

Corazon Village Climate Smart Community Resilience Plan



Village leaders and Community Members of Corazon, Toledo District, Belize

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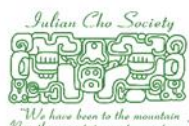
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Technical Details:

Community	Corazon Creek
Protected area (if applicable)	N/A
Area of Influence	
Population	295
Families	65
Ethnicity	Q'eqchi Maya
Tenure	Communal Land/Collective Ownership
Date of Plan Development	December - February
Date of updated plan	February 05 th 2025
Evidence of FPIC	Activity Report
Leading impacts of Climate Change	1. Forest Fire 2. Flooding
Priority Actions required for community adaptation to Climate Change	1. Sustainable Livelihoods
Participating Organizations	Corazon Creek Alcaldes, Corazon Creek Village Council, Toledo Alcaldes Association, Julian Cho Society

1. Summary

This climate-smart community development plan was developed through a series of participatory sessions with community leaders and community members of Corazon Creek Village. The village has Sixty-five (65) families and a population of two hundred ninety-five (295) Maya Q'eqchi Indigenous People. This document presents the community's priorities for actions and investments needed to assist the community to adopt and mitigate impacts of climate change. The local actions and priorities identified will enhance the stewardship of sustainable use and care of natural resources in and around Corazon Village. The community of Corazon has lost an important economic resource and a key element in the ecological health of their forests they use, enjoy and occupy.

The forest fire in 2024, has devastated thousands of acres of community lands that community member use to generate source of income from the extraction of forest produce. Corazon has identified forest fire as a major impact to natural resources and livelihood of their community, who rely on copal resin as a significant source of income. The loss of cultural and sensitive areas, such as copal groves and other forest resources due to fires has significantly impacts local economies and leaving Corazon without a primary source of income. By diversifying their livelihoods to create new income streams through raising local chicken will help mitigate the community from the financial instability caused by the loss of their traditional livelihoods.

2. Methodology

Table below shows a summary of the methodology undertaken to generate the Climate Smart Community Development Plan.

Table 1. Summary of Methodology

Activity	Description
Initial Project Contact	To seek the community's permission and village leaders' permission for us to be able to share with the community the project plan.
Preliminary engagement, Creating Awareness	Effective communication and understanding: The needs and measures to be implemented for effective communication and to be agreed by the Alcaldes and Village Council
Capacity Building	Presentation on Climate Change impacts and effects, Evidence of Climate Change. Vulnerability to Climate Change: materials will be identified and prepared by the Julian Cho Society on climate change and local impacts
Workshop sessions	Determining local impacts of climate change vulnerabilities and risks. Identify the Main Effects of Climate Change in Maya community Identifying interventions or action required to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Data Validation and review of draft report
Implementation	Develop a timeline for the implementation activity of the priority pillars and action on climate resilience. Community leaders to monitor the success of investments in favour of community climate resilience plan

3. Introduction: Social, Geographic and Environmental Context

Corazon Creek is among Forty-one of the Maya Indigenous communities in Southern Belize that have a distinct social, economic, and cultural systems. Corazon community is a Q'eqchi Maya that comprises 65 families with a total of 295 populations.

It is one of the communities that continues to practice the form of Customary governance system, the *Alcalde System*¹. The Alcaldes' role is to uphold the customary practices of the community such as the Fajina², burials, and calling community meetings among others, and also the Judicial role of presiding over court cases as a local Magistrate for petty crimes. Each community elects two traditional leaders every two years, an Alcalde and a Deputy Alcalde.

Corazon is located off-coast of Toledo District, Belize, with approximately three hours from Punta Gorda Town. The community members are dependent on the land and natural resources for their livelihoods, spiritual, and cultures. Most homes are traditionally built with Cohune leaves as the roofs. It is for the same purpose that the Maya people have historically defended the security and integrity of their lands and resources not only providing material sustenance, but it is the foundation of their identity and sense of community. Corazon is one of the communities that is named and protected by the Caribbean Court of Justice ruling of 2015, that affirms rights to their customary lands.

