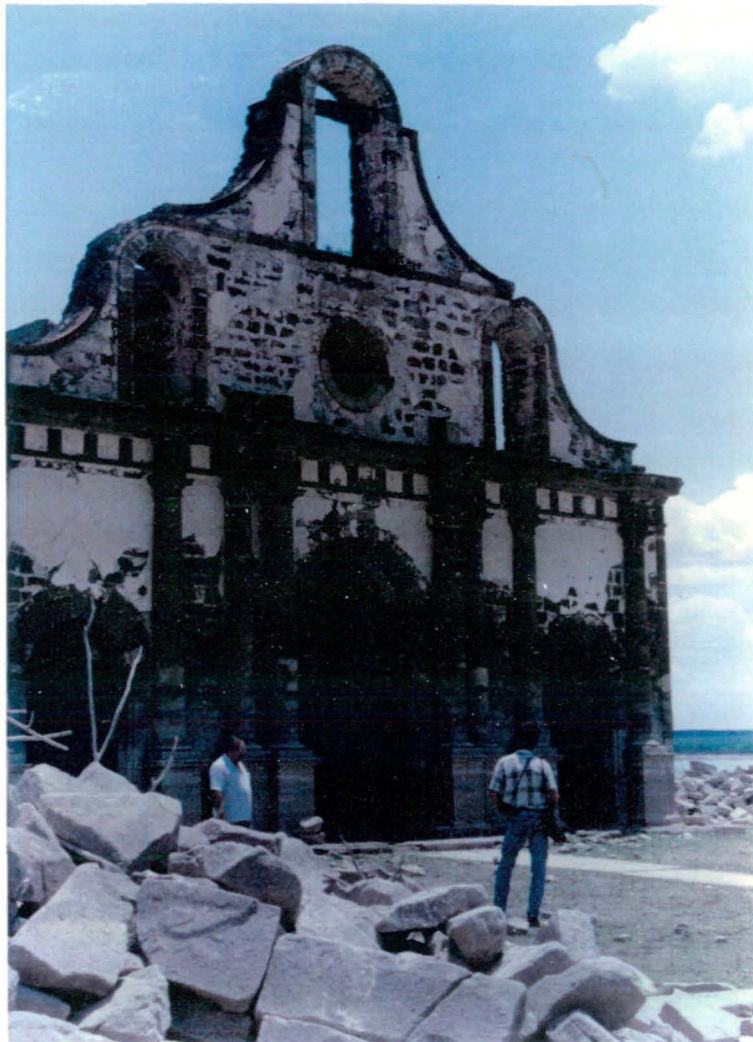


**WORKING TOUR AND SYMPOSIUM
REGARDING COLLABORATIVE PRESERVATION PROJECTS
IN MEXICO AND THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST**

