

# Nature Protection: the FBCN and Conservation Initiatives in Brazil, 1958-1992

## A proteção da natureza: a FBCN e as iniciativas de conservação no Brasil, 1958-1992

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Recibido: 30 de noviembre de 2012

Aprobado: 05 de marzo de 2013

### **Abstract**

The text evaluates the trajectory of the Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN, Brazilian Foundation for Nature Conservation). Created in 1958, for about 30 years it was Brazil's most important non-governmental environmental organization. The text examines its conservation-oriented goals, general strategies, national and international partners, and major hands-on projects and accomplishments. National and international contexts of conservation ideas, science and policies are also considered. Findings show that the FBCN intervened strongly in many inter-related conservation initiatives, working alone or associated with other NGOs, government agencies and businesses. The organization's decline was associated with the transition to the democratic order that followed a 21-year military dictatorship and with the expanded interest of Brazilians in environmental issues. This allowed the emergence of numerous environmental organizations that eclipsed FBCN. Major sources used are FBCN publications, archival materials and reports, interviews given by its leaders and analytical studies about the organization.

### **Key Words**

conservationism; environmental movement; environmental policy; developmentalism

### **Resumo**

O texto avalia a trajetória da Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza (FBCN). Criada em 1958, ela foi por quase 30 anos a mais importante ONG ambiental brasileira. O texto examina as suas metas conservacionistas estratégias gerais, parceiros nacionais e internacionais, e os principais projetos executivos. São levados em conta os contextos nacional e internacional de ideias, ciência e políticas conservacionistas. Os achados mostram que a FBCN atuou com destaque em muitas ações conservacionistas, isoladamente ou em parceria com outras ONGs, órgãos governamentais e empresas. O declínio da importância da FBCN esteve associado à transição para a democracia que se seguiu a 21 anos de ditadura militar e à consequente ampliação da participação dos brasileiros nas discussões sobre as questões ambientais. Isso propiciou a emergência de numerosas organizações ambientalistas que eclipsaram a FBCN. As principais fontes usadas foram publicações da FBCN, materiais de arquivo, entrevistas com os líderes da FBCN e estudos analíticos sobre a entidade.

### **Palavras Chave**

conservacionismo; movimento ambiental, política ambiental; desenvolvimentismo

## Introduction

This text examines the emergence and trajectory of a major Brazilian non-governmental environmental organization, the Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza – FBCN (Brazilian Foundation for Nature Conservation).<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1958, it was Brazil's premier environmental NGO until shortly before the 1992 United Nation's Conference of the Environment and Development, held in its home city of Rio de Janeiro. Instead of drawing strength from this global summit, the destabilized FBCN continued to lose ground in an increasingly complex context of environmental awareness, movements and organizations. By 1992, its heyday was over. Affected also by internal financial problems, the organization dwindled to a merely local level. It recently closed its doors. Nonetheless, its basic ideals and actions survive in the individual activities of members and ex-members, of other organizations that it helped spawn, and in several environmental policies that it helped shape.<sup>2</sup>

The text addresses mainly five matters: (i) how FBCN sustained an influential conservationist outlook in a development-oriented society and polity, (ii) its major goals, campaigns and interventions, (iii) its distinctively conservationist/preservationist outlook, (iv) the political context in which it operated, (v) its political and institutional affinities. Its overcoming by new types of environmental organizations in the late 1980s is briefly examined.

The article is divided into sections focused on the major phases of FBCN's trajectory. It concludes with an evaluation of its legacy and current relevance for Brazilian current environmental policies, movements and ideas. We focus mainly on the institutional features of the FBCN, but selected biographical details of some of its leaders and members were also used. The main sources of information were FBCN's newsletter and publications, archival documents, interviews with FBCN leaders and members, and the slim analytical literature.

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with a distinct Brazilian environmental NGO, the Fundação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, FBDS (<http://www.fbds.org.br>), a more recent, non-profit, environmental organization, funded by large Brazilian corporations.

<sup>2</sup> According to Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara (personal communication to the authors, June 2011), ranking FBCN member, it still exists as an organization, but has been inactive for several years.

### Gathering strength (1958-1966)

Created in 1958, in Rio de Janeiro (then Brazil's national capital), FBCN kept a low profile until approximately 1966.<sup>3</sup> As Brazil's first environmental NGO with a national scope, it had no local precedents to follow, and no local organizations to compete or seek alliances with. Its founders were mostly busy, middle-aged professionals, with little or no experience in political activism and no expertise in running NGOs. Although interested in nature conservation, collectively they had limited involvement in environmental issues, although their professional placements involved contacts and knowledge relevant to their activism. Some of them had been associated with or studied under a "first generation" of Brazilian scientists-conservationists, examined by us in an earlier text. With only one exception, the members of this generation had all died in the 1940s.<sup>4</sup> Given its location in the national capital and the good professional standing of its founders, FBCN became a meeting point for conservation-minded people from Rio and several parts of the country.

The idea of nature protection had a long lineage in Brazil, dating to late colonial times, but its record was discontinuous and pertinent actions were very limited.<sup>5</sup> Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century science-based conservation notions and policies were discussed by a small group of scientists, mostly non-Brazilian, but professionally active in Brazil. Among them were Hermann von Ihering (1850-1930), Alberto Loefgren (1854-1918), Emilio Goeldi (1859-1917) and Edmundo Navarro de Andrade (1881-1941). The influential Brazilian essayist Alberto Torres (1865-1917) wrote about conservation policies enacted in the US and called for similar policies in Brazil, to put an end to wasteful practices.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> FBCN's statutes are transcribed in Borges, Cristina Xavier de Almeida. *Por trás do verde: discurso e prática de uma ONG – o caso da Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza*. Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal de Viçosa, 1995): Appendix A, 96-108. Borges' text is the only book-length study available about FBCN.

<sup>4</sup> Drummond and Franco, *Wilderness and the Brazilian Mind (I)*.

<sup>5</sup> Dean, Warren. *With Broadax and Firebrand: the Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Berkeley, California University Press, 1995): chapter 5; Pádua, José Augusto. *Um sopro de destruição- pensamento político e crítica ambiental no Brasil escravista, 1786-1888* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2002). Pádua following Grove, Richard. *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), found dozens of all but forgotten Portuguese and Brazilian scientists and government officials who were critical of the wasteful uses of natural resources even before Brazil's independence, in 1822.

<sup>6</sup> See Drummond and Franco. "Preocupações com a proteção à natureza e com o uso dos recursos naturais na Primeira República Brasileira," *Textos de História*, 12, 1/2 (2004): 145-165; Torre, Alberto. *As fontes da vida* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 1990).

By the 1920s and 1930s, Brazil had a small cadre of home-bred, full-time of Brazilian scientists concerned with nature protection and conservation, among whom were Alberto José Sampaio (1881-1946), Cândido de Mello Leitão (1886-1946), Frederico Carlos Hoehne (1882-1959) and Armando Magalhães Corrêa (1889-1944). They were well positioned in the nascent Brazilian scientific community. They wrote, researched and taught broadly about numerous conservation issues. Besides helping shape Brazil's first conservation policies (related to water, ores, forests, fauna, hunting, parks), they trained or influenced a considerable number of FBCN members.<sup>7</sup>

Although FBCN excelled as a NGO, it was not the first Brazilian civil organization focused on environmental issues. There had been several short-lived or local organizations, such as an Arbor Society (created in 1931, in Rio, by Sampaio), a Friends of the Brazilian Flora (1939, São Paulo, created by Hoehne), and the São Paulo Association for the Defense of Flora and Fauna (1956). The FBCN was helped also by the fact that the country's young scientific establishment was mildly permeable to conservationist ideas. Several of Brazil's still young universities had research teams and projects that studied conservation issues (such as forest conservation) – Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Universidade de São Paulo, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi. Relevant, but mostly weak federal government agencies also existed - Serviço Florestal Federal (forest service, created in 1921), several regulatory agencies specific for natural resources (salt, pine wood, water) created in the 1930s, Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal (for forest development, created in 1967), and Secretaria Especial de Meio Ambiente (high echelon environmental secretariat, created in 1973).

