

**EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PANTANEIRO TEACHERS
FELLOWSHIP TEAM AT THE CONSERVATION RESEARCH INITIATIVE – PANTANAL FAZENDA RIO
NEGRO
FROM THE 26TH OF JANUARY TILL THE 06TH OF FEBRUARY, 2003**

**FACILITATOR: MARIZA SILVA
CO-FACILITATOR: ALEXINE KEUROGHLIAN**

Introduction:

After having been the facilitator for four other previous fellowship groups, being on for the *pantaneiro* teacher group was especially different since this was an essential target group for Conservation International's goal of conserving biodiversity through the establishment of corridors that reach their homes.

The projects ongoing during their expedition were about peccaries, water and bats. Most of the teachers had never been in the Pantanal as a tourist or any part of that region. Some actually had only been to the area for the first time when they went to teach and live at the *Pantaneiro* School. For this reason, they did not know much about the Pantanal's ecosystem and beauty. It is unlikely that a native *pantaneiro* would have the opportunity to become a rural teacher; a rural teacher needs to go to school and earn a degree in education, and undergo an exam in order to be hired by the municipality. Therefore, most of the *pantaneiro* teachers are originally from Aquidauana city, and are teaching in the Pantanal for the first time.

Based on these facts and on the general behavior of the teachers, I believe they all adored the opportunity of linking an extremely pleasant trip with the unique experience of learning real science in the field.

Before the trip, the teachers did not know each other very well, because the teachers live at the school, and they are distant from each other. This distance increases during the wet season when access in and out of the school is difficult. This was a great opportunity to promote the integration of the whole group of *pantaneiro* teachers so they could discuss common subjects and exchange personal ideas and experiences.

The teachers were asked to take notes of their sightings during the day and discuss them in the evening after dinner. At the end of the trip they were supposed to develop a lesson plan either individually or in pairs or groups.

During their stay there were numerous talks presented by PI's, and the facilitator about the Pantanal, biodiversity efforts of Conservation International, Earthwatch initiatives of establishing a Conservation Research Initiative in the Pantanal, and talks specifically about the projects and their role in providing data to help develop and conserve the Cerrado-Pantanal corridor.

The most important aspect of this fellowship with the *pantaneiro* teachers was to see how much they learned about the Pantanal itself, field research, and research techniques, respecting animals and nature, and finally on creating new ways/activities to teach without fearing the wildlife.

They devoted several hours of their evenings working really hard on their lesson plans and came out with good ideas to implement in their classrooms. They all presented their ideas and discussed them among themselves on how to improve it for their students, and were really enthusiastic about the results that were being developed.

Follow-up after the Expedition

This fellowship team was strategic for the continuation of our work with other members of the education community within the proposed corridor, because we brought other fellowship students to one of the former fellow *pantaneiro* teacher's school.

We visited the Brazilian students in the city of Corumbá to have them prepare something to show/offer to the rural students during their visit, and the Hudson teachers also prepared an activity with their students. We visited the pantaneiro school a week before the group and talked to the former fellowship teacher and landowner of the farm about the activities that we wanted to exchange between the Pantaneiro, Corumbá and Hudson school students. This was an important step both politically and environmentally. We were able to gain the landowner's trust in our environmental education efforts, and show them how much the students enjoyed and gained from this interaction with other students from Brazil and US.

In Setember 2003 CI will use the EWI fellows to conduct two more *Friends of Nature* workshops where the community, students, and teachers are invited to seminars about biodiversity in the Pantanal , talks on some of the research projects being conducted in the region, Cerrado-Pantanal project, and environmental education activities.

Brazil Fellowship Team Participants and Affiliation:

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| 1. Ana Claudia Trigueiro | Núcleo Santana |
| 2. Ana Rosa Santana Teixeira | Núcleo Baía das Pedras |
| 3. Denilson Cardoso Albres | Núcleo Taboco |
| 4. Edimar Gomes de Lima | Núcleo Tupaciretã |
| 5. Evanilson Campos Gonçalves | Esc. General Rondon, Aldeia do Bananal |
| 6. Jucinei dos Santos | Núcleo Taboco |
| 7. Luzia Nunes Mamoré | Núcleo Vale do Rio Negro |
| 8. Melchior da Silva Duarte | Esc. Erso Gomes, Distrito de Camisão |
| 9. Rogaciana de Lara Corrêa | Núcleo Baía das Pedras |
| 10. Sandra Cristina G. Santos | Escola André Pace de Oliveira |

Expectations from Fellows

- Ana Rosa S. Teixeira: "Try new experiences because the world is full of challenges, and our profession is in need of new stimulation and experiences.
- Ana Claudia: "Acquire knowledge about conservation issues so I could pass on to my students and others that could not be here."
- Denilson:" I hope to learn, in practice, how research projects are conducted so that I could show each student the importance of maintaining a stable ecosystem."

Feedback from fellows

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

- The scientific method
- How much work and dedication it takes to actually conduct research
- The importance of conserving the Pantanal – and NGO's role in the Pantanal
- Getting to know, understand, and learn about the Pantanal and the key species.

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

- Sandra Cristina G. Santos: "I wonder if we – human beings – were made to build up something or destroy the world?"
- Luzia N. Mamoré: "The greatest challenge as an urban resident, is not to lose the capability of learning instead of only teaching. This field expedition will be a milestone in the history of the education in the county of Aquidauana."
- Melchior S. Duarte : "I believe that all field experience reflects the self-confidence of the teacher which he/she passes on to the students."
- Jucinei: "I want to learn and pass on all this new information that I acquire to the students, so I could show and change certain false impressions that many of the students and parents have concerning wildlife and the Pantanal. "
- Denilson C. Albres: "Most of us have never done this kind of work in the field and did not know the Nhecolândia region of the Pantanal where Fazenda Rio Negro is located. Most of our knowledge was based on TV documentaries about the Pantanal.

Fellows had the opportunity to learn about:

- Radio telemetry
- Bats – ecological roles and capture methods
- Geographical Positioning System - GPS
- Aquatic ecosystems and sampling methods
- Ecological roles of seed predators and dispersers

Comments by the facilitators:

It is always a pleasure, rewarding, and an enormous opportunity to be with fellowship groups. I learned a lot about people and life with each of one of them. I had had some sort of contact with this group before, but spending twelve days in the field with them resulted in a bond which did not exist before, and that made a big difference in our work.

The PI's expressed how rewarding it was to work with the *Pantaneiro* teachers because they felt it was an important and necessary target group for the conservation of the Pantanal - the teachers of the future *pantaneiros*.