11-15 May 1993

TRIP REPORT



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

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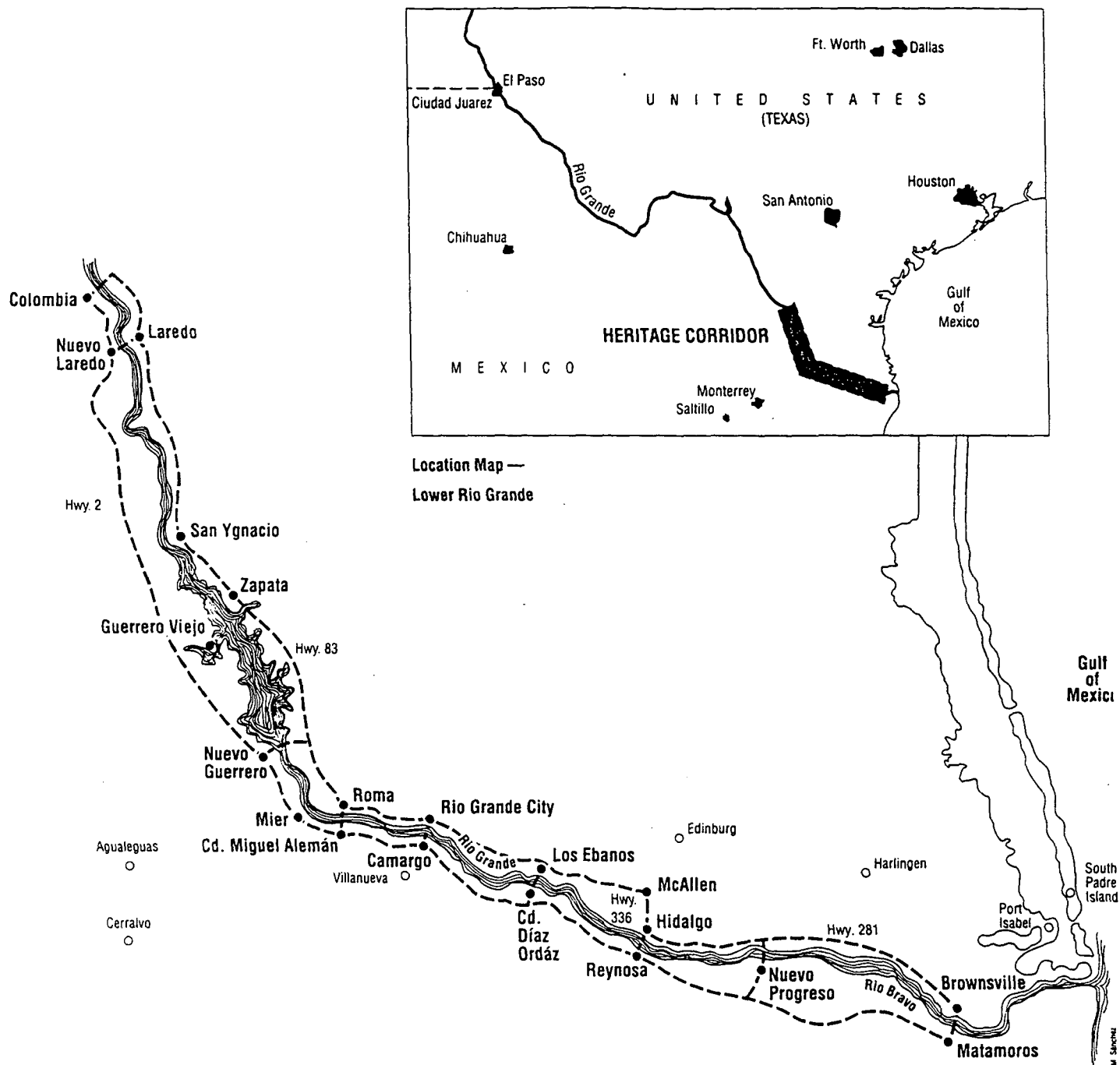
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WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

New York

June 1993

Mission Church, Ruins of Old Guerrero, Tamaulipas, Mexico, Late 18th century. Photo: Kimberly Stahlman



River Route and Crossings —

LOS CAMINOS DEL RIO HERITAGE CORRIDOR

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1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WMF is grateful to several organizations and individuals for their participation in this project. The guidance of the Texas Historical Commission, Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project, and in particular, Mario Sanchez, was essential. The book *A Shared Experience*, edited by Dr. Sanchez, was a valuable resource both during the trip, and in the preparation of this report. WMF is also thankful for the involvement of the U.S. National Park Service, Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos del Mundo, New Mexico Community Foundation, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Secretaria de Turismo, Mexico.

2. PURPOSE OF TRIP

The purpose of this trip was to visit planning and conservation sites in Texas and Mexico, in particular those of the Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project along the lower Rio Grande, and those of the Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos del Mundo in Puebla, Mexico. Project methodologies were compared, and possible ways in which these and other U.S. and Mexican preservation projects could be mutually developed were discussed.

The participation of the Director of the "Churches: Symbols of Community" program of the New Mexico Community Foundation was meant to allow for their various programs in New Mexico, such as the Escuelas Taller program, to be considered as part of the planning discussions. Possible new programs involving these institutions were identified, and strategies for their accomplishment were preliminarily planned.

3. PARTICIPANTS

World Monuments Fund (WMF)

Bonnie Burnham, Executive Director

John Stubbs, Program Director

Kimberly Stahlman, Rapporteur

Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos del Mundo (FMMM)

Sofia de Landa de Jenkins, President

Mercedes Gomez-Urquiza de la Macorra, General Coordinator

Luis Torres Montes, Scientific Coordinator

Marilupe Carpintheyro Gomez, Academic Organizer

Arturo de la Serna, Conservator

Los Caminos del Rio (LCDR)

Mario Sanchez, Texas Historical Commission

Bill Dolman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Michael Creasey, U.S. National Park Service, Southwest Region

Carlos Rugerio, U.S. National Park Service, Southwest Region

Bonnie Waninger, U.S. National Park Service, Southwest Region

Kitty Henderson, Texas Historical Commission

Margarita Robleda, Ministry of Tourism (Mexico)

Gloria Canseco, Los Caminos del Rio of Texas, Inc.

