

What about submitting data?

I. Introduction

Forests are storehouses of great natural diversity, and much of it may disappear before science can unravel its mysteries. The ecological structure and function of the variety of forest types ringing the Caribbean Sea expanding northward throughout North America is an active area of research for HabitatNet schools. Equal in importance to the taxonomic and genetic diversity they contain is how these complex ecosystems change over time, and how they respond to catastrophic natural and human-induced disturbance. Schools throughout the Caribbean Basin and North America may participate and exchange data as well as pose questions to participating schools. *There is NO cost to participating schools – we only share an equal interest in preserving “local and global ecosystems”.*

The Smithsonian Institution’s Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity (MAB) Program, in collaboration with HabitatNet & the Conservation Biology Institute at Souhegan High School (Amherst, New Hampshire), is proposing to identify and expand the regional representation of forest types by creating a Caribbean – North American network of long term vegetation monitoring sites. By promoting new opportunities for ecological investigation in schools and the ready exchange of student work man provide a more unified approach to regional science, science education, and global conservation. The abundance of long-term forest monitoring plots, large and small, has proven its collective value to ecologists and local land conservation groups. We propose to standardize basic methodologies and to store metadata that would link potential collaborators seeking to expand their own knowledge base on local biodiversity, improve the representation of forest types and to enhance their capacity to conserve Caribbean – North American forests.

The objectives of **HabitatNet** will be to:

1. Provide descriptions of the structure and composition of major forested ecosystems of the Caribbean – North America using standard protocols.
2. Facilitate baseline monitoring of temporal changes in these forests.
3. Explore the relationship between species diversity and physical parameters at each of the sites.
4. Provide baseline information for assessing and monitoring other taxonomic groups.
5. Facilitate information exchange through networking and capacity building.

These objectives can be achieved by working as a unified body of Caribbean – North American forest student researchers to:

- Share metadata and other current information on the status of long-term vegetation monitoring studies throughout the Caribbean – North American region through the internet.
- Develop a strategy for a more comprehensive regional network of vegetation monitoring sites.

- Facilitate collaborations on inter-site comparisons of various elements of Caribbean – North American forest dynamics.
- Yield a body of scientific information of use in exploring regional forest dynamics, long-term change and improved forest management.

The “data” asked for follows. Once your student group has collected data, enter the HabitatNet website and “Submit”. Your work with others will then be posted. It is a hope of this program that teachers and students will then contact other teachers and students involved and begin a dialogue regarding similar questions for research and global partnerships for CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY!

The following is the type of information that is initially asked for.
Questions?

Contact: Dan Bisaccio, HabitatNet Project Director
 Email: HabitatNet@sprise.com
 Phone: 603/673-9940 ext. 548

HabitatNet Vegetation Monitoring Plot Studies

Location: Country, region, latitude/longitude or any other information to identify location of the site
Forest Type(s): Name of dominant vegetation type that plot(s) are located in
Elevation (m):
Rainfall (mm/yr):
Method: Plot Size: Minimum diameter: # of plots:
Date established:
Number of censuses: Have the plots been re-measured, and if so, how many times and when?
Contact information: Name: Phone: E-mail:

Data: This may include vegetation Density, Frequency, Dominance values as well as any species listings for your site.

Photos:

