

RPPN

Private Natural Heritage Reserve

HISTORY OF PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION IN THE STATE OF MATO GROSSO DO SUL



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Preface

For 15 years (2001-2016), the Association of Private Reserve Owners of Mato Grosso do Sul – REPAMS, together with the non-governmental organization WWF-Brazil, have been seeking to engage new reserve owners in the fight to expand and defend environmental conservation efforts in Mato Grosso do Sul. To consolidate this important partnership, the organizations have come together to publish this history, hoping to present their shared experiences on private lands in Mato Grosso do Sul.

REPAMS and WWF-Brazil have been supporting the establishment of private reserves as a way to preserve important forest remnants in the Cerrado and the Pantanal. To achieve this, the organizations have adopted strategies that include liaising with owners to change mindsets, dispel myths, break paradigms and foster a greater sense of respect for traditional knowledge.

The main goal behind RPPN is the conservation of biodiversity, and these reserves are generally recognized for the important role they play in the protection of fauna and flora species. When a conservation unit of this kind is created, landowners retain full property rights and greater access to support from public agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, etc.

For REPAMS and WWF-Brazil, the creation and management of private reserves will lead to sustainable production and environmental preservation by integrating production and conservation to build a more conscientious and sustainable agenda. This action seeks to create protected areas within biomes like the Pantanal and the Cerrado, complementary to the creation of public protected areas, thus strengthening the conservation unit system in these regions.

REPAMS was founded in Mato Grosso do Sul in 2003 and, since then, it has been working to consolidate itself locally by establishing institutional partnerships and offering technical support to RPPN owners. In the last few years, the partner organizations have fought to achieve autonomy and to ensure the financial sustainability they need to maintain their activities.

In 2016, after 15 years of partnership, REPAMS and WWF-Brazil, through the Cerrado Pantanal Program, decided to publish a history of their experiences together.



Introduction:

Those who preserve the environment deserve our support!

The reasons landowners decide to transform part of their land into Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPN) are intriguing and inspiring. Many believe in the social and economic importance of natural areas and in protecting specific endangered plant or animal species. Others are seeking to meet the needs of an increasingly demanding market for whom production goes hand-in-hand with social and environmental responsibility.

Legislative history for RPPN began in 1977 and has been evolving ever since. At that time, a group of landowners asked the now defunct Brazilian Institute for Forestry Development (IBDF) to create an environmental protection category known as Native Wildlife Refuge (REPAN), in an effort to protect their properties from encroachment by hunters. In 1998, this category was replaced with the Private Fauna and Flora Reserve.

The term Private Natural Heritage Reserve (RPPN) was coined only in 1990 through Federal Law no. 9.985 of 7/18/2000, which instituted the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC).

It was the beginning of social recognition for landowners willing to protect their land to preserve nature, making it possible for many of them to engage in conservation efforts by mobilizing their own assets, since creating an RPPN is a permanent commitment that is recorded on the title and serves as an instrument to further collective interests for this and future generations.

In their 26 years of existence, ever since RPPN were first created in Brazil, many landowners have been recognized for their determination, enthusiastic attitude, persistence and dedication. The private land conservation movement has amassed incentives, support and advocates, resulting in the creation of over 1,000 RPPN, spread across every Brazilian biome.



Biodiversity in Mato Grosso do Sul

The State of Mato Grosso do Sul is exceptional in its biodiversity and influenced by the Gran Chaco, the Amazon Rainforest, Meridional Brazil Forest, Atlantic Forest, Cerrado and semi-deciduous forests. Its territory is divided by two water basins: that of the Paraguay River (BAP) to the west, and the Paraná River (BRP) to the east (ZEE, 2009).

However, the Pantanal and the Cerrado are its two predominant biomes. The state also shelters some Atlantic Forest remnants on its southern border and on the Bodoquena Plateau.

RPPN in the Pantanal

Established as a National Heritage Site by federal decree in 1988, and as a Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2000, the Pantanal encompasses the planet's largest continental wetland area and is classified as wilderness, that is, an area that preserves more than 70% of its original vegetation intact and is rich in biodiversity and ecological services.

Since much of the Pantanal is privately owned, the actions taken by landowners can have an enormous impact on conservation. All private and public properties, either urban or rural, have a direct function for their owners: to serve their needs. But they also have an indirect function: to promote general welfare. Thus, the landowners known as "*pantaneiros*" are potential agents for the conservation of biodiversity and regional culture.



RPPN in the Cerrado

Spanning a territory of over 2 million km², the Cerrado encompasses the second-largest vegetation formation in South America, second only to the Amazon Rainforest. It covers a quarter of Brazil's landmass and its vegetation spreads across ten states and the Federal District, and is also found in the states of Roraima, Amapá, Amazonas and Pará, in addition to two countries, Bolivia and Paraguay.

The Cerrado is a savanna characterized by a tropical vegetation, with marked seasonality and the presence, in different proportions, of grasses, shrubs and trees. Its farmlands and landscapes stand out for their surprising exoticism and rare beauty and the region has excellent potential for economic development and tourism.

Protected Areas: Strategies for the Maintenance of Biodiversity

Protected areas are currently a topic of major concern because rising levels of human consumption have intensified economic activities that exploit natural resources.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), protected areas are any land and/or marine site dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, including all the associated natural and cultural resources. They are managed through legal instruments or other effective means (IUCN, 1990) that seek to protect nature and ensure the integrity of biological processes pertaining to landscapes and species.



Conservation Units: An Instrument for Social and Environmental Interaction

Indirect Use or Full Protection Conservation Units

Brazilian forests protect sites of great beauty and the forest remnants that form national, state and city parks—among other protected areas—shelter a rich variety of fauna and flora species. The very first Conservation Units (CUs) were based on the concept of preserving scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. Brazil's first conservation unit was Itatiaia National Park, created in 1937 in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Today, there are tens of thousands of Conservation Units, Indigenous Lands, Quilombola Territories, Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Legal Reserves and Areas of Permanent Protection that deserve to be protected through legal mechanisms that will ensure the preservation of biodiversity and water resources, and be conducive to natural resource management, scientific research, and the maintenance of ecological and climate systems. These are important instruments for the survival of many species, including our own.

Those in which exploitation and use of natural resources are completely restricted and no environmental modifications are permitted, with the exception of measures necessary to restore altered ecosystems, natural balance, biological diversity and natural processes. Scientific research is allowed pending the approval of the body responsible for the administration of the unit (IBAMA, 1996). Definitions and objectives are presented in **Table 1**.

