

Project Update: November 2010

It was not possible to assemble teams for field trips over 5 days. So, we are making more trips than foreseen, but of shorter duration each. We made a complex sampling design, based on the structure of the landscape and not just in patches. This is important for a study of fragmentation and is rarely taken into account. We are also including in the sample the seedlings of tree species. But to complete the field work with the planned sampling effort, we are considering only the trees and not shrubs in forest patches. We are including shrubs in windbreaks, and we will compare these data with prior information we have about shrubs in other forest patches.

Outcomes

1. This is the first study on fragmentation effects over tree community in central sub-humid Chaco region. We are using a sampling design to analyze this problem at landscape scale and not only at patch scale, as usual. This is very important to the study of habitat fragmentation.
2. The results of field work, will serve as support for measures promoting landscape-scale management or conservation strategies, for one of the most threatened forest ecosystems in the region.
3. We will provide the first description of the diversity of shrubs and trees in wind-breaks forest in Chaco region; and the first analysis of its utility and its role in forest conservation. These results will be disseminated among the scientific community as well as in formal and informal talks to landowners, local producers and population.

Rural people from the region have been directly involved in the project because 100% of the windbreaks and forest patches analysed are within privately-owned lands. The local producer's association "APRACH" provided contact with landowners. We explained the aims of the project in all cases and most of time the landowners were very interested and were willing to actively cooperate with our activities in their properties. Additionally, we discussed the objectives and partial results of the project with students, teachers and local population at two local schools in the area. Among the conservation strategies that may arise for these forests, a possible component is economic compensation by the state to the owners of the land. If realized this would certainly be a great benefit to them. I plan to provide information to local population, producers, forestry technicians and decision makers through printed materials and workshops. Partial results of the project were presented in "Reunion Binacional de Ecologia Argentino Chilena", in Buenos Aires, August 2010. I plan to present also in "III Jornadas Argentinas de Ecologia de Paisajes" in Bariloche, May 2011. Based on the results obtained, I will prepare scientific articles to be submitted to

journals specialised in forest ecology and conservation. Thus, the results will be available to the international scientific community.



Jorge Adámoli explaining our project to students and peasants in a rural school