



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

 **Rainforest
Foundation US**

A photograph of a person in a canoe on a river, surrounded by dense forest. The person is in the center of the frame, moving away from the viewer. The river is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery. The forest is dense with various trees and foliage, creating a lush background. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning, with soft light filtering through the trees.

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 ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT!



A Letter from our Executive Director
SUZANNE PELLETIER

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

Indigenous communities are protecting their lands and now technology is helping to identify deforestation before it takes more ground. Though climate action has been derailed by the current U.S. administration, the public pressure to stabilize the climate both at home and abroad is on the rise. In 2017 for example, our supporters from ages 5 to 50+ 'Ran for the Rainforest' to raise awareness for rainforest protection and indigenous land rights. Our dedicated staff and volunteers also race daily to preserve rainforest lands, peoples and cultures.

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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A Letter from our Board Chairman
JOHN W. COPELAND Chair – President, AMG Wealth Partners, LP

The Rainforest Foundation US is a small organization with a big mission to protect lands, lives, cultures, traditions and our planet. We partner with people who live in, and depend on, rainforests for their living and for their way of life. We leverage the small resources of the Rainforest Foundation US to fund the indigenous groups that fight the legal and regulatory battles to secure and maintain their rights, on their lands, for present and future generations.

By working together with indigenous communities, the Rainforest Foundation US has achieved several substantial victories in 2017, including working in five countries, with 152 communities, to protect 9,323,385 acres of rainforests. The following pages share our progress over the past year, but overall, we have worked with hundreds of indigenous groups to protect over 28,000,000 acres of rainforest since our founding 28 years ago.

Yet, there is much more to be done; the people defending the rainforests are at risk of losing their food, their culture and their shelter while the world is at risk of losing numerous ecosystem benefits that rainforests provide including climate change and biodiversity.

Personally, I have made a significant commitment to the Rainforest Foundation US because I believe we need to protect the remaining rainforest. I believe the best way to do that is to assist indigenous peoples in continuing to be responsible stewards of their lands. I believe that through this partnership, small dollars can be leveraged to achieve impressive results. Join us on our mission. Your grandchildren will thank you.



40% OF ALL HARVESTED WOOD IS PROCESSED TO MAKE PAPER AND PAPERBOARD.

A BUSY YEAR

9 COMMUNITIES
TITLED

9,323,385

ACRES OF RAINFOREST PROTECTED

152 COMMUNITIES
SERVED

5 COUNTRIES: BRAZIL, GUYANA, PERU,
GUATEMALA & PANAMA



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



TROPICAL TREES: THE WORKHORSE OF CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Every day there is more research highlighting just how important rainforests are in the fight against climate change. The world's forests trap almost 50 percent of all human made emissions. Because they are denser, tropical trees absorb 95 percent of all the tree-absorbed CO₂, highlighting the importance of protecting the world's rainforests.

The current presidential administration's exit from the Paris Accord in 2017 as well as its attempts to bring back coal and to develop offshore oil threatens to reverse much of the hard work that has been done to combat climate change, making protecting our rainforests that much more urgent.

Already, 10 to 20 percent of current global greenhouse gas emissions come from tropical deforestation. Fragmentation caused by deforestation and climate change has increased forest fires in the Amazon, disrupted rain patterns and put additional stresses on an ecosystem already at risk. Now, the latest studies show that rainforests are increasingly losing their ability to trap carbon at a time when we need it the most. If these forests continue to be destroyed, we won't just lose one of the planet's most effective carbon sinks; we will also release enormous quantities of CO₂ into the atmosphere. As the rainforests shrink and the climate changes, the Amazon is ever more vulnerable. Yet, saving tropical forests for the long-term will capture at least 30 percent of global CO₂ emissions.



You already know that our indigenous partners are fighting climate change on the frontlines. But do you know what this looks like?

In **Brazil**, our partners in Rapossa Serra Do Sol are working at reforesting the land that was once stolen from them. Planting native seedlings, and teaching the next generation how to take care of their forests.

Indigenous rainforest monitors from **Panama** taught indigenous activists in **Guatemala** how to use GPS, enabled smartphones, and drones to fight deforestation.

In **Guyana**, indigenous youth are fighting back with video cameras making sure the world knows about them and their fight for their forests.

