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Current Project Description: Edge-interior gradients in the shola-grassland ecosystem in the Western Ghats, India.

Objectives:

1. Develop an understanding of edge-interior gradients in the shola-grassland and how it affects species distributions.
2. Assess current management practices and its effect on the shola-grassland.
3. Assess regeneration status of shola species and develop criterion for effective restoration of the ecosystem

Brief Description:

Forest ecosystems globally have been subjected to anthropogenic fragmentation. Sharp edges between forests and modified habitat often present threats to the continued maintenance of forest ecosystem structure and function. The shola-grassland ecosystem represents a steady, mosaic of tropical montane forest and grasslands. The forest-grassland edge has been described as natural and stable. Understanding the processes driving these patterns might provide better insights on forest fragmentation and edge-effects in other ecosystems.

The shola-grassland is characterized by high levels of floral endemism and provides hydrological regulation for downstream communities. Developing an effective adaptive collaborative restoration plan would ensure the continued survival of this ecosystem.