

Rainforest Alliance

In February 2008, the Rainforest Alliance published a case study that examines the impact of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR)—part of the 2nd-largest contiguous tropical forest in the Americas. Since 1996, the Rainforest Alliance has been working with the community-managed forestry concessions in the MBR to introduce the principles and practice of sustainable forestry, certify these concessions to the FSC standard for sustainable forestry management, and create market linkages between FSC-certified operations in the MBR and buyers of FSC-certified timber. We found that:

- From 2002 to 2007, the average annual deforestation rate for the entire MBR and its core protected areas was twenty times higher than the deforestation rate for the FSC-certified concessions.
- Since 1998 the incidence of wildfires in the MBR has been variable (7% to 20% of forest area burnt annually), while the area burnt on FSC-certified concessions has been a fraction of that and steadily dropped from 6.5% in 1998 to 0.1% in 2007.

These results are impressive and make a strong case for community and stakeholder involvement in natural resource management—a principle that is at the heart of the Rainforest Alliance's approach to conservation and sustainable development.