

**Ford Conservation Fellowship
Brazil Conservation Research Initiative
December 2002**

General Evaluation
Fiona Rotberg

The pilot Ford Conservation Professional Fellowship team went to the Pantanal Conservation Research Initiative (CRI) in December 2002. The team consisted of thirteen fellows who were employed by local, state, and national environmental agencies, as well as for a mining company from the area. In addition, there was one facilitator present from Conservation International, four principal investigators, and two Earthwatch Institute employees. Fellowship team funding was made possible by the Ford Motor Company Fund. Overall, the feedback from team members was positive. The fellows said that they gained experience, knowledge, and skills from participating in the field research, and that their expectations were generally exceeded. Each fellow indicated that they gained tools that they could use directly in their professions and that they could share with their colleagues. At the end of the project, there was consensus that a web based bulletin board or chat system would be beneficial for continued sharing of information and ideas between the fellows. Additionally, the principal investigators and the facilitator were extremely satisfied with the fellowship team and felt that more groups of professionals (and community members) could gain from participating in the field research at the Pantanal CRI. Alexine Keuroghlian, a principal investigator, and the Pantanal Field Director said that “The fellowship gave us the opportunity to show [the fellows] the importance of the research in the Pantanal and gave them ideas on how to pursue and run their own conservation units.”

Below is a brief outline of the participants, their professional affiliations, their feedback, and general lessons learned that can be adapted for future fellowship teams.

Brazil Fellowship Team Participants and Affiliation:

Participant	Affiliation
Humberto Jose Sepa de Matos Filho	Fireman for the state of Mato Grosso do Sul
Adao Vedovato	Fire Captain for the state of Mato Grosso do Sul
Paolo Leticia de Cassoli Ramos	State Environmental Agency
Marcio Ferreira Yule	Brazilian Institute of Environmental Affairs; Environmental Education and Fire Prevention Program
Evany Cristiane Lino Parrela	Environmental Military Police
Gabriel Borges	National Environment Agency; Environmental Director of Emas National Park
Martha Carrijo	State Environmental Agency, Culture and

	Tourism Office; Administrator and Manager of the State Park of the Nascentes do rio Taquari
Jose de Paula Filho	President of Environmental State Agency of the state of Goias
Livia Leite Santos	State Environmental Agency
Paulo Augusto Bueno da Rocha	Rio Tinto Mining Company
Mauro Costa	Rio Tinto Mining Company
Luciene Souza	Rio Tinto Mining Company
Angelica Haralampidou	Rio Tinto Mining Company
Ana Lucia Taveira	Rio Tinto Mining Company

Expectations from fellows

Fellows were not specifically asked before the project what their expectations were, but in application materials they did indicate why they wanted to participate in the field research. Also, during the project, in informal interviews, they were asked what their expectations had been and whether they had been met. The most consistent themes that emerged was that the fellows expected to learn about conservation management in general, while learning specific field work techniques that they could share with colleagues or community members.

For example,

- Humberto Jose Sepa de Matos Filho said he wanted to participate in the project to increase his knowledge about conserving biodiversity, and to learn information that he could pass on to other firemen. He said that firemen do not have any other opportunity to learn about conservation biology.
- Marcelo Moraes de Freitas wanted to learn about research so that he could develop research ideas for other conservation areas.
- Marcio Ferreira Yule stated that he wished to gain knowledge so that he could help inform local community members, especially about the importance of controlled fires and fire prevention, and the importance of preserving the Pantanal.
- Gabriel Cardoso Borges hoped to share his management skills as a national park director and to gain new information from others in similar positions. Gabriel believed that this opportunity would allow him to integrate with conservation managers and researchers.
- Martha Gilka Gutierrez Carrijo was interested in acquiring environmental education experience so that she could apply a program for her local community.

Fellows participated in daily field research and then in facilitated discussions in the evenings. In facilitated discussions with the fellows, there was a focus on skills and techniques that participants could use in their work environments.

Fellows had the opportunity to learn about

- project management;
- specific field research techniques;
- conservation issues in general;
- reforestation ideas; and
- they had the opportunity to share relevant knowledge across various environmental disciplines.

Feedback from fellows

General themes that emerged from evaluation interviews were that the fellowship opportunity provided fellows with knowledge about:

- Issues to include in environmental management and conservation plans;
- The value of partnerships;
- The importance of the Pantanal as an interconnected conservation area; and
- The interdependence of animals, trees, and water sources in the area.

