



Tideland Signal buoys mark completion of El Salvador's first marine protected area

June 2009 saw the completion of a project to develop El Salvador's first marine protected area. Known as Los Cobanos, the protected area is made up of ocean, mangrove forests, and sandy and rocky beaches.

The project was completed with the placement of four Tideland Signal SB-2200P sentinel buoys fitted with MLED-120SC self contained lanterns. The four buoys, which are anchored with a carbon steel mooring chain and a 5200kg sinker located 54m below on the ocean floor, are all-yellow with yellow lights and "X" marks on the top; as used internationally to mark special interest areas.

The Tideland Signal buoys are manufactured from UV stabilized, rotationally molded polyethylene; a much more environmentally friendly product compared to traditional steel buoys. The recyclable polyethylene buoys are non-corrosive and do not require the toxic anti-fouling paint needed for steel buoys; making them much safer for the remarkable variety of sea life and the delicate ecosystem that this project sets out to protect.

The polyethylene buoys are also a much more cost effective option, an important consideration for the project. The buoys never require painting, are easy to clean, and any routine maintenance can be performed with the buoy in position rather than having to bring in costly equipment to lift it from the water.

Located off the coast of Sonsonate, southwestern El Salvador, the protected area covers over 20,000 hectares of the Pacific Ocean, which features rocky reefs and the only hard coral formations that occur in the Eastern Pacific between Mexico and the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border.

The project was developed through a partnership between the Government of El Salvador and Development Alternatives Inc (DAI); and comes as part of the 'Improved Management and Conservation of Critical Watersheds' (IMCW) project, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Tideland Signal was contracted to provide the buoys that demarcate the corners of the marine surface; and their placement completed the measuring and marking of the area that was carried out by DAI.

Placement of the buoys was supported by the Government of El Salvador's port authorities, which provided supervision, port storage, and the use of cranes, tug boats, and equipment.

Now the area has been classified, a local team of stakeholders is developing a management plan for Los Cobanos, which will rule fisheries, land use, tourism, and other activities in a sustainable way in order to guarantee the preservation of the protected area.

Contact

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Tideland Signal
Corporation



Images:



Images show Tideland Signal SB-2200P sentinel buoys being maneuvered into place in the Pacific Ocean.

Notes:

Tideland Signal Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer of marine aids-to-navigation, with a reputation for developing equipment to high performance specifications and with the reliability needed to withstand harsh marine conditions. Prominent in Port and Harbor operations around the world, Tideland Signal has served Coast Guard and Lighthouse Authorities since 1954, as well as providing specialized aids-to-navigation equipment to the offshore oil and gas industry.

The IMCW project seeks to reverse economic trends in rural western El Salvador - trends that threaten the sustainability of critical ecosystems, degrade water supplies and quality, and bind farmers to environmentally destructive subsistence farming. To do so, the project develops the management of areas of high biodiversity importance while promoting responsible, sustainable economic growth.

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