Conservation Unit Categories	Definitions and Objectives
Ecological Station	Has as its objective to preserve nature and promote scientific research. Ecological Stations are considered public lands, with the private areas included in its boundaries requiring expropriation.
Biological Reserve	Has as its objective the full protection of the biota and other existing natural attributes within its boundaries, without direct human interference or environmental modifications, except for measures of recovery and preserving of natural balance, biological diversity and natural ecological processes.
National Park (PARNA)	National Parks are a type of basic SNUC unit. This model gave rise to all the other categories and these units are the main elements found within natural protected areas in Brazil. These units are also a major tourist attraction in the country and are at the forefront of the ecotourism market segment.
Natural Sanctuary	Has as its basic objective to preserve natural sites that are rare, singular or of great scenic beauty. Natural Sanctuaries may be constituted by private areas, as long as it is possible to make compatible the objectives of the unit with the landowner's use of the land and natural resources.
Wildlife Refuge	Has as its objective to protect natural environments where conditions are assured for the existence and reproduction of species or communities of the local flora and the resident or migratory fauna. Wildlife Refuges may be constituted by private areas, as long as it is possible to make compatible the objectives of the unit with the landowner's use of the land and natural resources.

Table 1. Full Protection Conservation Units (IBAMA, 1996).

Sustainable Use Conservation Units

Those in which direct economic exploitation is allowed, but in a planned and regulated manner. These units use sustainable management practices and require that environmental alterations be compatible with the permanent survival of the animal and plant communities (IBAMA, 1996). Definitions and objectives are presented in **Table 2**.

Conservation Unit Categories	Definitions and Objectives
Environmental Protection Area (APA)	Constituted by public and/or privately owned areas. Has as objectives to control the process of occupation and to protect the abiotic and biotic resources that are contained within its borders, ensuring the welfare of resident human populations, the protection or improvement of local ecological conditions, and the maintenance of landscapes and relevant cultural attributes. APAs have a deliberative council, presided over by the body responsible for its administration and formed by representatives of public bodies, civil society organizations and the resident populations, in accordance with its bylaws and the provisions set forth in the act of the creation of the unit. In its public areas, visitation is subject to the approval of the body responsible for the administration of the unit and must be in accordance with the site's management plan. Scientific research is also subject to the previous authorization of the responsible body and to the norms contained in the bylaws.
Area of Relevant Ecological Interest	These areas have extraordinary natural features or shelter rare species of the regional biota, requiring public authorities to adopt special protective measures. They are preferably created in areas of less than 5,000 hectares, with little or no human occupation. Their use is regulated by norms and criteria established by the National Environment Council - CONAMA
National Forest (FLONA)	Defined as an area with a forest cover made up of predominantly native species. Has as basic objectives to achieve the multiple sustainable use of forest resources and to promote scientific research, with an emphasis on methods for the sustainable exploitation of native forests. National Forests are considered public lands, with the private areas included in its boundaries requiring expropriation.
Extractive Reserve (RESEX)	Spaces destined for self-sustainable exploitation and conservation of renewable natural resources by traditional populations. In these areas, it is possible to materialize sustainable development goals, balancing the ecological interests of environmental conservation with the social interests of the resident populations, such as improved quality of life. It has two modalities: Amazon and Marine.
Fauna Reserve	Natural areas that shelter native animal populations, terrestrial or aquatic, resident or migratory, and for the conduction of technical-scientific studies on the sustainable economic management of fauna resources. Considered public lands. Public visitation may be permitted if compatible with the management plan of the unit and the regulations established by the body responsible for its administration. Amateur or professional hunting is prohibited.
Sustainable Development Reserve (RDS)	Has as its basic objectives to preserve nature and, at the same time, ensure the conditions and the means necessary for the reproduction, improvement of ways of life and life quality, and exploitation of natural resources by traditional populations, as well as valuing, conserving, and perfecting the knowledge and techniques of environmental management developed by these populations. Sustainable Development Reserves are public lands, with the private areas included within its boundaries requiring, when necessary, expropriation, in accordance with the law.
Private Natural Heritage Reserves	Areas destined for nature conservation in private properties. Creating an RPPN is a voluntary act of the landowner, who decides to transform his property, or part of it, into an RPPN, without losing his property rights if he does so.

Table 2. Sustainable Use Conservation Units (IBAMA, 1996)

Private Natural Heritage Reserves: An Act of Love for Nature

In 2000, after the creation of the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC - Law n. 9.985), Private Natural Heritage Reserves – RPPN were instituted as a private Conservation Unit (CU), legally registered ‘in perpetuity’, with the goal of conserving natural resources.

There are no size restrictions for establishing an RPPN and these units give landowners access to a mechanism that will not only protect biodiversity in their region, but also add value to their products. RPPN are conducive to scientific research, conservation projects, tourism and environmental education.

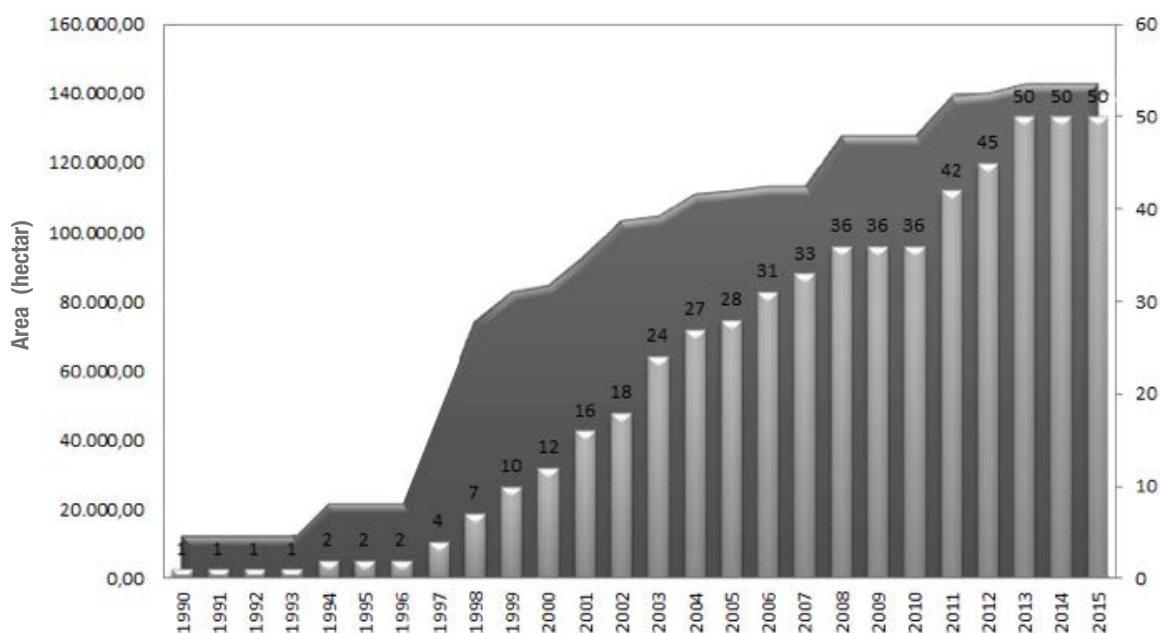
This model of conservation in private lands has shown itself to be effective in constituting buffer zones and ecological corridors, improving the environmental quality of rural properties, protecting fauna, flora and water resources, providing numerous ecosystem services and expanding legally protected areas.

