Appendix 2. Guide to questions used during fieldwork. The questions in italics are the guide questions used with in the interviews conducted to the locals.

- ✓ Did you ever know the dry forest in a completely natural state? Does this forest exist now? How would you describe it? How would you describe the best-preserved forest?

  What is the best-preserved forest that you know in Zapotillo? For example, a forest where any other activity has took place in. Could you please provide an example of a specific site? Why do you believe that that forest is a good example of the best-preserved forest?

- ✓ How is forest status changing since you first met it? How many forest states can you currently differentiate because of anthropogenic disturbance? How would you describe these states of forests in terms of their structure and composition (plant cover, plant diversity, regeneration, ecologic functioning, and soil conditions)?

  Could you tell me what changes you have noticed in the forest? For example, are there sites that were only forests and are now used for timber, for grazing goats or for sowing?

  Could you describe those sites? What plants are there? How are the trees (small, large, abundant, thin, etc.)?

  Could you describe some characteristics that make those forests different from the best-preserved one?

- ✓ How do you think that those changes in structure and composition of each forest state affect their ecological dynamics?

  Do you think that those forest types have problems for their maintenance at long-term? Can you mention those problems that you have observed? For example, is the water quantity the same than in the best-preserved forest? Is the soil different? Are there any seeds?

- ✓ Which phase of the forest do you consider represent a phase at risk? Why?

  What is the time of the year in which the forest is more susceptible to face those problems? Why?

  What time in the year plants and trees suffer the most?. For example, when summer/winter begins, during the summer/winter, at the end of the summer/winter?

- ✓ What disturbance factors –drivers- do you think are causing changes in the structure and composition of the forest? Which of these drivers do you think are the main ones?

  Can you mention the human activities that you considered are generating changes from a best-preserved forest to the other forest types?

- ✓ How long (minimum of years - maximum of years) do you think the disturbance should be present to cause a transition –a change of state in the composition and structure of the forest–?

Those sites that you mentioned as examples of other types of forest, how long they have been in the condition that we observe them currently? (The researcher provided examples of sites in each state of conservation, selected from those previously mentioned by the interviewee).
Thus, for a forest with the characteristics of the "best-preserved" forest to present the current appearance, it takes about ..... years, right?

- ✓ Do you think that removing the disturbance would trigger a return to a previous state or not? In the case of affirmative answer, how many years do you consider are necessary to that return (minimum – maximum of years)? Under what management actions?

Do you think that if that forest (example of a forest state) were stopped using, it could recover to be a forest like that one it once was?

In the case of an affirmative answer, how many years do you consider necessary for that recover (minimum - maximum years)? What would be necessary for that recovery to take place -additional actions besides stopping using it-?