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COLOMBIA FORESTS AND WETLANDS

Supporting forest and natural resource management to conserve biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.

OVERVIEW

The Colombia Forests and Wetlands Support Program helps transfer forest and natural resources management expertise from the United States Forest Service (USFS) to local government and community actors. The program provides technical assistance to local actors in the areas of wildfire management and public forest and protected areas governance. The program also supports the SilvaCarbon and Sustainable Wetlands Adaptation and Mitigation Program (SWAMP) initiatives to monitor and report carbon, and it strengthens Colombia's capacity to incorporate carbon data into land management, policy, and strategy development processes. Through these efforts, the program is advancing biodiversity conservation, improving natural resource governance, and reducing carbon emissions caused by deforestation and wetland degradation. This program runs from June 2020-June 2023.

COMPONENTS

IMPROVING NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNANCE

Colombia Forests and Wetlands strengthens local communities and the Government of Colombia's (GOC) forest management capacities, including community forestry. The program also supports a youth conservation corps for rural Colombian youth that provides natural resource training, internships, and professional development.

IMPROVING WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

Colombia Forests and Wetlands trains GOC officials in the skills and knowledge needed to prevent, suppress and respond to forest fires. Within this training, the program prioritizes supporting women's leadership and skill-building opportunities. The program is also developing a wildfire assessment and will provide recommendations to improve Colombia's wildfire management.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITIES

Colombia Forests and Wetlands builds Colombian academic and government actors' capacities to perform forest and wetland mapping. This mapping is needed to develop a national forest inventory, map forest cover changes, and identify the best models and technologies for agriculture, forestry and greenhouse gas capture projects. The program also helps SilvaCarbon and SWAMP develop platforms to monitor and report greenhouse gas emissions.

RESULTS

- Improved GOC officials' capacity to govern public forests and protected areas;
- Strengthened GOC agencies and Colombian universities' wildfire management capacities;
- Advanced the scientific methods used by Colombian institutions to understand wildfires' impact on land cover change;
- Trained Colombian youth in natural resources conservation and sustainable livelihoods, thereby enhancing their professional skills;
- Helped GOC agencies and academic institutions develop national maps of the country's forests and wetlands, and their respective changes overtime; and
- Supported the unification of existing Colombian forest fire forecast systems with the goal of establishing an integrated, interagency system unique to forest fires.