

Executive Summary

State Party

MEXICO

State, Province, or Region

Nayarit, Jalisco, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí

Name of nominated property

***The Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta
(Tatehuarí Huajuyé)***

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Northern latitude: 23° 41' 56.04" N; Northern longitude: 100° 48' 53.68" W

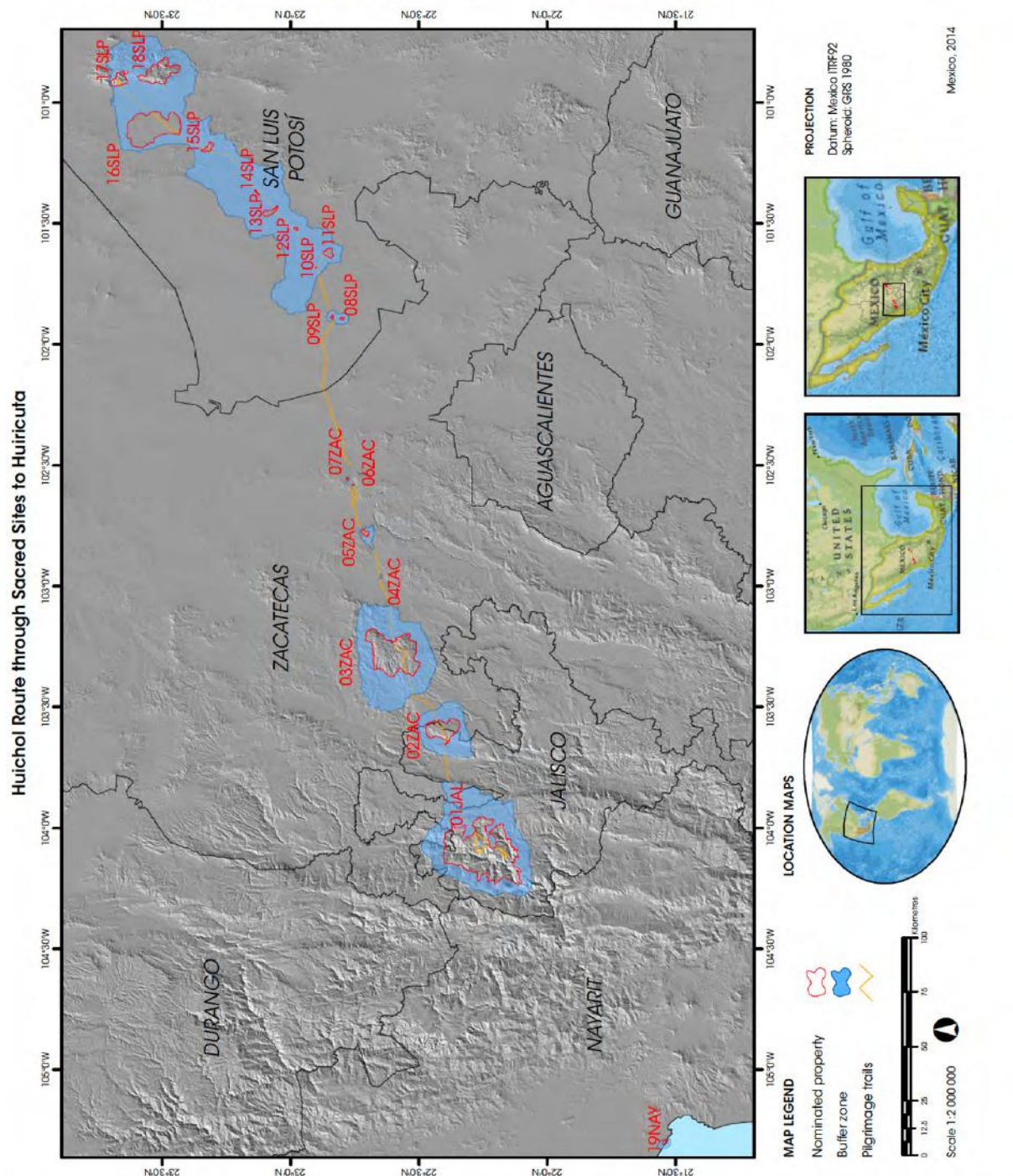
Southern latitude: 21° 31' 36.89" N; Southern longitude: 105° 18' 36.37" W

