

# **TRIP REPORT**

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## **Project Management and Technical Mission**

Brazil

August 17 – September 24, 2004

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## Trip Agenda

Aug.17-18: trip Victoria – Sao Carlos  
Aug. 19-21: meetings with Ines, Thais (Sao Carlos), update reports, preparation for steering committee & prepare package for ABC  
Aug 21-22: travel BH, meeting Arley, Hugo, Vasco – preparation of Rio presentation  
Aug 23-24: travel Três Marias, meetings Raimundo, Barbara, Alison  
Aug. 25-27: conference Rio de Janeiro  
Aug. 28-Sept 1: Três Marias – meeting and conference organization; meeting Sebrae  
Aug. 29: Pirapora – meeting Thais and Pedro  
Sept. 2 – 4: Belo Horizonte; meetings IBAMA, UFMG, COPASA; SEAP, PMMG.  
Sept. 6 – 8: Três Marias – management workshop  
Sept. 9 – 10: Brasilia – steering committee & follow-up  
Sept. 11 –12: Três Marias & Pontal community meetings  
Sept. 13-15: Três Marias: Management follow-up meeting, meeting Sato, meeting Bigua, conference arrangements  
Sept. 16-18: Rio de Janeiro: Environmental Education Conference.  
Sept. 19: Belo Horizonte  
Sept. 20-21: Três Marias – wrap up meetings  
Sept. 22: Belo Horizonte – workshop agendas with Hugo, meetings Vasco & Marcelo  
Sept. 23-24: Sao Carlos – wrap up meetings  
Sept. 24: return to Canada

## Objectives

- Review management structure of project
- Conduct Steering Committee meeting
- Observe co-management community meetings
- Participate in co-management & environmental education conferences
- Help set up next events

## Thematic summary:

### 1) Management structure

Management of the project was discussed at several informal opportunities in Sao Carlos and elsewhere on the trip, as well as in a facilitated workshop in Três Marias and a follow-up meeting to this workshop, also in Três Marias. The workshop is presented separately in the facilitator's report (Appendix G), and the contents of the follow-up meeting are presented in a report by Alison Macnaughton (Appendix G).

While it is clear that the project is starting to find its legs in Brazil, outstanding issues of particular concern at the start of the trip included overloading of the UFSCar team with management tasks, weak overall return on the project's direction from partners, slow or deficient reporting, poor communication between project partners, and uncertainty on the role of the

different partners in the project. Also of concern was an apparent discrepancy between the CIDA project's operating precepts and those of the IDRC project.

Most of these issues were discussed at the Três Marias meetings, resulting in a broader management team, a proposed communications committee, and somewhat more clearly defined roles (including for Alison Macnaughton). Alison is clearly a key person in holding the project together at this stage.

Positive discussions were also held with IBAMA, IEF, and the Military Police to see how they will fit into the revised management scheme with improved communications, though generally these were held without UFSCar present due to other commitments.

## 2) Steering Committee meeting

The first steering committee meeting of the project was held in Brasilia on September 9<sup>th</sup>. CIDA, ABC, WFT, UFSCar, Três Marias Municipality, and the Federation of Fishermen MG were all present from the project. In addition, representatives of the MMA, SEAP, and MEC attended to try to build stronger institutional links in Brasilia. Alison reported on the meeting (Appendix G), as did Juliana of ABC (Appendix G).

The project partners presented the project well, particularly on the Brazilian side, demonstrating good teamwork, enthusiasm, and cohesiveness. CIDA was particularly pleased to already have a project going in the Sao Francisco region when it started to gain greater national and international attention. Relationships with CIDA and ABC were thus strengthened considerably by the meeting. Options for Environmental Education with MEC were also created, though the support from the MMA and SEAP remain equivocal.

## 3) Co-management community meetings

The UFSCar team held community meetings to show a film that was made of previous meetings and to gather feedback on the project's progress. Thais Madeira's Canadian training on participatory processes (July, 2004), as well as Alison's training and empowerment of community members (particularly women) were put to good use in collecting feedback on the project. The results are summarized in a report by Ana The (Appendix C). Particularly striking was the community's positive response to the film. This is clearly a very useful tool for community awareness, though it is still unclear how to best utilize it.

The meetings that I attended clearly showed that the community is becoming entrained by the project, though not everyone is yet clear on what it is doing. There is no distinction, in the community, between the IDRC and CIDA projects. Both are referred to together as the Projeto Peixes, Pessoas e Agua, and the logo is becoming broadly recognized.

## 4) Seminario de Gestao Socio-ambiental de Aquicultura e Pesca - Rio de Janeiro, Aug. 25-27<sup>th</sup>

Alison and I participated in this I SEGAP meeting. Ines was scheduled to participate as well, to present the CIDA project, but was unable to do so. Alison presented the project in her place. I presented an invited talk on the risks and potential benefits of stocking rivers with hatchery

produced fish. Jutta Guthberlet also presented a very well received talk on co-management, which included results of the survey of Sao Francisco fisheries that she carried out for the CIDA project in 2003.

The meeting was quite interesting, but in general carried on a fairly academic discussion on different aspects of management options. Nevertheless, it gave us an opportunity to meet and talk with a number of leading Brazilian researchers in the field, including Carlos Dieges of the University of Sao Paulo and Miguel Petrere, of the State University of Sao Paulo (UNESP), and a variety of field workers associated with cooperatives.

