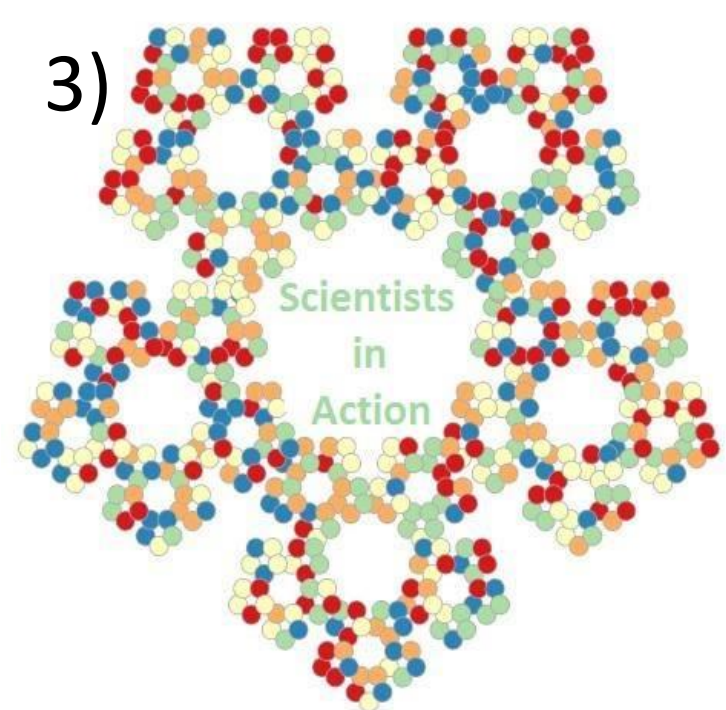


# FROM FOREST TO RESIDENTIAL HOUSING? A POTENTIAL VICTORY OVER THE “PRIVATE PROFITS, PUBLIC IMPACTS” WAY OF PROCEEDING

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Scientists in Action  
for Biodiversity and  
Sustainability  
**SiABioS**



(6) Citizen and  
former president  
(1991-1993) of  
Jilotzingo  
Municipality



(7) Working  
group

Autonomous University of the State  
of Mexico (UAEM), Institute for  
Agricultural and Rural Sciences (ICAR)

UNAM

(4) NGO: “Mexicans Against  
Corruption and Impunity”

(5) NGO: “Together Working  
for Jilotzingo Development”



*Bosque Diamante* (“Diamond Forest”):

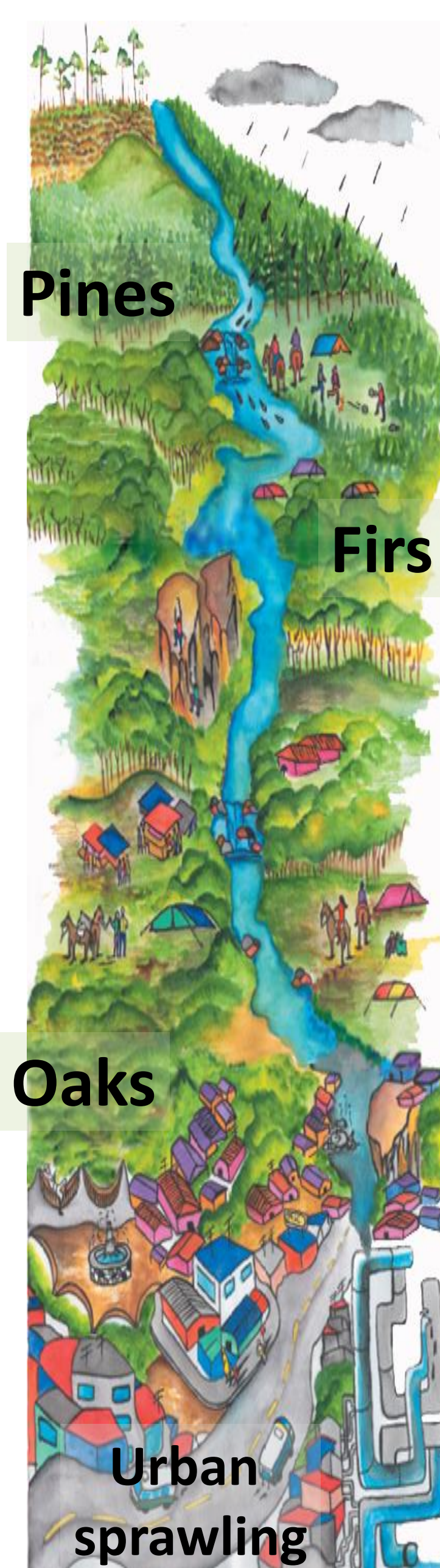
- Destruction of 186 504 trees in 238 has of well-preserved oak forest next to a natural protected area
- 19985 new residences = Over 5x the current population
- Non-transparent authorization in 2017: Real estate developer is close to the former government
- Neglecting two key legal documents: → Environmental impact assessment  
→ Public consultation

## REGIONAL DATA SHEET:

- Long history over **500 years** of occupancy: Otomí – Aztecs – Spanish colonialism – Mexico’s urbanization
- A key watershed providing **ecosystem services**: Forests of pines (mainly *Pinus hartwegii*), firs (*Abies religiosa*) and oaks (*Quercus*); aquifer recharge zone with springs and creeks; biodiversity-rich area (143 spp).
- A Natural Protected Area: Since 1980 the “Otomi-Mexica Park” begins at the 2800m altitude.
- **Land use** changed: Lowest areas taken by urban sprawling with <10% vegetation. Medium altitudes: semi rural villages and remnant traditional croplands.
- **Land tenure**: communal and *ejido* at high-medium altitudes, privatized at medium and low altitudes.

**JILOTZINGO** municipality: aprox.19000 inhabitants.

- **82%** of its territory **is natural** protected area (common land)
- Six traditional villages. Urbanization taking over quickly.
- **Productive activities**: Traditionally based on silviculture, free-range livestock, non-extensive traditional maize crops (*milpa*), seasonal wild mushrooms and fruits, gravel extraction. Now: 70% of people have changed to commerce and services. Rural tourism increasing.
- **Environmental issues**: deforestation, land-use changes, pollution, climate-change driven long droughts and short heavy storms.
- **Social features**: 45% of poverty, high insecurity and low social welfare with by lack of jobs, low education, high migration (in and out), complex governance.



Forest area projected to be to **ca. 20000 houses**



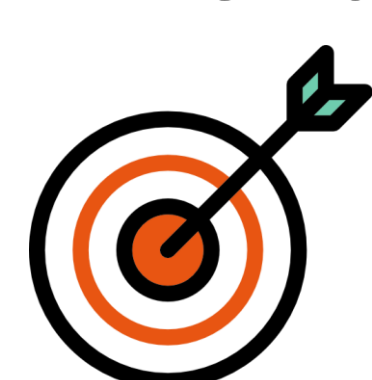
Local people felt their traditional ways of life threatened: forest destruction will negatively impact local nature and “its goods” reducing life quality and will change political decision-making process.

Complaints about local government having to provide public-paid services to the newcomers, with less natural resources.

Local society self-organization (urban neighbors, NGOs, civils and assemblies of common-lands rural owners): request of scientific-based evidence and support to organize informed-public demonstrations and serious press investigations.



Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity (MCCI): Investigation & legal dispute  
On January 2019, a district judge ordered the definitive **suspension of any building activities** until the company presents the two key documents



**A precedent-setting victory -although partial- in an ongoing environmental conflict**