



## THE OCEAN FOUNDATION

September 2009

Dear Friends of The Ocean Foundation,

No sooner did we inform everyone of the exciting addition to our work in the Sea of Cortez in the form of acquiring the programs of Pro Peninsula, and their co-executive directors, Kama Dean and Chris Pesenti, than the Pacific hurricane season heated up with a vengeance. Hurricane Jimena, a category 4 storm, swept into the Baja California Peninsula on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of this month. The U.S. media stopped covering the story when it became clear that the major resort cities (e.g. Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo) were spared. Unfortunately, the lack of media attention did not mean that there was no damage to human or natural communities. Dozens of small communities along the peninsula were inundated, losing power, clean drinking water, and, many houses and other buildings were severely damaged or destroyed. Hillsides and watercourses were particularly vulnerable to erosion from the heavy downpours that followed as much as two years without rain in some areas. This includes the communities of Guaymas – San Carlos I wrote about after a visit there in July of this year.

The Pro Peninsula team, our partners in Loreto, and our partners from our last hurricane rescue and recovery effort (the Baja Bush Pilots) have leapt in to do what they can. Many roads are washed out or impassable due to debris. Now, as with Hurricane John in 2006 with which we also helped in the relief effort, the work of the all-volunteer Baja Bush Pilots are critical to ensuring that the supplies reach those in need. Supplies contributed by a number of organizations, including special survival boxes provided by WalMart, are being assembled at pick-up locations for distribution.

Strapped by the global economic downturn and the local effects on tourism from crime and swine flu, the Mexican government and Cruz Roja (the Mexican Red Cross) have finite resources to provide fuel for the BPP mission. Communities are running short of food, fuel, and clean water. In the words of one observer, "The small community of Serenidad in Mulege was trashed, pilots were advised to bring a bed roll and expect only rice and beans to eat!"

Your help is needed. Many of those community heroes who help to preserve the sea turtles and abundant natural resources of the Baja peninsula have found themselves without housing and sometimes food in the wake of Hurricane Jimena ([Click here](#) for more information). As the communities rebuild, their leadership abilities will be sorely needed, and can be bolstered by support from all of us. Chris Pesenti, co-founder of Pro Peninsula and now part of the TOF team, is on the ground in the town of Lopez Mateos, working to do what he can. You can help by making a tax-deductible donation to the Pro Peninsula Fund at The Ocean Foundation today. [Click here](#) and please note 'Hurricane Fund' in the comments section of the donation form.

## **Other News from The Ocean Foundation**

- Dr. Linwood Pendleton, TOF's senior fellow, has accepted the position of Director of Oceans and Coastal Policy at Duke University's Nicholas School for the Environment. He will continue as a consultant to The Ocean Foundation.
- Deborah Williams, formerly head of Alaska Conservation Solutions and senior fellow of The Ocean Foundation, has accepted the position as head of the Democratic Party of Alaska.
- Former TOF staffer Bemmy Granados has joined Conservation International as Program Coordinator for its Food and Livelihood Security program.
- And, former TOF staff in Mexico Cecilia Fischer has recently become the Coordinador de Sitio en San Luis Rio Colorado [San Luis Site Coordinator, Colorado River] for Pronatura del Noroeste Pronatura, which is one of Mexico's top conservation organizations.
- Summer intern Campbell Howe of the University of Wisconsin has headed off for a year in Kenya, studying sustainable development issues.
- Miranda Ossolinski of Fordham University has completed her summer research internship at TOF and is headed back to school.