



Avoided Deforestation Campaign

Actions against climate change through protection of natural areas

“Avoided Deforestation Campaign” is carried out by SPVS (Portuguese acronym for the Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education), a Brazilian non-governmental organization. The objective of this Campaign is to help to protect the last remaining natural areas of “Araucaria Forest” in the State of Paraná, southern Brazil, due to their potential to counterbalance greenhouse gases emissions, as well as their significance to biological diversity conservation.

To put into practical, the Campaign consists in to involve land owners (well preserved areas owners) and help them to keep protecting the areas with financial support from sponsors – companies interested in counterbalance their greenhouse gases emissions.

It is estimated that well preserved Araucaria Forest areas, still remaining in this region of Brazil, could storage more than 120 tons of carbon per hectare (equivalent measure to counterbalance the emissions of gases which contribute to climate change). To reach this figure SPVS’s technicians have worked over scientific publications and researches which consider different carbon and biomass datum of tropical forests.

Under orientation of “GHG Protocol”, published by World Resources Institute concerning guidelines for greenhouse gases emissions inventories, and the policies of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) concerning different sources and features for greenhouse gases emissions inventories, SPVS’s technicians are able to calculate companies and events’ emissions.

Once the amount of emissions is known, SPVS offers the possibility to counterbalance the emissions through the maintenance of well preserved forests (avoided deforestation), avoiding the release to atmosphere of carbon already stored by the protected natural area. Based on historical trends, it is possible to state that remaining natural areas are threatened to be cleared because of economic pressures and lack of public policies to their effective protection. This is what happens with the unique and impressive Atlantic Forest of Brazil (it is estimated there is only less than 7% of well preserved areas of this biome which covered more than 1,3million km² of Brazilian territory; in the case of Araucaria Forest, an ecosystem associated to Atlantic Forest biome, there is less than 1% of remaining natural areas in the State of Paraná, southern Brazil).

Destruction of natural areas is a feature which contributes to the global warming. Deforestation, added to greenhouse gases emissions made by industrial and agribusiness activities, has a “double contribution”: it disables to capture carbon dioxide and, when forest is cleared, it releases to the atmosphere this gas which is the main responsible for the climate change in the whole Planet.

Forest biomass (set up by trunks, branches, leaves, roots, as well as soil organic materials) has the important role to withdraw from atmosphere the carbon dioxide (CO₂). Through photosynthesis, natural areas capture this gas, breaking it in oxygen



(released back to the atmosphere) and carbon (kept in forest biomass). When forests disappear, this ecosystem function is lost. Besides, when forests no longer exist, they contribute to other environmental issue: loss of biodiversity.

The current rates of biodiversity loss are other concern of scientists and environmentalists in the whole world. This decrease is strongly impactful for plants and animals species survival, for ecosystems balance and for the genetic material existing in any form of life. Moreover, losing natural heritage brings limits to the economic development, due to any productive activity depends on the existence of natural resources and the ecosystems services and goods (water, energy, climate balance, new technologies development, among others).

“Avoided Deforestation Campaign” has as goal to set a tool for compensation of greenhouse gases emissions and the protection of Araucaria Forest remaining areas in Southern Brazil. And, based on this protection, the campaign allows the conservation of biodiversity and helps fighting against global warming.

Forest projects, like avoided deforestation, could run and be accepted by “carbon market” such the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX) – the world's first global marketplace for integrating voluntary legally binding emissions reductions with emissions trading and offsets for all six greenhouse gases.

As far as Kyoto Protocol is concerned, avoided deforestation projects are still not accepted as Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) initiative. (CDM is arrangement under the Protocol allowing industrialized countries with a greenhouse gases emissions reduction 2008-2012 commitment to invest in projects that reduce emission or capture carbon in developing countries). Even though avoided deforestation are still not accepted, annual intergovernmental talks (under the conferences of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) indicate that this kind of project could be a part of “second phase” of Kyoto Protocol (beyond 2012).

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