Nonetheless, FBCN, was unique not only for its systematic conservationist outlook and activities, but also for being a civil organization active in a rigidly non-democratic polity. Citizen's input in Brazil was at the time strongly tied to a solid insertion in the power structure. FBCN, as an independent organization formed by well-placed professionals, captured a modest nature protection and conservationist legacy,

<sup>7</sup> Drummond and Franco. *Wilderness and the Brazilian Mind (I)*; Dean, *With Broadax*, chapter 5; Franco and Drummond. *Proteção à natureza e identidade nacional no Brasil, anos 1920-1940* (Rio de Janeiro: FIOCRUZ, 2009).

and for almost four decades was the major activist force for modern conservation ideals in Brazil. Besides activism and lobbying, it involved itself in an impressive number and variety of hands-on initiatives and policies. This happened exactly when a worldwide concern with the environment was emerging, but also when the Brazilian society's deeply ingrained consensus about "development at all costs" was at its strongest. Internationally, FBCN was in pace with rising environmental concern, but nationally it rowed against the current of a strong faith in the virtues of untrammelled economic growth.

In the mid-1970s, a number of other environmental NGOs emerged in Brazil, adopting conservationist views along FBCN lines. However, they acted mostly at local levels and engaged more in denunciation campaigns.<sup>8</sup> Today there are hundreds of environmental organizations in Brazil, with varying scopes and priorities.<sup>9</sup>

However pioneering it was, FBCN acted only sparingly during the terms of its first presidents (Annex C, I, contains a list of all FBCN presidents). Alceo Magnanini, who joined FBCN in 1966, stated that between "[19]58 and [19]66 FBCN was practically inactive".<sup>10</sup> Harold Edgar Strang, a FBCN founder, gives a slightly more positive view about it during this period:

Our activity was modest. We met periodically mostly to discuss current problems. The FBCN had no type of resources – they had to come from our own pockets. Later, we gradually managed to obtain some support, but always in modest amounts.<sup>11</sup>

*In 1978, FBCN's newsletter, in an editorial, recalled those first years in a more positive tone: the first years*

... were quite difficult and apparently not very productive. But the seeds were sown, the roots grew and enough energy accumulated to move the Brazilian conservation

<sup>8</sup> Dean, *With Broadax; Urban, Teresa. Saudade do matão: Relembrando a História do Conservacionismo no Brasil* (Curitiba: UFPR/Fundação O Boticário/MacArthur Foundation, 1998). A note on Urban's book is required. It resulted from a week-long workshop in which she brought together, in the mid-1990s, most FBCN ranking and surviving members and several other Brazilian conservationists. They were all interviewed individually by Urban, who taped, transcribed and edited the interviews. Also taped and transcribed were several debates among participants. We used these materials as sources and Urban's comments as analytical inputs.

<sup>9</sup> Since 1989 the Ministry of the Environment maintains a register of hundreds of civil environmental organizations, called "Cadastro Nacional de Entidades Ambientalistas", available at <http://www.mma.gov.br/port/conama/cnea/cnea.cfm>

<sup>10</sup> "Alceo Magnanini interview," in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 300.

<sup>11</sup> "Harold Edgar Strang, interview," in Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 42.

movement forward. Even if only indirectly, the FBCN was present at that time in many acts and decisions of which its members and spirit were obvious components...<sup>12</sup>

Among these decisions were those that created, between 1959 and 1961, 11 national parks and one national forest. Before 1959, only four parks existed in Brazil. FBCN members lobbied in favor of these new units, which became the sole conservationist accomplishment of two presidential terms, Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61) and Jânio Quadros (1961). Additionally, FBCN members helped draft the bill that evolved into the 1965 Forest Code (Law 4.771, 9 September 1965). This very advanced law resisted almost 50 years of reform attempts by legislators linked to farming interests, who oppose it. Both the new parks and the new law were strongly influenced by Victor Abdennur Farah, FBCN founder and first executive director. At this time he was the president of Brazil's Federal Forest Council, besides being a personal friend of president Quadros.<sup>13</sup> This shows that, although FBCN itself had yet to gather momentum, some of its members influenced decision-making circles at the federal level.

### **Becoming influential and growing (1966–1989)**

FBCN founders were mostly accomplished, middle-class, middle-aged urban professionals. A majority of them and of later ranking members had undergraduate degrees in “hard” sciences such as soil science, or agricultural engineering (“engenharia agrônômica”), biology, natural history and ecology. A few were well placed in academia. Also present were lawyers, Navy officers, self-taught naturalists, businessmen and journalists<sup>14</sup> (see Annex C, II).

The organization gained momentum in 1966, when its newsletter, *Boletim Informativo da FBCN*, appeared. It was published regularly between 1966 and 1989.<sup>15</sup> The first issue informed that the organization had been founded by a “group of idealists determined to confront the growing challenge that

<sup>12</sup> *Informativo FBCN*, 2, 3 (1978): 6.

<sup>13</sup> Urban, *Saudade do matão*.

<sup>14</sup> “Currículo Sintético da FBCN” (Rio de Janeiro: circa 1982), typewritten. This curious document contains FBCN's institutional CV and the CVs of 18 of its ranking members. It was used to apply for funding and negotiate funding agreements. See also Urban, *Saudade do matão*; Borges, *Por trás do verde*.

<sup>15</sup> *Informativo FBCN* and *Boletim Informativo da FBCN*, newsletter and journal, although published, are rare materials. We worked with the only known complete publicly available collections, stored at FBCN's library, in its former headquarters, in Rio de Janeiro.

the untrammelled use of natural resources was placing to our people's ability to plan and execute".<sup>16</sup> They proposed to resist a wasteful, but widely supported, development model. The "sole goal" of FBCN was stated to be the promotion of "a national movement in favor of the conservation of natural resources and of the creation of areas reserved for the protection of nature".<sup>17</sup> Although a few ranking members held positions in government agencies, the wording indicates that they saw the need for a movement led by a civil organization.<sup>18</sup>

This "sole goal", complex enough, entailed multiple objectives, stated as: (i) the creation of parks, reserves and similar areas, with special attention to rare or endangered species; (ii) cooperation with foreign governments and foreign and international organizations; (iii) conservation-oriented research programs; and (iv) the spread of conservationist knowledge.<sup>19</sup> The deep-rooted pro-development consensus was at that moment solidly supported by the coalition that elected President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961). His term is still fondly remembered by pro-developmentalists in current political parties as the moment of Brazil's industrial take-off. He campaigned on a mostly successful, 30-point plan for massive investments in roads, railroads, ports, mining, hydroelectric dams, heavy industry, automotive assembly plants, ship-building yards, besides the construction of a new "modernistic" national capital (Brasília) in a sparsely settled section of Brazil's vast Mid-Western frontier. Obviously, no environmental concerns or "constraints" were included in the plan.<sup>20</sup> Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros (founder and two times FBCN president, and first director of Brazil's first national park) stated plainly:

<sup>16</sup> *Boletim Informativo da FBCN*, 1, Rio de Janeiro (1966): 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> The pattern of Brazilian citizens acting simultaneously as government employees and as members of civil organizations was common in several policy areas in which authoritarian governments had little or no interest. See our discussion in "Wilderness and the Brazilian Mind (I)" for a more general discussion of this pattern of citizenship, see Carvalho, José Murilo de. *Os Bestializados - O Rio de Janeiro e a República que não foi* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> *Boletim Informativo da FBCN*, 1, Rio de Janeiro (1966): 2.