Rosena Garcia, Los Caminos del Rio of Texas, Inc.

Chip Briscoe, The Conservation Fund

New Mexico Community Foundation (NMCF)

Sam Baca, Program Director

The Patronato San Xavier

Jacqueline McNulty

4. TOUR DESCRIPTION

Tuesday, 11 May

Representatives from World Monuments Fund (WMF) arrived in McAllen, Texas and were greeted by Dr. Mario Sanchez of Los Caminos del Rio (LCDR). They were joined for dinner by other members of the LCDR team, as well as Sam Baca from the New Mexico Community Foundation (NMCF) and Jacqueline McNulty from The Patronato San Xavier in Tuscon, Arizona.

Wednesday, 12 May

Group reassembled and departed from McAllen, travelling south to the Toluca Ranch and Chapel site.

Rancho Toluca

The group toured this complex of buildings, composed of a chapel, ranch house, school house and store, which were constructed between 1899 and 1908 on the Saenz Ranch. A presentation was made in St. Joseph's Church, the ranch's chapel, by Jimmy Fernandez, the "grandson" of the ranch's founder. Mr. Fernandez described the history of the site, which continues to operate as a privately-owned working farm.

Rancho Toluca has been identified as a Texas Historical Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It benefits from the support of the county historical commission, which is currently offering technical assistance in the replacement of the chapel's canvas ceiling and wood shingle roof.

The site clearly communicates the agricultural and ranching theme present in the corridor region, and exemplifies the historic practice of ranch chapel construction. The brick masonry Gothic revival church is of particular architectural merit and remains almost completely intact.

Old River Pumphouse

Next, the group was guided through the Old River Pumphouse site in Hidalgo. This steam engine-powered pumping station which initiated a regional irrigation system was founded by the Louisiana-Rio Grande Canal Company in 1912. Currently it is abandoned, though most of its original machinery remains.

The site represents an opportunity to present the corridor's important agricultural theme, demonstrating the great impact of irrigation technology on the economic development of the region. Dr. Sanchez proposed several opportunities for linkage with other features of the LCDR Heritage Corridor. For example, the position of the pumphouse along the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service makes this site a particularly strong potential destination for both historic and wildlife education. The pumphouse could also benefit from linkage to other historic sites in the area such as the city of Hidalgo and the Hidalgo County Historical Museum in Edinburg.

Los Ebanos International Ferry

Providing a crossing point between Los Ebanos, Texas and Ciudad Diaz Ordaz in Mexico, this hand-drawn ferry clearly expresses the historic connections between these border cities. LCDR sees opportunity in presenting the site as a hands-on educational opportunity to express the river crossing/trade-route theme, reinforcing the historical connection between communities on both sides of the river, and providing a river experience which could reinforce the Wildlife Refuge.

Camargo and Villanueva

As the first Escadon settlement along the Rio Grande, founded in 1749, LCDR sees the city of Camargo as an opportunity to present the history of Spanish colonial river settlements through its incorporation into the Heritage Trail. Its relation to the history of Zachary Taylor's campaign of 1846, as well as its proximity to the Santa Gertrudis battle site is also relevant to the military theme of the heritage corridor. It was suggested by Dr. Sanchez that Villanueva, the nearby town to which citizens of Camargo relocated following the flood of 1846, could be naturally and effectively linked to the site of Camargo.

The group was invited to tour the house of a resident of Villanueva, a structure which incorporated a river steamboat ceiling into its construction. Also noteworthy was the house of Matias Ramirez with its sandstone staircase, and the Antigua Escuela, with its impressive stonework and sophisticated cistern system.

Mier

Also an Escadon settlement, Mier was founded in 1752. The community's strengths are in its well-preserved architecture, its rich historical associations and its culturally-aware community. Sites of particular architectural and historic merit in Mier include the Capilla San Juan and Casa de la Cultura, both located on the Plaza Hidalgo, the Parroquia de la Purisimia Concepción, and the Antigua Prison.

The strong potential for Mier as a tourist destination was discussed, a goal which would be facilitated by members of its community who have already demonstrated great interest in the preservation of their historic resources.

