

Rainforest Foundation US Quarterly ▶▶

Second Quarter Newsletter, 2023

As summer heats up, we are experiencing the undeniable effects of the climate crisis. The southern US is trapped in a record-breaking heatwave, and our offices in Brooklyn were shrouded for weeks in smoke from the Canadian wildfires. Many of us in North America felt these effects acutely, because they directly impacted us. But this is only a small taste of what our partners in South America have to live with—*every year*.

Healthy forests make for fewer fires. And science has shown that the healthiest forests are those protected by Indigenous peoples. However, in order to protect their lands, Indigenous peoples need legal recognition and title to their lands. Supporting our partners in securing their land rights has been a hallmark of our work since our founding nearly 35 years ago. In Peru last month, we were thrilled to celebrate the success of our Indigenous partners who secured a record-breaking number of land titles with support from RFUS. There's more about this event in the following pages.

In Panama last month, we supported our longtime partner, the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), as they hosted the first ever Mesoamerican Climate Week. During this event, Indigenous leaders, community members, politicians, and donors discussed Indigenous-led initiatives that are supporting the fight to protect our planet. This included discussions about direct financing programs such as the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, an alternative financing mechanism.

The success of these programs is only possible with your generous support.

I hope you enjoy learning about our progress in this quarter's newsletter.

Thank you as always for supporting our work, standing with our Indigenous partners, and protecting the health of our planet.

In gratitude,



Suzanne Pelletier
Executive Director
Rainforest Foundation US

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS ▶▶

Indigenous Communities in Peru Secure 18 Land Titles

Land titles are one of the most cost effective tools to protect Indigenous peoples' territories from encroachment and deforestation. Without legal recognition of their lands, our partners are ill-equipped to protect their territory from the devastating impacts of illegal mining, logging, and agribusiness. On June 17, the Gamboa community in Loreto, Peru, hosted a festive event celebrating the land titling of 18 communities, impacting 1,240 families in the tri-border region of Peru. Because of this partnership and approach, titles that would normally take years to obtain, were received in a record 10 months.

These communities were part of our Rainforest Alert program, through which Indigenous partners receive direct payments per hectare of land protected. They determine which priorities to fund with these payments,

whether community infrastructure projects, or legal advocacy efforts. And these communities in Loreto—in partnership with the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSEP), an organization that represents multiple ethnic groups and acts as a structure for Peru's Amazonian Indigenous movement—chose to pool their resources to support land titling. This bottom-up approach enabled Indigenous communities to decide the best way forward and to secure this historic number of land titles, a success which AIDSEP hopes to repeat in other communities in the Peruvian Amazon.



Photos by Marita Domper/ORPIO

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS ▶▶

Mesoamerican Climate Week

In June, the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) hosted the first ever Mesoamerican Indigenous Climate Week in Panama, which highlighted Indigenous experiences with climate change and emphasized the importance of direct financing to Indigenous-led initiatives. Facilitators from the RFUS/AMPB/USAID B'atz project from Honduras, Mexico, and Guatemala presented on disaster risk management, and RFUS staff spoke on the issues related to insufficient standards for the voluntary carbon market. The event was attended by over one hundred Indigenous and community leaders from across the region, as well as delegates from the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC), governments, donors, and international agencies.

The AMPB is leading the way with the establishment of the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM), which plans to disburse close to \$1 million this year. The FTM is a new, Indigenous community-led and governed financial mechanism to mobilize and channel finance to frontline

communities in the region. Through the USAID-funded B'atz project, RFUS has supported the development of internal policies and governance design for the FTM and is supporting ongoing fundraising, both bilaterally and through the GATC.



SUPPORTING OUR WORK ▶▶

Fires in the Amazon: How You can Help Break the Cycle

The fires in the Amazon made global headlines in recent years. The rainforest is caught in a vicious cycle of deforestation, drought, and fires—which reinforce the need for the work we are doing with our Indigenous partners throughout the region to stop deforestation. A staggering 27,896 square miles of the Amazon burned in 2019. By 2022, that number grew to 29,660 square miles. And unfortunately, with the onset of El Niño, this fire season may end up being the Amazon's worst yet.

But, together we can work to break the cycle.

With your support, RFUS is supporting our Indigenous partners with strategies that have been proven to help prevent deforestation including land titling, land management, and territorial monitoring programs. The effects of the collapse of the Amazon rainforest would be felt globally, but none stand to lose more than the Indigenous peoples who live there.

This summer, please give generously to support our Indigenous partners and to protect their territory in the Amazon. For more information, go to: <https://rainforestfoundation.org/engage/brazil-amazon-fires/>

Ensuring Your Legacy & Supporting Our Work

Did you know that next month is National Make-A-Will Month? While it seems there's a month for everything these days, it's a great reminder to ensure your loved ones will be cared for—and ensure your legacy by sustaining the causes you believe in. Rainforest Foundation US has partnered with [FreeWill](#) to make it easier than ever to start your will. It's 100% free to you, and most people finish in 20 minutes or less. You are not required to put Rainforest Foundation in your will to use this free service—but of course we appreciate each and every bequest!

For nearly 35 years, Rainforest Foundation US has worked to address climate change and safeguard biodiversity by promoting the rights of Indigenous peoples and protecting rainforests from further destruction.

