

Copal Resin Ecology Project – Amazon Field Volunteer Tasks

This project is based out of the city of Iquitos in the northeastern Peruvian Amazon. Most research is carried out at the Jenaro Herrera Research Center – reachable by a 12 hour boat trip the Ucayali River from Iquitos. Additional studies will be conducted at other sites downriver from Iquitos. Amazon Field Volunteers are mostly needed to work with the principal investigator and other project personnel to study the ecology, harvest and marketing of copal resin. Volunteers will stay in a basic guest lodge at the center for up to three weeks (depending on the volunteer's availability). Some tasks will be conducted at study trees that up to one hour's walk from the center while others will be conducted in the research base at the center.

Some specific research tasks are:

1. Photograph, harvest, weigh, and catalogue copal resin samples.
2. Capture resin weevils and other insects on copal trees with traps and nets.
3. Observe stingless bee collection and use of copal resin.
4. Enter data and process digital photos of resin and insect samples on computer.
5. Help develop methods to make incense and scented candles from copal resin.

Other volunteer projects in Jenaro Herrera

When center researchers are working on the copal project at the research station, other opportunities to volunteer may be arranged to work with local institutions or people in the town of Jenaro Herrera. These activities could include helping in the local health clinic or school. Another task would involve working with local artisans to document the harvest and processing of handicrafts and helping to develop better ways to market these products.