Roma Historic District

Currently under consideration for National Historic Landmark District designation, this 15-block area is located on a bluff above the Rio Grande. The group's introduction to this proposed historic district began with a walk across the Roma-San Pedro International Bridge, which stretches across the Rio Grande between Ciudad Miguel Aleman and Roma. The bridge was built in 1928 and represents the only remaining international suspension bridge across the Rio Grande. In Roma, the group took a walking tour of the proposed district, noting a number of fine brick masonry buildings, built by Heinrich Portscheller, a German immigrant.

Roma's history as a prosperous city and important point along the Rio Grande trade route, combined with its impressive architecture and position along the Wildlife Refuge, make it an ideal candidate for some form of controlled commercial development, combined with cultural and wilderness education and activities. The Roma Historic District benefits from the support it receives from the Meadows Foundation and The Conservation Fund, who

have purchased and are beginning to restore several of the Roma properties, to promote preservation and economic development in the area.

From Roma, the group returned to Rio Grande City for dinner at La Borde House, followed by a video presentation given by Jacqueline McNulty on her work with the restoration of San Xavier del Bac. The discussion focused on her need to develop programs to train community members in the maintenance of this significant structure.

Thursday, 13 May

Rio Grande City

The second day of site visits began with a brief tour of Rio Grande City, noteworthy for its architecture, its historic role as a river port, and its military outpost, Fort Ringgold.

Falcon Reservoir Area/Guerrero Viejo

The tour continued north of Rio Grande City, through portions of Falcon State Park toward Guerrero Viejo, a site on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. The 573-acre Falcon State Park is adjacent to the Falcon Reservoir and provides facilities for camping, picnicing, water recreation and nature study. It is a recreational resource in the area.

Founded as Revilla in 1750 by Don Jose Escandon, the city's name was changed to Guerrero after 1823. Guerrero's population peaked in 1848 at 40,000 residents, when it was a bustling commercial center with water access. Its population declined to about 3,000 after 1913 due to wars and railroad construction. The construction in 1952 of the Falcon Dam flooded most of the town of Guerrero, and resulted in the forced relocation of its residents to Guerrero Nuevo, a new town created below the dam. Today the city of Guerrero Viejo, with its impressive sandstone architecture, is all but deserted and in a state of ruin. It is owned by the Mexican government and is almost inaccessible due to poor road conditions.

The proximity of Guerrero Viejo to Zapata, Texas, combined with its position along the river, its rich history as a Spanish colonial settlement, and its impressive examples of traditional architectural craftsmanship, make the potential of preserving the Guerrero Viejo site through a binational effort a particularly intriguing opportunity.

San Ygnacio

The final stop on the tour was to the town of San Ygnacio, where the group attended a reception given by Michael Tracy, an artist and resident of San Ygnacio. Mr. Tracy expressed great enthusiasm in involving artists in the preservation of the Guerrero Viejo site.

5.1 SYMPOSIUM -- MEETING MINUTES

Date: **Friday, 14 May 1993**

Place: **Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos
del Mundo (FMMM), Puebla**

In Attendance: **FMMM:**
Sophia Jenkins
Mercedes Gomez
Marilupe Carpinteyro
Luis Torres
Arturo de la Serna

World Monuments Fund (WMF):
Bonnie Burnham
John Stubbs (Symposium Leader)
Kimberly Stahlman (Rapporteur)

New Mexico Community Foundation (NMCF):
Sam Baca

Los Caminos Del Rio:
Mario Sanchez
Margarita Robleda

Opening Remarks

(BB): This gathering, which began with a tour of much of the Los Caminos Del Rio Heritage Corridor, was inspired by requests for our involvement by several groups which we felt shared common interests. Our goal today is to create a dialogue between WMF and representatives of these parties in the hope of identifying ways in which we might be able to work in a consortium to achieve common goals.

(JS): Last January I met with Mercedes Gomez at the FMMM office here in Puebla for the purpose of educating myself about the FMMM program. It was a highly productive session which resulted in a background document describing the principal projects which the FMMM has been involved in during its first four years of existence (i.e. - work on the Rosario Chapel and the O'Gorman murals, and programs such as the stone conservation course given in partnership with the Getty Conservation Institute). We also identified some top priorities for future activities in this region, which related to topics such as: paintings conservation, the conservation of glazed ceramic tile, scientific research and education, among others. Our conversations stopped there.

We are now at a critical juncture. Our office in Puebla is set up and ready to be fully utilized. We are involved in several conservation projects, but all are in the analysis phase. As we near our five year anniversary, it is time to consider growth areas for the next five year period.