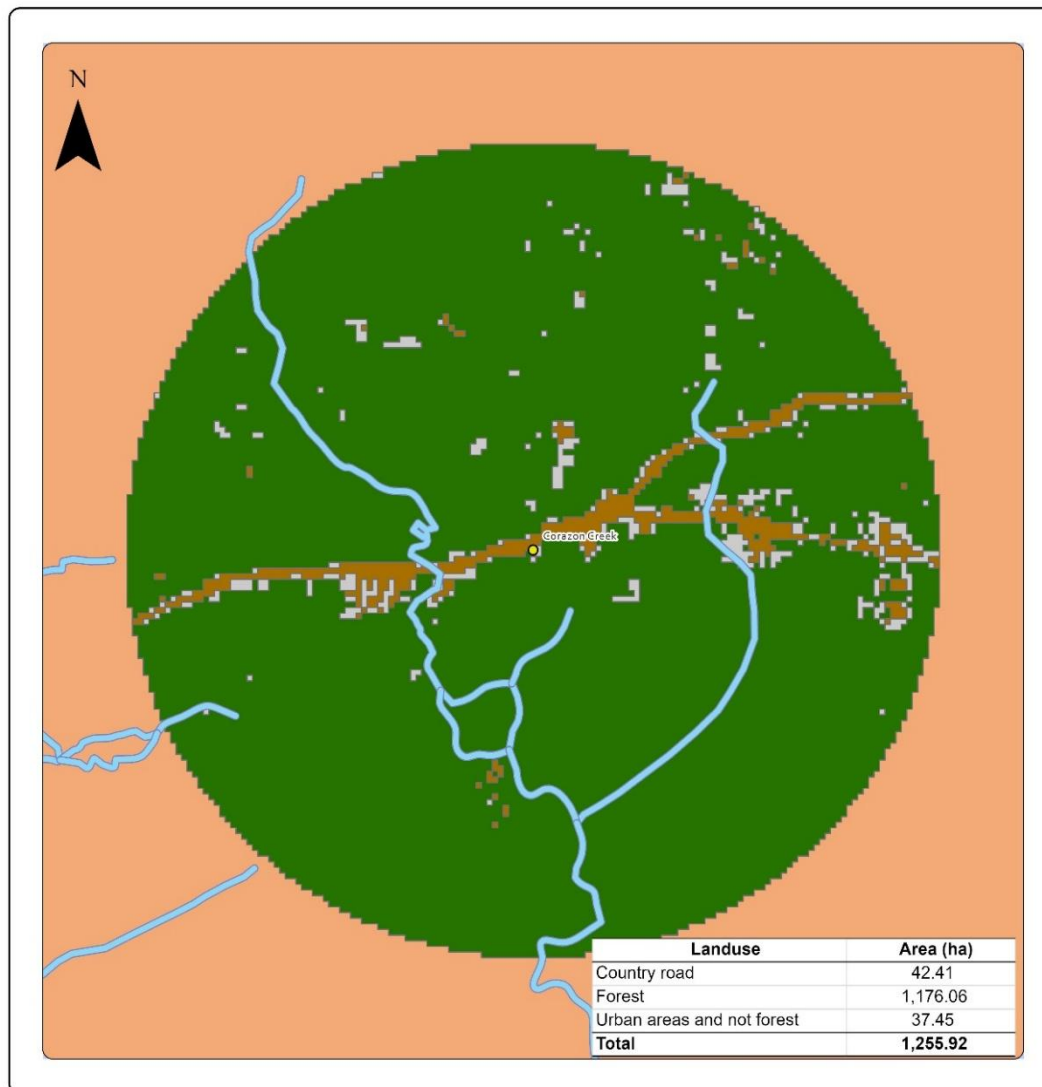
Corazon Community is in the process of implementing the 2015 Caribbean Court of Justice Consent Order ³ and have made progress in harmonizing the boundaries of their community lands with their neighbouring villages. This is a key step in the process of identifying and protecting their customary lands. The map below is a sketch of Corazons' land.

