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TITLE: DETERMINATION OF PARAMETERS INFLUENCING METHYLATION AND DEMETHYLATION IN TROPICAL LAKES IN BRAZIL AND NICARAGUA

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SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

A well planned field campaign is a highlight for any researcher working in the field. Correctly sampled and identified samples are the true base for high quality research. Poorly collected samples can never be corrected, no matter how much resources are spent on sample preparation and analysing equipment. With experience from several field campaigns, I think the following points might be helpful to achieve scientific results worth publishing.

- Information. **INFORM** all participants in a field campaign on their area of responsibility, material to bring, dates and times, etc. The coordinator has the main responsibility for informing the participants. And the participants should confirm received information. Make a detailed research plan and do not expect anybody to perform sampling if this has not been combined, preferably written to avoid misunderstandings due to expected tacitly implied agreements. The coordinator may delegate to another person to compile the plan, in which case it certainly should bear the name of that person.
- Make a **PLAN** with aim, objectives, and expected outcomes. Search for existing data and literature from the area and identify where additional research is needed. Compile then a scheme with methods to use, relevant to the objectives and existing funds. High quality research can be done with limited funds! Continue with a list on materials to bring with you to the field and a realistic time schedule. (Since I am a time optimist I never realize that research always lasts twice as long as expected.)
- Get hold of a topographic **MAP**, e.g. at the National Survey, and identify suitable sampling points (incl. a few alternative ones).
- Organize a **PLANNING MEETING** with participating persons to discuss the plan and define the area of responsibility for each one.
- Take short and concise **NOTES** from all meetings, which relate treated matters and made agreements and decisions. The one writing the notes and two additional persons selected at the meeting should sign the notes, thereby confirming that they are adequately relating/referring to the matters discussed. The notes should be sent to ALL participants within 3 days.
- Taking care of obtained **DATA** is as important as taking care of samples and analyses. Enter obtained data in Excel files as soon as possible and control their reliability, while it still is possible to track any abnormalities.
- Final points: Anybody able to write can produce data. The goal must be to get data possible to publish. And then **PUBLISH** them! Good Luck!