Mato Grosso do Sul was the first state to enact RPPN-specific legislation (Federal Decree No 7.251/1993) and its first RPPN unit, Lageado RPPN, was created in 1990 in the municipality of Dois Irmãos do Buriti.

There are now 177 CUs (federal, state and municipal) distributed statewide: 40 APAs (Areas of Permanent Protection), 20 Parks, 51 RPPN (Private Natural Heritage Reserves) and 6 Natural Sanctuaries (IMASUL, 2016).

There are two additional categories of conservation units, Scenic Rivers and Parkways, which are also contemplated under the State Conservation Unit System of Mato Grosso do Sul.

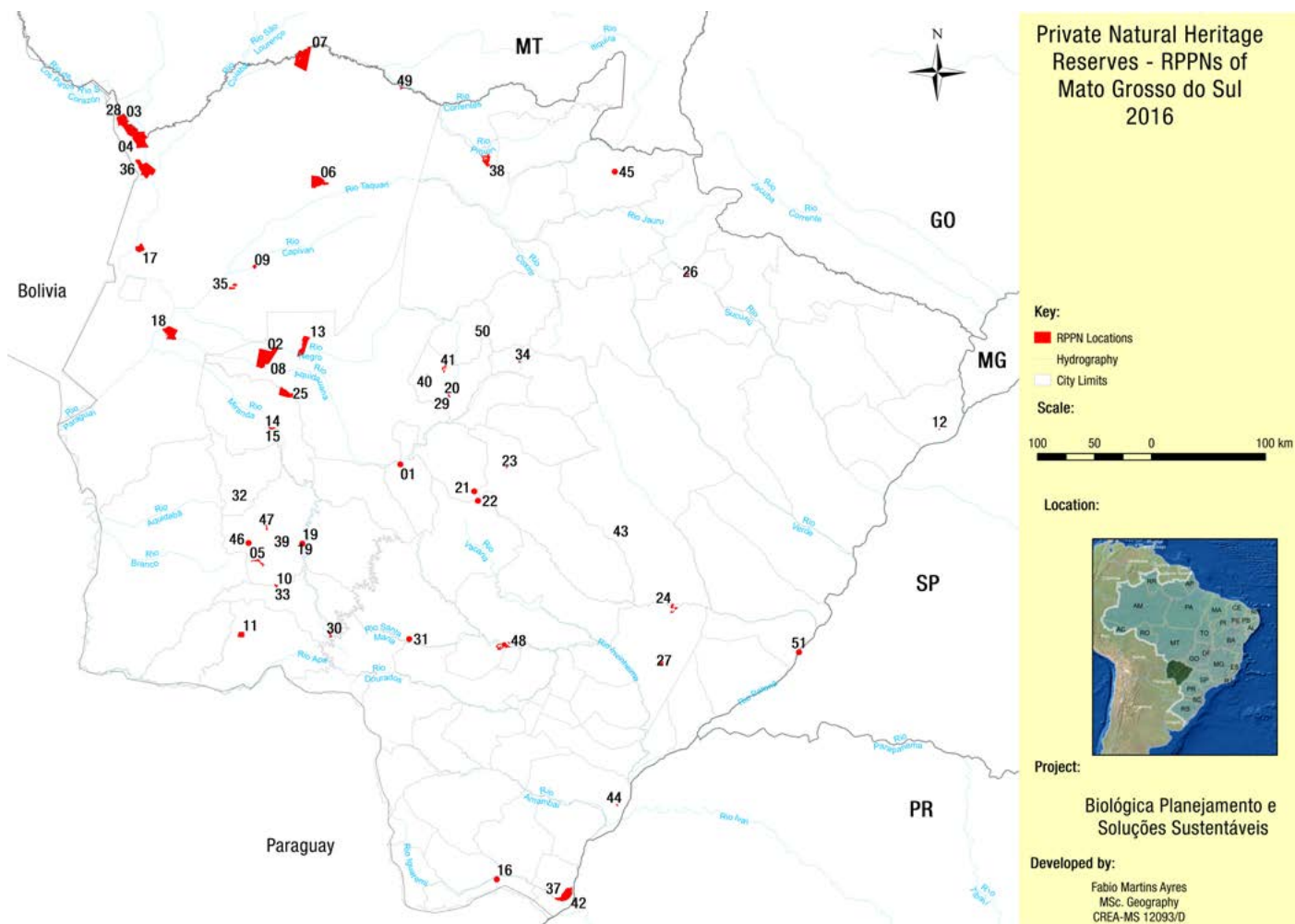
Private Natural Heritage Reserves in Mato Grosso do Sul



Evolution of RPPN created between 1990 and 2015 in Mato Grosso do Sul; area in hectares and number of RPPN created per year. Source: Repams, 2016

Legally Recognized RPPN in Mato Grosso do Sul

Map of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul depicting the locations of RPPN that are legally recognized by environmental bodies (2016).