We hope today to brainstorm with all of you with the goal of identifying some practical projects with an international perspective, that we can address together for our mutual benefit. We should be open to discussing many possible arrangements, so during this time together, don't be shy. I encourage you to think freely, and dream big.

Maybe we can begin with Sam Baca (New Mexico Community Foundation) and Mario Sanchez (Los Caminos Del Rio) telling us more about the ambitions of their respective programs.

NMCF's "Churches: Symbols of Community" Program

(SB): The New Mexico Community Foundation is a statewide organization which promotes community development in rural New Mexico through rehabilitating its churches, which are the center of our communities. These churches, mostly of adobe construction, are vernacular architecture designed and built by members of the community, and are thus important to the history of the people of the region. These churches have traditionally depended upon cyclical maintenance, utilizing skills passed from one generation to the next. Because rural populations are now dwindling, and the remaining elderly are incapable of hard physical labor, communities are becoming increasingly unable to provide the resources for such labor, and traditional skills are being lost.

The NMCF is working to revitalize these skills, through providing technical assistance in training members of these communities in traditional building techniques and providing the services of professionals such as engineers and architects. We have been assisted by a generous NEA grant which provided funding for a survey of the over 700 historic churches in New Mexico, about half of which are of adobe construction. In 1989 we hired a technical staff that has developed conservation solutions that are effective and easy to teach.

Our general approach is to first assess the resources of a given community. We then secure community volunteers who become responsible for raising funds (an average of \$5,000 per project). NMCF provides direction, inspiration and technical assistance. The community members are trained, and once the project initiated, the technical staff participates on an as-needed basis. We often benefit from the additional help provided by outside volunteers such as local college students. Our trainees become excellent resources for other communities.

We generally have 12-14 active projects at any given time. In the past three years, 30 churches have been restored through hands-on community involvement.

WMF Involvement in NMCF

(SB): World Monuments Fund became involved at a critical phase of our program implementation, at a point where greater technical assistance was needed. Over the past 2 1/2 years they have provided us with almost \$300,000 in funding. This represents a significant portion in our annual budget of approximately \$250,000 per year. The assistance of WMF has been critical in our ability to affect so many communities.

Future Plans for NMCF

(SB): Training is critical to our program. We are trying to use our sites as a training grounds, providing young people with skills that will enhance their job potential. These skills can then be applied to the restoration of the many abandoned adobe structures which exist in New Mexico, or to the existing higher end building market, such as new home construction.

NMCF and Los Caminos del Rio -- Common Themes

(MS): I can identify several themes common to NMCF and the Los Caminos Del Rio Heritage Corridor project. These include: an interest in the preservation of a common heritage, the need to train a workforce, and the desire to stimulate economic development.

The history of the Lower Rio Grande is largely ignored. We want to add it as a chapter in history, and revive the knowledge of traditional materials and craftsmanship. We focus on education, planning and field work, with field work representing a tangible product which is necessary to make our project real.

Training is essential to Los Caminos del Rio. The project also represents a successful public and private partnership, with private funding currently coming exclusively from the Meadows Foundation.

We have now reached a juncture in the development of our program. We are beginning to conduct limited tours, and with The Conservation Fund, are about to begin a major "bricks and mortar" project in Roma. We have a ready laboratory in the Lower Rio Grande. At

present we have a public/private partnership in the U.S., and a public partnership in Mexico.

LCDR in Mexico

(MR): Each town in Mexico that is part of Los Caminos del Rio has its own dream. This project has shown them that they have something to offer to Mexico, and has proven to them that Mexico cares.

I believe that best cooking is done on a slow fire. But there are also tremendous political influences at work. Cavazos (Tamaulipas State Governor) is ready, and we must work to achieve something this year so that it can be sold to the next generation of government that will be elected in 1994. We are in need of roads and services, and will be working with federal agencies and the state government to achieve this.

Guerrero Viejo is a jewel -- a jewel that belongs not only to Mexico, but to humankind. We conducted a Spring cleaning at the site this past March 21st. Three hundred people arrived to help, along with television and newspaper reporters. In October of 1993 we will be celebrating the 40-year anniversary of the inauguration of the dam. This may represent a great opportunity.

