

TCD Practitioner Grant Report: Returning results to Porto Dias Agroextractive Reserve in Acre, Brazil

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As a Masters student at UF in 2004, I first visited Acre, Brazil, and I was intrigued by the region's focus on sustainable forest management. The region is notable for historical ties to the forest within the rubber tapper community as well as state-supported forest certification efforts. I ended up continuing my field work as a PhD student in the Porto Dias Agroextractive Project, assessing the influences of logging on forest structure and species composition in bamboo (*Guadua* spp.)-dominated forest sites. Additionally, I evaluated the potential of enrichment plantings for an important timber species (*Dipteryx odorata*) in bamboo forests. I presented the research design to community members in September and October 2007, allowing them an opportunity to evaluate the methods and provide feedback on experimental design. To complement the ecological field data, I documented local perceptions of bamboo ecology and existing/potential local uses through a series of interviews. I discovered that the local bamboo-dominated forest is characterized by low commercial timber volume, suggesting that this forest type is susceptible to overexploitation. Enrichment plantings of *D. odorata* seedlings were successful, and their growth was enhanced in response to the bamboo removal treatment.

In the summer of 2012, thanks to a TCD Practitioner Grant, I was able to return research results to local community partners as well as my collaborators from local research institutions, NGOs, and companies. These institutions included the *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária* (EMBRAPA), the *Centro dos Trabalhadores da Amazônia* (CTA), the *Cooperativa dos Produtores Florestais Comunitários* (COOPERFLORESTA), the *Secretaria da Floresta* (SEF), the *Instituto de Meio Ambiente do Acre* (IMAC), and two community organizations, the *Associação Agroextrativista São José* and the *Associação Seringueira Porto Dias* (PAE). Much of my interaction with partner institutions in Rio Branco involved one-on-one meetings, with presentations of my research results, and work on research papers for publication. Community meetings in Porto Dias involved a formal dialogue with members of the two Project associations, allowing for dissemination of research results and discussion of possible implications for current management practices. I also visited various families within the Project to determine their current involvement with timber management programs, as well as to allow for a more informal setting for the distribution of my results. Project leaders were most intrigued by the confirmation that timber volume in their landholdings is very low and by the suggestion that they will need to diversify livelihood strategies to include more of the many non-timber forest products we discovered in our plots. Additionally, community members agreed that their involvement in future management plans is vital to the sustainability of the system.

