

Project Update: November 2012

The analysis of interviews and participant observations conducted during summer of 2012 combined with the examination of time series weather stations allowed studying the compatibility between fire management regulations and local climate variability in Calakmul, Mexico. I focused on the "Burning Calendar", a state regulation whose aim is to prevent forest fires by defining the time for agricultural burns. Results indicate that chances to meet adequate weather conditions - of relative humidity, wind speed and absence of rainfall - to perform a burn during the legal time (4-11 am) are less than 10%. Interestingly, the observed practice is to burn during the afternoon which increases the chances of meeting adequate climatic conditions to 25% and up to 80% in specific days. These findings illustrate the difficulties that farmers face in complying with regulations that are not sensitive to dynamic local conditions. I will share these findings with a range of stakeholders to enhance a dialogue and seek alternatives for fire management regulations that are more in tune with local climatic and cultural conditions.