FOR A THRIVING AMAZON

AMAZON CONSERVATION STRATEGY 2020–2030

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"No other organization is as committed to the conservation of this critical geography, its people, and its ecosystems. In fact, I'd say Amazon Conservation is the best organization that I have worked with in my 45 years in conservation, including my time as Secretary of the Interior."

— BRUCE BABBITT, *former U.S. Secretary of the Interior*

Two Decades In

For the past 20 years Amazon Conservation has worked on the ground in the southwest Amazon, in both Bolivia and Peru. Our work protecting wild places, empowering local people and putting science and technology to work has been shaped by the people and land where we began. Two decades in, we have protected over 3.3 million hectares of rainforest; provided cutting-edge tools to government and forest users to protect their lands; empowered hundreds of indigenous communities to develop forest-friendly livelihoods; and hosted thousands of scientists pioneering innovative research at our three conservation hubs. **We have made a difference.**

But we must do more, right now, to ensure that the Amazon thrives. This strategy lays out our plan for taking bold conservation actions over the next ten years. Building on our successes and lessons learned, we will scale up our efforts, strategically expanding further across the Bolivian and Peruvian Amazon and the region as a whole. We will do so by bringing greater attention, investment, and solutions to our work.

We protect vast expanses of forests that are home to apex predators such as this puma, seen at our Wayqecha Conservation Hub.

Children of the Queros indigenous community receive hands-on environmental education, learning more about the forest they live in.

New species of fauna and flora are discovered in the Amazon every year, such as the Andinia wayqechensis orchid, discovered in 2016 by our scholarship recipient Carlos Martel at our Wayqecha Cloud Forest Conservation Hub.

© Carlos Martel

We have framed our strategy around Amazon Conservation's unique combination of attributes:

- **THE AMAZON IS OUR HOME.** As local conservationists, we have a direct stake in the region, which gives us a long-term perspective on the history and needs of the forest while remaining agile, resourceful, and responsive to addressing present and future challenges and threats. We are here to stay.
- **WE ARE A TRUSTED PARTNER AND ADVISOR.** We build close relationships with local people and governments, based on mutual trust, understanding, and a commitment to conserving the Amazon.
- **WE ARE SCIENCE-DRIVEN.** We apply science to gain a deeper understanding of the biodiversity and conservation needs of the Amazon, and support cutting-edge scientific research at our three conservation hubs in the Peruvian Amazon.
- **WE INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION.** We provide education, support, and inspiration to the next generation of conservationists, to carry on the crucial work needed to save the Amazon.
- **WE INNOVATE TO TACKLE CONSERVATION CHALLENGES.** We pioneer new ideas and methods to creatively solve the Amazon's complex conservation issues, as well as pilot and deploy the latest in technology with the potential to transform the future of conservation.

The threats to a healthy Amazon are multiplying. **Now is the time to intensify our efforts to stop deforestation,** partner with Amazonian people to find a more sustainable path to their own vision of development, build greater climate resilience, and support good governance to conserve the ecosystems and biodiversity on which we all depend.

Amazon Conservation Alliance

Amazon Conservation's unique alliance is comprised of three organizations in three countries. **Legally separate but functioning like a single entity,** we work on the ground in **Bolivia and Peru,** delivering conservation results that build local and national capacity, and knowledge while devoting our presence in **Washington D.C.** to amplify and extend our work, expanding our scope and connections on an international scale.

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Why Conserve the Amazon?

A healthy Amazon matters to the people who live there, to the countries it encompasses, and ultimately, to the world.

The Amazon contains the **single largest tropical rainforest on the planet.** Covering some 40 percent of the South American continent, it spans more than 673 million hectares in nine countries. Stretching east from the foothills of the Andes Mountains, the upland glaciers, streams, and wetlands feed the Amazon Rivers that wind all the way to the Atlantic Ocean creating the **world's largest river basin.** The Amazon's forests and waters make it the most important terrestrial biome on the planet.

IRREPLACEABLE BIODIVERSITY. The Amazon's diverse forests, rivers, and savannas harbor more than 10 percent of the world's known wildlife species, higher than any other ecosystem. With over 100 new species discovered each year, the Amazon is still revealing its secrets. The western Amazon in particular, where the Andes Mountains meet the Amazon Rainforest, harbors the greatest known richness of species on the planet, and vast areas of forest remain largely intact, connected, and uninterrupted by major infrastructure.

ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS. Not only is the Amazon a biodiversity hotspot, it is also home to a wide range of indigenous groups. Over 400 tribes, each with a distinct culture, language, and territory, continue to live in a largely traditional manner as they have for millennia, relying on forests for daily needs such as food, water, fiber, and medicine. Nearly 100 of these tribes are "uncontacted" or in "voluntary isolation," and the forest offers their only protection.

ECONOMIC ENGINE. The Amazon's waters and forests are a crucial resource for South America's economic development. As much as 70 percent of the South American continent's GDP is produced in areas that receive water from the Amazon. It is estimated that the Amazon's ecosystem services contribute as much as $8.2 billion to Brazil's economy alone.

CLIMATE REGULATOR. The Amazon's role as a climate regulator is critical as the planet gets hotter and drier. Amazon forests store over 150 billion metric tons of carbon—more than a third of all the carbon stored in tropical forests worldwide—and they absorb 2 billion tons of CO_2 each year, representing five percent of global annual emissions.

Illegal gold mining devastates the Peruvian Amazon, deforesting irreplaceable habitats and contaminating the rivers with mercury.