In **Peru**, indigenous communities prevent illegal loggers and squatters from destroying their forests and protect Peru's priceless national parks.

Throughout the **Amazon**, indigenous activists risk their lives, personally standing up to drug traffickers, illegal loggers and miners, corrupt government officials and more.





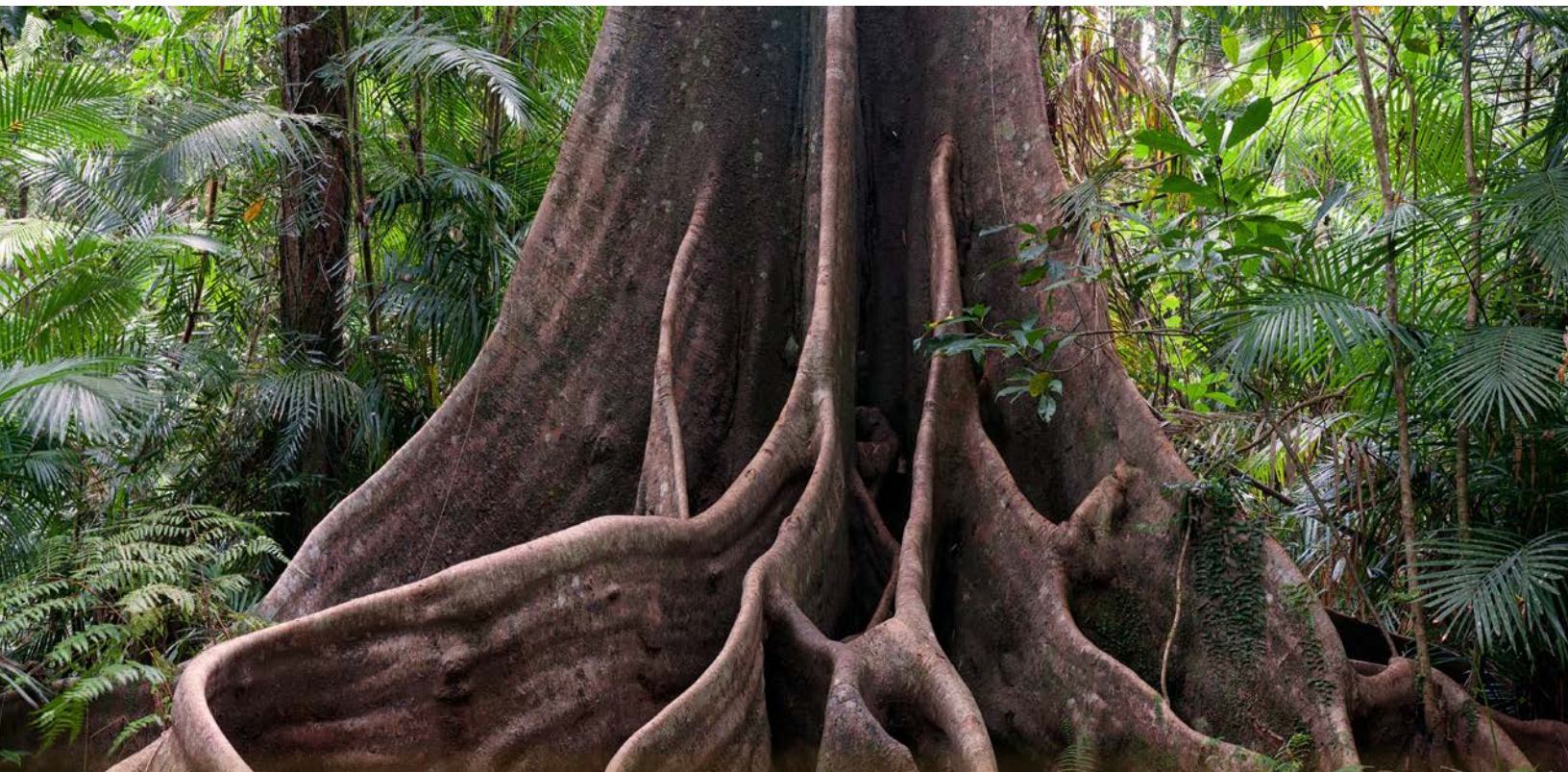
CLIMATE AND THE RAINFOREST

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HOLD THE KEY TO MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

There are only about one million indigenous people living in the Amazon, yet their forests hold **a quarter** of the region's above-ground carbon—**over 30 billion metric tons**. The carbon stored by these forests is equal to nearly 60 percent of the global carbon emissions from 2017. A growing body of research demonstrates that forests under indigenous control maintain lower deforestation rates than other areas, such as in the Amazon where deforestation rates are two to three times lower than other areas.

