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Avoiding deforestation in Apuí

Engaging local farmers in regenerative agroforestry

Annual Progress Report 2022



Summary

Our goal in Apuí, one of Amazonas State's most deforested municipalities, is to restore 175 ha over the next five years.

To do this, we've partnered with IDESAM and scaled up their Apuí Coffee AgroForestry Systems initiative, in which farmers are supported to establish coffee agroforestry systems on their lands. Growing coffee in agroforestry systems regenerates soil fertility, increases coffee production and decreases the pressure on native forests, and with WeForest and IDESAM providing technical support and capacity building to participating farmers, the coffee's market value increases. Since the launch of the Apuí Coffee AFS initiative by IDESAM in 2012, the participating farmers' annual incomes have increased by 220%, which is great news and gives a promising outlook for the farmers that we are working with today.

During 2021, we had enrolled 22 small farming families who between them devoted 35 ha – between 0.5 and 2.5 ha each – to coffee agroforestry. By the beginning of 2022, they had all set up their agroforestry systems, planting 58,310 coffee seedlings and 9,555 native tree seedlings. By February 2023, the second 35 ha had been set up by the 15 new families recruited during 2022.

The new government with a focus on zero tolerance toward deforestation was great news for all our projects in Brazil in late 2022. After the elections, the Amazon Fund and PPCDAM (Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon) were re-established. In January 2023 the deforestation alerts from DETER in the Amazon decreased 61% compared to January 2022, which is fantastic news! With the reimplementing of the policies and new financial incentives, deforestation rates in the Apuí region have the potential to decrease substantially in the coming years.

This report shares an update of our progress during 2022. Thank you for all your support!

2022 in numbers

37 families of small farmers are taking part in the establishment of **70 ha** of coffee agroforestry systems (**22** in 2021 and **15** in 2022).

Each farmer devotes between **2 ha and 3 ha** of their land.

By the end of the planting season (March 2023):

52 500 coffee seedlings were planted

8120 shrubs and tree species (**12** native trees and **2** exotic species (banana and gliricidia) were interspersed with the coffee

Since the beginning of the IDESAM / WeForest project:

70 ha under agroforestry

128 485 seedlings planted



Progress during 2022

The agroforestry systems are on track and doing well

The Amazon is one of the most biodiverse biomes in the world, and regulates the rainfall regime in many regions of South America. One of the main drivers of deforestation here is the low income of small farmers, which makes them likely to sell their properties to extensive livestock producers to convert to pasturelands. There's also a lack of systematic compliance with the Forest Code, which requires landowners to restore and to protect specific areas of their land with native restoration.

In Apuí, many coffee farmers had been abandoning conventional coffee production due to land degradation, low output, lack of incentives, technical support and challenges in marketing. Our project here with IDESAM supports small farmers to establish coffee agroforestry systems which, while regenerating soil fertility and reforesting land, increases coffee production and improves their families' incomes. Apuí Agroforestry Coffee is available in "boutique" shops in the major cities of Brazil, and the participating farmers are included in this commercial venture, benefiting from higher prices for their produce and increasing the likelihood that they will continue the forest-based systems developed in the project instead of selling off their land to large-scale agriculture.

The project's overall goal is to restore a total of 175 ha through the establishment of 35 ha of coffee agroforestry systems per year for five years. By the beginning of

2022, the first 22 farmers had all set up their agroforestry systems, planting 58 310 coffee seedlings and 9555 native tree seedlings.

After establishing their plots, these 22 farmers carried out maintenance activities and took care of any replanting needed in case of mortality. The survival rates of the seedlings planted in this first round of agroforestry systems are looking good, at around 85%, so not much replanting was needed.



Who are the WeForest farmers in Apuí?

The participants of the coffee project are small farmers, local families receiving little government assistance and who are highly vulnerable. Some are headed by women, but usually all family members participate in the farm's activities. In the first planting season (2021/2022), 5 women and 17 men participated; in the most recent, it was 4 women and 11 men.



Protecting the habitats of threatened species

In 2023, WeForest will supply the farmers with tools and equipment for maintenance activities such as pruning, and workshops are held to train the farmers in the best techniques to manage an agroforestry system. Sessions covering coffee processing steps such as harvesting, processing, roasting and grinding are also provided by the IDESAM team.

