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Deborah Tyroler

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Honduran Ecologists Oppose Logging Operations In Mosquitia Proposed By Stone Container Corporation

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Jan. 24, Jorge Varela, president of the Honduran Environmental Organizations Federation (FOAH), told reporters that a proposed timber extraction contract with US-based Stone Container Corporation would cause an "enormous ecological imbalance in the nation's most important natural reserves." If the contract is approved, Stone Container would harvest timber in over 1 million ha. of the Mosquitia region, near the Rio Platano Biosphere. Varela said the area is home to about 50% of all animal species found in Central America. He added that roads and an airstrip included in the investment proposal would open up the area to immigration, or conversion of virgin forest into "a desert." Varela noted that on at least 25 occasions, Stone Container has been fined by US authorities in the state of Florida for inadequate forest resource management. A preliminary agreement with Honduran officials has already been signed. However, approval by the national congress is required. The congress is expected to vote on the Stone Container contract in February. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 01/24/92)

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