



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

 **Rainforest
Foundation US**

MISSION

We work in partnership with indigenous groups and local grassroots organizations throughout the Americas to: secure rights to their lands, influence laws and policies to protect their resources, build strong and sustainable community leadership.



WHAT YOU CAN DO: BE A RESPONSIBLE SHOPPER & REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT!



SUZANNE PELLETIER, Executive Director

The threats and battle lines are continually changing in the fight for our rainforests.

One thing that is constant is the reality that the people that have the most to gain from forest protection and the most to lose from its destruction are the indigenous peoples whose livelihoods, health and cultures are dependent on healthy rainforest environments.

The Rainforest Foundation has never veered from its mission to conserve the world's rainforests by helping the long time stewards of these forests to secure their rights and sustainably manage their natural resources.

What becomes clearer with every passing year is that this approach is working. The forests that are best conserved are those where indigenous peoples live and have secure rights to their lands and resources. This is not an accident.

That's why we target your support to the people and places that can make the biggest difference: indigenous communities living at the frontlines of rainforest protection.

We have learned that the key to securing rights and maintaining conservation gains is strong leaders at the local level who are dedicated to sustainable management of their resources for their community. You will read in this report how this approach is making a difference.

None of our work could be done without your generous support. You are helping local communities protect their forests, livelihoods and their cultures for generations to come.

Sincerely,



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The Rainforest Foundation US is a small organization on a big mission: A mission to protect lands, protect lives, protect cultures and traditions, protect our planet. We have a remarkable record of success. How do we do it?

We partner with those people who live in and depend on rainforests for their living, and for their way of life. By assisting these people in securing and maintaining the rights to THEIR lands, we are able to leverage our small resources in a big way.

We fund local organizations of indigenous peoples who are fighting legal and regulatory battles in order protect the rights to their lands – and once secured, we help these people keep their rights, for themselves and for future generations.

In 2015 we focused our work in two countries in Central and South America: Panama and Peru. Each of these countries has a high proportion of at-risk indigenous cultures who live in and depend on unique and irreplaceable rainforest.

How have we done? The following pages share our progress over the past year in greater detail, but in all, we have worked with hundreds of indigenous groups to protect over 28,000,000 acres of rainforest since our founding 26years ago.

As you can see, we have achieved some extraordinary victories. There is more to be done. And we have a dedicated group of staff and volunteers who are in the trenches daily, fighting to preserve these lands and unique cultures.

Personally, I have made a significant commitment to the Rainforest Foundation US. Why? I believe we need to protect the remaining rainforest; I believe the best way to do that is to assist indigenous peoples to continue to be responsible stewards of their lands; and I believe that through this partnership, small dollars can be leveraged in ways that achieve impressive results.

Join us on our mission. Your grandchildren will thank you.

John





WHO OWNS THE RAINFOREST?

PANAMA

- Government administered: **5,461,024 acres**
- Owned or designated for IPs and local communities: **2,223,948 acres**
- Owned by individuals and firms: **7,166,056 acres**

PERU

- Government administered: **128,840,746 acres**
- Owned or designated for IPs and local communities: **47,246,548 acres**
- Owned by individuals and firms: **4,818,555 acres**

GUYANA

- Government administered: **31,283,541 acres**
- Owned or designated for IPs and local communities: **6,301,187 acres**
- Owned by individuals and firms: **1,235,527 acres**

BRAZIL

- Government administered: **370,979,309 acres**
- Owned or designated for IPs and local communities: **361,811,700 acres**
- Owned by individuals and firms: **246,833,566 acres**



GOING TO BUY A GUITAR OR UKULELE? CHOOSE ONE WITHOUT ROSEWOOD AND OTHER RAINFOREST WOOD.



IT SHOULDN'T BE SO HARD

OFFICIAL STEPS NEEDED TO OBTAIN AN INDIGENOUS LAND TITLE,
COMPARED TO LOGGING AND MINING CONCESSIONS*



LAND TITLE



LOGGING PERMIT



MINING PERMIT

PERU



PANAMA



GUYANA



BRAZIL



* Brazil uses demarcation of indigenous territories to acknowledge indigenous land rights instead of land titles.

ILLEGAL LOGGING OF WOODS LIKE ROSEWOOD AND MAHOGANY IS ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS LOGGERS INVADE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

FIGHTING FOR LAND RIGHTS REQUIRES PERSISTENCE, CREATIVITY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND PATIENCE.

Indigenous peoples play an important role in protecting the rainforest. Supporting indigenous peoples in securing their land and resource rights has always been **the Rainforest Foundation's** core strategy, and multiple recent reports and efforts back this up. [A recent report by the Rights and Resources Initiative](#) lays bare the need for governments to do more to recognize indigenous and community land rights. The report finds that:

"Communities and Indigenous Peoples are estimated to hold as much as 65 percent of the world's land area under customary systems", but "only 18 percent of land area in the countries studied is formally recognized as owned or controlled by local communities and Indigenous Peoples".

