



Report Card

of the Bitá River Basin, Colombia

Evaluation of Colombian tributaries of the Orinoco

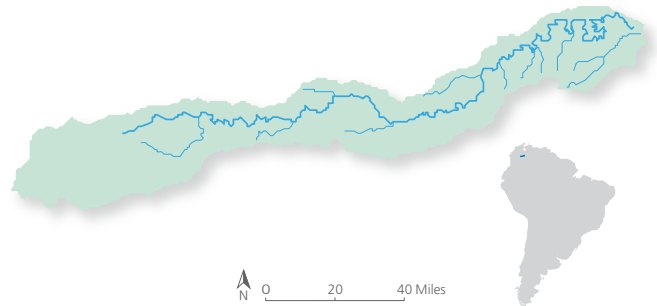
In Puerto Carreño, (Vichada) work continued on the report cards of the Orinoco basin with completion of the second workshop that included participation of the main stakeholders in the region.

More than 46 representatives in 25 organizations attended the meeting. The workshop identified environmental, economic, and social indicators that will form the basis of the Bitá River report card. These indicators were chosen based on the identified values and are key to the future sustainability of the Bitá River basin. We appreciate the continued active participation of the following organizations as well as environmental authorities that will enable the completion of the report: Ministry of Transport, Alexander von Humboldt Institute, Corporinoquia, Omacha Foundation, National Authority for Aquaculture and Fisheries, University of Tolima, Orinoco Foundation Biodiversa, La Pedregosa, Orinoco Foundation, National Parks of Colombia, Agroforestry Vichadense Guild Association, Yoluka National Army of Colombia, General Maritime, Local Tourism Organization, Action Fund, Sena, Umata Puerto Carreño, University of Maryland and WWF. The three-day interactive workshop also attracted positive media attention.

Outcomes from the meeting included:

1. Identification, and ranking by importance, of environmental, social and economic **values** within the Bitá River basin.
2. Identification, and ranking by importance, of **threats** to identified values within the Bitá River basin.
3. Selection of the **indicators** for measuring/reporting the status of these values and threats.
4. Assignment of key personnel to work on developing each indicator and defining **benchmarks** for scoring against.
5. A **timeline** through to completion and public release in early 2016.

Reporting Regions



With 423 kilometers, the Bitá River forms in the savannah's of Vichada and covers a wide variety of ecosystems. From its birth in the municipality of La Primavera, to the confluence with the Orinoco River in Puerto Carreño, the river makes a winding path. Hence, it is anticipated that the river will be divided into three reporting regions, each being assessed and scored independently of each other.

Preliminary discussions were held on how best to define these regions and it was generally accepted to achieve this based on changes in fauna and flora. A technical group has been established to define and document these regions.



Participants at the workshop in Puerto Carreño.

Values and threats

Workshop participants had the task of identifying the environmental, social, and economic values of and threats to the Bitá River and its watershed. An list of 12 values and 10 threats was collated, evidence of the importance of this watershed for the region. The list was narrowed down to 6 values and 4 threats that will be represented in the report card.

These values are shown in the following figure and include physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the river, as well as tourism, fishing, and provision of market goods. The threats are bad fishing practices, bad cultural practices, irresponsible tourism, and governance issues.

These values and threats form the basis for selecting the indicators that will be monitored over time in order to assess progress towards pre-defined criteria.



Indicators

Following the selection of key values to be protected in the Bitá River basin, workshop participants identified over 25 potential indicators that could be used to assess the status of these values.

These indicators were refined by assessing their cost effectiveness for collection, future viability, sensitivity to change, relevance to management actions and data availability, resulting in 11 viable indicators that are now being investigated for suitability, and 4 indicators to be used in the future.

Each indicator has been assigned to a technical working group for follow-up review, data sourcing and collation, and assignment of benchmarks.

Timeline

The report card is due to be released in early 2016.

Following collection and analysis of data, workshop participants will be invited to review, comment, and sign-off the report card prior to public release.