<sup>20</sup> Urban, *Saudade do matão*; Borges, *Por trás do verde*; a brief, but authoritative 2009 appraisal of Kubitschek's accomplishments is found in a collection of articles in <http://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/JK/apresentacao> (accessed on 8 May 2011). A classic evaluation of Kubitschek's term is Benevides, Maria Victória de Mesquita, *O Governo Kubitschek: Desenvolvimento Econômico e Estabilidade Política* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976).

“when Juscelino announced that Brazil would ‘advance 50 years in only five’, we [FBCN members] were alarmed”.<sup>21</sup> This official Kubitschek motto meant that “development at all costs” would prevail.

An early and distinctive FBCN trait was its connection with and involvement in partnerships with foreign and international conservation organizations. It soon became a member of the influential International Union for the Conservation of Nature - IUCN. Its directors attended IUCN meetings and received its newsletters, announcements and publications. This allowed state-of-the-art issues, findings and policies to flow into FBCN’s discussions, publications, meetings and activities. Although several issues of *Boletim da FBCN* inform that the organization joined IUCN in 1971, this seems to have happened earlier. For instance, FBCN member José Cândido de Melo Carvalho was a member of IUCN’s Council for two terms (1963-1970 and 1976-1981), representing non-Andean South American countries. Paulo Nogueira Neto (FBCN member) occupied this position between 1971 and 1975 and Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua (also FBCN member) succeeded Nogueira Neto in 1981. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, these and other FBCN members attended several IUCN General Assembly meetings, besides numerous regional, technical and council meetings.<sup>22</sup>

FBCN members attended other relevant international meetings. David Azambuja was present at the I World Congress of National Parks (Seattle, 1962). Carvalho reports his own participation (together with Nogueira Neto and Alceo Magnanini) in the II World Congress of National Parks (Yellowstone NP, in 1972). Pádua and Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara seem to have attended the third national park meeting, in Bali (Indonesia), in 1982, but we could not confirm it. Carvalho represented the FBCN also at the I International Conference of Specialists in the Rational Use and the Conservation of the Biosphere’s Natural Resources (Paris, 1968) and at the UN’s World Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros interviewed by Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 38. Barros, a career park service staff, wrote the first book on Brazilian national parks: Barros, Walderbilt Duarte de. *Parques Nacionais do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço de Informação Agrícola do Ministério da Agricultura, 1952).

<sup>22</sup> In 1998, FBCN materials still emphasized the importance of its IUCN membership.

<sup>23</sup> See *Boletim da FBCN*, pp. 121-137, 1988; *Boletim da FBCN*, 1973; *Boletim da FBCN*, pp. 5-16, 1979; *Boletim da FBCN*, 1998.

By 1966, this identification with the IUCN was so strong that FBCN adopted its organizational structure – a “Superior Council” coordinated five “Technical Committees” – “Education”, “Ecology”, “National Parks and Similar Reserves”, “Rare or Threatened Species”, and “Legislation”.<sup>24</sup> We found no other civil organizations in the country with such strong and lasting links to the IUCN or systematic participation in international events and organizations.

A few dozen FBCN projects were conducted in the late 1960s and 1970s with funding provided by the Worldwide Wildlife Fund - WWF, with additional IUCN support, at a time when no foreign or international environmental NGOs conducted activities or had offices in Brazil, as occurred since the late 1980s. WWF transferred funds to FBCN for the execution of several conservation projects.<sup>25</sup> A summary of these projects is provided in Annex B, I.

Carvalho (a zoologist), although not a FBCN founder, presided the organization in 1966-1969 and 1978-1981. FBCN came into its own during his first term. In 1998, Magnanini recalled this moment in the following manner:

I was invited to be the executive secretary of the FBCN in 1966, when José Cândido de Melo Carvalho was elected president. The FBCN started to develop projects, its newsletter was published, and we started to publish articles on conservation. In its first four volumes I published articles on soil conservation, water conservation, forest conservation. This was important to give an impulse to the circulation of ideas. This is what was really missing in Brazil – reading material for teachers...<sup>26</sup>

The FBCN started also to engage in public networking and scientific communication, on a large scale. In less than two years it co-organized two major conservationist events. The first was the I Brazilian Symposium for the Conservation of Nature, held in Rio de Janeiro, from 23 to 26 January 1967. This was only the second meeting of its kind held in Brazil (the first one was held in 1934).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> José Cândido de Melo Carvalho, A Conservação da Natureza e Recursos Naturais no Mundo e no Brasil, In: *Simpósio sobre Conservação da Natureza e Restauração do Ambiente Natural, Suplemento dos Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências*, vol. 41, Rio de Janeiro, 30 September 1969. Urban, *Saudade do matão...*; Borges, *Por trás do verde...*

<sup>25</sup> José Cândido de Melo Carvalho, “Algumas Reminiscências Conservacionistas”, *Boletim da FBCN*, 1988, 121-137.

<sup>26</sup> “Alceo Magnanini, interview,” in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 129.

<sup>27</sup> The proceedings of the 1967 meeting were published in parts, in three issues of the *Boletim Informativo da FBCN* (1967, 1968 and 1977). About the 1934 meeting, see Franco and Drummond, *Wilderness and the Brazilian Mind (II)*...

The second event - Symposium on Nature Conservation and Natural Environment Reclamation - was held between 26 and 31 October 1968, also in Rio.<sup>28</sup> The Brazilian Academy of Sciences was one of the co-organizers, together with the Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal – IBDF, Brazil’s recently created forest management agency. IBDF’s participation was propitious, because its association with the FBCN helped the NGO gain momentum. 102 official participants (besides many non-official ones) from eight countries attended this event. It was organized along the lines of the recently held Intergovernmental Conference of Specialists in the Scientific Bases and Rational Use and Conservation of Natural Resources, called by UNESCO, in Paris, in September 1968.

In a strongly conservationist tone, this meeting’s goal was stated to be:

(...) define, with an emphasis specifically applied to the Brazilian context, modes of action and identify means capable of allowing a multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional coordination for the conservation and rational use of natural resources, ensuring their renewal for future generations.<sup>29</sup>

The 1968 meeting dealt with a wide range of topics such as the protection of endangered species, censuses, management and rearing of wild animals in tropical areas, the role of zoos in the protection of rare species, environmental legislation, recovery of rural landscapes, industrial pollution, national parks and similar protected areas, education for conservation, natural resource management, rainforests, wetlands, neotropical primates, public land legislation and use, public recreation in natural areas, and human impacts on the natural environment.<sup>30</sup> Of course, FBCN was not solely responsible for this rich conservationist agenda, but at that time and for years to come no other Brazilian organization, civil or governmental, had as much familiarity with this agenda or worked within it.<sup>31</sup>

In the opening pages of the 1968 meeting’s annals, FBCN’s president Carvalho defined the organization’s role in nature conservation:

<sup>28</sup> The annals of the 1968 event were published as *Simpósio sobre Conservação da Natureza e Restauração do Ambiente Natural*, supplement to the *Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências*, 41 (1969).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-7.

<sup>31</sup> Annex A, IV, has a relevant summary of FBCN’s “cultural activities” before and after these two large meetings.