Textual description of the boundaries of the nominated property

The Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta (Tatehuarí Huajuyé) is a national serial nomination. The property consists of 19 polygons or sacred landscapes with a total surface of 135,360 hectares in north-central Mexico which extend west-northeast along a corridor of 500 kilometers that crosses the Mexican states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosí. The Route begins in the southern part of the Western Sierra Madre, in the Huichol Sierra, the geographic heart of the territory occupied ancestrally by the Huichol, where the main settlements and pre-Hispanic temple complexes are found. The Route then runs northeastward to the sacred landscape of Huiricuta, located to the southeast of the Chihuahuan Desert. The cycle closes in the opposite direction, at the sacred seaside sites in the west, on the coast of the state of Nayarit. The delimitation of the areas of the 19 properties and their corresponding Buffer Zones depended on each landscape and on the associative power between its elements (mountains, rocks, springs, or rivers) and the ancestral rituals performed during the pilgrimage route. In the process of delimitation of the Buffer Zones, adequate landscape and protection units were considered.

A4 or A3 size map(s) of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone (if present)

Letter size map of the nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone



Criteria under which property is nominated (itemize criteria)

The site is proposed for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a serial nomination of the Associative Cultural Landscape type, in keeping with Universal Value Criteria iii, v and vi.

Cultural Landscape

Yes

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta consists of 19 associative cultural landscapes with a total surface area of 135,360 hectares, which are in north-central Mexico and extend west-northeast along a 500 km corridor that crosses three eco-regions of planetary relevance for their contribution to biodiversity. The Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta is the most representative living relic of the ancestral ceremonial and trade routes that connected and culturally enriched the peoples of the American continent for millennia. The Route constitutes a unique living remnant of the ancient pre-Columbian pilgrimage routes of America. The continuity of pre-Columbian cultural schemes is one of the most essential qualities of the set of Associative Cultural Landscapes presented, which, with understandable adaptations due to time and space, still vigorously express themselves on the Route. The ultimate objective of all the complex processes involved in the cycle of the Route is to maintain positive relations with the natural elements considered as ancestral deities, to ensure the success of the agricultural cycle and, therefore, the general welfare of the people. The Route is also an extraordinary example of sustainable millennial land-use practices that express the bond between spirituality and specific elements in nature.

Justification for Criteria

Criterion (iii)

The Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta is one of the last living testimonies of ancient pre-Columbian pilgrimage routes in America. The Route is an exceptional remnant of the ceremonial and trade routes that connected and enriched the American continent for millennia. The Route represents and evidences the intimate connection between spirituality and nature, so essential to the human being. The veneration of nature and an alliance with the sacred landscapes is an integral part of the cosmogony of the Huixárica peoples, who in a world context, is one of the original peoples who have most vigorously preserved their ancestral system of beliefs and social organisation up until our times. The vitality with which the Huichol people have maintained their Mesoamerican legacy is incomparable. The combination of the ceremonial Route, ancestral agricultural practices, human settlements, pre-Hispanic ceremonial centres, and ritual cycles of the Huichol peoples comprise an exceptional testimony of the survival of the millenary cultural models of the Mesoamerican region.

Criterion (v)

The traditional agricultural techniques exhibited in the ancient coamil

systems, the settlement patterns in the disperse farming and ranching communities, the architectonic model of the ceremonial centres and the ritual bond with nature, all present in the Huichol Route through the Sacred Sites to Huiricuta, are extraordinary expressions of a complex system of ancestral interactions and land uses. The main purpose of the ritual itinerary is to follow and re-create the steps of the ancestors to ask them for rain and well-being. Sustaining positive relations with the ancestral deities, like the Sun and Water, assures the continuance of the annual agricultural cycle and the well-being and sustenance of the entire community. The ritual cycle is indivisibly linked to the traditional activities of agriculture, gathering, hunting, and fishing, thereby favoring a notable agro biodiversity. The arrangement of the ceremonial centres (tuquipa) in the communities preserves the models of architectonic organisation that had its roots in the monumental complexes known as guachimontones of the Teuchitlán Tradition (100 B.C. - A.D. 900).

