Launching a Sustainable Development Clinic in Colombia

By Juan Pablo Sarmiento, Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Colombia

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Grinter Hall, Room 471

Sarmiento has recently begun a “sustainable development clinic” at his University. He will describe one project he and his students are working on at the intersection of human rights and the environment. It involves a small and impoverished community of stilt houses in a large wetland eking out a subsistence living from the resource. There are currently some significant threats to the wetland from drainage and discharge, which is affecting the community fishery. The wetland is a listed under the Convention for the Protection of Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR). Working with the UF Law Conservation Clinic and the Inter-American Alliance for the Defense of the Environment, Sarmiento and his students are building a case to bring the site to the attention of the RAMSAR Secretariat and Government of Colombia, including possible listing as a threatened site under the Montreaux Record to the Convention.