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“Bridging the gap between increasing knowledge and decreasing resources”

Bridges Between Knowledge and Practice in Neotropical Mires Conservation: The Case of Iberá Wetlands, Argentina

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Abstract

The Esteros del Iberá in the Province Corrientes-Argentina are part of one of the largest neo-tropical wetland ecosystems of South America. For a long time the area was used for extensive livestock and hunting. During the last ten years the territory has been restored by the Argentinean foundation “Conservation Land Trust”, getting the status of National Natural Reserve. One key to the success was the involvement of local communities and stakeholders, especially under the creation of the “Iberá Centre for Education and Training in Restoration of Large Natural Ecosystems”. The Iberá wetlands are characteristically formed by floating mires, which due to their high saturated conditions remained mainly isolated, pristine and safe from the earlier land use practices. Knowledge about pedological and ecological aspects of these particular ecosystems are crucial to design conservation strategies dealing with them, but until now it has been scarcely produced. Through a cooperation project between the German Foundations Michael Succow, Manfred Hensen and the Argentinean Foundation Conservation Land Trust, a first ecological-hydrological characterisation of the Iberá Wetlands with emphasis on mire ecosystems was realised. The main goal of the project was to outline ecological information about the mires existing in the region: evidences about their formation, their hydrogenetic types, their carbon storage capacity, their water retention capacity and the current main threats to the health of these ecosystems. This presentation exposes the first results and produced knowledge, which shall be included in education tools for restoration and conservation of mires in the Iberá Wetlands at the Iberá Centre.

Keywords: Argentina, Iberá wetlands, mires conservation, mires ecology, neo-tropical mires, South America