By the Conservation of Nature and of Natural Resources [...] we understand the preservation of the living Earth, the natural environment for man, and of the Earth's renewable natural resources, a basic foundation for human civilization. Natural beauties, on the other hand, are a source of inspiration for spiritual life and of the necessary satisfaction of human wants, which become more and more intensified due to the growing mechanization of modern life.<sup>32</sup>

This statement, written into the proceedings of the largest environmental meeting held until then in the country, by the leader of Brazil's first nationally-based environmental NGO, tied the utilitarian emphasis of a Gifford Pinchot with the aesthetic/spiritual appeals of a John Muir. No other organized environmental group in Brazil was attuned to this recurring dilemma that Carvalho tried to knit together as the goals of his organization.

Brief examinations of selected FBCN's hands-on projects provide an idea of how conservationist and effective it was. An early FBCN-supported project, initiated in 1967, was archaeological in nature. However, it was focused on the recently created Tijuca National Park, located in Rio, and sought to inform visitors about the area's history. It was supported also by CNPq (Brazil's national science foundation) and IBDF, the agency responsible for the park. For more than 25 years FBCN member Carlos Manes Bandeira (1931-1993) and several teams of historians, architects, museologists and interns researched parklands extensively. Bandeira's teams unearthed at least 86 remains of farmhouses, slave dwellings, trails, warehouses, waterworks and fountains, besides artefacts (clocks, pottery, silverware, stoves, furniture, pens, tools) belonging to coffee farms that once covered the area. Thousands of objects were retrieved, restored and identified. Sites were described in dozens of reports. FBCN planned to display these materials in a "Coffee Farms Museum" to be installed inside the park. The educational potential of this work is enormous. Nowhere else in Rio can the general population and visitors learn about the city's coffee farm past.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Carvalho, José Cândido de Melo. "A conservação da natureza e recursos naturais no mundo e no Brasil," in *Simpósio sobre Conservação da Natureza*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> In the early 1990s, this was the longest lasting archaeological project ever conducted in Brazil. Two of Bandeira's many reports are available as Bandeira, Carlos Manes et al. *Pesquisas e escavações arqueológicas em sítios históricos do Parque Nacional da Tijuca e arredores* (Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Brasileira de Conservação da Natureza, 1984), especially 1, 3-5, typewritten; Bandeira, Carlos Manes. "Escavações históricas no Parque Nacional da Tijuca," *FBCN - Boletim Informativo*, 10 (1975): 87-93. The originals of several other unpublished Bandeira reports are filed in the FBCN's library. The "Coffee Farms

It was stated earlier that the joint participation of FBCN and IBDF in the 1968 meeting was propitious for the former. Indeed, a durable collaboration was born. IBDF, created in 1967, was the national agency in charge of forest conservation, wood products, commercial tree-planting, and protected areas. It was in many ways similar to the USFS and had a comparable mandate. It inherited duties, revenues and personnel from several small resource management and conservation offices.<sup>34</sup> The IBDF was in charge of both national forests and national parks, but caring for national parks was only one of its 16 statutory duties. For several years protected areas remained a definitely secondary concern of the agency.<sup>35</sup>

The agency, although well funded, was short on personnel with expertise in conservation. It thus made a series of working agreements or contract services with FBCN, which for a long time co-designed and executed almost all IBDF policies related to protected areas. IBDF transferred funds to FBCN to pay for these services, allowing floating numbers of FBCN staff to work professionally in important conservation projects. As the NGO walked willingly on the tightrope between conservation and preservation, and as the IBDF was a conservationist agency with a small preservationist mandate, the two organizations found a common ground to work together.

Preservation – as distinct from conservation, but sometimes combined with it - became a hallmark of the increasingly stronger FBCN. Despite its aforementioned concern with the “rational use” of natural resources for the benefit of “future generations”, its drive increasingly included the creation and management of protected areas (in which productive activities were excluded) and ecosystem and endangered species protection, i. e., preservation. This option “compensated”, as it were, IBDF’s weak commitment to preservation and worked for the benefit of both the agency and the NGO.

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Museum” has not materialized – there is a plan to house it in special rooms at the visitor’s center of the Tijuca National Park (Karla Mattos, personal information).

<sup>34</sup> The best overview of the evolution and structure of Brazilian environmental management institutions is Scárdua, Fernando de Paiva. *Governabilidade e descentralização da gestão ambiental no Brasil* (Ph. D. Dissertation, Sustainable Development (Brasília: Universidade de Brasília, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Federal Decree 62,018, 29 December 1967, defined IBDF statutes. See also Drummond, José Augusto, *National Parks in Brazil: A Study of 50 Years of Environmental Policy - With Case Studies of the National Parks of the State of Rio de Janeiro*. Master’s Thesis, Environmental Science (Olympia, Washington: The Evergreen State Coolege, 1988), chapters 3, 4 and 5.

In the early 1970s, Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua, a soils scientist on the IBDF staff, worked in the agency's minuscule office for protected areas, which she helped strengthen over the years. She was also a FBCN member. She is thus in an ideal position to make this more recent comment on the relations between FBCN and IBDF:

The strongest areas inside the IUCN were the Committee for National Parks and Protected Areas and the Committee for Species Survival. From my perspective, the FBCN copied the IUCN's structure and engaged much more vigorously in the struggle for the preservation of wild floral and faunal species and for the creation of protected areas than in any other environmental issue. In addition, the FBCN blended somewhat with government, as happens until today with the more structured NGOs in Brazil. People who held important positions in the FBCN also occupied important posts in the Federal Government. This happened also with other NGOs.<sup>36</sup>

Pádua stresses that virtually everything that the IBDF did in the field of preservation between 1974 and 1979 (mostly planning) and immediately after 1979 (execution) was based on the work of approximately 90 consultants hired through agreements made with FBCN. Areas for numerous new protected areas (particularly in the Amazon region) were studied and defined; migratory birds were banded and studied; salt and freshwater turtle and manatee populations were managed and protected; negotiations concerning a forest reclamation fund allowed the IBDF to acquire two million hectares of protected lands. FBCN continued working closely with the IBDF during the 1980s, when much of what it helped plan between 1974 and 1979 was executed.<sup>37</sup>

This systematic cooperation with government (in particular with the country's top executive environmental agency) was another distinctive FBCN trait. As little was happening in the 1970s and early 1980s in terms of environmental policies, FBCN carved a niche for itself. At the same time, this cooperation helped internationally discussed conservationist/preservationist ideas to penetrate and grow in IBDF and, later, in other federal and state environmental agencies. This also opened the organization to

<sup>36</sup> "Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua, interview", in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 302.

<sup>37</sup> See Pádua, Maria Tereza Jorge. "Bons tempos ou maus tempos," in *O Eco*, October 14 2004. Available at [http://www.oeco.com.br/maria-tereza-jorge-padua/16223-oeco\\_10502](http://www.oeco.com.br/maria-tereza-jorge-padua/16223-oeco_10502)

criticism - made by later “socioenvironmental” NGOs - of having cooperated with authoritarian governments.<sup>38</sup>

This type of collaboration soon expanded beyond IBDF. Paulo Nogueira Neto is a FBCN member who exerted influence nationally and internationally, both as NGO activist and government official. In 1973 he became the first president of the National Secretariat for the Environment (known by its acronym SEMA).<sup>39</sup> His recollection of the cooperation between SEMA and FBCN is summarized below:

(...) The FBCN had the power of persistence, an important asset. It insisted and kept on speaking until it convinced. FBCN [became] the major environmental NGO in Brazil. I was a member of its council and had much contact with its work. Later on, when I presided SEMA, we realized that bureaucratic limitations forced us to hire out the services of third parties, because it is hard for an agency to do things directly. (...) There was a moment when it was imperative that SEMA hire outside services, and we hired the FBCN. This system had its ups and downs, but I believe that it helped SEMA, at least during a certain phase. This option of hiring out services is practically non-existent today, but it helped very much in the growth of the FBCN, which in its turn helped SEMA to attain its goals.<sup>40</sup>

Again the FBCN cooperated with a newly created, severely understaffed environmental agency and was paid for its services. According to Pádua, contracts with IBDF and SEMA (and other state or local agencies) fuelled FBCN’s growth, the deployment of its technical capabilities, and its high degree of visibility:

The FBCN, as a consequence of its service contracts with SEMA and IBDF, actually managed to buy its own headquarters and to maintain a technical staff. All IBDF activities in the areas of parks and wildlife were executed through the FBCN, which [in each

<sup>38</sup> See Hochstetler, Kathryn and Keck, Margareth E. *Greening Brazil – Environmental Activism in State and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 66-68. The authors criticize FBCN’s collaboration with the authoritarian military governments and its faith in science and protected areas. See Annex A, I, for a summary of FBCN actions made in cooperation with the IBDF.

