

Project Update: August 2014

So far this has been an exciting field season. We have consolidated our partnerships with five communities who have kindly allowed us to participate in their timber harvest activities. We have been monitoring polewood extraction and have recorded more than 60 tree species that are harvested for building beach huts, double than reported before!

We decided to study forests product used in the tourism industry by assessing all the plant construction materials used in 75 beach front resorts of the Mayan Riviera. Here two preliminary results got our attention: 1) A large proportion of the posts of different diameters are from sapodilla trees (*Manilkara sapota*), an old-growth forest species that is the source of organic chewing gum (an important non-timber forest product) and a key resource for frugivorous wildlife; and 2) Most of the beach huts have grass thatching instead of the traditional palm thatching used by Mayan communities.



Left: The core team after a day monitoring polewood harvests. Right: Assessing forests product use by beach front resorts