

Setting private natural heritage reserves



Band-tailed Hornero (*Furnarius figulus*)



The business case

Owning large natural reserves as part of its forestry activities in Brazil, Fibria has chosen to register its most biodiverse lands as part of the Brazilian-specific Private Natural Heritage Reserves scheme. Recognition of Fibria's conservation efforts is expected to further increase public and stakeholder awareness on company conservation activities.

The issue

Gaining recognition for environmental conservation

As a pulp and paper company, Fibria's activities involve the management of forests. In Brazil, the company owns an area of 1,043,000 hectares, of which 393,000 hectares are native reserves dedicated to environmental conservation. Fibria aims to have recognition from the Brazilian government for this initiative and has thus engaged in a protection program under the Brazilian legal framework called Private Natural Heritage Reserves (or Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural, RPPN).

The RPPN is a system that was created by Federal Decree 20 years ago and is unparalleled in the rest of the world. It provides a mechanism for the creation of environmental conservation areas on private land. RPPNs are voluntarily established by the landowner who makes a commitment to preserve nature and guarantee that the area will be protected indefinitely. RPPN registration approval by the Brazilian public environmental agency depends on the environmental attributes of the land such as its biodiversity, water resources, and scenic beauty. But it also includes obligations for the private landowner, such as ensuring that the environmental characteristics of the area are maintained and gaining approval of land use zoning plans. Today, Brazil has around 1,000 of these private reserves, covering a total area of 700,000 hectares.

The response

Implementing biodiversity conservation initiatives in Private Natural Heritage Reserves

Fibria decided to apply for RPPN registration for a total of 6,367 hectares of land. In these areas, Fibria is implementing different biodiversity conservation initiatives, and among others, is enhancing biological diversity through the expansion of the areas connected by ecological corridors. Fibria devotes its efforts to not only setting up the reserves, but also carrying out the support work of cataloguing, maintenance and studying the biodiversity in depth, together with the assistance of institutions, NGOs and universities. Fibria will, therefore, allow the land to be used for scientific studies on biodiversity and will also grant access to the public for environmental education projects.

The results

Registration as a key communication tool toward stakeholders

Fibria has now completed the legalization process for 3 RPPNs, representing a total of 2,677 hectares. These RPPNs are:

- Restinga de Aracruz, which is one of the only preserved areas of coastal forest in the north of Espírito Santo;
- Recanto das Antas, situated in Linhares (ES) within the Atlantic Forest biome. It is among the ten largest RPPNs within Brazil's Atlantic Forest biome according to the *Instituto BioAtlântica*, and is home of the tapir, one of the largest mammals in the Americas; and
- Mutum Preto, also located in Linhares (ES) within the Atlantic Forest biome. It is home to the black curassow, an endemic bird that is in danger of extinction.

An additional submission for a total of 3,690 hectares is also currently under approval by the Brazilian government. These areas are now better protected and studied, and their records are part of the management plan that is being drawn up and submitted to environmental agencies.

While generating public awareness on its biodiversity conservation initiatives, the recognition of these lands as RPPNs will help strengthen Fibria's ties with government agencies and NGOs active in environmental conservation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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