5.- To standardize the federal and estative politics regarding the use of water, as well as the regulations that apply them.
- 6.- To Project Lake Chapala and to constitute it as a place of international protection through adjudging it a Ramsar place.

## Chapala Lake´s Indigenous vision

- ◆ Chapala has lost the traditional indigenous mentality about sustainable use. However, Chapala lake remains being a sacred place for the Wirrarika or "Huichol" people. Up to this day, this indigenous group remains making sacred ceremonies in the lake´s Scorpion Island. Without a doubt, the indigenous traditional mentality offers another possibility of sustainable use and management of water



# Background

- ◆ Chapala lake remains being a sacred place for the Wirrarika or “Huichol” people. Up to this day, this indigenous group remains making sacred ceremonies in the lake’s Scorpion Island. Without a doubt, the indigenous traditional mentality offers another possibility of sustainable use and management of water. The “Huichol” people is the only Mesoamerican group that keeps its population universe unaltered from the Christian influence. Their mythology, cosmology and rituals are pre-Europeans and up to certain point, pre-agriculture too.



- ◆ **The “Huichol” gods and deities are natural phenomena that have been converted into gods. Their main god is Tatewari or grandfather fire. The huichol rituals, under the leadership of a shaman, are for preventing a dry season, a serious disease or some other ailment of the tribe. (Lumholtz y Furts-Salomon, de Arte simbólico y decorativo de los Huicholes y Mitos y Arte Huicholes).**



- ◆ Most American indigenous groups' ideas about the relationship between humans and their environment have a lot of harmony and are very balanced. For instance, under the "Huichol" cosmovision, the use of water, fire, air, plants and animals is part of men's environment, which gives them a spiritual value. Chapala's lake is one of their sacred places.



## Indigenous groups

- ◆ In this century, one of the biggest values of the indigenous groups' heritage is the management and living logic of Mexican and Native American people that considered a sustainable use of all natural resources, including water. Chapala must be recovered as a sacred and as an identity place for all Mexicans, following the traditional beliefs of the Wixarrika people.



## United Towns of the Earth Declaration

- ◆ The Interamerican Council of Indigenous Spirituality, CISEI A.C., and the Great Confederation of Main Ajq'ijab Councils of Guatemala's Mayan Community, with the support of *Tinamit Junan Uleu* (United Towns of the Earth), gathered in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, in this November 29th of 2007, declared that:
- ◆ Humanity is facing a problem of water over use, due to men's conduct negative impacts through the time. The water inadequate use has caused springs exhaustion, lakes and wetlands' disappearing, river flows reductions and native flora and ecosystems loss and destruction.
- ◆ The future development of areas affected by water over use is limited. This development would be even more limited if the current climatic tendencies persist. These tendencies have been characterized by extreme climatic conditions, which include longer and more severe dry seasons.

## United Towns of the Earth Declaration

- ◆ Additionally, a greater number of regions' main water source, and many times the only source, is underground water. Therefore, this water is an strategic resource that should be managed in a very efficient manner in order to guarantee life on earth.
- ◆ The water and environmental problematic themes have been studied in many forums from a technical and scientific point of view; however, the spiritual and intercultural perspectives have been omitted. The ancient cultures of our continent are a testimony of a "spiritual management" of water that our towns keep doing nowadays.
- ◆ Therefore, this Forum recognizes these ancient practices related to the Water Spirit and its contribution for a different management of water, that contributes to the sustainable use of potable water in the world.
- ◆ Then, we summon all towns in the world, the civil society, the academics, the governments and the international organisms to take into account the native people's original wisdom over water, with the purpose to promote adequate national and international strategies and politics which include free access to clean water as a fundamental right of all living beings.
- ◆ Under this reference, the challenge in Chapala's lake management of all people who work for its recovery would be to rescue the spiritual and sacred value of the lake; as well as to rescue the identity with the Wirrarika people. All of this, in order to protect the lake as a world heritage site of the current and future generations.

*“The future of the Lerma-Santiago-Pacífico river basin depends on the future of Lake Chapala”.*



Lerma Chapala Santiago river  
basin Foundation A.C.  
Environmental Law Institute Civil  
Association  
Nuez street number 1714  
Colony Las Torres  
Postal code 44920  
Guadalajara, Jalisco.  
Phone numbers: 01 (33) 3811-  
3274  
Fax. (33) 3810-1418

Email:  
mvrfundacion@gpovillamex.com  
idea03@prodigy.net.mx

**Thank You !!!!!**