

Press Release: From Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, México on 12 June, 2019
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STRIKE PLANNED TO PROTECT LOS HORCONES RIVER

Around the world, record-breaking numbers of student strike demonstrators are rocking the system and demanding action to fight climate change, ecocides and other abuses to our planet. Your help is needed here in the Puerto Vallarta region on Friday, June 21, 2019.

An Appeal to the Youth of our Region

Dear students in Puerto Vallarta, Cabo Corrientes, Bahía de Banderas and beyond:

The Los Horcones River and all the wildlife that it supports (both terrestrial and marine) need your help, your voice, and your physical presence to clearly demonstrate the will of our greater community. I invite you to join us on June 21 for a strike from your classes to a demonstration right at the site of where a group of Guadalajara-based companies intend to dam the Río Los Horcones, dooming the wildlife and people who depend on it.

This strike and demonstration is intended as a physical show of strength to compliment a legion of environmentalists who have signed our petition to declare protection of the Río Los Horcones as a federally designated *Área Natural Protegida* (natural protected area). This petition to Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and top environmental authorities gained over 50,000 signatures within just one week of going public and is quickly picking up momentum.

Please take the time to read, sign, and share this petition. In the petition's narrative I propose that the would-be dam of the Horcones is not about "clean energy" as its proponent José Ayala Michel claims, but rather an attempt to privatize and commercialize this river's waters. The companies that Ayala represents were given shady exemptions to evade the environmental and social impact studies that these kinds of projects legally require. The communities that would be most effected by this project, foremost among them Boca de Tomatlán, were never consulted nor have they been told who would be the new owner of their community's water. But collectively, we throughout the entire region can make their voices heard and serve as a voice of the threatened plants and animals that cannot speak for themselves.

Our Collective Power to Effect Change

Online petitions are an excellent way to tap into the power of social media and quickly amass tens of thousands or even millions of supporters. But signatures on devices lack the power of images generated at good old-fashioned demonstrations.

And I'm a good representative of the old school. As a student at the University of Guadalajara (UDG) in the 1970's I rediscovered a teozintle (ancestor of corn) assumed extinct for decades. Shortly thereafter I discovered a new species of teozintle with even more potential for the world's agriculture industry. These discoveries helped spark a campaign to protect the lands where these rare plants could be found. But just as important to our campaign were our discoveries and exposure of widespread illegal logging operations in these forests.

Less than a decade later, these lands were declared as the Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve and I was appointed as the founding director, by then a professor of the UDG. Now I'm retired, but my love and commitment to our planet doesn't allow me to sit back and watch the abuse of mother nature, deforestation, and loss of habitat for our animals. In the 70's and 80's I worked with other supporters to turn the very abuses that saddened and angered us into rallying points for a major protection victory. In a similar way, we can use the threat of a dam that would alter the Río Los Horcones forever to catalyze our movement to protect this river forever.

So please join this movement! While even old-school lifelong learners like myself are welcome to join our demonstration on the 21st, I'm especially hopeful that Kindergarten through University aged students arrive in mass numbers. Throughout the world, student strikes are forcing the hands of politicians and other decision makers. You can be this force in our region. Your future depends on your actions today.

Event Summary — Río Los Horcones Demonstration

Meet-up: June 21, 2019 at 10 am at the southbound bus stop in Las Juntas y Los Veranos (Along Highway 200 about a 10-minute drive south of Boca de Tomatlán)

Group Photo: 11 am at the site of the would-be dam (Which we can stop!)

Bring: Drinking water, snacks, swimming attire, towels, sunscreen & banners with your messages about protecting nature

Petition: Go to **change.org** and search for "Horcones" or click: <http://chng.it/vZhc2vFM7h>

Learn more: <http://vivanatura.org/rio/>