

Project Update: May 2016

1. PROJECT UPDATE (MARCH 2015)

Progress was slow with national and village council elections in May and June 2015. Following a Sawariwau council presentation (June), and Katoonarib, Shulinab (July), and Rupunau village public meetings (November), permits from the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MIPA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA-G) were received in March 2016.

A literature review of shade-grown coffee was followed by nursery preparations including purchasing seedling bags, water tank, cutting materials, and constructing a water trestle. Nursery work was unsuccessful this year with the worst drought in 40 years.

The project has engaged four youths as researchers. We had no success with seedlings owing to drought, but gained skills and experience by participating in ongoing SRCS red siskin research. Three are pursuing higher education at Bina Hill Institute, University of Guyana, and Carnegie School of Home Economics respectively. One has become a Secondary School teacher in Sand Creek Village, remaining an active SRCS Ranger.

2. PROJECT UPDATE (APRIL 2015)

Activities so far have included: (a) ethnobotanical interviews on household subsistence and income, seasons, and tree knowledge and use; (b) bird surveys at potential shade-coffee sites; and (c) seed collection.

Ethnographic data collected is used to identify issues in each village: sites at Rupunau surveyed involve red siskin populations and Wapishana cassava farms, and in Shulinab concerned with frequent burning of secondary forest during dry season. Katoonarib and Sawariwau, located in open savannah, are concerned with preservation of their limited bush island resources. Coffee and shade tree planting in each village will address these specific concerns.

The project has so far identified over a dozen species to focus on as shade trees and waterway and road boundary buffers, including fruit, NTFP, and timber trees, with seeds collected for nursery growing. Our current difficulty lies in sourcing sufficient coffee and cocoa seeds, which are rare in the region.



Photo 1: SRCS Cadet Kim Spencer conducting a field survey at Mabiwau, a Wapishana traditional bitter-cassava farm (see background) and Red Siskin habitat in Rupunau Village where the project intends to plant shade-grown coffee.



Photo 2: Putting up the water trestle at Kaiambe Ranch, Shulinab Village, where the SRCS main plant nursery will be established.



Photo 3: SRCS Ranger Nicholas Cyril at Naptoon, Katoonarib, another intended shade-coffee site, setting Pinaokan (*Copaifera* spp.) and Mirii (*Inga* spp.) seedlings.