The gap in recognition is shocking, and shows how much work we all have cut out for us.

The Rainforest Foundation has worked with indigenous peoples of the Americas for over 25 years in obtaining their land rights. Whether it's helping communities in Belize fight for their rights to lands small in acres but large in cultural and spiritual meaning, or fighting to ensure massive tracts of rainforest were demarcated for communities in Brazil and Peru we have been there every step of the way. Over the years, we've gathered a lot of lessons learned, but here are key points to keep in mind.

Today the Macuxi, Wapichana, Ingaricó, Taurepang and Patamona have land rights to Raposa Serra do Sol, over 4 million acres of rainforests and savannahs in Northern Brazil. But it was not always this way, Raposa was the site of one of the most critical battles for indigenous rights of the past two decades. The community didn't just have to fight for government to acknowledge their rights but also against acts of arson and even murders by those who sought to terrorize the community into submission. Their struggle continues today. Our work in Raposa is both long term and flexible. Over the years we have worked with the Indigenous Council of Roraima on a symbolic campaign sending pens to the President to sign their land title, running training workshops in the community, supporting legal processes, conducting research, funding the Council's core operations, old fashioned advocacy and working together to fight for improved security for Raposa. Together, we are making sure that Raposa remains in indigenous hands and that those who terrorized the community are brought to justice.

Today we see our successes, not only in rainforests still standing and homes secured, but also in the experience we gained and our partners' increased strength.



MAKE SURE YOUR FOOD IS FREE OF PALM OIL.



WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

FIGHTING FOR LAND RIGHTS REQUIRES PERSISTENCE, CREATIVITY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND PATIENCE.

IT'S A LONG-TERM STRATEGY:

Obtaining land rights takes years and years. Land demarcation and titles are most often the result of decades of struggle by local communities consistently demanding their territorial rights. Our support must therefore be long-term.

IT TAKES A MULTIPLICITY OF APPROACHES:

Gaining land recognition is not just about filing papers; it usually takes various different efforts. These include constant community meetings and consensus-building on the ground in communities. Mapping to determine boundaries and negotiate with neighbors; legal work; advocacy; meetings with government officials at local, regional and national levels. In a number of cases, it has also taken international advocacy, campaigns, and the use of international instruments, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It can also mean direct action on the part of communities. This means that our support, as allies and funders, must be both flexible, and support multiple strategies.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING IS KEY:

Both the struggle for land rights and consolidating those rights with sustainable, long-term protection takes strong organizations. Indigenous organizations are frequently over-burdened and under-resourced. Without committed leaders, clear strategy, transparency and accountability to their communities, organizations can have a hard time sustaining their work over the long-term. Donors should provide ongoing organizational support, both financial, and when asked for, technical.



PALM OIL HAS DECIMATED THE FORESTS SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE AMAZON IS NOW UNDER THREAT AS MORE AND MORE OF IT IS CUT DOWN FOR PALM OIL PLANTATIONS.



VICTORY 2015 - OIL CLEAN UP

PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT AGREES TO \$30 MILLION REMEDIATION PLAN TO TITLE LANDS, CLEAN WATER, AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION IN THE AMAZON.

In 2015, Peruvian indigenous populations obtained an enormous \$30 million remediation plan from the Peruvian government. The agreement was achieved through the combined efforts of the Rainforest Foundation, Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett LLP's pro bono team led by Board Member Todd Crider, as well as a local law firm and several indigenous peoples' organizations.

"Indigenous people have rights to lands they have traditionally occupied, and you should not be exploiting natural resources without consulting with them and protecting the environment," Crider says. "Everyone agrees with what those rights are, and now it's about translating those rights into something that changes people's lives for the better."

In the 1970s the Peruvian government signed a 40-year concession, allowing massive oil extraction in the Amazon, leading to devastating environmental impact. "This oil concession represents 20 percent of national production, and was the first production in the Peruvian Amazon," Crider says. "While it was productive, the environmental impact was devastating due initially to a lack of Peruvian laws and subsequently to the remote nature of the area, which limited attention from authorities or meaningful enforcement activity."

Before it could be renewed, indigenous populations (more than 100,000 residents) decided to seek remedy through a consultation process. After 18 months of negotiation and advocacy, **The Rainforest Foundation** and Simpson Thatcher, with the support of local communities and other organizations, obtained a \$30 million commitment. It includes: land titling, water treatment, environmental remediation, health & education initiatives, extension of electrical grids into rural areas, and funds for remediation from companies that previously held concessions.