EXISTING RPPN IN MATO GROSSO DO SUL

Nº	RPPN	YEAR OF CREATION	MUNICIPALITY	BASIN	RPPN EXTENSION (ha)	SPHERE	BIOME
1	Lageado	1990	Dois Irmão do Buriti	BAP	12,550.00	Federal	Pantanal
2	Fazendinha	1994	Aquidauana	BAP	9,619.00	Federal	Pantanal
3	Acurizal	1997	Corumbá	BAP	13,200.00	Federal	Pantanal
4	Penha	1997	Corumbá	BAP	13,100.00	Federal	Pantanal
5	São Geraldo Farm	1998	Bonito	BAP	642	State	Cerrado
6	Santa Cecília II Farm	1998	Corumbá	BAP	8,729.00	State	Pantanal
7	Poleiro Grande Farm	1998	Corumbá	BAP	16,530.00	State	Pantanal
8	Pata da Onça (Santa Sophia Farm)	1999	Aquidauana	BAP	7,387.00	State	Pantanal
9	Nhumirim Farm	1999	Corumbá	BAP	862,7	State	Pantanal
10	Cabeceira do Prata Farm	1999	Jardim	BAP	307,53	State	Cerrado
11	Olhos Verdes (Margarida Farm)	2000	Bela Vista	BAP	1,999.19	Federal	Cerrado
12	Sabia Reserve	2000	Aparecida do Taboado	Paraná	15,7	State	Atlantic forest
13	Rio Negro Farm	2001	Aquidauana	BAP	7,000.00	State	Pantanal
14	Neivo Pires I (Portal do Pantanal Sul I)	2001	Miranda	BAP	119	State	Pantanal
15	Neivo Pires II (Portal do Pantanal Sul II)	2001	Miranda	BAP	320,13	State	Pantanal
16	B'longalé (Floresta Negra Farm)	2001	Sete Quedas	Paraná	971,06	Federal	Atlantic forest
17	Arara Azul Farm	2002	Corumbá	BAP	2,000.00	Federal	Pantanal
18	Paculândia Farm	2002	Corumbá	BAP	8,232.00	Federal	Pantanal
19	Da Barra Farm	2003	Bonito	BAP	88	State	Cerrado
20	Vale do Bugio	2003	Corguinho	BAP	81,75	State	Cerrado
21	Laudelino Flores de Barcellos	2003	Terenos	BAP/ Paraná	200	State	Cerrado
22	Nova Querência	2003	Terenos	BAP/ Paraná	50,02	State	Cerrado
23	UF MATO GROSSO DO SUL	2003	Campo Grande	Paraná	50,11	State	Cerrado
24	Vale do Anhanduí (Douradinho Farm)	2003	Nova Andradina	Paraná	979,43	State	Atlantic forest
25	Dona Aracy	2004	Miranda	BAP	5,603.20	Federal	Pantanal
26	Ponte de Pedra	2004	Costa Rica	Paraná	169,92	State	Cerrado
27	Cabeceira do Mimoso	2004	Nova Andradina	Paraná	475,05	State	Atlantic forest
28	Rumo ao Oeste	2005	Corumbá	BAP	990	State	Pantanal
29	Gavião de Penacho	2006	Corguinho	BAP	77,72	State	Cerrado
30	Xodó do Vô Ruy	2006	Jardim	BAP	487,62	State	Cerrado
31	Morro da Peroba (Capão Bonito Farm)	2006	Maracajú	Paraná	607,37	Federal	Cerrado
32	Cara da onça	2007	Bodoquena	BAP	11,69	State	Cerrado
33	Buraco das Araras	2007	Jardim	BAP	29	Federal	Cerrado
34	Duas Pedras	2008	Bandeirantes	BAP	152,99	State	Cerrado
35	Alegria	2008	Corumbá	BAP	1,128.78	State	Pantanal
36	Eng. Eliezer Batista Nature Reserve	2008	Corumbá	BAP	13,323.43	Federal	Atlantic forest
37	São Pedro	2010	Eldorado	Paraná	3,688.19	State	Atlantic forest
38	Cachoeiras do São Bento	2011	Coxim	BAP	3,036.96	State	Cerrado
39	Rancho do Tucano	2011	Bonito	BAP	29,85	State	Cerrado
40	Quinta do Sol	2011	Corguinho	BAP	12,69	State	Cerrado
41	Cabeceira da Lagoa	2011	Corguinho	BAP	431,26	State	Cerrado
42	Santo Antônio Farm Lot 1 C	2011	Eldorado	Paraná	3,877.68	State	Atlantic forest
43	Vale do Sol II	2011	Ribas do Rio Pardo	Paraná	500,61	State	Cerrado
44	Santa Cecília	2011	Naviraí	Paraná	112,23	State	Atlantic forest
45	Fundão	2012	Costa Rica	Paraná	252,1948	State	Cerrado
46	Reserva do Saci	2012	Bonito	BAP	178	State	Atlantic forest
47	Estância Mimosa	2013	Bonito	BAP	271,76	State	Cerrado
48	Santa Angélica	2013	Rio Brilhante	Paraná	2.089.23	State	Atlantic forest
49	Pioneira do Rio Piquiri	2013	Corumbá	BAP	195,86	State	Pantanal
50	Trilhas do Sol	2013	Rio Negro	BAP	77,41	State	Cerrado
51	CESP - Cisalpina	2016	Brasilândia	Paraná	3,837.00	State	Cerrado

