

**EXAMINING FOREST RECOVERY THROUGH SOIL SURVEYS:
A Study at the Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology in Costa Rica**

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Environmental Analysis Senior Thesis

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Pomona College 2008

ABSTRACT

Humans have been altering tropical forest landscapes for centuries, most destructively through widespread deforestation, which among other things, results in severe soil degradation and reduced biodiversity. The purpose of this study was to compare the physical and chemical properties of soil, along with the invertebrate communities in the soil in eight habitats with different historical levels of human disturbances and in different stages of recovery. In addition, a plot of naturally regenerated forest was examined in more detail to relate our study to the forest recovery process. The study was done at the Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology in southwestern Costa Rica from June 1 to July 31, 2008.