

TRIP REPORT

PROJECT MANAGEMENT MISSION

Brazil, January 19th – February 4th, 2004

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TRAVEL REPORT

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Period covered: January 19 – February 7, 2004

Transfer of radio-tagging technology

The purpose of this activity is to build Brazilian capacity for tracking the movements of migratory fish species, including specifically through and around fish passage facilities. The project strategy is two fold: to provide the hydroelectric industry with technical tools for modification of existing facilities and design and construction of new ones and to provide improved tools for researchers and fishermen to better understand migratory patterns of the fish independent of fish passes. The activity is designed to link with nascent radiotagging capability in the São Francisco basin (primarily at UFMG), make use of unique training facilities at Itaipu Binacional (available as an in kind contribution), promote linkages to programs in other parts of the country (Uruguai Basin and NUPELIA, a Parana partner), and initiate interest and capacity for participatory research with fishermen. Technology transfer includes an important user group component, namely participation of fishermen in tag implantation and data recording, thus promoting their involvement in co-management.

My duties at the Itaipu fish pass included becoming familiar with, and assisting in, transfer of Canadian technology to site staff and project partners at the hatchery. Technology transfer was provided by a Canadian consultant (Karl English of project partner LGL Limited). I met with representatives of the Itaipu Environmental Section, assisted Karl English and Lisiane Hahn (NUPELIA) in tag implantation and monitoring, and gathered information on the role of fish passage at this important facility. Lisiane's participation established new links with her present institution (NUPELIA) and solidified those with our partner in the Uruguai Basin.

Link to public awareness

The radiotagging training was keenly reported by local and national media, with a story appearing in O Globo (see Trip Report of Piracema Canal Technical Visit in Appendix E). Transfer of this technology is also a target subject for documentary production within the project, and part of my purpose in being present was to provide background for a short feature story on the Discovery Daily Planet program. As a result of my visit a story proposal has now been developed together with Asterisk Productions (Victoria) and is being proposed to Discovery Channel; the story will link to invasive species, including the tucunare in the São Francisco River, and involve fishermen on the São Francisco.

Project Management Discussions, Belo Horizonte

En route to the project geographic focus in Três Marias I met with Prof Hugo Godinho (UFMG), Yogi Carolsfeld (WFT) and Capt. Arley Ferreira (Polícia Militar) for discussions on project progress in several areas. Capt. Arley has energetically promoted the project and we discussed

ways that the results related to his area (enforcement) could be more widely available in Brazil. Stories on project activities, including enforcement, have been compiled and provided for global distribution on the Vancouver Aquarium AquaNews site. I am pursuing ways of making them more accessible to partners.

Três Marias, Pirapora, Andrequise

I met with project partners in Três Marias on both ends of a trip downriver to the community of Pirapora. My time in Três Marias coincided with the beginning of an intensive period of collaborative interviewing of fishing families by researchers from UFScar and IARA. This work was primarily funded by IDRC through a companion project to the CIDA project and marked the beginning of an evaluation of the suitability of “Acordos de Pesca” for fishing communities in the São Francisco.

During my visit, the CIDA project received a request from UFSCar researchers with a special interest in documentation of the interview process, and a proposal to support students from the UFSCar media program was discussed. While direct support for the students does not appear to fall within the aims of the CIDA project, a more appropriate long term strategy was proposed, wherein the students receive training from Asterisk Productions (Victoria) as a component of production of the Discovery Channel stories. This strategy builds capacity while at the same time contributing to the fulfilling of planned awareness objectives. It will be discussed further with the consultative council. While in Três Marias I also interviewed Norberto dos Santos, a key local fisherman, and travelled with him downstream to the confluence of the São Francisco and the Rio Abaete, collecting information and images for development of documentary films on the river and its fisheries.

In the vicinity of Andrequise, where the Prefeitura of Três Marias has created an excellent museum celebrating the life of Manuelzao, a pioneer of conservation on the river, I was able to gather important information on the extensive eucalyptus plantations that flank large stretches of the river. Eucalyptus has replaced very large areas of native vegetation and also encroaches on the few remaining veredas (natural aretesian oases). The plantations affect groundwater supplies and raise serious land use issues that are of concern to fishermen. They would be good subjects for the documentary.

Several days were spent around Pirapora gathering information on fishing in the corredeira (a traditional rapids stretch that highlights many issues of conflict between fishing sectors themselves and between commercial fishermen and enforcement agencies). I interviewed fishermen at the corredeira and in the town of Buritizeiro, and took photographs that will be used to develop a proposal for a documentary film on the São Francisco fisheries (see below).

I observed a ten-kilometre stretch of the river downstream of Pirapora by boat, and made enquiries about the system of sangradores, gates that can control entry of water into the floodplains in an area of primarily small agricultural plots and cattle farms. There is a large industrial development 2-3 km downstream of the town, for processing of quartz into ferro-silicate, as well as a large textile factory. Further downstream, CODEVASF has developed a large, irrigated project for culture of grapes and melons. The stretch between Pirapora and the CODEVASF project illustrates many development issues in the valley (farming, eucalyptus, water flow regulation, tourism, sport fishing) as well as the social, enforcement and policy issues raised by the corredeira fishery. It may be a good focus for the documentary film currently being

proposed by TVE (Television Trust for the Environment) to IDRC and the CIDA project. This initiative represents a very positive step toward producing documentary material on artisanal fishing that is adequately funded and broadly distributed (currently, TVE distributes its programs through the BBC and other European networks, and through PBS in North America). Based on my notes from the present trip, the CIDA project is proposing refinement of existing TVE plans for a film on the São Francisco, including a provision for local Brazilian use of footage, inclusion of sustainable fishing issues and assistance with logistics. IDRC is negotiating funding of the documentary and is interested in having the results of the CIDA project profiled. WFT will raise the negotiations in the next Consultative Council meeting and solicit instructions on how best to represent the project's issues.