



Intercultural Fire Management in the Meseta Comiteca Tojolabal, Chiapas, Mexico.

Laura Ponce Calderón¹ e Norma Edith Gopar Cruz¹

¹ El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR).

E-mails: laponce@ecosur.edu.mx, negopar@ecosur.edu.mx.

ABSTRACT – In Mexico, forest fires cause significant losses of natural resources in various ecosystems. Chiapas is among the 10 Mexican states with the highest recorded number of wildfires on the last decades. The Region “Meseta Comiteca Tojolabal” encompasses seven municipalities with an area of 7,243.35 km², where plateaus, hills, and mountains in the northern portion dominate 80% of its terrain. The distribution of human settlements is associated to the presence of water sources as streams used for irrigated agriculture, livestock, and other uses. Recently, ecotourism has become an important income for a significant part of the population. Governmental institutions consider the traditional vision of the farmer and his cultivation practices (“swidden”) as the main cause of environmental deterioration; such that they have tried to demotivate this practice by promoting modernization of agriculture throughout the use of technological innovations. The objective of this study is to propose an Intercultural Fire Management strategy where communities and governmental institutions responsible for wildfire management join efforts and work together in a regional cultural context. The methodology consists in a comprehensive analysis of the role that play the actors based on the proposal known as “Mapping of Key Actors of Tapella” (2007). The proposal not only involves drawing a list of possible actors in a territory, but knowing their actions and objectives of why they are in the territory and their perspective in the near future. The interviews are complemented with participant observations.

Keywords: Intercultural Management, fire, territory.