

A photograph showing three people standing in a savanna field with tall grasses and scattered trees. A woman on the left is looking at something in her hands, a man in the middle is looking towards her, and another man on the right is looking towards the other two. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a cloudy sky.

Fire in neotropical savannas revisited

From 2017 onwards | Total budget € 30,000

Neotropical savannas (e.g. Cerrado, Campo Sujo, Campo Limpo) are hotspots of biodiversity, but are also highly threatened by land use change. Management and conservation of remaining savannas and in particular fire management have become the focus of attention as protected areas have become increasingly isolated. Fire co-shapes neotropical savanna structure, but the extent to which fire is needed for biodiversity conservation is currently hotly debated. Implementing regular fire regimes in protected areas is also costly, difficult to organise and, if wrongly applied, can result in habitat and species loss. In this project we focus on the most typical dystrophic neotropical savanna types of Central Brazil. Wageningen University and Research Centre and the University of Brasilia (Prof. Heloisa Miranda, Prof. Augusto Franco) collaborate through exchange of staff and students and joint research and publications. Activities so far have included training of students from both universities and re-assessment of the effect of fire on vegetation structure and biodiversity using data sets from the long-term fire experiment (Projeto Fogo) in the IBGE ecological reserve (Distrito Federal, Brasilia). Output will include advice on the regularity and seasonal application of fire as a management tool for biodiversity conservation.

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