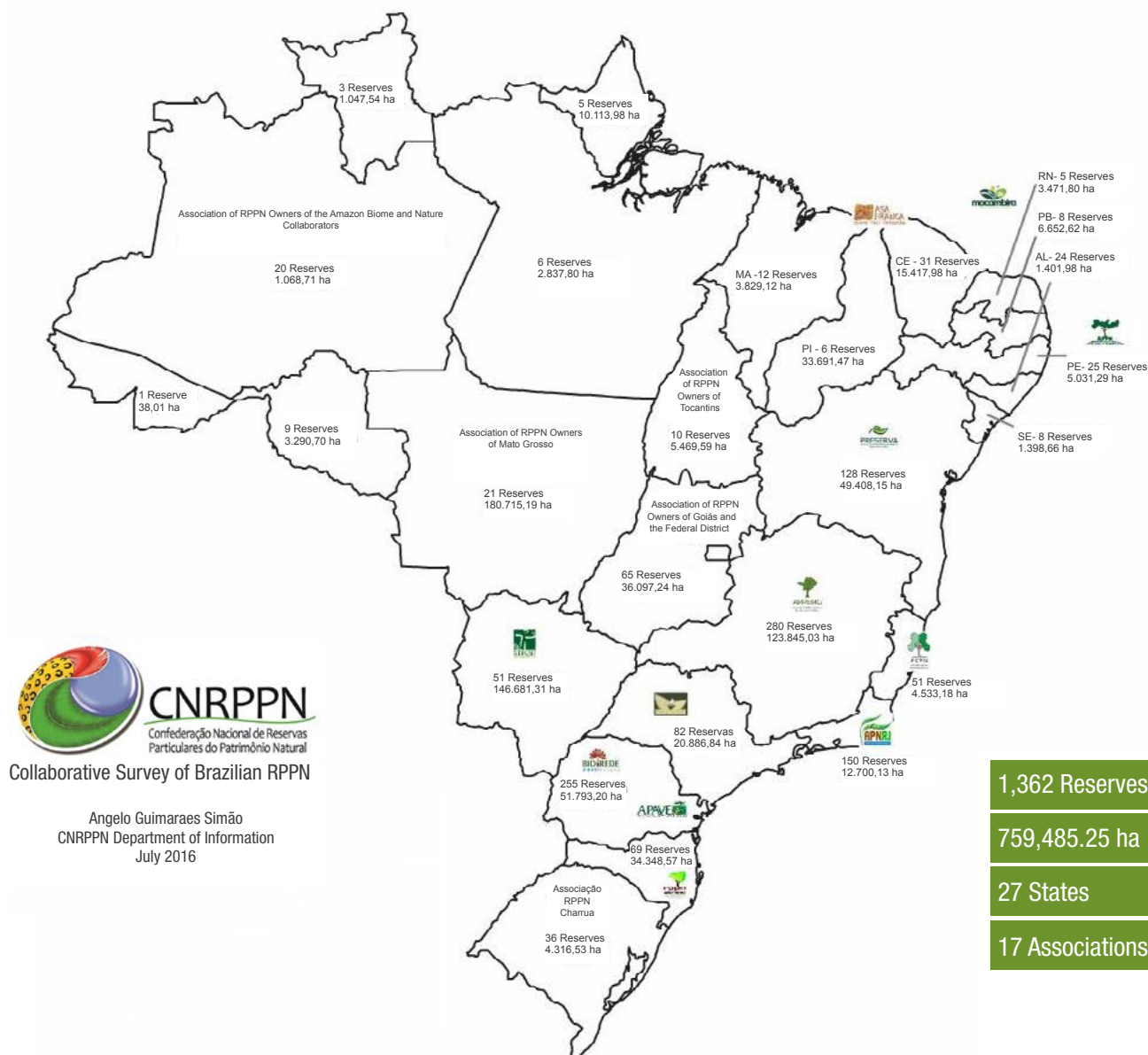
Total

146,681.31 ha

Environmental Conservation in Private Lands in Brazil

The National Confederation of RPPN - CNRPPN was established in 2001 and has focused its work in providing support to the associations, in addition to disseminating and promoting recognition for the category, supporting the creation, administration and management of RPPN, and promoting sustainable development.

In Brazil, the number of RPPN has reached 1,260, with a total area surpassing 708,705,14 hectares. There are currently 17 associations that partner with government agencies and RPPN-sympathizing organizations to offer guidance to private landowners on the process of RPPN creation, implementation and management.



Environmental Conservation in Private Lands in Mato Grosso do Sul

Step by Step Instructions to Create a New RPPN in Mato Grosso do Sul

The State of Mato Grosso do Sul enjoys national prominence because of the diverse economic activities undertaken in its agribusiness sector. However, in the last few years, owing to the region's natural beauty and potential for tourism, nature conservation has also earned it some eminence.

The Environment Institute of Mato Grosso do Sul - IMASUL, together with the State Secretary of Environment and Economic Development, have been working to develop a private reserve program through GUC - Management for Conservation Units.

The applicant shall comply with the following:

- Who can create one: individual or legal entity
- Size: total or partial rural property
- Documents:

- I. Application form of the managing entity;
- II. Personal documents of owner of rural property and spouse or representative; for legal entities, the documents of the legal representative;
- III. Proof of payment for the past five years of Rural Land Ownership Tax – ITR;
- IV. Certificate of rural real property registration - CCIR;
- V. Commitment Statement;
- VI. Title to the property, with the certificate proving the record and registration of the real property, which will indicate the RPPN, in the name of the landowner, together with the uninterrupted and valid ownership record for the property since its origin or for a period of fifty years;
- VII. Registration map of the real property indicating the boundaries and area of the property; of the area proposed for the RPPN and the boundaries, and the area corresponding to the legal reserve and permanent preservation area (APP), preferably with geo- referencing.

The environmental agency shall:

- I. Publish notice of public consultation in the Official Gazette of the State, indicating the intention to create the RPPN;
- II. Place a summary of the application on the official internet page, with maps showing the location in the municipality and in the state;
- III. Send the representative of the municipality where the real property is located a summary of the application, containing maps showing the location in the municipality and in the state, indicating the intention to create the RPPN;
- IV. Conduct the inspection and issue an opinion;
- V. In the event the application to create the RPPN is approved, the competent environmental agency will send it to formalize the act of recognition;
- VI. Publication of act of recognition.

The landowner will have a period of 60 days to annotate the RPPN on the real estate registry for the land at the competent Real Estate Registry, and shall send a certified copy to the competent agency.

SEMA/MS Resolution nº 044 - May 26, 2006



**Stories that Inspire and
Strengthen Conservation
and Ecotourism**

Buraco das Araras RPPN

Buraco das Araras is a 29-hectare RPPN in the municipality of Jardim, located inside the Alegria Farm. It was created in 2007 by Modesto Sampaio. The reserve is a sanctuary for macaws and is representative of the Cerrado biome, with plant species such as *angico-preto*, *sucupira-preta*, *pequi*, *araticum*, and others.

Its famous sinkhole resulted from the groundwater erosion of underground limestone, causing the collapse of surface soil. Dating back thousands of years, the 100-meter massive hole with red colored walls is surrounded by a strip of cerrado vegetation and is home to large green-and-red macaws, hyacinth macaws and blue-and-yellow macaws, as well as several other species of fauna. At the bottom of the sinkhole lies a green-tinged lake inhabited by broad-snouted caimans.

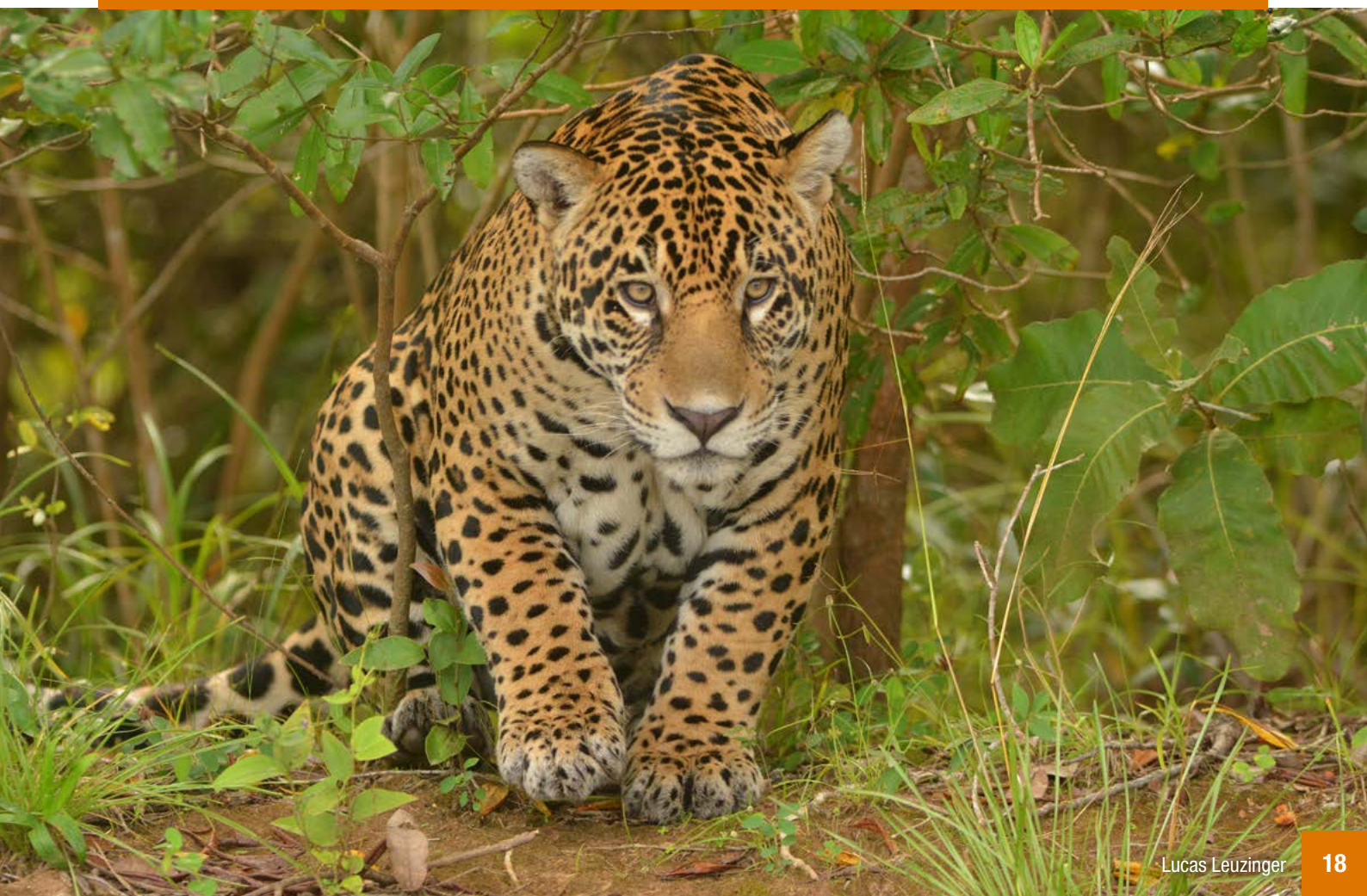
Buraco das Araras is presently one of the top spots for nature contemplation in the Bodoquena Plateau region, attracting photographers and birdwatchers from Brazil and abroad, as well as tourists and students.