¹ "Alcalde system" means the traditional governance system of the Maya People used by Maya Villages of Southern Belize, and includes the roles of the Ab'ink, Alcaldes and Village Police all as defined and empowered by Maya Customs.

² Fajina is the reciprocal labor, collective ownership and stewardship of the land that allow us to be community. "The Future We Dream"

³ In the Caribbean Court of Justice Maya Leaders Alliance vs. Attorney General of Belize 2015 Consent Order

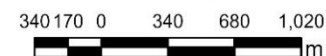
CORAZON CREEK LANDUSE MAP FOR SELVA MAYA BELIZE LANDSCAPE BLF



Symbology

- Target communities
- International borders
- Selva Maya - Belize
- Countries
- Rivers
- Country roads
- Forest
- Urban areas and not forest

Scale number: 1:27,000



Scale reference: WGS84

Source: WCS

Author: Michelle Catalán

Date: 21/01/2025 12:44



Figure 1. Corazon creek landuse map for

4. Major Impacts of Climate Change

The table below shows the results of the community consultations providing a list of local vulnerabilities that impact people, their livelihoods and natural resources.

4.1. People

The results of the community meeting provided in the table below shows insights into the community's climate risks and vulnerabilities. It shows how Corazon identified the main climate change impacts on the community members as follows: 1st Forest Fire, 2nd Rainy and Unstable weather.

Forest fire and unstable weather are the two main climate vulnerability the community identified that has severely impacted the community's physical, mental, and social well-being. One of the most immediate and harmful effects of forest fires is the degradation of air quality. The smoke can have serious respiratory effects, particularly for children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions such as asthma or respiratory infections.

Unstable weather has severe consequences on the livelihoods of Maya people, particularly the inaccessibility of farm roads. These roads are critical for transporting crops and maintaining economic stability.

Table 2. Community Vulnerabilities, Severity, and Targeted Mitigation Actions.

Vulnerability	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	% Population Affected	Severity	Actions Identified
Forest Fire	Increase respiratory diseases - elders and children are the main ones affected especially individuals with underlying conditions of asthmatic	25	Medium Severity	Reparatory Materials to be available at the Community Health Center
Rainy/Unstable Weather	Accessibility to farms, loss of income generation by majority.	100	High Severity	Construction of Farmers Road

4.2. Livelihoods

Unstable weather poses a significant threat to the livelihoods and well-being of Corazon villagers. The consequences are far-reaching, affecting not just food production but also economic stability, social structures, cultural practices and inaccessibility of farms causing income loss to Maya people.

The interviews and community meetings at Corazon are in consensus that the entire community introduce an alternative livelihood that will reduce dependence on resin extraction such as raising local chickens. This will ease the pressure on copal trees but promotes regeneration and also strengthens the community's economic resilience.

Table 3. Climate-Related Vulnerabilities, Impact Severity, and Livelihood Adaptation Measures

Vulnerability	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	% Population Affected	Severity	Actions Identified
Rainy/Unstable Weather	Increase the risk of losing crops, especially corn and beans. (rains a lot and for long period, the produce start to germinate) Flood – Damage crops that are along the river	95	Medium Severity	Construction of farmers road
Forest Fire	Reduction in income generation: Copal trees were burnt, which was the main income generation from Copal Raisin extraction.	100	High Severity	Raising Local Chickens for an immediate income to sustain family.

4.3. Natural Resources

The Maya people talk about land as strength and not about land as resources alone, the reciprocal relationship with the land and this is what is captured in the concept of Ral Ch'och. Ral Cho'och means that "we are the children of the land, people who live on the land and care for the land".