For indigenous communities of the Amazon, the forests are a hunting ground, university, pharmacy and garden plot; they are the home to an array of people and leaders who are deeply motivated to protect the landscapes that have shaped their livelihoods for millennia, a concept increasingly understood by the global community.

Already committed to protecting the forest; indigenous communities are our natural allies in the fight against deforestation and climate change. Indeed, they are on the frontlines, frequently **sacrificing their lives** to protect our environment.



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POLITICAL WILL AND ACTIVISM:

Today, people are speaking out against climate change **like never before**. 2017 saw more protests, more articles about climate change and a major sway in public opinion around the world. With one notable exception, political leaders have acknowledged climate change and have committed to taking actionable steps to mitigate it. There is also an increased commitment to addressing indigenous rights in many countries in the Amazon Basin. People are ready for change and we at the Rainforest Foundation are ready to act.



TECHNOLOGY PUTS A SPOTLIGHT ON DEFORESTATION:

Illegal deforestation flourishes out of sight, proliferating in the many distant corners of the humid tropics. Even as threats to the forest increase, we can now track threats to the rainforest like never before.

Satellites spool around the globe daily, registering forest loss and other environmental indicators at high resolution. Cellular networks, Wi-Fi and informal Bluetooth networks are springing up at key locations throughout the tropics, and information can flow to and from the field with unprecedented speed and volume. At the same time, smartphones have spread into every corner of the earth, including to all but the most remote portions of the Amazon. These phones are being used to capture evidence of illegal logging and geo-referencing it with the push of a button.

Technology is beginning to give indigenous communities a new advantage to identify deforestation activities on their lands and to take highly targeted actions that **stop the destruction of their forests**.



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.



1. VICTORY PERU

INDIGENOUS MONITORS ELIMINATE DEFORESTATION ON THEIR LANDS

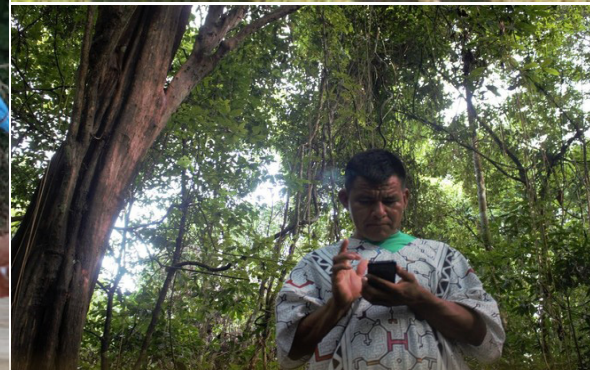
One of our newest partners in Peru, the Peruvian Shipibo-Konibo communities of Patria Nueva and Nuevo Saposoa were losing **five percent** of their Amazonian forests every year to coca growers, who illegally logged primary forest and replaced it with a thin smear of cocaine-grade coca plants. This meant that by the time their children reached their twenties, their forests could have completely disappeared and our planet would have been 7 million tons of atmospheric carbon closer to boiling.

The Rainforest Foundation US partnered with these communities to pioneer a homegrown monitoring program that used emerging data and technology to quickly detect, ground truth and report illegal deforestation, turning **information into action**.

Today, deforestation has been eliminated in both communities; in response, the Peruvian government formally recognized the monitors as official forest rangers. The government pays the communities to expand their forest protection work as part of its program to mitigate climate change through rainforest protection.

The community:

1. Began monitoring river access to stop boats that were bringing illegal logs or drugs in or out of their land;
2. Built a guardhouse at the edge of their ancestral land ensuring that they know who is coming in and out of their forests;
3. Mapped their lands and learned to fly drones to identify incursions to prove that coca growers and illegal loggers were invading their lands and got the government's support in stopping these incursions; and
4. Created eviction plans for those growing coca in their rainforest.



