

The Coda Files

Steve Haase

Think being or hosting a Coda Global Fellow is mysterious and unattainable? Think again! The Coda Global Fellows program enables staff to apply their talents beyond their regular job to forward the Conservancy's global priorities. Coda Fellows can be anyone. They can be anywhere. They could even be...you. So take a step with us into...The Coda Files.

"I help people look at their river with new eyes," is how Steve Haase characterizes his work for the Conservancy in the southern United States — and now, through a Coda Global Fellowship, in the Southern Hemisphere. Steve's fellowship is with Brazil's Water Producer program, part of a larger "water funds" strategy promoting sustainable finance mechanisms through which water users incentivize upstream landowners to conduct management that will result in improved water security.

A mix of 30 landowners and natural resources managers, including the government officials responsible for implementing water monitoring in six Brazilian states, attended Steve's training conducted jointly with the Conservancy's Latin American Region freshwater scientist Paulo Petry and conservation specialist Claudio Klemz. Water funds often pay for reforestation and other forms of riparian restoration, but there is a well-documented cycle of how a river responds to land-use change that determines if restoration will work.

"There are certain places in response cycle that you can intervene and other points where you can't do much and you just have to understand that the stream is going to make a new channel," says Haase. "So you ask yourself, 'How can I best to help the stream stabilize itself? Should I even do this restoration now? Or will the stream just tear it up during the next flood event.'"

Coda Fellow: Steve Haase

Day Job: Senior Biohydrologist, The Nature Conservancy in Louisiana; Fellow, Great Rivers Partnership

Assignment: Brazilian Water Funds

Duration: July 2011 – June 2012

Task: Conduct baseline geomorphologic survey to measure the impact of two Brazilian water funds and train land-owners and natural resource managers to conduct and analyze follow-up monitoring.

Take-Home Lesson: "Bad agricultural practices degrade streams the same in both the Southern and Northern Hemispheres. The good news is that we really can transfer lessons learned from a extensive body of practice among watersheds, regardless of where we are working."



Steve traveled throughout the water fund watersheds for illustrative training examples. One student was shocked to see a photo of what he thought was his property held up as a text-book negative response to dredging that the local government had ordered (it was a different site, but his section of stream had very similar problems). After class, Steve, Paulo and Claudio spent a few hours on the student's property. They didn't have much good news, but they did point to some alternative actions he could take because it was clear his tree planting would be taken out in the next high-water event.

"This fellowship gave us a new tool to measure the impact of water funds and everyone is very excited about it," said Anita Diederichsen, coordinator of the Brazilian Water Producers program. [SC](#)

— [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!