Dona Aracy RPPN

With 5.6 thousand hectares, the Aracy RPPN lies within the Caiman ranch in the municipality of Miranda, and is owned by Roberto Luiz Leme Klabin. The reserve protects a large diversity of habitats—such as *cerradões*, *carandazais* (caranday forests), *cerrado baixo*, *vazantes*, *corixos*, *caapões* and *cordilheiras*—that shelter the Pantanal's fauna and flora. Located between the Miranda and Aquidauana rivers, the RPPN promotes environmental conservation, research, livestock farming and tourism in the Pantanal.

The Estância Caiman ranch offers internationally recognized ecotourism activities to guests of its ecological refuge and to neighboring schools, providing them with incredible sensory and educational experiences that explore culture, history and the environment. The refuge also provides visitors with an ecological safari, known as “Onçafari”, where they get an up-close view of jaguars and other wildlife that are tracked via radio collars. Other activities that are undertaken at the RPPN include research and environmental education projects, such as the *Arara Azul* (Hyacinth Macaw) project, *Papagaio Verdadeiro* (Blue-Fronted Amazon) project and the *Caiman Reciclar* recycling project.



Estância Mimosa RPPN

“All of our visitor surveys into the environmental and social aspects of our tourist attraction have underscored that people are often more satisfied to know they are inside a protected reserve. This leads to increased support and commitment to environmental conservation. Our RPPN is a great source of satisfaction not only for us, but also for our visitors from all over the world. Not to mention that it serves as an instrument to promote the conservation of the areas surrounding the reserve, and it does so by enabling us to request support from our neighbors and public authorities.”

Luiza Spengler Coelho, Environmental Engineer, MSc
in Water Resources Conservation - Manager of Cabeceira do Prata RPPN and Estância Mimosa RPPN

Estância Mimosa is located within the Bodoquena Plateau, in the municipality of Bonito, and is owned by Agropecuária Rio da Prata Ltda. The property has a total area of 422 hectares, of which 66% comprise the RPPN.

The farm offers ecotourism activities with minimum impact practices, giving visitors the opportunity to contemplate the region's native birds, particularly in the permanent protection area of Mimosa River. Ecotourists also get to enjoy waterfalls and natural pools that are peppered along the trails. The reserve was created to protect preserved woods in the hydrographic basin of Prata River, which has been heavily weakened by deforestation in contiguous areas.



Cabeceira do Prata RPPN

Known as Rio da Prata Ecological Refuge, this RPPN is located in the name-sake farm, in the municipality of Jardim, and is an absolute must on ecotourism itineraries in the Bodoquena Plateau. In 2008 and 2009, it was voted “Brazil’s Best Tourist Attraction” by readers of the Quatro Rodas Guide. The RPPN also served as a natural set for Brazilian soap operas such as “*Alma Gêmea*” and “*Vida de Gente*”.

The reserve develops research and environmental education programs, hosts school groups for projects in environmental education, and is recognized for its work in nature restoration and conservation. Hiking activities are monitored to prevent environmental damage and the property’s trails reveal a rich diversity of cerrado typical species from the peripheral regions of the Pantanal, which is influenced by the Atlantic Forest.

The Cabeceira do Prata RPPN is owned by Eduardo Folley Coelho and encompasses 307.53 hectares dedicated to preserving an admirable network of water springs, including those of the Olho D’Água River, a tributary of the Prata River. Illustrating the unique beauty of Brazil’s Midwest, the reserve is one of Brazil’s top ecotourism destinations.