Specific quotes from several of the fellows help to elucidate the above general observations:

Mr. Humberto Jose Sepa de Matos Filho

Fireman for the state

“The most important thing I will use in my job is to share with my colleagues the knowledge about how important the area is for conservation. We usually let fires burn to the road, but now I will try to stop the fire before the road to conserve the area that is so important for wildlife. I have spent time in the forest but I never realized the different fruits and trees that are here that the animals depend on.”

Ms. Martha Gilka Butierrez Carrijo

State Environmental Agency, Culture and Tourism Office

“I now understand all the species that live here and how important it is to understand how they connect and depend on one another.” She will present to her co workers about what she learned so that they can apply it in their daily jobs. She mostly learned about the animals and techniques to study them. She will apply her knowledge to the writing of environmental management plans in the future.

Mr. Paulo Augusto Bueno da Rocha

Rio Tinto Mining Company

“This is an excellent opportunity to share information with other professionals and exchange knowledge. Different work areas within Rio Tinto may not have shared information or thought that there was overlap, but we can really learn a lot from each

other. Also, this is really good for my work...I have learned a lot about jaguars so when I get a call at 4:00 am from a guy I work with who is complaining about jaguars, I know what to tell him...and I learned a lot about peccaries, that they are not pigs!..

I learned a lot of specifics about plant and animal species and about the requirements of IBAMA....I plant sapindus saponaria for my work and I learned that it attracts mammals...also I learned about the behavior of jaguars...I will apply for this fellowship again next year and will encourage others to apply and to participate. It was excellent to involve a cross section of people and to learn and exchange information. My expectations were exceeded. Researchers were patient and answered all our questions. I have made good contacts and will use the information in the future at work. Overall, this experience will open doors for the company to include new strategies for conservation and for new plans and partnerships.”

Ms. Livia Leite Santos

State Environmental Agency

Livia is responsible for writing environmental management plans and the state wants to write a conservation plan but she did not know what to include and this fellowship experience has given her appropriate tools to write a conservation plan: “I can include appropriate conservation issues in my plan now, when before I had no clue...I will go back to my colleagues and tell them what needs to be included. I also understand how well partnerships can work because the state has no money to implement their management plans, so we could look toward partnerships to help make our management plans a conservation reality.”

Ms. Evany Cristiane Lino Parrela

Environmental Military Police

“I work in environmental education, so now I can teach others about techniques to study different animals and what is involved in studying conservation. This week I learned so much in the field, it compliments my work so well, now I understand so much more and how it can be applied...I will suggest to others to come on this project. “

Mr. Marcio Ferreina Yule

State Environmental Fire Management Control

“I now know to match development issues with conservation. I work in conservation already but many things I learned here have helped proved theories I knew of...for example, birds can really tell you the richness of biodiversity in the area and bats are amazing dispersers...I am amazed that plants and flowers bloom only at night and that the bats depends on these plants. “

General lessons learned for future fellowship teams

- A group of professionals and community members can gain invaluable experience from participating in a field based project together
- A week long team is an appropriate length for a conservation professionals group

- Conservation Research Initiative field research can provide fellows with valuable skills and conservation management tools to be used in their professional environments
- Facilitated discussions can supplement field research to give fellows an opportunity to share knowledge with team members in other disciplines
- Follow up communication and engagement (through an alumni network and a online list serve for example) of fellows will capitalize on their ability to share experiences and tools from their daily jobs with one another
- A facilitated evaluation discussion at the end of the fellowship site visit will be an invaluable addition to the project activities and could provide the fellows with a further opportunity to learn from other fellows.

To evaluate future fellowship teams, through written materials, ask fellows prior to their participation on a project

- what their expectations are and what skills and knowledge they would like to gain;
 - what skills they think they could contribute to an interdisciplinary team;
 - what topics they would like covered in evening facilitated sessions.
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- At the completion of the project, evaluation questions should include those that will help the principal investigators adopt their methodology (if needed) to address the expectations of community members. In addition to general evaluation questions, (i.e., Did this project meet your expectations? Did it exceed your expectations? What are the main areas where you felt you gained the most?) specific questions should help tease out lessons learned by the fellows and any areas that they wanted to learn more about. Sample questions could include:
 - What did you learn about the process of science and scientific research?
 - What steps are needed to solve environmental problems?
 - What did you learn about the process of networking?
 - Were the research and conservation issues in the project similar/different than those faced in your community? Did this project expand your outlook on those issues? If so, how?
 - Did your attitudes toward human/environment and human/wildlife interaction change? If so, how?
 - Did you acquire any new tools/methods/knowledge on this project that you can apply to your daily life?
 - Would it have been helpful to have other professionals or segments of the community present on this fellowship team? If so, how and why?
 - Is there anything you would like Earthwatch Institute to do in terms of pre or post fellowship activities for you to gain even more from your experience? If so, what?