A questionnaire was developed to interview the 22 small farmers who have been participating since 2021, collecting information on their socioeconomic conditions to establish a baseline. A second questionnaire will be sent to the farmers after three years to see how things have improved. We're interested to know how much of the family's income is represented by the coffee and whether they are producing other products aside from coffee from their agroforestry systems. We'll report on the data from the baseline survey in the mid-year report for 2023.

The production of coffee from the agroforestry systems supported by WeForest is expected to start in 2024, three years after the first planting. That's how long it takes for the planted coffee seedlings to produce fruits. IDESAM's farmers that were recruited before WeForest came on board are seeing good returns: the June 2022 sales target was exceeded by almost 50%.

The second 35 ha has just recently been set up, finishing at the end of February 2023. Fifteen new contracts were signed with farmers during 2022, covering the targeted 35 ha with areas ranging from 2 ha to 3 ha per farmer. For these new agroforestry systems, 52 500 coffee seedlings and 8 120 seedlings of native shrubs and tree species were provided. The survival rates for these seedlings will be available later this year.

Despite being highly deforested, Apuí supports almost 500 bird species (of which 14 are threatened), 80 amphibian species and 150 mammal species. These include the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) and giant armadillo (*Prionomys maximus*, both listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List); the endangered black-faced black spider monkey (*Ateles chamek*, pictured) and peruvian woolly monkey (*Lagothrix cana*), and the near-threatened golden-backed squirrel monkey (*Saimiri ustus*).



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By avoiding further deforestation and restoring native forests, the project will conserve and support the biodiversity here by protecting and restoring habitats.



Who is IDESAM?

The Apuí Coffee AgroForestry Systems Initiative was developed in 2012 by IDESAM, an NGO that works to achieve social and environmental solutions for rural producers, traditional communities, riverside communities and indigenous peoples. Amazonia Agroflorestal, a spin-off from IDESAM created in 2019, sells the products developed under IDESAM's initiatives (such as coffee and essential oils) and guarantees market access. Five women and nine men from IDESAM provide the WeForest and other farmers with technical support and capacity-building to increase the market value of the coffee. In 2022, IDESAM was named as one of the **top 100 NGOs** in Brazil.

Other great news is that in 2022 the farmers participating in the Apuí Coffee AFS initiative have been invited by IDESAM to take part in a REDD+ project covering the wider region where there is still native forest. REDD+ is a United Nations-backed framework that aims to curb climate change by stopping the destruction of forests, and this REDD+ project generates certified carbon credits from the native forest.

This is a positive development, because not only does it show that our agroforestry is contributing to the protection of the carbon stock in the native forests nearby, but it also means the participating farmers will receive income from both the coffee and the sale of future carbon credits from the native forest, increasing the likelihood that native forest will be protected.

It does mean, however, that farmer engagement has become more time-consuming, as steps such as a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes are required by REDD+. More meetings have to be held to explain REDD+ to the farmers, and they themselves are required to sign a

longer commitment to forest protection than when the project was just focused on coffee.

This means that, although a whopping 78 farmers showed interest in joining the project in 2022, actual enrollment was a bit more complicated and time-consuming than in 2021 and so the actual number of farmers that were officially signed up in 2022 was 15. We will catch up in future years with the signing up for more farmers.





What's Next?

- Keep track of the project development and implement the monitoring and evaluation protocol with the collaboration of the IDESAM team.
- Workshop with Fundación Vida Silvestre, WeForest's partner in the Misiones, Argentina project, to exchange experiences. IDESAM has great experience with value chain markets that could be useful in Misiones.
- Supply farmers with tools and equipment for maintenance activities such as pruning, and workshops will be held to train the farmers in the best techniques to manage an agroforestry system. Sessions covering coffee processing steps such as harvesting, processing, roasting and grinding will also be provided.

