

SYMPOSIA AND MEETING REPORT

Symposium 1: REDD+: Beyond the Hype
Symposium 2: Land Reforestation with Native Species
Meeting: Forest Restoration Knowledge Base

ATBC Annual Meeting
Sanur, Bali, Indonesia
July 22-25, 2010

A series of events sponsored by:
Environmental Leadership & Training Initiative (ELTI)



Background: The Association for Tropical Biology & Conservation (ATBC), the largest professional association of its kind, held its Annual Meeting in Sanur, Bali, Indonesia from July 22-25, 2010. This was the first time that the Annual Meeting was held in Southeast Asia and ELTI took advantage of this gathering of over 800 participants, including representatives from government, NGOs, and educational and research institutions, to continue its work of promoting training, dialogue, and the practice of tropical forest conservation and restoration. ELTI staff and steering committee members organized two symposia and a meeting on the creation of an on-line native species reforestation database, all of which were very well attended and received. Short event summaries are provided below:

Symposium
REDD+: Beyond the Hype

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and other related approaches (REDD-plus), which assign a price to forests based on their ability to sequester and store carbon, have emerged as a prominent strategy for mitigating climate change. Poised for inclusion in international and national regulatory frameworks, and already in effect through voluntary, non-compliance transactions, REDD-plus holds the promise of providing affordable offsets to carbon-intensive industries in the developed world, channeling needed funds for economic development to developing countries, and significantly increasing the amount of money available for tropical forest conservation and sustainable management. Although the exact nature of this mechanism is still being worked out, groups concerned with the plight of tropical biodiversity have started implementing demonstration REDD-plus projects on the ground using designated funds and voluntary carbon market standards, while scholars have begun to pursue multiple lines of research to support, evaluate and/or influence the development of the REDD-plus mechanism.



This symposium, which was organized by Dr. David Neidel (ELTI), brought together the latest findings from both pure and applied research on a number of REDD-plus-related topics, including carbon accounting, opportunity-cost valuation, safeguarding biodiversity, improved resource management practices, and working with communities. Each presentation had its own emphasis, but the symposium as a whole was driven by the concern that conservation and development approaches are often over-hyped with the actual results failing to live up to initial, high expectations. Indeed, past experience has shown that in the excitement surrounding new conservation and development 'fads', lessons from past experiences are often forgotten, technical issues are emphasized over fundamental political ones, and critical voices are ignored. Looking back ten years in the future, this symposium questioned, will the same be said about REDD-plus?

The audience received varying perspectives on this question. To further disseminate this critical thinking about REDD-Plus, some of the presentations from this symposium may be written up in a Special Section of *Biotropica*. Information gained from this symposium will also be integrated into ELTI's training programs on forest carbon.

Symposium

Land Reforestation with Native Species - Case studies in experimental trials and community based initiatives

Reforestation is receiving significant attention in climate change policy and management discussions as an option to offset a portion of the 12-20% of global greenhouse gas emissions generated from land use and land use change, especially agricultural expansion. As a society industrializes and urbanizes, marginal lands are abandoned and agriculture is concentrated on the most productive sites. During this process, marginal agricultural lands often transfer to pasture and then to forest, or directly to forest. If the land has been significantly degraded, however, natural regeneration is often impossible or impractically slow, and therefore, reforestation may be an option to restore ecosystem function and services, including mitigating global warming. Currently most reforestation in the tropics occurs at large industrial scales with a few well known exotics which have well accepted markets and well-known silvicultural technologies. There is a need, however, for reforestation with native species that can provide greater ecological and social values. But in many cases, silvicultural and social knowledge of planting native species on marginal lands is lacking.

This symposium, which was organized by ELTI Steering Committee members, Dr. Mark Ashton (Yale University) and Dr. Jefferson Hall (Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute), consisted of ten presentations that focused on degraded tropical lands and reforestation with native species. It was divided into two main parts. The first



part consisted of presentations of current experimental and applied ecological work being conducted in Latin America and Asia. The second part was a series of case studies demonstrating lessons learned in the implementation of community restoration and agroforestry planting programs. These presentations were well received by the audience and provided significant input for ELTI's two regional training programs, both of which are investing significant effort on promoting various native species reforestation approaches.

Symposium

Developing a Knowledge Base for Forest Restoration in Southeast Asia

There are many forest restoration projects currently underway in Southeast Asia. To date, however, much of the data collected and management lessons learned from those projects have not been systematically collected, synthesized, or adequately disseminated to other researchers and practitioners. This evening session was organized by Dr. David Neidel (ELTI-Asia) and Dr. Campbell Webb (Harvard Arnold Arboretum) to discuss the creation of an internet-based, shared knowledge base for forest restoration in Southeast Asia. The goals of the meeting were to create a network of scientists and practitioners working on forest restoration, to identify what types of information are already available, and to discuss how it can be efficiently collected and organized. Some of the ideas generated during this meeting will be carried out by an intern at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies as part of larger tropical reforestation information clearinghouse project that ELTI will undertake, while others, including the need to raise additional funds, will be carried forward by other affiliated organizations and institutions.



This event was possible thanks to Arcadia Fund, whose Environmental Conservation grants support programmes that protect and enhance biodiversity, and provide field training and academic research.