

Peer Review Plan

Date: 8/20/2012

Source Center: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center
677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 615
Honolulu, HI 96813

Title: The economic viability of smallholder timber production under expanding Açaí palm production in the Amazon Estuary.

Subject and Purpose: In the mouth of the Amazon River, smallholders have developed a micro-scale vertically-integrated system of timber production where numerous informal micro firms integrate timber extraction and processing in local circular sawmills. As rare examples of small holder vertically-integrated tropical timber production systems, these micro firms bear special relevance to the potential role of smallholders in sustainable timber management. In this study we use data from landowner and firm surveys, participatory monitoring of firms, and detailed forest and sawmill operation monitoring to devise a financial returns model of smallholder timber micro firms. We then compare the financial attractiveness of small holder timber production to its primary land use alternative in the Amazon Estuary, Açaí palm fruit production. Net Present Value over initial investments show timber production yields a better return per dollar invested than açaí fruit production only when firms mill timber purchased standing. While this research focuses on the economic rationale and consequences of Amazon Estuary smallholder timber and açaí production, our calculations shows how the 'açaization' of the estuary has the potential of changing the dynamics of human disturbance in the Amazon estuarine forests from widespread logging disturbance into highly intensified and localized, albeit still forested, açaí production areas.

A USGS scientist is lead author of this product that will be released in non-USGS publication.

Impact of Dissemination: This information product is considered by the USGS to be Influential Scientific Information.

Timing of Review (Including Deferrals): August 2012 – April 2013. Deferrals are not anticipated.

Manner of Review, Selection of Reviewers, and Nomination Process: This review will be conducted via individual letters. The USGS will select the peer reviewers pursuant to requirements in Survey Manual chapter 502.3 -Fundamental Science Practices: Peer Review (<http://www.usgs.gov/usgs-manual/500/502-3.html>).

Expected Number of Reviewers: Anticipates 3 or fewer reviewers.

Requisite Expertise: Tropical forestry/ecology; natural resource economics; traditional/indigenous use of tropical forest resources.

Opportunity for Public Comment: No, the opportunity for public comment is not formally incorporated into the USGS peer review process.

Agency Contact: peer_review_agenda@usgs.gov.