FMMM's View of Shared Concerns

(MG): I am surprised at how much we in Puebla have in common with the cities in the north. For all of us our old buildings represent part of our community's identity, and an opportunity to make people aware of who they are and where they come from. I have also observed common technical problems. For example, we share the same problem with the past mis-uses of portland cement. We also all share the need to make people aware of what they have, while preventing commercial interests from overriding cultural awareness. And we, too, are interested in providing the community with technical assistance.

Distinct Resources

(JS): Texas, Mexico and New Mexico seem to share some common problems, and also have distinct resources. Though Guerrero Viejo is a very special site which is unique in the

region. The Texas State Historical Commission and National Park Service are other distinctive resources. What are the current plans for Guerrero Viejo?

(MS): We have always considered the idea of using it as a park. Since the Wildlife Corridor project is progressing, perhaps this would be complementary to the use of the site as a park. But this site cannot just be conserved. It must also be used for the economic benefit of the region. One of our main goals is to revive the traditional arts and crafts of the corridor region, most of which are architectural.

(MR): Guerrero Viejo could become a school of many traditional trades: plaster, arcades, carved sandstone work, and woodwork -- maybe all against the background of the architectural conservation of the site.

Organization of a Consortium

(JS): Let's discuss how such a consortium can work. It appears that those on the American side of the river are currently the leaders in this dance. For this reason, WMF is leaning more heavily toward lending help to the Mexican side, choosing a project on the Mexican side of the border to serve as some sort of "demonstration project". Roma appears to be more of an American-sponsored project that is already in good hands. Guerrero Viejo appears to be in need of more help.

Other Potential Mexican Projects

(LT): I am aware of some paintings done by a 17th-century Mexican artist named Miguel Cabrera, which are currently in the possession of the St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe. Perhaps they could be restored through the FMMM.

(JS): Jacqueline McNulty has a concept for a Mission Corridor that originates in Arizona and stretches into Mexico. This concept shares many features common to the Los Caminos del Rio project.

American Express has also expressed interest in working with WMF to publish a booklet on Latin America, an idea we might want to pursue together.

(BB): Projects to consider:

Guerrero Viejo (with WMF/FMMM collaboration)
Network of Workshop Schools (sponsored by WMF)
Paintings at St. Francis Cathedral
Arizona Trail
American Express Publication

(SJ): This reminds me of the example of the city of Alamos in northern Mexico, an abandoned community that was revived using tourists as the workforce.

(MR) We cannot lose sight of the fact that, in general, Mexico despises its border towns, and these towns despise themselves. It may take time for them to realize that they have something to offer.

Strengths of Potential Project in Guerrero Viejo

(JS): The idea of trying to preserve and present Guerrero Viejo is unquestionable, in my opinion. The buildings themselves may not be world class, but the thought of sensitively developing this historic resource is. This idea relates to every country that has a border, and every region with a river, and could be especially important now, when potential for even greater North/South cooperation is probable. Yet we need to look at it in terms of practical development schemes, outlining what must be done and who will do it.

(MR): I have a concern that Mexico may not care enough.

(BB): But we don't need to convince the whole country. It is perfectly O.K. for us, with our current level of insight, to make an effort to enlighten individual communities. It could be interesting to take a city like Roma and invite its community and neighboring communities to participate in certain tasks. This could provide a starting point for community involvement and awareness.

(JS): Involving neighboring communities may be a big idea. Such cooperative spirit could make the critical difference to any project. Perhaps we can think of several simple, specific work projects.

(BB): Several levels of involvement are needed. We need to develop projects that relate to conservation, planning and exchange. There also needs to be a crafts training level. There also should be a grass roots, community participation level.

(JS): It might lend a healthy perspective to have artists involved.

Promoting LCDR as Pilgrimage Route

(JS): What is the status of the creation of a cultural pilgrimage route?

(MS): The National Park Service has agreed to create a corridor map for us, and we are planning to apply for ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) funding to be used for interpretive signage, at least on the U.S. side of the corridor.

We are also thinking about the most appropriate locations to interpret the themes represented in the corridor. And we're looking at the corridor in terms of gateways (entries, endpoints, places where transportation arteries intersect).

(JS): In our experience we have found that the use of simple, engaging graphics can be immensely helpful. As you move beyond speaking to preservationists, to an audience of sympathizers, you should make sure that you communicate in a language that your audience will understand.

(MS): We have had great success with our current method of presentation. A video would be very helpful, however.

(MR): We do need help to sell this idea to communities in Mexico.

