



## THE PARANOÁ SERRINHA

Get to know the case that led the Public Prosecution office, society and the academy to fight for **water-sensitive Brasilia**

Federal District, Brazil



## PARANOÁ SERRINHA AND ITS PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY

Located in North Lake, Brasilia, the hilly area known as “Paranoá Serrinha” – so named by a famous resident and historian Paulo Bertran – contains springs and streams that flow to Paranoá Lake, plus ecological trails, beautiful views and preserved Cerrado (Savanna) areas. Even the maned-wolf lives here where many residents dedicate themselves to ecotourism and organic production.

There, was developed the *Waters Project: unitedly building a sustainable society in Paranoá Serrinha* as well as a spring-recovery program in partnership with the Regional Administration in which the residents themselves mapped a hundred springs until then never formally identified.

## TAQUARI SECTOR: THE WORRYING URBAN EXPANSION IN SERRINHA

Worried over a sign indicating the construction of a new phase of the Taquari Housing development in Serrinha (a real estate project by Governmental Agency Terracap), the local community and Federal District environmental movements requested Public Prosecutor Office (MPDFT) intervention – something which has intensified because of the water crisis that began in 2016.

## THE MPDFT PUBLIC HEARING

The case was the subject of a public hearing on the water crisis held by MPDFT in March 2017.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the pre-licensing [agreement] of the new housing area was approved 20 years ago and that its projects did not present any technical solutions compatible with environmental sensitivity in the area, namely an aquifer replenishment region and a range between the Urubu and Jervá streams.

## PARANOÁ LAKE AND ITS SUPPLY CAPACITY

Another relevant factor in 2017 involved Paranoá having become a source of public water supply for the first time in its history.

The residents of the country's capital began to drink water previously only used for leisure, receiving urban rainwater, producing electricity or diluting treated sewage. This usage has stretched the dilution capacity of this man-made lake.

Paranoá Lake is therefore unable to receive new effluent loads generated by housing developments whose urban criteria are considered unsustainable and outdated.

Without deploying modern techniques, the implantation of new housing estates in the region has become environmentally unfeasible.

For this reason, the urban densification of the entire Paranoá basin needs to be revised and re-planned in accordance with the capacity of the new source of public water supply.

## THE PARTICIPATION OF THE ACADEMY: SEMINAR IN UNB

MPDFT and the community held a seminar in August 2017 called "*Paranoá Lake and the Water Crisis: Urban Planning Challenges for Brasilia*", seeking alternatives for sustainable urban expansion in partnership with the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Brasilia (FAU/UnB).

Having the water cycle as a methodological basis for promoting "water-sensitive cities", the purpose of the seminar was to make the research conducted by the University of Brasilia public, focusing on the Paranoá basin.

The "Water-Sensitive Brasilia" project by the FAU/UnB Water and Constructed Environment Research Group was developed on the basis of the Australian government's "Water Sensitive Cities" program (WSUD, 2012 and 2013). The central point of the debate was to recognise the influence of urban configuration on water flows and to use the urban water cycle - rainwater, drainage, grey and black water as a resource rather than a source of degradation or waste.

The urban drainage project, although already approved by Novacap, was considered obsolete and capable of causing serious impacts to the water resources in the water-producing region of Serrinha. This is because it does not adopt techniques to favour the water cycle such as rainwater infiltration, permeable pavements, green areas with drainage flow, etc.

### THE PUBLIC PROSECUTION OFFICE RECOMMENDATION

As projects for urban settlement in an environmentally sensitive area, located in two Areas of Environmental Protection (Paranoá and Central Plateau) must necessarily adopt solutions to preserve natural water-producing systems and respect the supply capacity of Lake Paranoá, the Public Prosecution Office for the Defense of the Environment (Prodema) recommended the suspension of the development license of the project. This [argument] was accepted by the district environmental agency.

The recommendation was the result of teamwork between the public Prosecution Office and organised civil society, as well as the sharing of scientific knowledge by the University of Brasília. It also counted on the support of the Paranoá River Basin Committee, ICM-Bio, the Environmental Protection Area Manager of the Central Plateau, and the Commission responsible for the elaboration of Federal District Economic Ecological Zoning (ZEE/DF) – all of whom opposed the implementation of the new housing development as was licensed by Ibram – the local environmental agency.

### BRASÍLIA SENSITIVE TO WATER – OBJECTIVES TARGETED

Consensus is sought to allow the implementation of the housing development through dialogue with the public authority, though according to certain criteria to preserve Serrinha waters.

Also on the agenda is the creation of ecological corridors, the maintenance of eco-trails and the creation of new conservation units to protect the fauna and the remaining vegetation in the Cerrado.

It is not about not developing but of how to develop, which requires a paradigm shift.

Nestled in a crib of waters, Brasilia society obviously wants to live in a water-sensitive city.

The participation of the population in the land development planning process is essential for public authorities to perceive the need of adopting new criteria for urban expansion, which promote sustainable projects capable of promoting socio-environmental justice, thus guaranteeing everyone access to quality water.

**Participate in the decisions that define the direction and future of your city and your quality of life!**

Your involvement is fundamental!

The best way to get involved is through engagement in organised civil society like residents' associations, advisory bodies, city halls, courts, NGOs, etc.

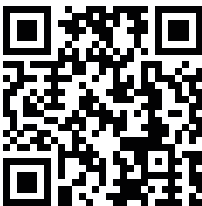
Attend public hearings.

Spend some of your time on community issues that will bring life to your block, your neighborhood, your city, your country.

**This way, we will bring the change that we so wish to see in the world.**

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.mpdft.mp.br/site/serrinha](http://www.mpdft.mp.br/site/serrinha)





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