

AnthroBytes

Anthropology Research Highlights

#3 Ethnobiology at the University of Florida

J. Richard Stepp, Director of the ETHNOBIOLOGY LABORATORY, currently conducts two externally funded projects:



Comparative Ethnobotanical Study of the Mopan and Q'eqchi' Maya of Southern Belize (funded by the National Science Foundation)

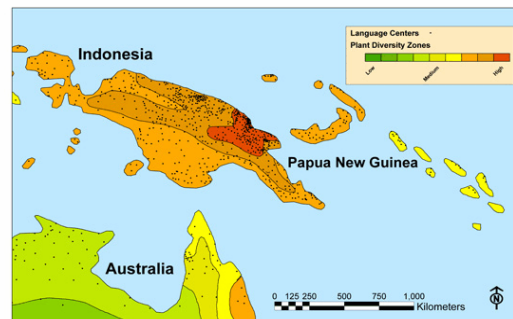
Interdisciplinary and comparative research on the interaction between cultural knowledge and use of plants (ethnobotany) in relation to the biophysical environment and ecological knowledge (ethnoecology).

This approach allows for a fuller understanding of human-environmental relations by contextualizing human behavior within local perceptions of the environments.

The goal is to understand the factors behind loss and persistence of traditional ecological knowledge.

Global GIS and Database of Biocultural Diversity (funded by The Christensen Fund)

Studies the interrelationship between biological and cultural diversity (biocultural diversity) as a geographical phenomenon with a strong positive correlation between increasing levels of biodiversity and increasing levels of cultural diversity (variety of human cultures).



Geographical Information Systems (GIS) research has produced a preliminary global database and series of maps, noting the linkage between high plant diversity and high linguistic diversity in a variety of regions throughout the world. Future plans include the development of a Global Atlas of Biocultural Diversity.