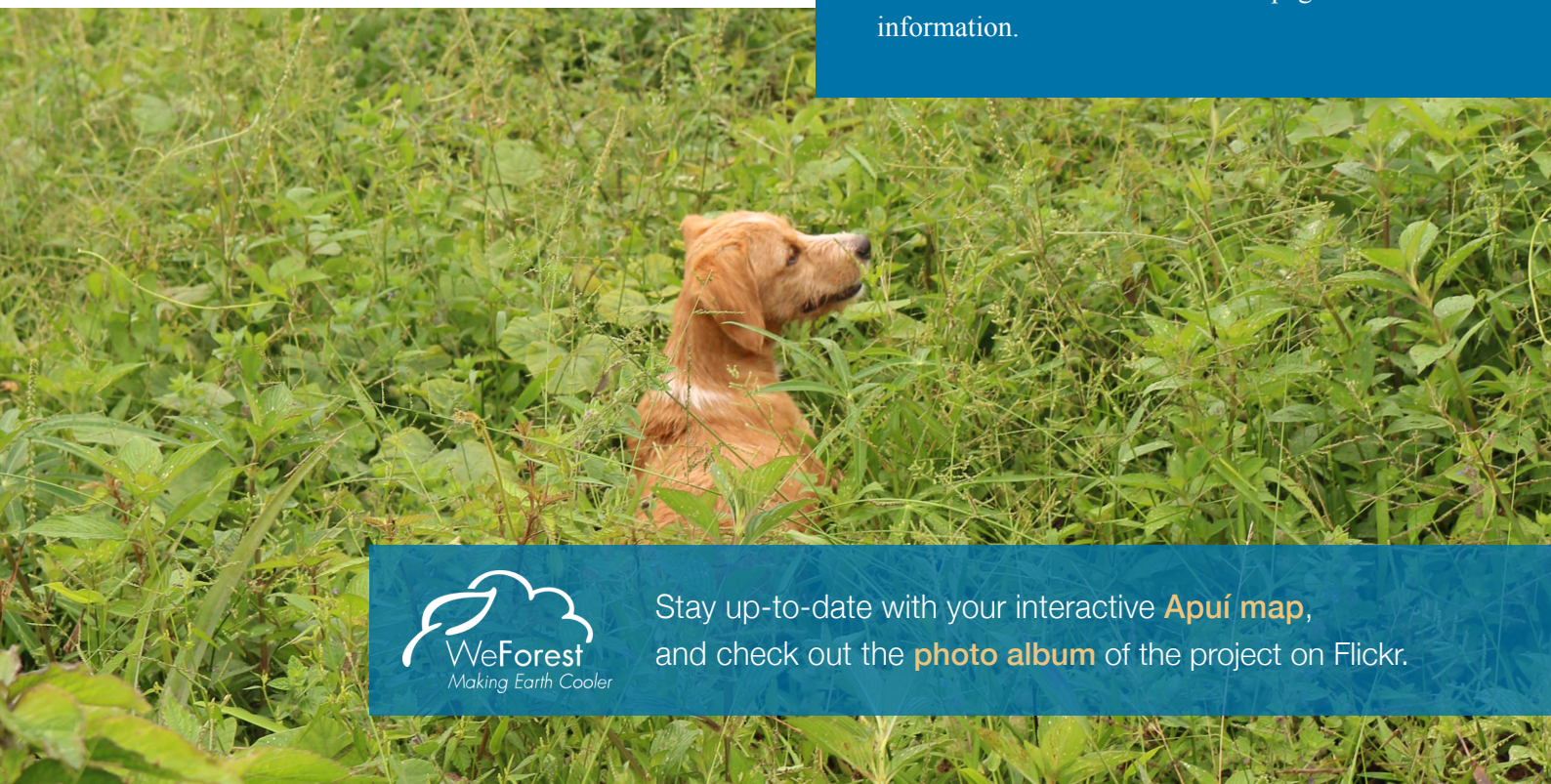
What is agroforestry?

Agroforestry combines agriculture and forestry; environmentally and socially-appropriate trees and shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland. It plays a critical role in successful forest restoration by:

- reducing the pressure on forest resources and incentivising sustainable forest management by alleviating poverty;
- compensating the loss of access to forest resources;
- ensuring reliable incomes to fund sustainable forest management.

IDESAM's work in Apuí started in 2012, with each producer receiving support to recover 1 hectare of coffee plantation in an agroforestry system, with native trees for shade including *jatoba* and mahogany, as well as species whose fruits and seeds could be collected and sold, such as cocoa, açai, Brazil nut, crabwood and *copaiba*. Regenerating coffee systems has doubled productivity in the region and enabled farmers to earn income from coffee and look to the future of essential oil production from native trees. Creating value in standing productive forests can prevent their degradation and destruction.

Please visit our [What We Do](#) webpage for more information.



Stay up-to-date with your interactive [Apuí map](#), and check out the [photo album](#) of the project on Flickr.

Thank you for supporting the Avoiding Deforestation in Apuí project!