

Judge Denies Tarahumara Request to Suspend Logging Chihuahua, Mexico

In December, 2006, the Tribunal Agrario in Chihuahua denied a petition from 84 Tarahumara from Choreachi to suspend logging of their traditional forests until their land claims are resolved. The pueblo of Choreachi has struggled for recognition of its lands since 1934. They are the last Tarahumara pueblo to live in an ancient forest and one of the most traditional indigenous communities in North America. Biologists have identified 26 protected species in this endangered forest. Less than 1 percent of the original old growth in the Sierra survives. Choreachi is supported by an *Alianza* of NGOs led by Sierra Madre Alliance (SMA). They plan to preserve their forests and have applied for protected area status under traditional indigenous management. SMA coordinates an interdisciplinary team of biologists, anthropologists, lawyers and indigenous leaders who facilitate biocultural conservation, defense of indigenous rights and appropriate development. The *Alianza* has been defending Choreachi since the Tarahumara were defrauded of their rights in 1998. A renewed campaign of lawsuits, political negotiations, and public pressure are planned. For more information see www.sierramadrealliance.org.