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## **Sonoran Desert Conservation Award Recipients Announced**

Tucson, AZ (Nov. 1, 2012) – The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum will present its 2012 Conservation Award to Comunidad y Biodiversidad (COBI) at its Conservation Award Dinner at the Desert Museum on November 12, 2012.

The award will be presented to two former University of Arizona graduate students, Jorge Torre Cosio and Luis Bourillón Moreno, who founded COBI in 1999. COBI is a leader in community-based conservation of coastal and marine resources in the Gulf of California.

The dinner not only commends the work of the award recipients but also recognizes the continuing conservation and science work of the Museum. The award recipient is selected by the Science Advisory Council of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, which includes representatives from the University of Arizona, local businesses and conservation organizations.

“COBI’s work is instrumental in supporting sustainable fisheries, marine-protected areas and economic incentive programs that conserve biodiversity in and around the Sea of Cortez,” states Debra Colodner, Director of Conservation Education and Science at the Museum.

(more)

“Unlike in the US, many national parks and protected areas in Mexico have people living in them. COBI works with local communities to find sustainable solutions for communities and the ecosystems they inhabit,” continues Colodner.

COBI maintains that the best stewards and managers of the fisheries and natural resources are the very people who depend on these resources, the fishermen themselves. Therefore, COBI works with fishing communities to design and establish fully- protected marine reserves, to restore marine ecosystems, and to promote legal rights of ownership of the waters they use.

By promoting participatory decision-making processes between fishermen, government and other stakeholders COBI aids in aligning incentives to improve sustainable fishing practices. As a result of COBI’s efforts, fishing communities implement and enforce sustainable fishing practices, patrol their own waters and prevent illegal overfishing.

The Desert Museum’s Conservation Award event will include live animal presentations, the bestowal of the award, and an elegant three course dinner. Last year’s award was presented to Chuck Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator, for his work on the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Tickets for this notable dinner are \$75 and are available online at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum website.

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### **The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is one of the nation’s leading outdoor, living museums, featuring more than 230 animals and 1,200 varieties of desert plants. Its mission is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the bi-national, Sonoran Desert. The museum is located at 2021 N. Kinney Road, in Tucson Mountain Park adjacent to Saguaro National Park (West). It is open daily year round with operating hours varying by season. Call (520) 883-2702 or visit [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org) for more information.

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