RAINFOREST FOUNDATION US

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What Your Support Helped Achieve in 2024

Indigenous-Led Carbon Sequestration

New Analysis Confirms Climate Impact of Rainforest Foundation US's Partnership/Indigenous Peoples

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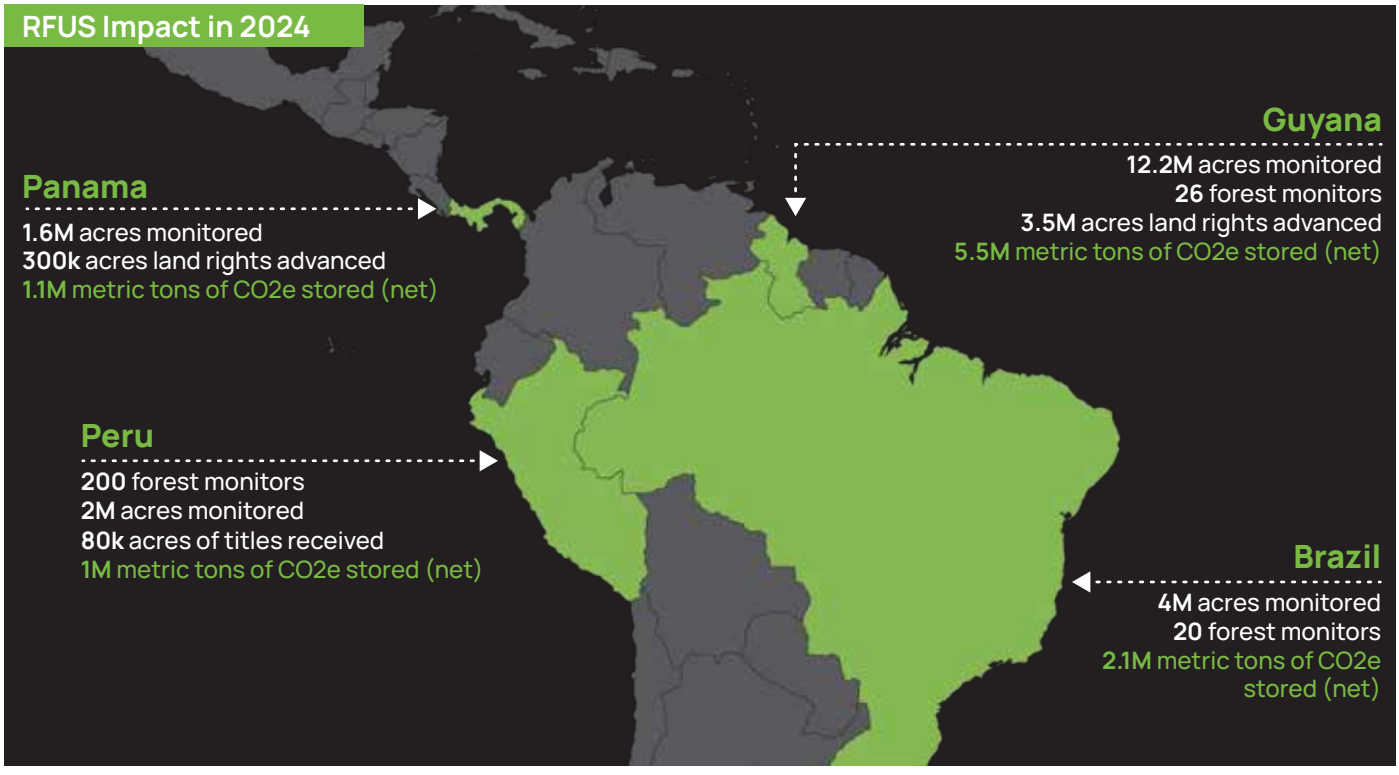
For over 35 years, RFUS has been protecting rainforests in Latin America in partnership with the forests' greatest protectors: the Indigenous peoples who call them home. Your support enables RFUS to provide the tools, training, and resources that ensure the rainforests' best guardians are able to defend their rights and forests. We partner with Indigenous peoples to secure legal recognition of their lands, protect their forests through monitoring, and build strong governance for managing their territories through capacity strengthening.

Our partnership with Indigenous communities advances nature-based carbon sequestration, as forests protected by Indigenous peoples have reduced deforestation and remain strong carbon sinks.

In 2024, RFUS's work on Indigenous land titling and forest monitoring in Peru, Brazil, Guyana, and Panama supported communities to achieve a net annual carbon sink of 9.8 million metric tons of CO2e on their lands—equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 2 million gas vehicles or 1.3 million homes.



[1]**Methodology:** To calculate the carbon sequestration value of RFUS's work, we compare the annual carbon loss or gain (carbon flux) within the precise geographic regions where RFUS provides titling, monitoring, and institutional strengthening support.

Forests Managed by Indigenous Peoples Capture More Carbon

Indigenous peoples' land rights and forest management are crucial to advancing nature-based solutions to climate change. A report published in 2023 demonstrates how Indigenous peoples' lands in the Amazon act as robust carbon sinks, capturing significantly more carbon than they emit. This contrasts sharply with areas under public and private management, which often struggle to maintain their ecological balance and can even become a source of carbon emissions.

The research also highlights a striking pattern: Areas of the Amazon managed by Indigenous peoples with documented or formal land recognition have been some of the most secure and reliable net carbon sinks over the past two decades. Between 2001 and 2021, these forests emitted around 120 million metric tons of CO2 annually while removing 460 million metric tons, resulting in a net total of 340 million metric tons removed from the atmosphere—equivalent to the U.K.'s annual fossil fuel emissions.

The impact of land rights goes beyond carbon storage—it also curbs deforestation. Communities with established collective property rights have legal backing to protect their lands against the unauthorized exploitation of resources. A peer-reviewed study from 2020 examining data from 245 Indigenous territories ratified between 1982 and 2016, found that once territories are legally recognized, there is **an approximately 66% decrease in deforestation.**

Rainforest Foundation US's Monitoring Methodology Bolsters Carbon Sequestration

In 2021, a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* evaluated Indigenous territories using RFUS's Rainforest Alert methodology. The Rainforest Alert program provides training, tools, and financial support to Indigenous communities to map, monitor, and secure their territories using cost-effective technology like smartphones and drones. This community-led rainforest monitoring program connects Indigenous communities with remote-sensing technology in order to better survey their lands against illegal deforestation.

The study's randomized controlled trial (RCT) found territories using the Rainforest Alert methodology experienced 52% less deforestation than the control group counterparts. This drop in deforestation has an incredible impact on carbon storage and the climate crisis. Over the course of the two-year study, **forest communities prevented the release of over 234,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.**

The study also concluded that Indigenous peoples who have access to satellite images and smartphones can reduce unauthorized deforestation in their territories, and over time, Indigenous communities became more effective and efficient at detecting and addressing deforestation as it happens.