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2. VICTORY GUYANA INDIGENOUS YOUTH BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE

We know how important it is to have **a voice**. That is why together with the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA), the Rainforest Foundation US trained 17 indigenous youth from throughout the rainforest to make videos to advocate for their communities, indigenous rights and environmental issues.

Youth from diverse regions of Guyana came together to learn from experienced video makers as well as to learn about advocacy from the APA. Together they produced 55 short videos highlighting indigenous culture and forest issues. The Rainforest Foundation US and the APA continue to use these youth videos on our social media channels so we can share their perspectives **with the world**.



17 youth in Guyana (eight of which are women) don't just acquire valuable video journalism training, they get to advocate for their communities.

One issue tackled: the crisis of gold mining in the rainforest; other videos focused on documenting indigenous languages and cultures.



REDUCE YOUR MEAT INTAKE.



3. VICTORY PANAMA

1.5 MILLION ACRES MONITORED

Confronting criminals bent on cutting down swathes of tropical forest is dangerous. In 2017, over 200 environmental activists were killed around the world—most of them were indigenous and many of them were protecting their forests. In Panama, illegal loggers and squatters that slash and clear ancestral lands have threatened the indigenous communities that try to protect their forests. This is one reason why indigenous communities in Panama are supplementing new technologies such as drone flights to take photograph and video signs of deforestation with traditional monitoring. By doing this, indigenous monitors discover and document deforestation while [minimizing the risk of human conflict](#). Once documented, communities can submit reports to request help from the government.

In 2017, we expanded this work, partnering with indigenous monitors to protect over [1.5 million acres](#) that would have been almost impossible without drones. But these monitors aren't just using drones to investigate deforestation; they are also flying them to create precise maps detailing their historical territories. The maps are used to continue to press for land rights and bolster legal claims, giving each community a chance to see the entirety of their forest homelands and to guard and pass on their cultural knowledge to younger generations.

"We can see when deforestation began, when they began to fell the trees to turn the forest into pasture land and when they began to clear the trees."

- Carlos Doviassa, indigenous monitor & Rainforest Foundation US Mapping Coordinator.



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



4. VICTORY BRAZIL

CONNECTING ACROSS BORDERS TO PROTECT & NURTURE THE RAINFOREST

Divided by a border they did not create, indigenous communities in Guyana and Brazil don't just have deep historical ties that tie them together; they share the need to protect their forests from the mining that threatens their lands. Today, threats are increasing in Guyana as mining concessions increasingly surround indigenous lands and mining prospectors and Brazilian 'garimpeiros' encroach on the area, aiming to build roads linking the mining sites. On the Brazil side, industrial-scale agriculture is turning indigenous lands into 'islands' of green, facing the increasing impacts of climate change.

Communities in Brazil, who have been fighting for the protection of their lands for years, [shared their struggle](#) with communities in Guyana. Together, they talked about how to monitor their forests but also discussed how to create plant nurseries to recuperate degraded areas on their lands, and provide seedlings for other reforestation efforts in the region.



Today the ties between communities are stronger than ever as communities on either side of the border plan reforestation and rainforest monitoring strategies.



BUYING ETHICALLY SOURCED INDIGENOUS CRAFTS, FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS.



LOOKING AHEAD

PANAMA

With our indigenous partners we are fighting to ensure Panama recognizes that indigenous forests are the best protected forests, and putting years of stonewalling indigenous land rights to an end.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS -- BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Panama's Darien region is probably the most biodiverse region in the country. By protecting indigenous rainforests and communities, biodiversity of plants and animals is also preserved.



GUYANA



Together with the Amerindian Peoples Association, we are working to ensure indigenous communities receive the legal right to all of their ancestral lands.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS—WATER SECURITY

Guyana shares many of its watersheds with other countries meaning protecting Guyana's rainforests doesn't just protect the trees. It protects the watersheds of much of South America.



