

Supporting Learning Platforms for Participatory Land Use Planning and Management among Participants of PROAMBIENTE

Wendy-Lin Bartels¹

¹School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA

This poster reviews two capacity-building workshops conducted in the state of Acre during August of 2006 as part of a "TCD practitioner experience." The need for these workshops emerged from dissertation research about Proambiente, Brazil's pilot program for environmental service payments. Within Proambiente, specific land-use management tools are developed for individual properties, farmer groups, and institutional administrative councils. The research explored social learning among actors involved in this collaborative land-use planning process. Specifically, it investigated the utility of the management tools to participating families, as well as aspects of social network formation. Preliminary findings indicated that farmers were unable to articulate clearly their management plans, or describe in great detail the concept of environmental services. In addition, certain families appeared as outliers in network maps of the two Proambiente groups under analysis. The researcher worked with rural extension agents to plan and implement two workshops that would address these issues. The aim of the workshops was to bring together participating Proambiente families from different communities to encourage an exchange of experiences about management practices. Farmers visited a demonstrative property, sharing ideas regarding opportunities and challenges to providing environmental services. We also engaged partners from local supporting agencies like the workers union and the municipal governments of Brasiléia and Epitaciolandia. These workshops provide a good example of how graduate student research can have a direct application in local capacity building efforts, strengthening partnerships with host organizations and research participants.

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Contact information: Wendy-Lin Bartels, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, P.O.Box 110240 Gainesville, FL. Phone: 392 1845 Extension 412 wendylin@ufl.edu