This is a promising victory for indigenous communities, as a remediation plan as large as this is unprecedented in Peru, creating a precedent for other indigenous communities seeking reparations.



**1/2 OF ALL PRODUCTS FROM SUPERMARKETS CONTAIN PALM OIL. CHECK YOUR LABELS,
THERE IS ALMOST ALWAYS A PALM OIL FREE ALTERNATIVE.**



VICTORY 2015 - SAWETO

200,000 ACRES OF RAINFOREST LAND ARE IN SAFE HANDS NOW THAT ASHENINKA COMMUNITY OF ALTO TAMAYA-SAWETO HAS THE TITLE TO THEIR LAND.

The Rainforest Foundation worked with the Asheninka community of Alto Tamaya-Saweto in Peru to acquire the title to 200,000 acres of their ancestral lands on August 19, 2015. For years, the community fought against illegal logging and were subjected to a campaign of terror by loggers. Today Saweto is able to focus on community building while protecting their rainforest and resources.

The struggle for the legal recognition of their land took 12 years, and only garnered international attention after the murder of its leaders Edwin Chota, Jorge Rios Perez, Leoncio Quincima Melendez and Francisco Pinedo in September 2014. After the murders, the widows and a daughter of the slain leaders continued pressing for the recognition of their rights. Together, the Rainforest Foundation and Saweto pressured the State to grant the title. With the help of Margoth Quispe, our legal and policy analyst and lawyer, we focused specifically on Saweto and their needs. One year later, Saweto obtained its title.

"The loggers and the government didn't want to give us our title. They ignore us. We don't have anything. All we can do is fight." said Diana Rios, treasurer and community spokesperson.

In Peru, it is extremely difficult for indigenous communities to have their rights to land recognized by the state - there are at least 27 bureaucratic steps necessary to get a land title, whereas there are only seven steps required to mine for gold in the forest and only three needed to get permission to cut down trees.

Rios insists that this success must only be seen as the beginning: *"They thought they could treat us badly forever. But no! We are human beings! We don't want more bloodshed... We ask the State to support us and to support other communities too. It's not just Saweto—there are other communities that don't have title."*

This victory has set an important precedent for Peruvian indigenous communities seeking titles, demonstrating that titles can be given for larger territorial sized tracts of rainforest land.





VICTORY 2015 - ARIMAE

AFTER ALMOST 50 YEARS OF STRUGGLE THE PEOPLE OF ARIMAE HAVE THE TITLE TO THEIR LAND..

The Rainforest Foundation partnered with the Embera and Wounaan community of Arimae in Panama to obtain a land title after a 40 year struggle, on December 10, 2015, with the help of the Rainforest Foundation. The land title is for more than 20,000 acres.

Arimae is historically and symbolically significant for the indigenous peoples of Panama, and was the birthplace of the collective title movement. In the 1960s, the community held over 200,000 acres.

"In 1965 there was not even a Panamarican Highway and we didn't worry about the future, even though our elders warned us. At first we didn't fight back, we were calm thinking: we have water, our forest and food. Who can hurt us? Why should we fight? Now our eyes are open. The government doesn't respect us, they discriminate, they make laws that usually harm us. The elders who foresaw this future and led us are gone but we can fight." Elivardo Membache, Secretary and Cacique General of the Congreso General de Tierras Colectivas Emberá y Wounaan.

Over the years, land was lost to campesinos, loggers, expansion of the Panamerican Highway and lack of protection from the government. The Embera and Wounaan struggled for decades, leading marches, blocking the highway, meeting with hundreds of government authorities and negotiating with campesinos.

The Rainforest Foundation provided drones and training, so that the community could map their territory. "Looking at [drone maps], we can see exactly how invaders have entered our territories, and the full extent of their environmental crimes," said Tino Quintana, regional chief of the Embera Wounaan Comarca. "With these maps in hand, we can go to court to insist on our legal rights and defend our lands."

The title is the culmination of decades of hard work, and can now be used as a basis for acknowledging the land rights of the six remaining Wounaan communities that have yet to receive a collective title.



CATTLE RANCHES CONTINUE TO BE THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF DEFORESTATION IN MANY COUNTRIES.