Criterion (vi)

The territory comprised in the Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta maintains a powerful, indivisible bond with Huichol culture and spirituality. The Route is the epic road travelled by the ancestors: deities who were the first beings that inhabited the earth, and at the same time, elements of nature with which the Huichol peoples have direct kinship. From the beginning to the end of the Route, each site is charged with meaning and cultural associations since in such natural sacred sites ancestors reveal themselves in the form of (i) formations such as mountains, caves, boulders, and springs, (ii) phenomena such as rain and wind, and (iii) in certain kinds of flora and fauna like maize, tobacco, peyote, the golden eagle, or deer. The social organisation of the Huichol peoples is the essential support for the transmission of all their cultural expressions. During the journey, the elders transmit to the younger generations the most valuable knowledge of their ancestral legacy through stories, songs, dances, and sophisticated rituals, as the itinerary becomes a codex that opens onto the landscape. Such ritual practices are complex artistic expressions —literary, visual, and dramatic— of extraordinary wealth. The legacy of knowledge transmitted through the pilgrimage constitutes an “itinerant Mesoamerican university” that reproduces a way of acting in the face of a world in a process of permanent change. The role of the Route in the narrative of the Huichol oral tradition is critical for the transmission of knowledge and cultural survival, especially considering the absence of a written tradition among the Huichol. The exceptional Huichol art, displayed in clothing, votive arrows, feather art, musical instruments, paintings, and sculptures, expresses the ritual relationships of the ancestors with aspects of daily life, and the elements that make up their complex cosmovision.

Statement of Integrity

This nomination includes the principal sacred landscapes of the Tatehuarí Huajuyé that were selected in close collaboration with Huichol authorities and fully represent the attributes that reflect its cultural meaning and historical development, in a series that comprises an indivisible cultural unity in which powerful religious and cultural associations of the Huichol peoples are included and developed. The interdependent properties clearly express the Outstanding Universal Value of the Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta for the World Heritage List as a Serial Nomination as Associative Cultural Landscapes. The main factor in the selection criteria of the sacred landscapes, that are the subject matter of this nomination, was the association of each one of them with the ritual activities performed and stories told by the shamans, or maraacames, during the pilgrimage and ceremonies. Such selection was made in close collaboration with Huichol authorities. This nomination is made at the request, and with the active participation, of Huichol communities. Each year, during the pilgrimage along the Route, the religious and cultural heritage of the Huichol peoples is renewed and recreated ritually; its integrity has been preserved from the remote past to the present day. This heritage has been consistently referred to by chroniclers, historians, and anthropologists since the seventeenth century.

Statement of authenticity for properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi)

Associative cultural landscapes are an outcome of the relationship between humanity and the territory, that has existed for a long period of time. They are the result of an alliance between culture and the natural environment —the link between traditions, ancestral beliefs, landscapes, and species. This is clearly reflected in the components and attributes that express the authenticity of the Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta. Tatehuari Huajuye irrefutably complies with the authenticity conditions established in the *Nara Document*. The cultural processes that the Huichol peoples have kept alive from their remote past until the present time have made it possible to safeguard unique traditional elements. The Huichol concept of heritage and territory, which includes social structure, oral tradition, ceremonial spaces, agriculture, and pilgrimage routes, has become part of the spiritual, intellectual, and material heritage of humanity. The Huichol temples and sacred sites are part of a social reality that permits the continued existence of a pre-Hispanic political and ceremonial structure. The cultural value of the Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta is truthfully expressed through the attributes now present in its components. The components of the Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta continue to maintain their original vocation and ancestral characteristics dynamically and vigorously, thereby preserving their authenticity values.

Requirements for protection and management

The Federal and local governments have effectively been able to procure the conservation and the protection of the properties along the Route, through the implementation of diverse layers of environmental policy instruments, provided for in federal and local laws, as well as international agreements. The constitutional recognition of the Huichol Community as national heritage that deserves protection, and the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights to use the territory they live in and occupy (including its natural resources) allows for the protection of the Huichol Route through Sacred Sites to Huiricuta, the Huichol culture, and the ecosystems and landscapes associated to it. The properties that compose the Route are located across a series of ecosystems of great significance for the conservation of environment and biodiversity in Mexico. All the properties are within areas governed by either environmental protection, policy instruments or classified within some level of priority regions. Most of the properties located along the Route are already subject to management programs, ecological planning programs or other guidelines resulting from the different environmental and planning policy instruments. These management plans set the modalities for the use of the natural resources available in certain regions of the Route. A comprehensive management, conservation and safeguarding plan for the property has been elaborated. The management plan for the Route integrates the guidelines included in existing programs and the provisions established in future natural protected areas, ecological planning or other programs aimed at the sustainable management of the Property to guarantee the conservation of the Route.

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency/organisation.

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