Field exercise: Transect Walk

USAID Staff Environmental Training
Bagamoyo, Tanzania 2-6 June 2008
The transect methodology

- **TRANSECT** = a path along which one observes and records environmental attributes of interest, e.g.
  - **Key species counts**
    (record number of observations, distance from the transect line—a classic technique for estimating populations of key species and thus assessing ecosystem health)
  - **Land use and land cover**
  - **Soil profiles**
  - **Etc.**

Used in many disciplines: ecology & NRM, landscape characterization for integrated agricultural development, etc.
Our assignment

“Integrated transect” approach focusing on

- Economic uses and activities
- Natural landscape and human interventions
- Environmental health
  - How intact are ecosystems & ecosystem functions?
  - How healthy is the environment for the people who live in it?

Objectives

Use a systematic, structured approach to practice field observation from an environmental perspective.

Get a head start on understanding the Bagamoyo “baseline situation”
Recording transect results

- Part 1: Map showing transect path

Our assignment today

Just kidding.

Path of the 1999 Central African “Megatransect” by Ecologist J Michael Fay & his team (15 months, 2000+ km)

Image: National Geographic. Articles and images at www.nationalgeographic.com
Recording transect results

Part 2: Transect diagram

Example from an integrated transect focused on agro-ecosystem characterization