

Venezuela, March/April 2004

Although delayed by events beyond our control, happily, RAINFOR was able to head north of the equator and visit a number of important forest sites in Venezuela. Through the efforts of Rafael Herrera to organise the logistics and permits, Jon Lloyd, Sandra Patino, Tim Baker, Michael Schwarz, Joonas Merikanto, Kuo Jung Chao, Luis Marcano Berti and Rafael headed in a series of small planes to San Carlos de Rio Negro to resample plots set up 30 years ago. Remarkably, despite the lack of original tree numbers, with excellent plot maps and the help of Pedro Maquirino it was possible to effectively relocate the vast majority of the original trees. A large range of forest types are associated with different edaphic conditions in this area, which are botanically very distinctive from other RAINFOR sites.

Sandra Patino, Rafael Herrera, Kuo-Jung Chao, Carlos Alberto Quesada and Joonas Merikanto later joined a group from Universidad de los Andes coordinated by Armando Torres to work on three of the long-term sites started by Prof. Veillon in Rio Grande and Km 95 and Km 98, El Dorado. Luis Marcano Berti, Hirma Ramirez Angulo, Pedro Salcedo, Luis Serrano, Rodrigo Barros and Emilio Vilanova also joined the group. The site in Rio Grande is a protected area in an extensive logging operation complex in a transitional dry-to rain forest area. Evidences of recurring fires were found as soil charcoal. The sites south of El Dorado were in the slopes close to a diabase outcrop in the lowlands just before climbing to the high plateau of the Canaima National Park.



Colombia, January/February 2004

Thanks to the support of Tropenbos and Parques Nacionales de Colombia, RAINFOR was able to visit the Colombian Amazon. During January and February a group from different Colombian institutions; including Agustin Rudas from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Adriana Prieto from the Instituto Humboldt, Esteban Alvarez from Universidad de Antioquia & ISA, Alvaro Cogollo and Eliana Jimenez from the Jardin Botanico de Medellin, Heriberto David from the Herbario de la Universidad de Antioquia, Oscar Juan Cardona from Universidad de Santa Rosa and Russman (Rosi), our tree climber from the Huitoto community that live around km 11 in Leticia, joined Sandra Patiño and Beto Quesada on a expedition to Parque Nacional Natural Amacayacu. The park is located in the southern extreme of Colombia containing different forest formations including terra firme, seasonally flooded and swampy areas.

Despite some difficulties that were solved by our "genie in the lamp", Alejandro Jaramillo from Fundacion GAIA in Leticia, four plots established by Agustin and Adriana ten years ago were remeasured and leaf and soil samples were taken. In order to visit the sites the group had to be divided into two teams. One team flew north of Leticia to Ipiranga on the Brazilian border and then travelled by boat along the Cotuhé river and La Lorena stream. The other team headed west along the Amazonas river, entered the Amacayacu River and finally continued some two km up the Agua Pudre stream and set a camp in the forest. After two weeks the two teams joined in Agua Pudre to continue the work.