A BUSY YEAR

- **ACRES TITLED**

220,000 acres for 3 communities

- **COMMUNITIES**

Worked with 52 communities total

- **SOLAR POWER & FILTERED WATER**

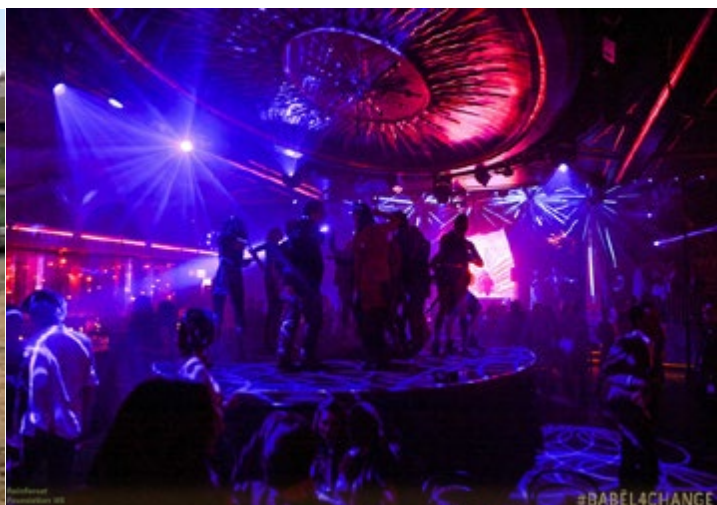
The Wounaan community of Caña Blanca in Panama wanted clean water that was easily accessible. The Rainforest Foundation partnered with Thermal Design to help the community plan, obtain and install solar power that not only gives them access to renewable energy, it powers a water pump and filtration system ensuring they have easy access to clean water for years to come.

- **EXPANDING RAINFOREST DEFENDER COMMUNITY**

This year Josalyn Bonney raised almost \$5000 — bringing her “Lemonade for the Rainforest” fundraising to well over \$10,000!



Our friends at Babel-New York became **Rainforest Defenders** hosting events for us throughout the spring!



BUYING ETHICALLY SOURCED INDIGENOUS CRAFTS, FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS.



LOOKING AHEAD

PANAMA

With our indigenous partners we are working to ensure Panama ratifies ILO 169, and to encourage local legislation that protects Free Prior and Informed Consent and help Guna, Embera and Wounaan and other communities get titles to their rainforest lands – almost 1 million acres in all!

ONE REASON IT MATTERS -- WATER SECURITY.

Almost half of the world's rain falls in the rainforest. Without Panama's rainforests, its famous canal would disappear as would much of the rain throughout the Southwest of the US!



PERU



We are working with Peruvian government, NGOs, and indigenous communities to create a protected area corridor in the Ucayalli region of the Peruvian Amazon.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS -- CLIMATE CHANGE!

This will protect 27 million acres of rainforest in the Peru Purus Mosaic and store 53 million tons of carbon!

BUYING PRODUCTS FROM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES HELPS PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED INCOME, ALLOWING THEM TO CONTINUE TO LIVE IN AND PROTECT THEIR FORESTS.



LOOKING AHEAD

GUYANA

Together with the Amerindian People's Association we are working to ensure all indigenous communities are mapped and have the title to their land.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS—BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY!

Protecting the rainforests of the Guiana Shield will protect more than 1000 different bird species, over 300 different kinds of mammals and at least 13,000 species of plants!



BRAZIL



Together with the Indigenous Council of Roraima we are fighting to make sure Brazil respects the rights of the communities of Raposa Serra do Sol and brings justice to those who have terrorized the indigenous communities of Raposa.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS—MEDICINAL KNOWLEDGE!

We are just beginning to learn about the medicinal knowledge and traditional remedies from the indigenous communities of Raposa, and their forests may hold the next medicines that cure cancers, viruses and more!

CONTACT GOVERNMENTS AND INSIST ON CHANGE: ASK FOR INCREASED FUNDING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, STRICTER ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS PROTECTING OUR RAINFORESTS. YOUR VOICE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

REVENUE AND SUPPORT 2015

Contributions	\$288,961
Special Events (net)	\$23,925
Interest and other Income	\$1,855
Grants	\$961,870

Total Revenue and Support	\$ 1,276,611
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EXPENSES 2015

Program services	\$ 1,051,858
Management and Administration	\$156,657
Fundraising	\$84,301
Total Expenses	\$1,292,816

Change in Net Assets	\$ 593,878
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$1,095,268
Net Assets End of Year	\$1,689,146

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

This is how we spend your donations:

FUNDRAISING 6.6%

PROGRAM SERVICES 81.4%

**MANAGEMENT &
ADMINISTRATION 12.1%**



DONATE OR FUNDRAISE FOR THE RAINFOREST. JUST \$5 SAVES AN ACRE OF RAINFOREST!

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RAINFOREST FOUNDATION FOUNDERS

TRUDIE STYLER AND STING

The Rainforest Foundation was founded in 1989 by Sting and Trudie Styler. In the last 26 years, the Foundation has expanded and diversified, and now includes three autonomous organizations — Rainforest Foundation US, Rainforest Foundation Norway and Rainforest Foundation UK — as well as the Rainforest Fund, which provides funding to programs and projects that support indigenous peoples. Together, we support programs in 20 countries across all the major tropical rainforest regions of the world.

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