

A Cooperative Applied Research Program on Native Forests in the Brazilian Amazon

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This is a pivotal moment for management of Brazil's native forests. In 2006, a new public forest law (Nº 11,284/2006) was established, creating a framework for forest concessions. Government plans to establish and manage public forests represent a historic opportunity to reconcile socio-economic and conservation objectives in the Amazon. However, this plan presupposes a level of technical/scientific understanding in the areas of forest silviculture, economics and ecology that does not currently exist. To date, research on Brazil's native forests has been piecemeal and localized, dependent on the interests of individual researchers with little coordination between entities and no regional strategy. The challenge of sustainably managing millions of hectares of public forest across the Amazon basin can only be met through a coordinated research program that incorporates all forest management sector perspectives.

We propose the creation of a Forest Research Cooperative to identify, prioritize and implement applied ecological and socio-economic research critical for maintenance of public and private values in production forests. This cooperative will include all key stakeholder group representation (federal and state government, forest and timber industry owners, forest communities, researchers, etc.) and will serve as a forum for discussion of research needs, evaluation, and synthesis of research applications.

The main expected results are: (i) a structuralized Inter-institutional Group to address advances in, and challenges to forest management; (II) a multidisciplinary evaluation of current management practices; (III) improved technical capacity of the forest sector; and (IV) increased prospects for maintenance of the ecological and socio-economic values of public forests.

Keywords: Forest concessions, forest management, national forests, research cooperative, sustainability.

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