UF awards new Research Opportunity Seed Grant to cooperative project between the University of Florida and Brazilian Universities: “Designing a Framework for Integrative Research on Dams, Environment and Society in the Amazon.”

**Principal Investigator (PI):**
Dr. Marianne Schmink, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida (UF).

**Co-Principal Investigators:**
Dr. Simone Athayde, Center for Latin American Studies, UF.
Dr. Stephanie Bohlman, School of Forest Resources and Conservation, UF.
Dr. Anthony Oliver-Smith, Department of Anthropology, UF.
Dr. Michael Binford, Department of Geography, UF.

**Other faculty and UF personnel to be involved as collaborators:**
Dr. Bette Loiselle – Tropical Conservation and Development Program (TCD) Director, Center for Latin American Studies, UF.
Dr. Robert Buschbacher, Center for Latin American Studies, UF.
Dr. Joann Mossa, Department of Geography, UF.
Dr. Joseph Christian Russell – GIS/Land Use and Environmental Change Institute - LUECI, UF.
MS Patricia Sampaio – TCD Program Coordinator, Center for Latin American Studies, UF.

**Brazilian Partners**
Dr. Elineide E. Marques, Federal University of Tocantins (UFT), Brazil
Dr. Carolina Dória, Federal University of Rondônia (UNIR), Brazil
Dr. Marina Heizenreder Hertzogue, Federal University of Tocantins (UFT), Brazil
Dr. Emerson Figueiredo Leite, Federal University of Tocantins (UFT), Brazil

**Abstract**
In the Amazon biome, an important global climate regulator and provider of ecosystem services, a new boom of infrastructure development is underway by the Brazilian government, with plans for massive implementation of hydroelectric dams for energy supply in four main Amazonian watersheds. Escalating social-environmental uncertainty and risks are due, in great part, to the lack of approaches for integrating knowledge and data in the understanding of the potential transformation of the Amazonian landscape by these dams, providing an urgent and timely need for interdisciplinary scientific research. With the support provided by the Opportunity Grant at UF, we will develop an innovative theoretical and methodological framework for integrative research of dams, identifying critical actors and existing knowledge and integrating assessments of land-use and land-cover change with data from socio-economic and political dynamics, in a historical perspective. The framework highlights and integrates outstanding expertise of UF principal and co-principal investigators in three main interdisciplinary research fields: tropical conservation and development; development-forced displacement and resettlement; and land-use and land-cover change studies. We will conduct several qualitative analyses and conceptual modeling exercises, covering selected dams in one Amazonian watershed (Tocantins-Araguaia watershed), as study-cases for framework development. This project has four main objectives and associated outcomes: 1) Development of a conceptual framework which can be applied broadly to interdisciplinary research on socio-environmental transformation of dams, and publication in peer-reviewed journals. This will be applied specifically to understanding direct, indirect and cumulative (cascading) impacts of dams on land use land cover change; 2) Development of an open-access website, data portal and database for use by project members and the public specific to land use land cover change, but general enough for use for other aspects of Amazon dam impacts; 3) Development and submission of research proposals to secure external funding for a long-term program on integrative research on socio-environmental impacts of dams in the Brazilian Amazon; and 4) Formation of an interdisciplinary and international research team and collaborators among UF, Brazilian universities and other institutions.