LOOKING AHEAD

PERU

In 2018 we are expanding our successful pilot of indigenous tech-based forest protection and putting *information into action* in 600,000 acres of rainforest in Loreto, Peru.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS—CLIMATE CHANGE

Forests sequester human made emissions from the atmosphere and release oxygen. This means that forest protection doesn't just protect Peru's rainforests, but helps to stabilize the global climate.



GUATEMALA



Our work training indigenous technicians to analyze satellite data and use drones and GPS-enabled phones to monitor and collect evidence of deforestation in their indigenous territories is a game changer. The Rainforest Foundation US is continuing to train technicians and share our work with indigenous communities throughout Central America.

ONE REASON IT MATTERS—CULTURAL HERITAGE!

Indigenous communities in Central America have defended their rich cultures and languages against incredible odds. By working together to save their ancestral forests, we not only protect their home, we help to safeguard their history and culture.



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 2017

Contributions	\$506,793
Interest and Other Income	\$592
Government Grants	\$862,346
Grants	\$851,566

Total Revenue and Support	\$ 2,221,297
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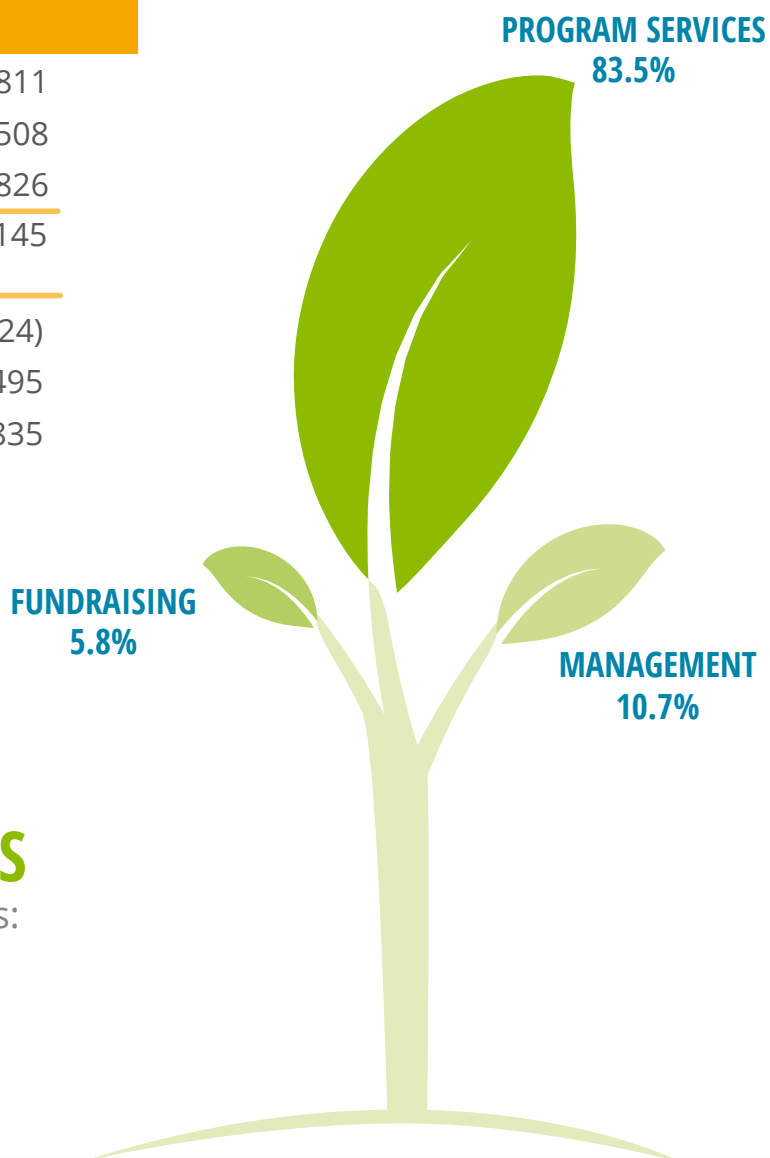
EXPENSES 2017

Program services	\$ 1,931,811
Management	\$246,508
Fundraising	\$134,826
Total Expenses	\$2,313,145

Change in Net Assets	\$ (81,624)
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$964,495
Net Assets End of Year	\$882,835

SUMMARY OF EXPENSES

This is how we spend your donations:



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 1988 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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