



MEDIA RELEASE

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**Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra of the San Diego Natural History Museum appointed
president of the National Council for Natural Protected Areas of Mexico
(CONAP)**

Dr. Ezcurra accepted this important honorary position in October 2007. The National Council for Natural Protected Areas is a citizen board that acts as advisory to Mexico's Federal Government and Park Service on the management of protected areas and conservation issues. The Council represents a number of groups such as native Indian tribes, NGOs, business organizations, environmentally minded people, and the academic community, whose recommendations affect the government's decision making at a very high level.

Dr. Ezcurra has been a member of this organization since its creation in 1995, and after being appointed by Juan Elvira, Minister of the Environment of Mexico, has been serving as president since October 7, 2007. It is unusual for someone working in the United States to be on this board, and even more unusual to be its president, but the members selected Dr. Ezcurra unanimously.

This appointment constitutes yet another achievement in a lifelong career devoted to the conservation of the environment that has made Dr. Ezcurra a highly and internationally regarded scientist, researcher, writer, and speaker. In addition to his responsibilities as President of the Council for Natural Protected Areas, Dr. Ezcurra is the Director of the Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias (BRCC) at the San Diego Natural History Museum since 1998, where he simultaneously serves as Provost, the highest ranking academic office at the institution.

Says Dr. Michael Hager, president of the Museum: "Exequiel's experience and expertise position him perfectly to synthesize all the scientific disciplines here at the Museum. He also promotes cooperation with the Mexican government and environmental and scientific organizations."

During a sabbatical from the Museum from 2001—2005, Dr. Ezcurra served as president of the National Institute of Ecology (INE), a position appointed to him by former Mexican president Vicente Fox. There he was in charge of the national research organization and think tank that supplies scientific information and research results to aid the federal government in making informed decisions, and to inform the public.

Other highlights of his 30-year career include developing the first environmental impact assessment in Mexico and promoting the creation of the California Condor release program in Baja California. Dr. Ezcurra has also written and edited over 80 articles for scientific journals, 15 books (the most recent one is the United Nations report on the state of the world's deserts — *Global Deserts Outlook*) and over 60 chapters for different books. He has received numerous awards for his professional contributions to the field of ecology, including the prestigious Conservation Biology Award and the Pew Fellowship, and most recently the international Peacemaker Award from the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), for creating, along with Dr. Hager, a cross-border environmental preservation effort.

In 2005 he also co-produced the award-winning film *Ocean Oasis* that takes viewers on a fascinating journey into the bountiful Sea of Cortés and the pristine deserts of Baja California. The compelling message of this film shows this little-known region as a treasure worth preserving. All proceeds from the film support conservation, education, and research in the Baja California peninsula and the Sea of Cortés.

Celebrating its 133rd year, the San Diego Natural History Museum is the second oldest scientific institution in California; third west of the Mississippi. A binational museum, its mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. Located in Balboa Park at the intersection of Village Place and Park Blvd., the Museum is open daily except for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Phone: 619.232.3821. Website: www.sdnhm.org.

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