<sup>39</sup> Urban, *Saudade do matão*; Ministério do Meio Ambiente. *Homenagem a Paulo Nogueira Neto*. (Brasília: Instituto Takano, 2000). SEMA (Secretaria Especial do Meio Ambiente) was created in the wake of Brazil’s participation in the 1972 Stockholm Conference. SEMA’s mandates partially overlapped with those of the IBDF, but it was basically a normative agency, in charge of establishing institutions, regulations and standards seeking the attainment of environmental quality. It eventually created its own types of protected areas, which had the effect of expanding the numbers, the areas and the types of protected areas in Brazil. See Nogueira Neto’s recently published memoirs, Neto, Paulo Nogueira. *Uma trajetória ambientalista: diário de Paulo Nogueira-Neto* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> “Paulo Nogueira Neto, interview,” in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 304. For a summary of FBCN activities funded by SEMA, see Annex A, II.

contract] received overheads of between 10 and 15 per cent. These funds helped the organization very much in monetary terms. SEMA did the same.<sup>41</sup>

Luiz Emygdio de Mello Filho (a botanist, FBCN member and president between 1975 and 1978) confirms the importance of service contracts for the FBCN. “The FBCN earned overhead funds that paid for our publications and even for the acquisition of our headquarters. Among the services performed were meetings about sports hunting, the production of educational materials and the drafting of management plans for several parks.”<sup>42</sup>

A striking example of the cooperation between FBCN and IBDF is described in an unpublished report about the Serra da Bocaina National Park (created in 1971), written by FBCN member Walter Wolf Saur. In the late 1960s, when the IBDF was defining the area of the planned park, the Ministry of Agriculture plotted a land reform settlement in the exact same area. Hundreds of landless families rallied to the area. Social conflict and resource destruction became rampant. Appointed by the FBCN in the mid-1970s to report on the park’s status, Saur described a complex situation, including the lack of proper land titles by reform beneficiaries and older residents. The IBDF concluded from his report that the costs of placing the park under government ownership would be prohibitive. Even when it redesigned park limits and excluded expensive real estate and land reform plots, 3,200 people still resided inside the reduced area proposed for the park.<sup>43</sup>

This led to a second FBCN effort concerning the same park, again under Saur’s responsibility and again funded by the IBDF. He conducted a detailed survey of the land ownership situation in the park. 422 individual private plots were measured, described and evaluated, adding to 865 km<sup>2</sup>, almost 80 per cent of the intended park area (the other 20 per cent were identified as state and federal public lands). Unfortunately, the IBDF did not use these results for a comprehensive effort to assume control of the park,

<sup>41</sup> “Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua, interview,” in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 313. Several issues of *Boletim da FBCN* from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s report that FBCN had between 100 and 200 people hired and paid through its several service contracts. Oscillations were due to non-overlapping project cycles.

<sup>42</sup> “Luiz Emygdio de Mello Filho, interview”, in Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 67. These contracts were signed also with state governments. See Annex A, III.

<sup>43</sup> Saur, Walter Wolf. *Parque Nacional da Serra da Bocaina e sua área adjacente - estudo apresentado à direção da Fundação Brasileira de Conservação da Natureza* (Rio de Janeiro: 1977), typewritten.

which remained in an unstable land tenure situation.<sup>44</sup>

Adelmar Coimbra Filho (a zoologist and FBCN member) explains how hands-on species preservation projects were conducted by the FBCN, with the participation of the IBDF and the IUCN:

I was the second coordinator of FBCN's Rare and Endangered Species Committee, following Fernando Ávila Pires. We started to work on a project suggested by José Cândido de Melo Carvalho, which was part of the International Biological Program. Our project was about the golden lion tamarin and the muriqui. Carvalho took this project to the IUCN and secured funding also from the National Research Council [CNPq]. We started to conduct applied research, with a strong emphasis on environmental education, involving a large number of students. It was a modest project, but it was very significant, as all the projects that we conducted.<sup>45</sup>

This was the first concerted, long-term effort to save native endemic and endangered animal species in Brazil. It generated an important international connection for FBCN. The North-American zoologist Russell Mittermeier, later president of Conservation International (CI), was drawn into the primate management projects and became a long-term collaborator, especially in relation to the golden lion tamarin.<sup>46</sup>

Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara (Admiral in the Brazilian Navy, an expert on aquatic mammals and FBCN member) has a more nuanced view on the “good times” of the FBCN, including its wide-ranging and long-time collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund:

It is hard to say if the FBCN had a “decade of glory”. There were good times and bad times, and there was the important period during which the FBCN worked closely with

<sup>44</sup> This massive survey was published as IBDF-FBCN. *Parque Nacional da Serra da Bocaina - levantamento de dados cadastrais*, 3 v. (Brasília: IBDF, 1977), 3 v. Pages 19-25 describe the exhaustive survey; “Anexo”, in v. 3, contains individual descriptions and evaluations of the 422 holdings. In Annex A, I, there is a record of similar studies made by FBCN for a non-disclosed number of other Brazilian protected areas. We have no detailed information about equivalent work being done about this crucial issue for other protected areas in Brazil. This pioneering effort by the FBCN seems to have been lost in the memory of the IBDF and its successor agencies. This is unfortunate, because a recent study shows that almost all of Brazil's 65-plus national parks continue to have serious land tenure problems – see Rocha, Leonardo G. M. da; Drummond, José Augusto and Ganem, Roseli Senna. “Parques Nacionais Brasileiros: problemas fundiários e alternativas para a sua resolução,” *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 18, 36 (2010): 205-226.

<sup>45</sup> “Adelmar Coimbra Filho, interview”, in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, p. 305. Coimbra Filho had been managing tamarins with scant institutional support since the early 1960s. Only in the 1970s, with FBCN support, did he achieve results. IBDF also involved itself since the early 1970s, aiding with the creation of a biological preserve used for the reintroduction of populations of the two critically endangered species of primates, the golden lion tamarin (*Leontopithecus rosalia rosalia*) and the muriqui (*Brachyteles arachnoides*). Álvaro Aguirre – who located several troops of very rare muriqui in the state of Minas Gerais - was another FBCN member involved in this effort. See Aguirre, C. “O mono *Brachyteles arachnoides* (E. Geoffroy),” *Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências* (1971): 1-53.

