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Nuñez Oporto Shares Lessons and Inspiration from the 2022 Conservation Finance Boot Camp

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Mauricio Nuñez Oporto, Managing Director of *Colectivos de Accion Local para la Regeneracion (CALOR)* in Peru, joined over 25 experts at a week-long conservation finance boot camp from June 27 to July 1. He left with new tools, ideas, and hope for the future of conservation.

The 2022 Conservation Finance Boot Camp at Colorado State University (CSU) was hosted by the Conservation Finance Network (CFN) at the Warner College of Natural Resources at CSU and the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources of the University of Wyoming.

Nuñez Oporto leads *Calor*, an emergent conservation organization that works to develop landscapes and build a pipeline for restoration businesses led by Indigenous peoples in Peru. Coming from

a position that requires him to build and enable wide collaborative networks, he said the opportunity to work alongside other industry leaders was transformative. “I walked away ... armed with a new set of tools and perspectives to further my aim of empowering my people to protect our sacred lands.”

The boot camp was a fast-paced and all-encompassing program that explored a range of topics within the field of conservation finance. Subjects included ecosystem services, market development and maturity, public funding, state revolving funds, debt, federal-private partnerships, outcomes-based finance, and the state of international conservation finance.

The participants also explored a new concept developed by the CFN and Gordian Knot Strategies, called the Arch Framework. The tool uses cross-cultural strategies to boost the efficiency of capital deployment and appeal to private conservation investment by establishing a common language. The lexicon can then



Conservation Finance Boot Camp Participants, Credit: Photography by Desiree INC.

be used to translate project elements into metrics of success. “At a time when it’s critical to meet the world’s most urgent challenges, such as climate change and biodiversity collapse, these cross-cultural tools and practices are more important than ever.”

Núñez Oporto entered the camp with a clear view of what he hoped to learn. He was interested in how organizations can use project finance to accelerate pipeline development; how others aggregate projects for scale and Payment for Environmental Services markets; and which innovative financial structures can pass equity and justice back to land stewards. After exploring case studies and sharing dialogue with peers, he walked away with a toolbox of ideas for addressing those questions and more. “In the end, I uncovered a range of strategies that generate, manage, and deploy financial resources, and align with purposeful conservation outcomes.”

As the senior leader of a conservation organization, Núñez Oporto values collaboration and uses it as a measure of progress in the landscape of conservation finance. Development projects often require intricate partnerships, which makes networking events such as this one particularly valuable. “Ultimately, everyone plays a role in the building of this ecosystem of conservation finance, and that is why collaborative gatherings like the Boot Camp are so essential,” Núñez Oporto said.

The diversity and unique competencies of the boot camp’s cohort impressed Núñez Oporto. The group was a mix of rookie and veteran conservationists from a variety of organizations, but each participant brought new and innovative concepts to the table. Despite its varied backgrounds, Núñez Oporto said that the group shared a strong sense of camaraderie, working together to study material, complete projects, and share ideas and experiences.

Reflecting back on the week he shared with a diverse cohort of ambitious and motivated conservation entrepreneurs, Núñez Oporto is hopeful for the future. “From radical to conservative, our innovative financial instruments and capacities have the power to shape how we treat, protect and save our planet. And through collaboration and earnest organization of our skills and investments, we, together, can flip the script.”



Mauricio Núñez Oporto, Credit: Photography by Desiree INC.