

LATAM Bamboo supply chains

Ecologically regenerative industry?

or

Continuation of the Global North > South Extractive
history



REGENERATION
FIELD
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Demand increase after earthquake

- Disaster relief
- Eco-touristic re-development
- Farmers needing income began harvesting more bamboo
- Ecuadorian government fast-tracks bamboo building code approval



Understanding current bamboo market in Ecuador







Well managed *Dendrocalimus asper*



Severely overharvested
Dendrocalimus asper



For use in manufacturing
industry

Measuring impact on ecosystems and communities

- Great deal of academic and commercial research goes into developing engineered bamboo products for construction
- Comparatively little effort is made to research how to optimize relationships with supply communities and bamboo ecosystems
- Due to this deficit and anticipating a growth in the bamboo industry of the Americas, in 2020, we created the Regenerative Industries Think Tank group: a collaborative interdisciplinary research group looking at case studies here in Ecuador
- We are currently implementing bamboo remote sensing inventories, socioeconomic surveys, bird, primate, and plant biodiversity surveys. Much more attention on the subject is required however





Balsa industry example

- Core material for windmill turbine industry
- 7 years ago, balsa not perceived as having value
- Ecuador produces 95% + world's balsa
- High demand and severely fluctuating prices led to clearcutting of naturally occurring balsa
- International buyers work through intermediaries and don't interact directly with farmers
- During upswings of price, large quantities have been planted: on formerly forested land clearcut for the new crop, and also in degraded pasture
- Will bamboo demand create a similar dynamic?
Perhaps a cautionary tale...



Future demand for bamboo



Using the whole culm





Crédito Productivo Agropecuario

CAÑA GUADUA BAMBÚ

El bambú tiene relación con la supervivencia de más de 500.000 productores en Ecuador. BanEcuador y el Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería juntan esfuerzos para promover el desarrollo de este sector.

MINISTERIO DE  sembramos





Panels being manufactured in Ecuador

- The jury is still out: Will engineered bamboo products take off in the market place? Will companies invest in sustainable supply chains, prioritizing social and environmental justice?
- We can all play a role as scientists, engineers, builders, investors, environmental advocates, and consumers
- How can we support this industry to live up to its tremendous regenerative potential !?