<sup>46</sup> See Kleiman, Devra G. and Rylands, Anthony B. (eds.). *Lion Tamarins: Biology and Conservation* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

IBDF and SEMA. There was also a period during which the FBCN developed a strong relationship with the US-based WWF – at one time we had 40 joint projects going on. The FBCN became practically a link between the WWF and its projects in Brazil.<sup>47</sup>

The FBCN distinguished itself also for its publications. Of special interest is its scientific journal *Boletim da FBCN*, in which a considerable number of Brazilian scientists and managers published their first conservation-oriented articles.<sup>48</sup>

However, FBCN's towering achievement is arguably its participation in the drafting and initial deployment of a 1979 master plan that overhauled the national park system and established new directives (based on science and broad policy guidelines) for park siting, creation and management. It did this in association with IBDF. FBCN pulled together a few dozen scientists from several fields related to the goal of establishing a coherent, integrated park system and a corresponding park management apparatus. The plan, several years in the making, was deployed in 1979 and after just a few years multiplied the numbers and areas of national parks and biological preserves, besides introducing several ecological and biogeographic directives for park policies.<sup>49</sup>

If FBCN had its "golden years", they occurred roughly between the early 1970s and the late 1980s. During most of this time its technical commissions were active in projects conducted with several partners, governmental and non-governmental, Brazilian, foreign and international. These projects involved between 100 and 200 paid scientists and support staff, besides interns and volunteers. It participated in and/or organized many scientific and environmental education events. It had a body of between 1,200 and 4,000 due-paying members, figures unheard of for such an organization in the weakly

<sup>47</sup> "Ibsen de Gusmão: Câmara", in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 311.

<sup>48</sup> Urban, *Saudade do matão*; Borges, *Por trás do verde*. For more information on FBCN's publications, see Annex A, V, and Annex B, II.

<sup>49</sup> The master plan was published as Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal and Fundação Brasileira de Conservação da Natureza. *Plano do Sistema de Unidades de Conservação do Brasil* (Brasília: mimeographed, 1979) It had a "second stage", published as Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal and Fundação Brasileira de Conservação da Natureza. *Plano do Sistema de Unidades de Conservação do Brasil - II Etapa* (Brasília: mimeographed, 1982). A more detailed analysis of FBCN's participation in this plan is given in Drummond, José Augusto. *Brazilian national parks – an assessment of national and foreign influences up to 1979* (unpublished paper presented at the colloquium "National Parks Beyond the Nation", organized by the Department of History and the Public Lands History Center of Colorado State University, September 14-17, 2011).

organized Brazilian civil society of the time.<sup>50</sup> Its small but specialized library and archives were the best repository of conservation publications in the country, attracting researchers from all over Brazil and abroad, besides university and high-school students. FBCN led or participated in several projects focused on the protection of rare and endangered species, on the creation and management of protected areas, and on environmental education. It participated in the creation of Brazil's first graduate program in wildlife research and protected areas management (at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais). It helped establish at least eleven conservationist organizations in several Brazilian states, some of which became accomplished NGOs on their own, such as Biodiversitas, in the state of Minas Gerais, and Funatura, based in the national capital, Brasília. The following section examines briefly the causes of FBCN's decline and eventual demise.

### **Shaken (1989-1992)**

In the years immediately before 1992, when Rio de Janeiro hosted the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, FBCN still held a position of leadership among Brazilian environmental NGOs. Since the mid-1970s it had promoted annual meetings of Brazilian NGOs and was still doing so in 1989, although its leadership was wearing thin. However, it was also going through serious difficulties to survive on its own. One cause was the shortage of funds for its projects. Since the early 1980s Brazil entered a serious economic-financial crisis that crippled public budgets, from which most of FBCN's funding came from. Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros recalls the situation:

The service contracts came to an end, with the exception of one [in 1988], with Rio de Janeiro's Botanical Garden. However, many problems emerged from this contract - labour laws were not observed - and these problems persist until this day [1995], because the contract was poorly designed. (...) We did receive money from the Botanical Garden, but all personnel were hired by its director, not by FBCN. The contract predicted that labour and social costs were the responsibility of the federal government, but the actual

<sup>50</sup> The figure of 4,000 is taken from the *Informativo FBCN* for 1998. The issues of *Boletim da FBCN* (1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988) recorded 1,261, 1,233, 2,131 and 2,536 members, respectively.

employer was the FBCN and related responsibilities fell upon our organization. This was a regrettable mistake...<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, this new contract, far from saving the day, became a financial and institutional nightmare for FBCN, leading to its court-mandated closure and seizure of its assets. In the few years before the labour court's final decision, however, FBCN managed to remain active. The proximity of the 1992 environmental summit encouraged the signing of a number of new service contracts, despite tight budgets - with IBDF and its successor agency (IBAMA), Furnas (one of Brazil's largest electricity utilities), WWF, Ford Foundation, and a few municipal governments. Nonetheless, the outlook was not favorable. In the late 1990s, Câmara recalled the situation in the following words:

The declining amount of activities of the FBCN had two causes. First, there was a proliferation of NGOs, some of them very active and important, dividing NGO activities, previously concentrated on FBCN. Second, the poor drafting of some of our service contracts with government agencies allowed a flood of labour lawsuits against FBCN, nearly breaking it.<sup>52</sup>

The emergence of new environmental NGOs, emphasized by Câmara, was not seen as a negative development by FBCN leaders, however much they may gotten used to being major players in the field of environmental activism, science and services. Their emergence obviously heightened the competition for scarce resources, but it also indicated that the conservationist cause had become more visible, more widely accepted, and less likely to be ignored by governments and society at large. These were accomplishments that seasoned FBCN members could construe as their own.

Strang, on the other hand, gave these new organizations a mixed review, as follows:

[Their appearance] is a positive thing, in my view, because each organization has its peculiar features. Some will march in the streets and carry banners, others will write articles in newspapers, and others will focus on their own states. This movement is good because everything that can be done to make people aware of the need for conservation is positive. Many activists are passionate, though, they have a distorted view of the problems, but something good always comes from their actions.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> "Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros, interview, "in Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 75. Labor courts charged FBCN for unpaid workers' benefits, besides fines and interest. The amount to be paid was way beyond FBCN's capabilities and assets, so the courts froze its funds, put a hold on its headquarters and other real estate and forbade further contracts with governmental agencies.

<sup>52</sup> "Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara, interview", in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 314.

<sup>53</sup> "Harold Edgard Strang, interview", in Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 77.

Carvalho, writing in 1988 about recent meetings of Brazilian conservationist NGOs, emphasized FBCN's important status and criticized the stance of some of the younger organizations:

We understand that the FBCN, as the senior conservationist organization in Brazil, was necessarily the one most prepared to attempt the coordination of similar associations in Brazil. We held a few meetings with this goal, but with little success. (...) Some people grandstanded as leftist radicals and practically blocked any motions or basic actions in the field of conservation.<sup>54</sup>

Strang and Carvalho sensed that FBCN's standing was being challenged or skirted by the highly politicized positions of the new organizations, which came to be called or to call themselves "socioenvironmental" or "ecosocialist". Indeed, in the mid- and late of 1980s a considerable number of environmental NGOs emerged with a strong drive. Some took the FBCN route - professionalization of their staffs, execution of service contracts, and engagement with international partnerships. This was the option, for example, of the previously mentioned Biodiversitas and Funatura, spawned by the FBCN itself.<sup>55</sup>

"Socioenvironmental" organizations, on the other hand, added a highly politicized and ideological dimension to the debate over environmental issues. Many of them were led by leftist or ex-leftist activists, who found in environmental issues a harbor for their fading socialist/communist references. They accused FBCN, led mostly by politically moderate or conservative people, of being "apolitical" or "technocratic", with no track record or roots in social movements.<sup>56</sup>

FBCN was challenged by these new organizations. It is not our purpose to examine their ideas, goals or organizations. We wish only to stress how distinct they are from FBCN's conservationist-preservationist purview. Their emergence is linked to the end of a 21-year military dictatorship, a fact that

<sup>54</sup> Carvalho, José Cândido de Mello, *Algumas Reminiscências Conservacionistas*, 136.

