



# A COMMUNITY RESOURCE



*"It is only me."*  
~ Alberto Blanco

Alberto Blanco, Petatlán's government ecologist  
Photo by Susan Carlin



From a boat in the Potosi lagoon.

Photo by Joel Carlin

Investment isn't just a measure of time or money, it's also a devotion of commitment, responsibility, and passion.

La Laguna Valentin lies between the City of Petatlán and the Pacific Ocean. It has been home to a very successful fishing industry for hundreds of years, but things are starting to change. Felipe, a local fisherman, has made the lagoon his life and livelihood since he was 10 years old. His, and the families around him, are completely dependent on the lagoon—as they have been for generations.

This has not come without expense to the environment. Overfishing and opening the lagoon to the sea have created problems. Today, the fishermen do not catch as many fish, and those they do get are small. Removing fish from the ecosystem before they can reproduce is not sustainable.

There are those who are voicing concern. Alberto Blanco, Petatlán's only government ecologist, is extremely concerned about the need to protect the lagoon. Even though Alberto works for the government, he struggles to gain support and finds raising public concern difficult.

Even though the fishermen love and depend on the lagoon, and want to see it preserved for their children and beyond, they don't yet realize that their actions are contributing to its decline. For scientists like Alberto there is hope. The region made great strides in other areas like shrimp farming and sea turtle conservation efforts. People are slowly beginning to realize that preserving their environment is not only good for nature, but good for business as well.



Felipe and other local fishermen.

Photo above by Joel Carlin

Escape to the sea.

Photo below by Susan Carlin

La Laguna Valentin, near Petatlán.

Photo bottom by Joel Carlin



## What resources need preserving in your community?

