

## The Coda Files

### Leandro Baumgarten

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“Connecting what is not naturally connected — that’s what the Coda Global Fellowship did for us,” says Mark Anderson, director of science for the Eastern Division of the North American Region, on his experience working with Leandro Baumgarten as a fellow. “When TNC hosts big meetings like All Science, we tend to reconnect with the people we already know. This fellowship was a conscious effort to forge a new relationship among science colleagues.” During his fellowship, Leandro shared his expertise in climate change vulnerability, whole systems, and connectivity assessments with the Eastern region staff, and he and Anderson also scheduled ample time for additional discussion in a PowerPoint-free zone.

For Leandro, the fellowship was also an opportunity to gain hands-on experience managing a science department, such as his growing team in Brazil. “I had the chance to work with Mark’s team when he wasn’t there and got candid feedback on his management. I see there is really no right way to manage. You have to be sensitive to different communication styles; some staff need more interaction and some just want to know what they have to do and then they go off on their own.”

The fellowship also yielded an unexpected epiphany on both sides about the function of Conservancy science across the globe. A two-hour discussion with Mark and his officemate, Andy Finton, director of science and conservation for TNC-Massachusetts, revealed that Leandro works primarily with pilots to leverage national

#### Coda Fellow: Leandro Baumgarten

**Day Job:** Science Manger, Atlantic Forest and Central Savannahs, Brazil

**Assignment:** Eastern U.S. Division Science

**Duration:** July – December 2011

**Task:** Share vegetation restoration and monitoring techniques and gain science department management skills.

**Most Important Lesson Learned:** “Many scientists across TNC think they will be working out on preserves, but many of us need to manage and collaborate with many people and we weren’t trained to do this; it has to be learned.”



and international policy, while Mark works to network science issues across 18 states and Andy tries to accomplish as much science as possible in cooperation with state agency partners.

“At that moment I realized how different what we call TNC ‘science support’ really is, depending on where you sit in the organization,” says Leandro.

Mark agrees, “It was eye-opening. Andy sits right down the hall and I hadn’t realized how differently he works. Each scientist at TNC has to figure out how to make science applicable.”

It is the conservation scientist, not science in and of itself, who makes the connection.

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— [Jensen Montambault](#), applied conservation scientist, Central Science, The Nature Conservancy

*The Coda Global Fellows program enables staff to apply their talents beyond their regular job to forward the Conservancy’s global priorities. Burning science needs? Want to share your skills with a global priority? Contact [Jolie Sibert](#), director of the Coda Global Fellows program!*