

The Understory ▶▶

A newsletter from Rainforest Foundation US

Over the last two weeks, policymakers and climate experts gathered in Scotland for the United Nations' Climate Change Conference (COP26), where indigenous peoples had a seat at the table like never before in the history of the conference. From the most prestigious panels to sector events, the most effective stewards of rainforests finally received the respect they're owed. Perhaps best representing this sea change, a coalition of governments pledged \$1.7 billion to assist indigenous peoples in their rainforest protection efforts.

At Rainforest Foundation US, we're thrilled to see the world catching up to what we've long known—that supporting indigenous peoples is one of the best and most cost-effective ways of protecting tropical rainforests and preventing climate change.

In this newsletter, you'll read about our work in Guyana, and how the Guyanese government must recognize the territorial rights of indigenous peoples in their country if they're going to make good on their climate promises. You'll glimpse a map of indigenous peoples' carbon holdings, helping you understand just how much is at stake as we try to mitigate the climate crisis. And finally, you'll learn about Rainforest Foundation US's ambitious plan to combat climate change in the years ahead—my direct response to a United Nations report, which forecasts a global climate catastrophe unless drastic action is taken immediately.

There's no denying it: The road to a better climate future is treacherous. But we're confident that, together with our indigenous partners, we've hit upon a solution that is effective, scaleable, and replicable.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Pelletier
Executive Director of Rainforest Foundation US

NEWS FROM THE COP



To Meet Guyana's Climate Pledge, Empower Indigenous Peoples

As part of Guyana's national climate goals, the country has pledged to aggressively expand the amount of rainforest it protects. But as the threat of big oil looms, it needs indigenous peoples' help more than ever before.

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Why Recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Territories Is Good for Climate

During the first week of COP, the Rights and Resources Initiative, Woodwell Climate Research Center, and Rainforest Foundation US released a report showing that indigenous peoples and local communities live on lands that hold 250 billion metric tonnes of carbon—yet their lack of legal rights to those lands threatens to release that carbon via deforestation.



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Top Indigenous Leaders at COP26

Representatives from the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC)—the preeminent coalition representing indigenous peoples in tropical forests worldwide—had their voice heard at COP26, with support from Rainforest Foundation US. Their presence helped inspire an **historic \$1.7 billion pledge** to support indigenous peoples' efforts in combating climate change. Our staff and GATC delegates also visited a **Scottish forest community**, and attended the hundred-thousand strong **Climate March**.

Our Response to a UN Prediction of a Dire Climate Future

Earlier this year, the United Nations' climate change panel released a report stating that global warming will inevitably intensify in the coming decades. The only question is: By how much? Here, we lay out our role in mitigating the damage.



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GET INVOLVED

Test your knowledge

QUESTION: How much carbon is stored in the lands of indigenous peoples globally?

ANSWER: The carbon emissions of all the world's homes over:

A

[5 years](#)

B

[10 years](#)

C

[15 years](#)



"After extensive research into organizations we could support, our family chose Rainforest Foundation US because of its unique approach to supporting both people and the planet. The way Rainforest Foundation US centers its work around the goals of indigenous peoples themselves and supports those goals through direct action is compelling, dignified, and effective."

- Chris Allison from Oakland, CA

For over 30 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. Continue to support our efforts to protect and defend the rainforest by making a contribution to RFUS today.

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