



Centro para la Conservación del Paisaje
Project: CEN Marino
Progress Report—December, 2013 – January, 2014
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First Progress Report

Introduction

This is the first progress report of our research project in the maritime reserve of the North East Corridor. It will describe the work done during the month of December 2013, until the present. The report suggests some preliminary ideas to be taken into consideration for the development of the research design. Also, we will present the next steps in our agenda.

Our sociological study will look at stakeholders' perceptions on the uses and management of natural resources in the marine reserve of the North East Corridor in Puerto Rico ("C.E.N. Marino"). The sociological analysis of human perceptions is crucial for an in-depth understanding of stakeholders' views, meanings, opinions and practices. Most research on marine reserves have neglected the use of qualitative methods to better understand and capture the meanings and worldviews of community residents and main users of natural resources. This research strives to fill the qualitative vacuum present in most of the literature.

After an exhaustive search of the academic data banks, and reviewing an array of academic literature, we are exploring the potential of specific methodological strategies such as semi-structured, focus groups, field



observations, and document analysis that will enable us to answer our preliminary research questions: How do the main stakeholders perceive the use and management of natural resources in the maritime zone of the North East Corridor? Are there conflicts and contradictions that emerge from different practices, dynamics, and worldviews among different stakeholders? What proposals and perspectives on the future management of C.E.N. Marino do stakeholders hold?

First steps:

Meetings - We have had several meetings with key stakeholders of the North East Corridor, where we have explained our research agenda and maintained communication for future interviews or focus groups appointments. These meetings (two) have been important in the development of trust with important gatekeepers within the NGO's groups and local communities. We also had an important meeting with the head of the Department of Tourism of the Universidad Interamericana, in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, and one of his students, with whom we share some ideas about the relationship of our research and sustainable tourism practices in the area. Notes from these meetings are also part and parcel of our data collection.

Field documents – We have collected local and regional newspapers, tourism brochures, among other field documents that will give us an idea of the different representations and discourses that could impact peoples' perceptions of C.E.N. Marinos' natural resources and its management.

Academic Literature – we have done an exhaustive search and gathering of academic articles related to our study. We have read and divided in the following topics:



- Human perception and natural resources
- Marine reserves and social science research
- Socio-economic and historical research related to the area of study
- Social research methodology and co-management of natural resources
- Socio-environmental theories and paradigms

These academic works form the basis of our literature review, which shall be finished at the end of January. The literature review – together with field data analysis- will serve as a solid base to wrap up our study design. Our goal is to have the design ready for the first week of February, so that we can return to the field with further, and more focused, questions. Given the qualitative nature of our study, the research design will be flexible enough to integrate ideas and changes that will come with further field experience. Thus, the research design will be in a stage of continuous refining through the study, becoming more focused and robust as the data analysis develops.

Field Work – We are organizing and beginning to analyze collected field data from previous research produced by the CCP in our area of study that will be very relevant for the development of specific research questions, and the testing of preliminary interpretations. In other words, the organization and coding of this data will serve as a springboard for deepening our research and keep refining our focus in the research design and agenda.

The field data include the following:

- Fifty interviews (need coding and analysis)
- Documents, notes, and observations (need coding and analysis)

We have also contacted other academic researchers willing to share valuable data gathered for their own work on socio-economic factors in our area of



study that could be beneficial for our analysis. Also, we have more contacts of participants for future interviews, focus groups, and field observations.

To wrap up, at this moment we will begin the analysis of rough data from the previous research produced by the CCP in the area of study. Furthermore, we are developing the literature review based on the academic literature and research reports relevant to our area of study. The literature review and the research design should be finished by the month of February. The first stage of the field data analysis should be done by the end of March.

Literature Review (February)

Research Design (February)

Data Analysis (March-April)

Field Research (ongoing)

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