(MG): You have clearly already done a great job of getting people involved in their own communities. Perhaps it would be helpful to create a mechanism of informing one community about the neighboring ones, perhaps through organized tours.

How Can WMF Help?

(BB): What do you need from WMF?

(MR): We need your perspective, which is important in adding value to the things which are underappreciated. In this critical moment, your support provides us more force.

(MS): You have a compendium of talents to offer to our compendium of problems and needs. We would benefit from your international expertise, credibility and experience with tangible, bricks and mortar projects.

Prioritization of Potential Mexican Projects

(JS): INAH and the National Park Service already seem to be taking good care of Brownsville/Matamoros, and it appears that good progress is being made in the Roma/Mier region. The last remaining zone of concern appears to be that which encompasses San Ygnacio, Zapata and Guerrero Viejo, with its greatest challenge being at Guerrero Viejo. It represents a rich area for examination due to its historical interest, natural environment, potential for water recreation, and its position on the international border.

(BB): WMF is interested in taking on a Mexican project, under the auspices of the FMMM, with the American side also participating. It should be a regional, rather than site-specific project, and offer an opportunity for WMF to address all four of its primary goals: conservation, training, research and advocacy.

(MS): Roma could benefit from crafts training instruction programs. Help with the Roma bridge is also needed.

Description of Potential WMF/FMMM Charrette for Guerrero Viejo

(JS): The role of the FMMM in a Guerrero Viejo project could be to organize and help conduct a study of the town and its environs, utilizing WMF staff in both New York and Mexico, with the assistance of the LCDR staff.

(BB): The following is a potential project timeline, operated under the auspices of the FMMM:

Report on Meeting	June
Charrette Planning/Fundraising	June-Sept.
Charrette Organization	Aug.-Sept.
Charrette	Early Oct.
Document/Preliminary Plan	Nov.-Dec.
Project Promotion/Fund Raising	Jan.-March

(JS): Such an exercise would result in the creation of a plan of action, a budget cost analysis, and would enlist appropriate participants (individual and institutional). This process would require a designated coordinator for the period of July through December, and would result in a jointly-authored report, offering a holistic and integrated analysis of the problem. This process itself can be expected to solve many questions, and the resulting document can serve as a fund raising tool and application to various decision makers.

LCDR Wish List

(BB): A possible disadvantage is that it might not be able to be accomplished within this time frame. It will depend on WMF's success in raising the necessary funds for organizing and staging the event. But, aside from this, if you had your wish, what would you like from us?

(MS): I would wish for:

1. a charrette (involving international experts, and a document with color photos

2. implementation or help with implementation of the plan
(including fund raising, generation of awareness, implementation of vision created by the charrette)

(JS): The charrette and a report could certainly be done. With regard to the implementation of the resulting vision, this cannot be guaranteed. The result of the charrette may be a suggestion of several tracks to follow, some of which WMF may be able to offer our assistance with.

(BB): A next step will be for us to evaluate the costs of such a program, to determine how it could potentially be funded. In the meantime, you should assume that potentially nothing may happen.

(MR): It would be important for the program to be bi national, due to the potential for changes in the Mexican political scene.

(JS): The project should probably involve the following sequence of activities:

- orientation at the site
- general assembly
- specialty workshops
- refining of solutions
- presentation of scheme to respondents (potentially media)
- response refinement
- final report

Training Programs

(BB): With regard to craft training, perhaps it would be best to regroup in the fall, once Sam has had a chance to test their new Summer Youth Program (sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor) and WMF will have developed a document which outlines a feasible training program in New York. At that time, Mario could present a hypothetical set of challenges which he feels should be addressed. At this later stage, with more information, we will be better able to evaluate the potential of working together on such a project.

With regard to the Summer Youth Program, there are several issues to be considered: the use of a casual workforce is often beneficial only up to a point, and may take more energy in training than it is worth.

(MG): Perhaps different crafts could be taught in different towns. The result would be a non-competitive workforce.

(SJ): I am familiar with a magazine called "Mexico Desconocido," which might be an effective vehicle for publicizing such activities.

(MS): Other "wishes" include:

- an article published in *National Geographic*
- an article in *The New York Times*
- assistance with securing a designation from the U.S. Congress
- a book on the resources in the corridor by a internationally-renowned photographer

(BB): We could certainly help you by providing introductions to people at *Smithsonian* and *Historic Preservation*.

I think the discussion of the paintings in the Santa Fe cathedral should be tabled until we have more information.