Destruction of forests and the loss of forest resources such as Copal can have serious economic and cultural consequences for a community like Corazon Village, who rely on these resources for their sustenance, livelihoods, and cultural practices. Beyond its cultural importance, the Copal tree plays a vital role in the environment. It is important because it contributes to the biodiversity of the ecosystems in which it grows. It provides habitat and food for various species of wildlife, such as insects, birds, and mammals. Additionally, the tree helps maintain soil stability and promotes the health of local forests.

Table 4. Forest Fire Impacts on Natural Resources, Food Security, and Mitigation Actions

Vulnerability	Impacts Requiring Mitigation	% Population Affected	Severity	Actions Identified
Forest Fire	Destruction of Forest, Destruction of Cultural and Sensitive Natural Areas (Copal). Destroys the main food source such as corn, plantain and other ground staples	100	High Severity	Raising Local Chickens for an immediate income to sustain family.

5. Actions/investment Required to Adopt and Mitigate Climate Change

At the community meeting held on January 3rd, 2025, the community of Corazon Creek identified one vulnerability that affects livelihood and natural resources, which urgently needs to be addressed with one priority action. The most urgent call is to raise local chickens as a resilient action to loss of income, reduce dependence from a single income source, ease the pressure on copal trees and strengthen the economic resilience, nutrition and social-wellbeing of the community.

Table 5. Community Priorities, Interventions, and Contributions for Sustainable Livelihoods

Category	Impact Required to Mitigate	Priority	Actions/Interventions	Community Contributions
Livelihoods and Natural Resources	Sustainable livelihoods	High Priority	Raising Local Chickens for an immediate income	Community members to provide food and maintenance of the chickens
Livelihoods	Sustainable Livelihoods	Priority	Farmers road	Community members to provide maintenance

6. VI. Community Priority Development Needs in the context of Climate Change

The community of Corazon has identified a series of priority sustainable development initiatives that are essential for fostering resilience to climate change. These initiatives are interconnected and require specific actions to ensure long-term resilience.

6.1. Priority Service

1. Health Care services – Stationed nurse and Doctor in the community

6.2. Priority Infrastructure

1. Construction of farmer road for Corazon Village
2. Improve main road conditions

6.3. Priority Livelihoods

1. Sustainable Livelihoods in Local Chicken production

7. Annexes:

7.1. Annex 1: Corazon Implementation Guide

Implementation Guide to Corazon Creek Climate-Smart Community Development Plan

This document provides a guidance on the implementation of Corazon Creek Climate-Smart Community Development Plan that aims to strengthen the community's climate resilience and enhance its capacity to adopt and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The focus of this plan is to address the community's alternative livelihood that will reduce dependence on resin extraction such as raising local chickens. This alternative livelihood will also ease the pressure on copal trees; promotes regeneration and strengthens the community's economic resilience. This document outlines the implementation approach step-by-step detailing planning, procurement and monitoring of activities.

Activity 1: Community information/planning:

- (i) Community leaders will gather information on the number of households and families in the community

Activity 2: Procurement:

- (i) Procurement officer will establish an appropriate mechanism for the procurement that is appropriate to the value of goods and services being required using the JCS Accounting Policies & Procedures Manual and Biodiverse Landscapes Fund Grant Recipient Handbook.
- (ii) The quotations will be shared with community leaders to review and evaluate whether the estimated cost for materials or services and other expenses are realistic and manageable within the budget. This will allow community leaders to identify any potential cost adjustment on reducing or increasing quantity of items before the procurement.
- (iii) JCS selection committee will evaluate the multiple quotations for the best value for money using a selection criteria template.

Activity 3: Project Activity:

- (i) Goods and services for the alternative livelihoods will be jointly coordinated with the leaders and delivered in an effective and efficient manner.
- (ii) Community leaders will receive and distribute any goods and services efficiently to community member using a delivery form to account for goods and services.

Activity 4: Monitoring

- (i) Monitoring of project implementation will be carried through the community leaders to ensure that the activities are in alignment with the community's needs, priorities, and expectations.
- (ii) Community visit will be undertaken by the JCS and TAA to ensure that the activities are making progress
- (iii) Communicate to community leaders as a follow-on activity progress.