Norma Valencio, an original partner to the project's proposal, lead an interesting session on fishing conflicts on the Sao Francisco river, which provided an opportunity to start improving our relationship with her. Issues raised, with input from a fisherman (Joao) from the lower river valley, included:

- clandestine and illegal fisheries are a major source of conflicts
- literacy is often used as a tool to dominate colony politics; corruption and false representation are common; need to get away from patrimony system;
- problem of fisheries patrons that finance operations but recover costs with a lucrative margin;
- environmental point of view of conservation vs. utilization discussed (audience); concept of fisherman as environmental guardian rather than threat presented by Norma
- value-added processing commonly pushed as a solution, but not always appropriate and may stand idle (Joao);

An interesting workshop on cooperatives was also held. Of particular interest was a discussion of the challenges of introducing coops into existing structures of fishing organizations. Successful models first discussed with the fishing colony where the coop would be most useful – in the Rio case, it focussed on marketing. A women's initiative to make flowers out of fish scales was highlighted as an informal structure in the colony – supported by the state extension agency, but not yet a more formal structure. The issue of replacing the middleman with coops was discussed – and it was recognized that this should be done with care (Petrere separately complained about the largely inappropriate bad press that these middlemen are getting).

Carlos Dieges' talk was also illuminating, particularly with regard to the recognition of local knowledge in management systems and protocols for working with communities. Examples that he pointed to for failed management that could have been mitigated through better use of local knowledge included the North American collapse of the cod fishery - foreseen by local knowledge, according to Dieges, but ignored by government.

Artificial reefs in riverine systems are also an example of inadequately used local knowledge - these, together with fish traps, were actually an ancient fishing tool in the Sao Francisco river, and could be put to good use for enhancement and management, but are now illegal.

Dr. Dieges' insights on community development were also good. He sees that the key element in this activity is that it is facilitated as a bottom-up movement. He cites the Cananeia oyster association as an example that proceeded through these critical steps (facilitated by the USP)

- 1) Live in community for a while to get to know it;

- 2) Build community association
- 3) Identify sustainability question
- 4) Create technical solution that includes quality control
- 5) Build legal structure – in this case, an extraterritorial reserve.

He also felt that it was important to recognize that culture is not static, but an evolving entity, and that cultural time cycles are quite different from funding cycles and academic schedules - community results should not rely on these latter schedules. He sees danger in forums, if individuals start taking control that may not reflect the feeling of the populace.

Dr. Dieges also had a historical perspective of fishing development in Brazil with a warning about current SEAP policies. Industrial fisheries were promoted strongly in the late 1980s for export, a strategy that decimated stocks and artisanal fisheries. Now artisanal fisheries are returning, as a more efficient way to make use of low density of fish. However, government is once again promoting industrial fisheries for export, which he feels is a doomed strategy.

#### 4b) World Environmental Education Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Sept. 16-18th

I attended the II WEEKS conference together with Barbara Johnsen, of the Três Marias Environment Secretariat. The meeting was extremely well attended, but somewhat inadequately organized for this number of people.

#### 5) Future events and activities

I assisted to some extent in planning for an upcoming SEAP meeting for fisherwomen, but this was mostly handled by Alison and Thais, in the name of the project, and Barbara and Raimundo for the Federation. Initial organizational steps were also taken for the upcoming meeting to review subproject 3 (The Fishing Resource) and a workshop on participatory stock assessment.

A discussion with Pedro Melo, colony head of Pirapora, was illuminating in terms of possible future directions for the project:

- Conditions on islands off Pirapora are very precarious; Pedro thinks that these should be one of the main focuses of the project. Education and infrastructure (particularly clean water) should be brought to the people – strongly against just supplying money. Believes in a participatory development of initiatives and deciphering the needs of each locality.
- Policing is a major issue – believes that better trained police and community-based trained guardians could help resolve this issue; linked with participatory development of regulations.
- Comments on fish distribution: 1000 km downstream, in Bahia, apparently there are a lot of fish and fishermen. This stretch has functioning lagoons, and the reservoir leaves behind pools that get flooded only some years (contributing to stocks). Downstream of Rio das Velhas there are also fish, but upstream to Três Marias is considerably poorer. Fish migrate into Rio das Velhas (where fishing is prohibited) where they die with the first rains (sewer flushing?). Maybe fishing should be allowed, rather than have the fish die and be wasted?

- Comments on the Para visit: impressed by the community cohesion – sees this as essential for any of the benefits that they are achieving. Organization came about through education, as with the IARA process, but still depends on a constant presence of the ProVarzea project – both for consultative issues and some funding. He believes that this was once done by the church, so already had a history, but is essential do continuity of the process.
- Pedro recognized that the colony itself is too large a group to work realistically, and liked the idea of local nuclei. Also liked the sub-structure of working groups within each colony (or nucleus?) that were responsible for specific issues. Apparently did not recognize the council-led colony structure (vs. president-led), or did not agree with it. Liked the idea of people getting elected individually for a function (rather than as a board of candidates), but didn't like the manner delegates were selected to do the voting.
- The River Sao Francisco colony that split off recently has considerable geographic overlap with the remaining Pirapora colony in membership, though based in Buritizeiro. Relationships are not yet too good, though also not violent.