(JS): This has been a valuable meeting which has done much to give shape to our plans for FMMM. Let's go forward in planning the charrette as a cooperative effort, making sure to identify long-term participants with strong leadership capabilities.

* * * * *

The symposium was followed by a presentation of the FMMM's work on the O'Gorman Library in Mexico City and the Rosario Chapel in Puebla. Presented by Mercedes Gomez, Luis Torres, Marilupe Carpinteyro and Arturo de la Serna, the talk described the motivations, methodologies and technical aspects of their work on these two ongoing projects.

On Saturday, en route to Mexico City, the group visited several sites in Cholula, including the Capilla Real and Tonantzintla.

5.2 SYMPOSIUM -- SUMMARY

Our tour of the area and subsequent discussions revealed several needs common to the New Mexico Community Foundation and Los Caminos del Rio:

- To create awareness of, and to preserve, the unique cultural heritage of this region.
- To develop training programs which relate to the traditional architectural crafts of the region.
- To promote economic development in the region while maintaining a balance with cultural priorities.

Due to the high level of leadership involvement and financial commitment currently offered by the United States to this region through private organizations (the Meadows Foundation, Inc., The Conservation Fund) and government entities (U.S. National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), it was agreed that the help of the WMF and FMMM would be most valuable if applied to a project on the Mexican side of the border. Of the sites visited, the primary zone of concern was identified as the region including the towns of San Ygnacio and Zapata in the U.S. and Guerrero Viejo in Mexico, due to its rich cultural resources and lack of support when compared to other areas along the Rio Grande.

The group identified the following potential preservation projects for consideration:

- Development of a training program -- perhaps involving a network of workshop schools, or community training exchanges
- Creation of a preservation program for Guerrero Viejo
- Conservation of Mexican paintings at St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe
- Development of an Arizona-Mexico historic mission corridor
- Production of an American Express-sponsored publication on Latin America

Proposed Project

For the following reasons it was decided that the strongest candidate for WMF support, would be at Guerrero Viejo:

- The site represents an architectural ensemble of special significance.
- The concept of preserving and presenting “lost” or economically depressed river towns is relevant to many other places in the world today.
- The problem of preserving historic towns threatened by floods and construction of dams is an international concern.
- It would allow for the development of a regional, rather than site-specific program.
- Due to its position on the border, it could promote North/South cooperation during a critical time.
- A program could be developed for Guerrero Viejo which would address the primary goals of the WMF (conservation, training, research and advocacy) and the goals of the other participants.

It was proposed that the WMF, supported by FMMM, would plan and conduct a “charrette” (intensive planning session) which would result in a jointly authored report, recommending a holistic plan of action for the preservation of the Guerrero Viejo site. This process would involve a preliminary research and planning phase, and a brainstorming session at or near the site which would result in the formulation, presentation and refinement of proposed solutions. Responsibilities for implementation of the proposed solutions would depend on the outcome of the charrette.

Next Steps

WMF is to develop a prospectus for the Guerrero Viejo charrette, including a description of the proposed project, a schedule, a list of possible participants, and a preliminary budget. Los Caminos del Rio is to identify possible participants and forward existing documentation on the site.

6. APPENDIX -- PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund, founded in 1965, is a not-for-profit organization whose aim is the conservation of cultural heritage worldwide through advocacy, public education and training in conservation techniques. As a private organization based in New York with autonomous national affiliates in France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Mexico, World Monuments Fund has accomplished the conservation of over 80 projects in 22 countries.

Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos del Mundo

The Fundación Mexicana para los Monumentos del Mundo was created through the joint efforts of the World Monuments Fund and the Mary Street Jenkins Foundation in 1989. Headquartered in Puebla, Mexico, its objectives reflect the interests of both organizations: the study, conservation and advocacy of the cultural heritage in Mexico and Latin America.

Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project

Initiated by the Texas Historical Commission in 1989, Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project is based on a network of regional, state and national organizations and governments working with businesses and local citizens. The aim of this consortium is to preserve the shared heritage between the United States and Mexico along the lower Rio Grande through linking the region's cultural and natural resources by means of a heritage trail.

New Mexico Community Foundation

The New Mexico Community Foundation is a public, non-profit corporation, established in 1980, dedicated to strengthening New Mexico's communities through historic preservation activities. Through programs such as "Churches: Symbols of Community" the NMCF assists communities in preserving their historic churches, thus helping them to maintain and share their cultural heritage.