

## **Sustainability and a comprehensive vision for environmental protection, conclusions of the series of round tables hosted by Fundación Cepsa at UHU**

- **Representatives from public administrations and productive sectors, as well as experts from Spanish universities, participated in the sessions held on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the restoration of Laguna Primera de Palos.**
- **Two of the fundamental pillars of Fundación Cepsa work to promote conservation, care for the environment, and natural heritage, as well as research and employability programs.**

Fundación Cepsa and the University of Huelva have closed a series of round tables held throughout October at the University of Huelva to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Laguna Primera de Palos restoration project. Among a range of topics, participants analyzed and discussed the importance of conserving spaces that are vital for humanity, such as wetlands.

The first session, entitled "Ramsar, more than just an international convention: The reason for a wetland," featured José Enrique Borrallo, Sustainable Development delegate; Carmelo Romero, Mayor of Palos; Juan Carlos Rubio, former Director of Doñana National Park; Tobias Salathé, Ramsar deputy for Europe; and Lucia Santolaria, head of environmental protection at Cepsa. Since 2006, Laguna Primera has been a Ramsar site of international importance.

The second, entitled "Conservation and restoration of wetlands: the case of Laguna Primera de Palos," dealt with the importance of public/private collaboration to erect and maintain projects of this magnitude, as occurred twenty years ago between Cepsa and the then Department of the Environment of the Andalusian Regional Government. In addition to this action, over the last two decades Cepsa and its Foundation have been working alongside regional and local administrations and environmental companies to restore degraded spaces. This includes the work by Cepsa at the Madrevieja environmental station in San Roque (Cádiz) and Arroyo Negro (La Línea) and the different awareness, maintenance, and public use initiatives in Marismas del Odiel. José Fiscal, Andalusian parliamentarian for Huelva; Enrique Martínez, Director of Marismas del Odiel; and biologist David Barros, among others, participated in this round table.

The need for harmony between activity sectors, for development of the provincial economy, and for sustainability of these sensitive natural spaces, was the topic during the third session of the debate, which included the Delegate of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, Alvaro Burgos; Vice President of Fundación Cepsa, Iñigo Diaz de Espada; head of 'Platalea, Naturaleza y Patrimonio,' Diego Vazquez; head of the Community of

Irrigators of Palos de la Frontera, Fernando Sanchez; and President of QSostenible, Antonio Montaña.

The final panel discussed the future of wetlands and sustainability as an economic, social, and educational principle through the perspectives of María José Polo, from the University of Córdoba; José Prenda, from the University of Huelva; Juan Ramón Rallo, professor of Economics at IE University; Ana Warleta, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development; and Javier Camacho, restorer of Laguna Primera de Palos.

Communication professionals such as Miguel Doña, María José Maestre, Rafael López, and Norberto Javier were responsible for moderating the debates.

### **A project and national milestone**

Laguna Primera de Palos, a wetland near Cepsa's facilities in Palos de la Frontera, is part of the *Lagunas de Palos y Las Madres Natural Preserve*. Due to its growing value after its restoration, it was designated in 2006 as a "Site of Community Importance" and declared a "Wetland of International Importance" (Ramsar Area). The restoration and enhancement works were approached from a threefold perspective: ecological recovery, landscape restoration, and environmental awareness.

Twenty years later, Laguna Primera continues to be a benchmark for sustainability in Spain. Thanks to the various educational programs and 'Open Doors' days that Fundación Cepsa hosts in this natural area, in collaboration with the Andalusian Regional Government, nearly ninety thousand people have had the chance to visit it.

**Fundación Cepsa** is a general interest, nonprofit entity whose aim is to carry out initiatives that serve the needs and priorities of the local communities where its founder, Compañía Española de Petróleos S.A. (Cepsa), conducts its activities. The areas of action for Fundación Cepsa are social, environmental and scientific-educational.

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**Fundación Cepsa**  
huelva@fundacioncepsa.com  
Tel.: (+34) 659 679 341  
[www.fundacioncepsa.com](http://www.fundacioncepsa.com)