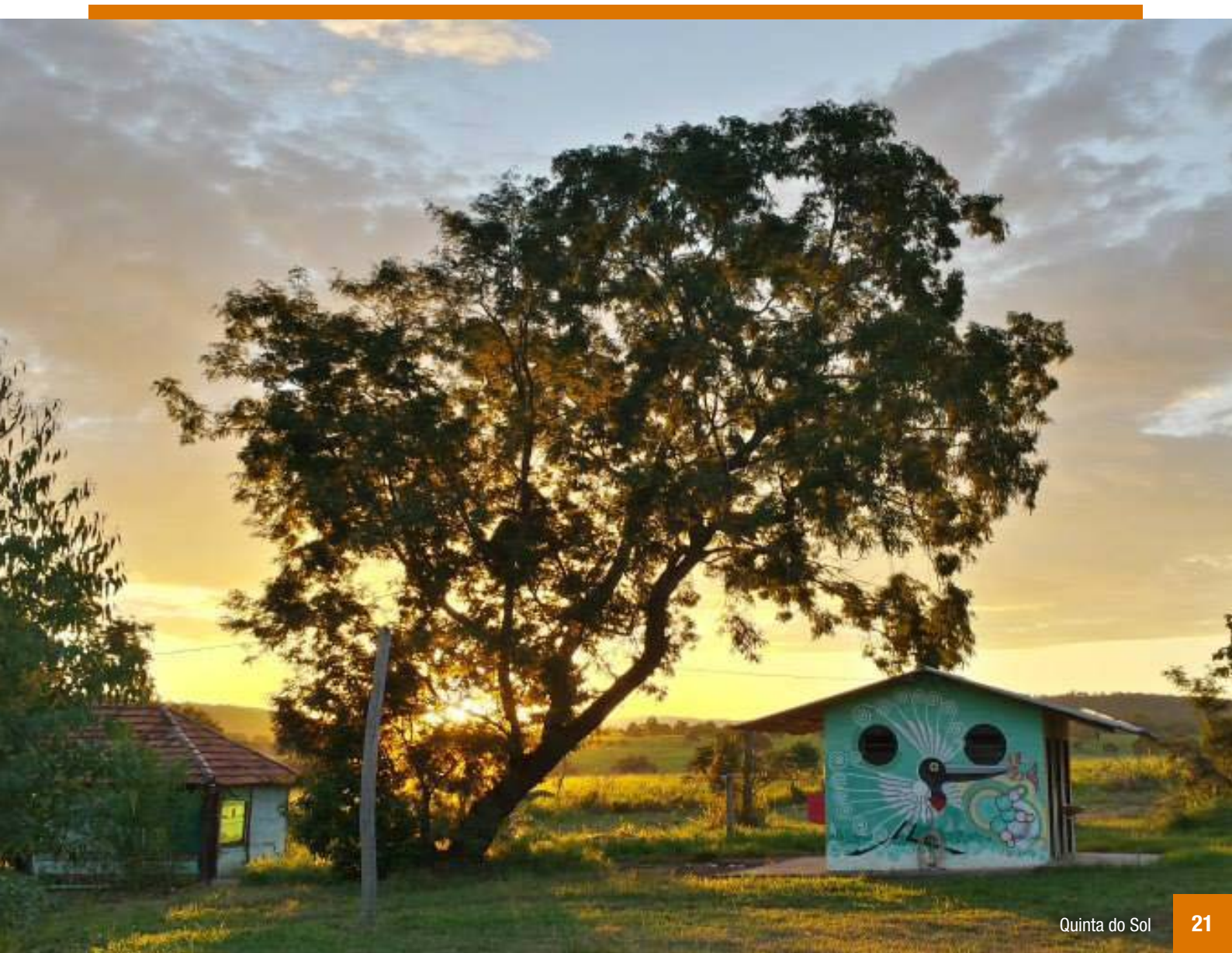
Estância Ambiental Quinta do Sol RPPN

Owned by Maria do Carmo Andrade Santos, the Estância Ambiental Quinta do Sol RPPN is located in the district of Taboco, municipality of Corguinho, in Mato Grosso do Sul. It has 12.7 hectares and some areas have been reforested with cerrado native species. The site makes use of bioconstruction and permaculture techniques.

In addition to conserving biodiversity, the RPPN was created to advance environmental education and scientific research. With a preference for hands-on activities, the owner promotes educational activities through courses in ecology and related fields, providing an exchange of experiences between students and teachers from numerous educational institutions.

“The Quinta do Sol RPPN, in the municipality of Corguinho, was created with the support of REPAMS and many other organizations that work to protect the environment in Mato Grosso do Sul. The RPPN currently serves as an experience center for the exchange of knowledge about sustainability topics. Research projects, courses in biological sciences and conservation, and internship activities take place in the reserve.”

Maria do Carmo, Biologist and Owner of Quinta do Sol RPPN.



Incentives and Motivations Behind the RPPN Sector

Learning more about RPPN and their activities leads us to reflect on the motivations and incentives behind their creation and maintenance. The history of the RPPN movement tells us that these units owe their creation and maintenance to the dedication and commitment of their owners, especially considering the relatively high cost of creating a private reserve.

The current legislation and public policies in this field, although still new, mark the beginning of a process of recognition and appreciation for natural assets and for the role played by their conservation-minded administrators and owners.

However, in spite of the recognition and legal advances that have been made, conservationist landowners are faced with a major challenge: finding the needed resources to achieve their sustainability goals. They depend on public bids and projects that support the management and maintenance of RPPN, and would benefit from incentives and compensations that are better suited to their needs.

a) Benefits for Landowners

The main benefit for landowners creating a private reserve include exemption from the Tax on Rural Land Property (ITR), proportional to the area recognized as an RPPN. Additionally, there is the possibility of receiving payment for the ecosystem services rendered by the natural environments they preserve, which include, for example, contributing to the quality of the air we breathe, regulating rainfall, and the benefits arising from normalizing water absorption, storage and supply to regulate the capacity of rivers, to produce the food we eat and to provide the wood we use. These benefits are called Environmental Services and, when they result from environmental conservation and restoration actions undertaken by people, can be valued monetarily and traded commercially.

This incentive system is already a reality for RPPN owners in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and it comprises legal mechanisms that enable financial transfers to RPPN owners through support projects.

b) Benefits for the Environment

Biodiversity maintenance and conservation; contribution towards the rapid expansion of protected areas in the country; and the establishment of buffer zones around conservation units and ecological corridors.

c) Benefits for Society

Biological diversity for the present and future enjoyment of society; scientific research, environmental education, ecotourism and nature watching, all facilitated by the tax credit generated by the ecological ICMS (Taxes on Consumption of Goods and Services in Brazil), which is invested in the municipality and conservation unit; and the preservation of ecosystem samples for present and future generations.

A Successful Initiative:

Association of Private Natural Heritage Reserve Owners of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul - REPAMS

The Association of RPPN Owners of Mato Grosso do Sul (REPAMS), created based on the efforts and engagement of landowners who understand the importance of strengthening this category of protected area in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, is constantly working to increase the number of RPPN to promote greater protection of biodiversity and ecological processes in the state's biomes.

REPAMS is a non-profit, non-partisan civil society organization established to promote the restoration and conservation of the environment by supporting RPPN. Its administrative body is formed by an elected board of directors and a supervisory board. All members are RPPN owners who work for the Association as volunteers.

Mission To defend, protect and preserve natural resources in order to achieve sustainable development and expand the creation, implementation and management of Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPN).

- Objectives**
- To promote the exchange of information between our member RPPN owners and other RPPN owner associations, public authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
 - To promote the dissemination of information about private reserves in Mato Grosso do Sul, their objectives and activities;
 - To support public or private institutions in the implementation of policies that target the conservation of private reserves;
 - To support and identify projects that stimulate the creation of RPPN in the state or the maintenance of existing ones, seeking ways to achieve economic sustainability for RPPN;
 - To foster research that contributes to our institutional mission;
 - To produce educational and scientific materials on the environment;
 - To organize events of interest for owners of private reserves.

Activities in Favor of REPAMS

In an effort to fulfill these objectives, REPAMS offers technical and economic guidance to reserve owners seeking assistance, by prioritizing their participation in congresses, meetings and events in the field of conservation units, in addition to other benefits that have already been extended to rural landowners, such as the opening and following up on reserve creation applications that are submitted to environmental bodies; researching bid notices that offer technical and financial support to RPPN; providing technical support for the development of environmental projects that promote the sustainability of RPPN; and taking part in public policy discussions that involve conservation units.

