

Misiones Argentina

Mid-Year Update 2023

Project status

Year 1
out of 3

196 hectares
restoration target

49 families
directly benefiting



Our project with Fundación Vida Silvestre and WWF-NL in Misiones takes place between two provincial forest parks. It will transform the current agricultural model by engaging smallholder farmers to cultivate *yerba mate*, combined with other native trees, in agroforestry production systems.

The first half of 2023 has been strongly focused on building trust and confidence in the project among the participating farmers, who at the time of writing are planting and preparing their *yerba mate* agroforestry plots. Several talk sessions and workshops took place to explain the benefits of land use planning at farm level, best practices in soil preparation, seed collection (left) and harvesting techniques for native tree species, and best practices in *yerba mate* harvesting.

Read on to find out more about what's been happening in the Misiones project.

Each participating farmer agrees to devote 4 ha of their land to the project, restoring these hectares into forest. In return, they receive materials and training in restoration and agroforestry, support for their selected livelihood activities (horticulture, livestock etc) as well as improved water access and infrastructure. 2 ha of every 4 ha area will be for enrichment planting, 1 ha will be for full planting, and 1 ha will be for a *yerba mate* agroforestry system. This photo (right) shows a site being prepared to establish one of these new agroforestry systems. The vegetation seen on the left side of the picture is an older, conventional *yerba mate* plantation. This will also be transformed into an agroforestry system by the introduction of native tree species (which provide shade to the *yerba mate*).



This workshop on best practices in soil preparation in April was provided in cooperation with the Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA) and the Instituto Nacional de la Agricultura Familiar, Campesina e Indígena (INAFCI). The farmers engaged by the project – all from a small village called Paraje Alegria just to the south-east of Cruce Caballero Provincial Park – were the target audience, but these sessions were open to anyone, and the average participation was 35 people. To prepare their *yerba mate* plots, the farmers receive supplies from the project – lime, fertilizer and seedlings – as well as support from INTA and INAFCI technicians to define the best ground cover species, aiming to reduce the use of herbicides.

Families here have had many problems with drought. Farmers usually have springs, but they don't always have an effective way to bring the water to their crops. Usually they have a pump, but it is often exposed or muddy. The project is supporting the participating farmers to improve their water supply and infrastructure. First, a structure is built from bricks and gravel to make sure the water is cleaner and protected by a lid. Next, pipes and a water tank to store water are installed. They use the water in their homes and to irrigate their land.



Many farmers have patches of forests on their lands like this one (left) that have been logged in the past or degraded. Enrichment planting promotes the recovery of these forests by reintroducing native tree species that are important to these ecosystems, planted at an average density of 230 seedlings per hectare. These areas may be poor in species richness – in other words, they have low biodiversity – but they nevertheless offer the forest structure that can protect planted seedlings from frosts during the colder months of June and July. As a result, native tree species for enrichment planting in these areas were distributed to the farmers earlier in the year and planted. Full planting and the setting up of the agroforestry systems, however, takes place in August and September to avoid the colder months and minimize the risk of frosts.

Check out Fundación Vida Silvestre's website and social media to meet some of the Misiones project farmers on the video series '[Protagonistas de la restauración en la selva misionera](#)', where farmers share their experiences on the benefits of forest restoration and improved water access. The featured farmers participated in previous efforts with our local partners, and are now sharing their perceptions with our new and prospective participants.



How do we know our restored forests are growing and making an impact?

Every hectare under restoration is mapped with GPS points to generate polygons (areas on a map) that are assigned to sponsors. Permanent monitoring plots are established in our sites and our forestry and science teams conduct surveys to monitor progress of biomass growth, tree density, survival rate and species diversity, among other indicators.

Where social impacts are also critical, we measure socio-economic indicators such as the number of individuals or families directly benefiting, people trained, and income generated from forest-friendly livelihood activities.

Please visit our [What We Do](#) webpage for more information.



You'll receive an annual update in March. Meanwhile, stay up-to-date with our interactive [Misiones map](#), and check out the [photos](#) on Flickr.

[Here](#) you'll find all information about how to communicate about this project and your partnership with WeForest.