<sup>55</sup> See [www.biodiversitas.org.br](http://www.biodiversitas.org.br) and [www.funatura.org.br](http://www.funatura.org.br)

<sup>56</sup> The highly politicized nature of new environmental NGOs in post-dictatorship Brazil is extensively examined (and implicitly praised) by Hochstetler and Keck, *Greening*. The Instituto Socioambiental ([www.socioambiental.org](http://www.socioambiental.org)) and Fase ([www.fase.org.br](http://www.fase.org.br)) are typical Brazilian socioenvironmental organizations that emerged or redefined themselves in the democratic context that followed the downfall of military dictatorship in 1985. The major source of socioenvironmental ideas in Brazil is the sociologist Antônio Carlos Diegues; see, among his many productions, Diegues, Antonio Carlos. *O mito moderno da natureza intocada* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1998).

stimulated citizens' self-organization on an unprecedented scale in Brazilian history, in all areas of political life. FBCN, despite having a few thousand due-paying members, had no roots in social or political movements of any kind. Additionally, given its long record of working with federal agencies, it was an easy target for accusations of "collaboration" with the defunct authoritarian regime.

Besides socioenvironmental organizations, two other types of NGOs emerged in Brazil, almost at the same time. First, large foreign and international environmental organizations - Greenpeace, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, WWF etc. – expanded or opened offices in Brazil. This resulted from Brazil's then recent identification as a country with a crucial role in global environmental politics and issues, on account of its endowments in natural resources and biodiversity. These organizations used mostly their own resources and their foreign contacts and networks to fund themselves, rather than seeking funds in Brazil or associating themselves with local supporters. Second, since the mid-1990s a new wave of corporate, non-profit, environmentally oriented organizations emerged, focused on issues such as sustainable development, product certification, corporate social responsibility, consumer rights, clean production and waste management.<sup>57</sup>

These three new types of organizations crowded the arena in which FBCN once had a free hand.

According to Magnanini:

The FBCN was the first Brazilian NGO to care about conservation. It opened trails for other NGOs, but it also entered a path by which it slowly languished. While it was active, practically all the older members of these younger Brazilian NGOs were at one time members of the FBCN.<sup>58</sup>

In the late 1980s the FBCN was thus losing its ability to lead and coordinate other environmental NGOs. Despite still having a seat in the all-important National Environmental Council (Brazil's top-level normative body for environmental policy matters), its scope of action and influence was dwindling. In the words of Câmara, stated in the late 1990s:

<sup>57</sup> See, among others, the aforementioned FBDS foundation ([www.fbds.org.br](http://www.fbds.org.br)), CEBDS ([www.cebds.org.br](http://www.cebds.org.br)), the Ethos Institute ([www.ethos.org.br](http://www.ethos.org.br)), the Fundação Boticário ([www.fundacaoboticario.org.br](http://www.fundacaoboticario.org.br)), the Natura group ([www.natura.net](http://www.natura.net)), and the Akatu group ([www.akatu.org.br](http://www.akatu.org.br)).

<sup>58</sup> "Alceo Magnanini, interview", in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 129-130.

FBCN has no resources! It has political and technical capabilities, but no resources! (...) The idea of centralizing the movement [of conservationist NGOs] was suggested by Wanderbilt [Duarte de Barros] who thought that the FBCN could be a focal point for them. For some time the FBCN distributed documents to other NGOs seeking to achieve this coordination. Later this political directive changed. Nowadays [1998] I have been saying that the FBCN is in a period of dormancy. It has serious financial problems, but it does not wish to settle in this secondary role. As soon as the opportunity comes, the FBCN will recover its importance.<sup>59</sup>

Although it is highly unlikely that a “reborn” FBCN will play its former leading role again, this is not necessarily detrimental to the cause of environmental conservation in the country. Now there are many other conservation-minded NGOs and social movements in Brazil, indicating a wider and more nuanced social perception of conservation issues among the citizenry. Also, since 1992 Brazil has had a federal Ministry of the Environment. Environmental policy agencies exist in every state and in many municipalities, although their effectiveness and capabilities vary markedly. Laws, policies and regulations exist for almost all the dimensions of environmental issues – from “traditional” ones like deforestation and water management to more “modern” ones such as biodiversity protection, climate change, clean air and waste management.

The authoritarian political context in which FBCN excelled was formally substantially terminated in 1985, and the new democratic context has propitiated the autonomous organization of the citizenry around several causes and issues, including environmental ones. No single government agency or NGO can pull together all the expertise and effectiveness needed to deal with all the dimensions of environmental issues.

In this new democratic context, FBCN and other conservationist organizations lost their easy access to the federal agencies that deal with protected areas and other environmental issues, because “socioenvironmentalists”, business-funded NGOs and international NGOs gained footholds in several spheres of Brazilian environmental policy and activism. In many cases, conservationists like FBCN members are now limited to work directly with the willing staffs of specific protected areas, with a few

<sup>59</sup> “Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara, interview,” in Urban, *Saudade do matão*, 315.

state environmental agencies, with privately owned protected areas, with universities and research centers, and with international organizations.

Rescuing the history of the FBCN and its deeds in the field of conservation is important to consolidate the memory of the relations between Brazilian society and the natural aspects of Brazilian territory. FBCN members were pioneers in the protection of what came to be known as biodiversity and in the wise use of natural resources, working in the hostile environment of a dominant pro-development culture.<sup>60</sup> If ever or whenever Brazilian culture and politics begin to have a less anthropocentric/pragmatic view of nature and to have at least some doubts about the principle of “development at all costs”, FBCN will be seen as one organization that helped achieve this.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Part of the legacy of the FBCN is evident in a recent collection of interviews conducted with ten selected Brazilian conservationists. Three of them are FBCN veterans – Câmara, Coimbra Filho and Pádua. Four others worked under Pádua for parts of their careers. See Correa, Marcos Sá and Brito, Manoel Francisco. *Água mole em pedra dura – dez histórias da luta pelo meio ambiente* (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> See Wilson, Edward O. *The Future of Life* (New York: Vintage, 2002); Wilson, Edward O. *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (New York: Norton, 2006).

## Annex A – Major FBCN activities, 1966-1989<sup>62</sup>

### I – Summary of FBCN activities made in cooperation with and/or funded by IBDF

- organization of regional scientific meetings on faunal conservation
- research, drafting and publication of management plans for 20 national parks and 9 biological preserves
- research and drafting of IBDF's 1979 and 1982 master plans for sites, creation and management of new protected areas
- research on sites for new state conservation units (several states)
- inventories of the land tenure situation of three national parks
- organization of courses on national park management for park personnel
- faunal preservation and management studies and programs – golden lion tamarin, *muriqui*, manatee, maned wolf, sea turtles, migratory birds etc.
- production of environmental education materials and park visitors' leaflets and maps
- studies for and implementation of interpretative trails in national parks
- studies for the protection of natural and cultural patrimonies of Rio's Botanical Garden

### II – Summary of FBCN activities made in cooperation with and/or funded by SEMA

- selection, identification, ecological and management studies, and mapping of the areas of 19 ecological stations
- initial management of some of these ecological stations and training of their managers

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<sup>62</sup> Most data in Annex A taken from "Currículo Sintético da FBCN" (Rio de Janeiro: circa 1982), Typewritten. This non-paginated dossier is filed at the FBCN library. It was used for funding applications and for partnerships. It has two parts: (i) a "synthetic institutional curriculum vitae", containing information about its projects, partners, funding and assets; and (ii) individual CVs containing detailed professional and biographical data of 18 FBCN leaders, staff, members and consultants. For this annex we used only the first part. Other parts of the data come from yearly FBCN reports published in the *Boletim da FBCN*, issues 1985 to 1989.