A Successful Initiative

During the period between 2003, the year of its creation, and mid-2016, REPAMS has worked in conjunction with several government and non-governmental institutions to execute projects to promote RPPN in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, by subsidizing projects, administrative expenses, offering technical partnerships, disseminating work carried out by the association, as well as helping to undertake all proposed activities.



Relationship Program for RPPN Owners

This program was developed to offer direct support to rural landowners, both RPPN owners and non-owners, providing technical clarification and assistance on the process of creating an RPPN, referrals to the appropriate environmental bodies and advice on issues related to environmental conservation.

REPAM's publications, website and activities in favor of RPPN have allowed the association to make great strides in the dissemination of these topics across the region and even in other Brazilian states.

It has also aligned itself with environmental bodies, especially IMASUL, through its Management for Conservation Units (GUC), which led to significant improvements in its reach, including collaborative creation of new RPPN and evaluation of management plans, as well as for matters related to the compensation of legal reserves located in forest remnant areas.



Projects:

“Incentive Program for RPPN of the Pantanal”

(2005/2012)

and

“Incentive Program for RPPN of the Atlantic Forest” (2009/2010)

The Incentive Program for Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPN) of the Pantanal was established in 2005 to support RPPN creation and sustainability in the Atlantic Forest biome, and was based on the successful experiences of Conservation International CI-Brazil and SOS Mata Atlântica—both non-governmental organizations. The incentive program fostered biodiversity conservation in the upper Paraguay River basin, which focused on the “Serra de Maracaju – Negro River” corridor, which corresponds to 2,500,000 hectares of the Negro River and Miranda River basin – Bodoquena Plateau, which itself covers approximately 3,900,000 hectares and is distributed along the Apa, Miranda and Nabileque River basin.

The incentive program approved the development and creation of RPPN management plans, fencing of RPPN, acquisition of firefighting equipment, and construction of a plant nursery to aid in environmental recovery, among other actions.



“WWF-Brazil Pantanal Cerrado Program” (2005/2016)

FAPACE Institutional Support & Project

The main goal of this partnership has always been to institutionally strengthen REPAMS. It has supported the association’s administrative actions, as well as permitted its participation in relevant congresses, such as the Inter-American Congress on Private Conservation, the Brazilian Congress on Conservation Units, the Brazilian RPPN Congress, regional meetings held with other associations for the exchange of information, and the meetings held for RPPN owners in Mato Grosso do Sul.

Additionally, WWF-Brazil has supported the development of the “Support Fund for Pantanal and Cerrado RPPN - FAPACE” project. FAPACE was created in 2007, when the need to ensure the sustainability of both the association and RPPN was identified. FAPACE aims to be a permanent capitalization fund managed by REPAMS and a review committee. Its goal is to raise funds from donations and from company and NGO investments, so that the earnings generated by investing the funds would enable the association to issue invitations for bids to finance the development and execution of projects that would ensure the sustainability of RPPN in Mato Grosso do Sul.

In August 2011, a workshop was held to prepare FAPACE’s strategic plan. In 2012, WWF-Brazil brought in funds through the “Support for Institutional Strengthening Actions for REPAMS and FAPACE” project. One of the main goals of this project was to provide continuity for the actions and strategic planning involved in the implementation of FAPACE.

Several activities were undertaken to fulfill these goals, including internal meetings focused on strategic planning analysis and alignment; hiring of consultancy services for the preparation, registration and creation of all relevant paperwork; and the creation and development of the FAPACE website. The project also allocated funds to the association so that it could develop activities to strengthen the ties between the institution and other entities and rural landowners.

The project is currently being discussed on a national level through the RPPN Confederation and seeks to expand its presence in the field of RPPN creation and management, and increase its membership and support base.

Project “BRPPN: Generating Environmental Services” (2010/2012)

The project started in 2011 and lasted two years, leading to the development of forest conservation efforts in the RPPN located in the municipalities of Corguinho, Aquidauana, Miranda, Bonito and Jardim, in the upper Paraguay River basin in Mato Grosso do Sul.

The project's main goals were:

- use of complementary methodologies to evaluate fixation and avoided emissions of CO₂ in five RPPN of the Pantanal and Cerrado biomes;
- identification of the environmental services rendered by each RPPN through field surveys and the available data from RPPN management plans;
- creation of an educommunication plan focused on payment options for environmental services and on reducing CO₂ emissions; and
- restoration of degraded/altered areas in RPPN and their direct surrounding areas.

REPAMS Institutional Communication Plan

One of REPAM's strategic goals is to promote the exchange of information between RPPN owners, public authorities and civil society organizations, as well as to promote a strategic conservation plan involving the creation and management of RPPN through the elaboration and dissemination of communication materials. The association's organizational planning has always included the development of an institutional communication program, supported by WWF-Brazil and International Conservation, to promote the creation and dissemination of institutional materials.



REPAMS

Strategic Planning and Sustainability Plan

Strategic planning is a management tool that uses appropriate methods and fosters strategic thinking in organizations. There are several different ways to go about developing strategic planning, but they all lead to a common goal: forecasting the organization's future through an understanding of the present.

With this in mind, REPAMS held its first meeting in 2006 to carry out its strategic planning. This step enabled the association to better position itself when faced with issues stemming from its external and internal environment, orienting itself towards the future. The first plan was designed to have a duration of two years (2006 to 2008).

In 2009, both the plan and its activities were reviewed, internalized, and once again, redesigned, this time for a duration of three years (2009 to 2011). After this period, the organization felt the need to broaden its scope, which culminated in its sustainability plan, elaborated in 2011, and its marketing plan, in 2012.



Conclusion: The Past, Positive Results and Challenges for the Future

All of the actions undertaken by REPAMS have only confirmed the importance of the institution, since the benefits it has generated have led to a deeper understanding of the activities, projects and specific needs of RPPN in Mato Grosso do Sul, which require subsidies for institutional project planning and structural project planning.

If governments face difficulties when raising and allocating the necessary resources to consolidate their own conservation units, it is no less challenging for citizens who transform a part of their property into an RPPN. This is the current backdrop of our continued work and team effort to identify and maintain strategies that will enable sustainable conservation in protected areas.

In its 15 years of existence, REPAMS has offered technical and financial support whenever possible, encouraging rural landowners to create private reserves and, consequently, to expand activities such as ecotourism, environmental education and research, with the goal of strengthening this category of conservation unit.

Bill 1548/15 is currently working its way through congress. From the point of view of the RPPN movement, the main thrust of this instrument is to correct a distortion in the current legislation: the RPPN category was mistakenly designated by the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC) as a sustainable use unit, when in fact, due to a presidential veto, the activities permitted in RPPN place it in the full protection category.



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