

FOREST DYNAMICS RESEARCH

Description: Study the diversity and structure of tropical dry forests and analyze how the community changes over time.



Project summary: The Lalo Loor Reserve has two permanent 1-hectare forest plots established in 2004 that are being monitored intermittently to track phenology, growth, recruitment and mortality, and long-term dynamics of this forest fragment to assess stability and/or biological decay. Our goal is to continue monitoring these plots and publish the results when enough data has been collected. Interns are needed to revisit each tree to measure diameter (DBH), record living and dead trees, replace lost tree tags, identify and map locations of new recruits, and update the database for each plot. Interns may also collect seeds for the native tree nursery and for our agroforestry plot (see Agroforestry Internship).

Independently designed research certainly can be carried out, as the plots offer an opportunity for a wide range of ecological studies. Interns must be willing to spend long hours off-trail in the forest. This internship may be combined with reforestation and restoration, or the agroforestry project.

What you'll do:

The intern's tasks will vary depending on the season and the needs of the plot. These plots are surveyed only during the rainy season (approximately January through June) therefore, our activities are scheduled accordingly.

- Measure DBH and collect growth/survival & phenology data on all trees in the reforestation and permanent plots
- Retag trees as needed
- Collect seeds of fruiting trees and work with high school nursery or with Agroforestry interns to have them planted
- Update database and analyze data for evidence of biological decay, recruitment and carbon sequestration (the latter in the reforestation plot only)
- Collect seeds of native species for planting in the community tree nursery

What you'll learn:

- Standard field methods for research in forestry and vegetation community structure
- Establishment and maintenance of long-term research plots
- Identification of common tropical tree species
- Management and analysis of multi-year datasets
- GPS navigation and mapping



What we seek: Strong interest in botany and forest ecology; detailed and organized, with good data collection and management skills; knowledge of Excel; ability to use keys and other resources to identify plants; willing to conduct field work in rugged conditions.