

Project Planning

During the first few weeks after our arrival from London, the team concentrated on the strategic planning of the project. We organised several internal workshops for the formulation of a Logical Framework and an Operative Plan. During this stage we carried out a trip to the study area in order to get in contact with the main stakeholders of the area.



Diffusion

We prepared a Press Release for national mass media in order to acknowledge the public opinion about the project and the BP award.

As a result, we can remark the diffusion of the project in the following media:



- Interview to the Project Leaders (Diego Varela and Nicolás Rey) at National Radio.
- Complete page note (with a photograph included) in the main newspaper of Misiones Province, Argentina (Diario El Territorio)
- Short notes in local newspapers of Buenos Aires.
- Several interviews in FM radio stations of the project area (Andresito, Misiones).
- One “free-lance” journalist covered part of the field work with birds in the study area.
- Short notes in several local web pages.

Since August we have a short weekly radial programme in FM Andresito, where we present the advances of the project to the local community and we also expose prepared special subjects related to the conservation of the native forest and the wildlife inhabiting the corridor.

Interviews

During the months of July and August we carried out interviews to 40 rural producers and their families in the area of influence of the ecological corridor. We used Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques. This work provided us with a diagnosis of the ecological and socio-economical problems affecting this area and also allowed us to present the project to the local community. The farms where the interviews were made were selected with the help of a cadastral map making sure that those properties between and around both protected areas were included.



Local government support

In order to improve the implementation and local impact of the project we initiated negotiations with the Ministry of Ecology of Misiones Province. These negotiations included the potential assignation of a local park ranger (Aloisio Foletto) for the maintenance of the agroforestry tree nursery and the development of extension activities in the community.

On September 16th we participated in an interview with the minister of Ecology (Miguel Alterach) and signed a co-operation agreement that included the assignation of the park ranger, as well as logistic support and satellite images of the study area.



Agroforestry nursery



In conjunction with the park ranger Aloisio Foletto we began to plan the construction of the native trees agroforestry nursery. We prepared an inventory of the necessary material and bought many of them. The nursery will be localised in a 35 hectares farm situated between both provincial parks, this farm includes a conservation area of almost 20 hectares.

Park ranger Aloisio Foletto has much helpful experience in the maintenance of forest nurseries and has worked previously with the NGO FUCEMA in a project of agroforestry sustainable development. We estimate that the nursery will be working by the month of December of this year.

Conservation Education

We visited 3 rural schools and 5 satellite classrooms located in the surroundings of the ecological corridor. We conducted interviews with the teachers in order to present our project and to plan jointly activities with the children of the area.

We started to develop a conservation education programme for the rural local schools in conjunction with Aves Argentinas (BirdLife partner)



GIS mapping

Using those satellite images donated by the Ministry of Ecology and CONAE (Comisión Nacional de Actividades Aeroespaciales), some members of the group are currently working with the mapping of the forest remnants of the ecological corridor.

In order to successfully classify different habitat types on the satellite image, we registered in the field, with the help of a GPS, the geographic position of those different habitat types and land uses.



Bird Surveys

Since the beginning of September and till the end of October we are carrying out the bird surveys in order to evaluate the connectivity between both provincial parks. In Misiones, Argentina, it is spring season, which is the best time of the year for the study of birds. The surveys include mist netting and point counts (visual and auditory registers).



Until the present time, we have had high rates of capture in the mist netting, including the register of several species of special conservation interest.



Forest People Wildlife Forest People Wildlife

Conservation problems

During our field work we have been able to take a deep look into the conservation problems that are currently affecting the region. The advance of the deforestation and the fragmentation are principally due to the slash and burn for the culture of Tobacco and Maize. There is also a precarious system of land ownership (permissions of occupancy) that does not contribute to the development of sustainable agricultural practices. The permission of selective cutting of the biggest trees are granted in an uncontrolled way and with political and electoral purposes. Every night we were able to see trucks loaded with huge trunks, coming out of the forest. Besides, there is a growing demand of wood from Brazil which incentives this contraband and illegal cutting.



Urugua-í Green Corridor Project BP Conservation Programme Gold Award 2002



Conservation of an ecological corridor between Urugua-í and Horacio Foerster Provincial Parks in the Atlantic Forest of Argentina.

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