## **II – Summary of FBCN activities made in cooperation with and/or funded by the São Paulo State Secretariat of Agriculture and Secretariat of the Environment**

- technical studies on commercial tree planting and charcoal manufacturing
- drafting of management plans for several state parks
- execution of a state forest inventory
- technical support to water basin management plans

## **IV - Summary of FBCN's "cultural activities" – conferences, meetings, lectures, courses etc.**

- participation in many IUCN technical and council meetings and general assemblies, in several countries
- participation in and/or organization of dozens of scientific conferences and technical conservation meetings inside and outside Brazil, involving universities, scientific associations, FAO, UNESCO, Organization of American States, Brazilian Academy of Sciences, United Nations Development Program etc.
- participation in a 1968 national park management course (US)
- special lectures in universities, NGOs, clubs etc.
- participation in regular meetings of Brazil's National Environmental Council (CONAMA)
- interviews in newspaper, magazines, radio stations and television stations
- lending services to several hundreds of library users per year
- yearly national meetings of Brazilian environmental NGOs

## **V – FBCN publications**

- book compiling environmentally relevant Brazilian laws, decrees and regulations (four continuously expanded editions between 1971 and 1986);
- two books by José Cândido de Melo Carvalho about nature conservation and land uses in Amazonia (1967; 1979);

- several books and booklets on conservation (1971-1976);
- educational materials – posters, maps, leaflets, booklets etc.
- co-editing of a weekly “Environment” section in a major Rio newspaper (*O Globo*)
- authorship of Brazil’s first official list of endangered animal and plant species (1968);
- annals of several scientific and technical meetings;
- 12 management plans for national parks and one for a biological reserve (1978-1981);
- leaflets and maps distributed to visitors of several national parks;
- annual scientific journal *Boletim FBCN* - 24 issues between 1966-1989, plus two special issues (1977 and 1998); circulation varied significantly, with a ceiling of 4,000 copies;
- newsletter *FBCN Informativo* (1977–1998); issued quarterly until 1989, when publication was interrupted; publication was restored in 1991, but without regularity; at least 14 additional issues were published until 1998, when publication was interrupted; circulation varied significantly, but averaged around 3,000 copies.

## **Annex B – Other FBCN activities, 1967-1989<sup>63</sup>**

### **I – Summary of FBCN activities made in cooperation with and/or funded by WWF-International and WWF-US between the mid-1960s and the late 1980s.**

- research and drafting of management plans for several federal and state protected areas
- management of several federal protected areas
- studies and management of populations of golden lion tamarins, black lion tamarins, *muriquis* (rare primate species), five threatened species of sea turtles, sloths and manatees
- studies of rare birds of the Brazilian Northeast region
- studies of floral species threatened with extinction
- environmental education programs in public schools in several states
- research and protection of several whale and other aquatic mammal species
- conference on extractive reserves in Amazonia

### **II – Partners and funders of FBCN publications and activities**

- Aracruz Celulose – large private pulp and paper company
- Banespa – public bank owned by the state of São Paulo
- CESP – São Paulo state electricity utility
- CNPq – National Research Council
- Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Brazil's largest mining company)
- Conselho Federal de Cultura – federal cultural council, linked to the Ministry of Education
- Conservation Foundation – US-based environmental NGO
- DNOS – federal agency for waterworks
- ELETROBRÁS – federal electricity holding company
- FGV – Rio – private-public educational and planning institution

<sup>63</sup> Information summarized in Annex B was taken from the Appendices of Borges, *Por trás do verde*, 111-127. Although it is clear that she used several sources to compose this annex, she does not identify them.

- Ford Foundation
- Furnas – regional electricity utility
- IBBD – federal scientific information agency
- IBDF – federal executive environmental agency between 1967 and 1989
- INPA – major ecological research organization in the Amazon region
- IRDA – non-profit organization linked to a major mining company active in the Amazon region
- MUDES – university student internship organization
- Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi – major research institution (archaeology, anthropology, biology ecology) located in the Brazilian Amazon region
- PETROBRÁS – federally-owned oil company
- Smithsonian Institution
- SNA – national-level private association of commercial farmers
- Sousa Cruz – private tobacco company
- SUDAM – regional planning agency for the Amazon region
- SUDEPE – federal fisheries agency
- The Macarthur Foundation
- UFMG – major federal university in the state of Minas Gerais
- UFRJ –major research university in the state of Rio de Janeiro

## **Annex C – FBCN presidents and important members<sup>64</sup>**

### **I – FBCN presidents, 1958-1991: terms and occupations**

- 1958-1960: Luiz Hernany Filho – industrialist (founder)
- 1960-1966: Jerônimo Coimbra Bueno – civil engineer and politician (founder)
- 1966-1969: José Cândido de Mello Carvalho (1914-1994) – veterinarian and zoologist, university professor
- 1969-1972: Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros (1916-1997): agricultural engineer (founder)
- 1972-1974: José Piquet Carneiro (1912-1974): businessman
- May-December 1974: Alberto de Resende Rocha: lawyer
- 1975-1978: Luiz Emygdio de Mello Filho (1913-2002): medical doctor, botanist, university professor
- 1978-1981: José Cândido de Mello Carvalho
- 1981-1987: Ibsen de Gusmão Câmara (1923): Brazilian navy officer, self-taught in palaeontology and aquatic mammal conservation
- 1987-1990: Wanderbilt Duarte de Barros; vice president Alceo Magnanini (1925) acted as president several times during this period
- 1991-2011: Jairo Cortez Costa: businessman

### **II – Other notable FBCN members/founders:**

- Ademar Faria Coimbra Filho (1924) - zoologist
- Alberto Resende Rocha – lawyer
- Alberto Soares Sampaio (1902-1977) – businessman
- Álvaro Coutinho Aguirre (1899-1987) – zoologist
- Álvaro Silveira Filho (founder)
- Arthur de Miranda Bastos (?–1968) – agricultural engineer (founder)

<sup>64</sup> Information in Annex C came from several issues of the *Boletim da FBCN* and from the aforementioned “Currículo Sintético da FBCN”.

- Augusto Ruschi (1915-1986) – agricultural engineer and biologist
- Carlos Manes Bandeira (1931-1993) – journalist and self-taught archaeologist
- David Azambuja
- David Felinto Cavalcanti
- Eurico Santos (?–1968) – self-taught biologist and writer (founder)
- Fernando Dias de Ávila Pires – biologist, university professor
- Fernando Segadas Vianna – biologist and ecologist (founder)
- Francisco Carlos Iglésias de Lima (1912-1986) - agricultural engineer (founder)
- Fuad Atala (1933-) - journalist (founder)
- Harold Edgard Strang (1921-) – agricultural engineer and botanist (founder)
- Heitor Vinícius da Silveira Grillo (1903-1971) – agricultural engineer
- Helmut Sick (1910-1991) – biologist and university professor
- João de Vasconcelos Sobrinho (1908-1989) – botanist and ecologist
- José de Paula Lanna Sobrinho (1915-) - botanist
- José Luiz Belart (?–1980) – Brazilian Navy officer
- José Willibaldo Thomé (1930-) – zoologist
- Luiz Simões Lopes (1903-1994) – agricultural engineer (founder)
- Maria Tereza Jorge Pádua (1944) – agricultural engineer
- Paulo Nogueira Neto (1922) – biologist and lawyer
- Rosalvo de Magalhães – biologist (founder)
- Rossini Pinto - journalist (founder)
- Victor Abdennur Farah (?–1968) – agricultural engineer (found)