Teetering at the "Tipping Point"

Despite its globally-acknowledged importance, unchecked deforestation is taking the Amazon closer to its "tipping point" where it will no longer be able to generate its own rainfall and support its rainforest ecosystems. Across the Amazon, deforestation has claimed more than 75 million hectares of forest since 1978 and the rate has been steadily increasing, reaching a new peak in 2017. Estimates place the current deforestation level of the Amazon at 17 percent, and its tipping point at 20-25 percent. If the tipping point is surpassed, the largest rainforest on Earth would collapse, becoming—at best—a fire-prone dry savanna.

Hectare by hectare, forests are consumed by the unrestrained expansion of the agricultural frontier, illegal logging, and unmitigated gold mining. Fire follows deforestation, as trees are felled and cleared fields are burned to make way for more ranching and farming. Ill-conceived roads increase the speed and scope of the pressure on the Amazon by opening access to remote forests.

As **climate change** affects global weather patterns, warmer and dryer periods will bring new stresses and make yearly fire seasons even more devastating. The decreased resilience of these ecosystems will further accelerate the Amazon's decline, affecting both nature and people.

In addition to these pressures on the forest, **lack of sufficient natural resource management and governance** coupled with high demand for the region's natural resources has led to poor decision-making on critical issues. And, the **lack of sufficient enforcement to curb illegal activities** further erodes the Amazon's precious and finite resource base.

At risk are the conservation needs of the Amazon's flora and fauna, and the development needs of its people, both of which depend on a healthy ecosystem. **Now is the time to take transformative action to balance the needs of development and conservation before these exponential threats take the Amazon beyond its tipping point, benefitting no one.**

75 million

hectares of irreplaceable forests lost to deforestation

Deforestation is at

17%

in the Amazon

20-25%

deforestation is the estimated **TIPPING POINT**

Main Drivers of Deforestation:

- unrestrained expansion of the agricultural frontier
- illegal logging
- illegal gold mining
- poorly planned infrastructure

"The Amazon is teetering on a tipping point beyond which it won't be able to sustain its hydrological cycle. Beyond that, there will be calamitous effects on its biodiversity and the functioning of the living planet. A holistic approach that manages the Amazon as an interconnected system is imperative to safeguard all that wonder from reaching a point of no return."

— THOMAS E. LOVEJOY, Ph.D, *senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation who coined the term "biological diversity"*

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Our work helps thousands of local people like Omar Espinoza use forest products sustainably that keep forests standing. The açaí berries he is collecting create an income for his family, boost the local economy, and provide a strong incentive for protecting the forest.

From Tipping Point to Thriving

We envision a thriving Amazon that sustains the full diversity of life. In the face of the challenges and in support of this vision, we have set bold goals to help stop deforestation and improve people's well-being by creating a more sustainable path for the region. We will do this through scaling our on-the-ground work in Bolivia and Peru and engaging partners to bolster protection across the greater Amazon.

The southwest Amazon—where the Andes Mountains meet the Amazon Rainforest—harbors the greatest diversity of wildlife on the planet and is the birthplace of the waters that feed the Amazon River basin. Elevations range from 150 to 5,600 meters above sea level, creating a variety of unique ecosystems, and making this a vital refuge for species under pressure from climate change. Most importantly, these areas remain largely biologically connected by a sea of forest spanning tens of millions of hectares. Dozens of indigenous groups, including several uncontacted tribes, reside in the region and depend on its forests and waters to continue their largely traditional lifestyle. Expanding our work in this vital landscape is critical to safeguarding the ecological integrity of the entire Amazon, both for its richness in resources, but also as a testbed for conservation solutions that can be exported for greater impact.

OUR 2030 GOALS

- **Achieve enduring conservation across 50 million hectares of the southwest Amazon** to protect biodiversity and ensure functionality, connectivity, and resilience of the ecosystem for both people and nature.
- **Bolster conservation across the wider Amazon** by sharing key conservation tools and strategies that improve its protection at scale.

Achieving conservation results over the last twenty years has required engaging partners nationally in Bolivia, Peru and across the wider Amazon basin. Strengthening our work at this scale is essential for bringing greater knowledge, political support, and investment to conserve the southwest Amazon, while allowing us to share our expertise across the region and beyond.

Our Approach

To achieve a thriving Amazon, our holistic approach protects wild places, empowers people and innovates through science and technology across our 50-million-hectare landscape. This living laboratory provides the conservation results, lessons learned, and tools that can be built out across the wider Amazon.

Protect critical ecosystems and biodiversity by **creating and strengthening protected areas,** ensuring landscape connectivity essential for species survival, and directly **addressing threats**

Build sustainable and resilient livelihoods that protect standing forests

Strengthen environmental governance that improves protection and management of natural resources

Develop innovative conservation solutions through science and technology

Employ our network of conservation hubs as living laboratories where we carry out and host robust scientific research, develop and test cutting-edge technologies, and facilitate learning and education of the next generation of scientists and conservationists

PROTECT WILD PLACES

Through strong partnerships with communities, government agencies and other organizations, we work hand-in-hand to help guarantee the level of management and conservation required to protect biodiversity, address threats and keep this vital region's ecosystems intact and functional.

To protect some of the planet's last wild places, we will:

- **Directly address the major threats** that endanger biodiversity and people's well-being, including **illegal gold mining** and **logging, road development projects,** and **climate change** impacts such as fires, flooding and species loss.
- Support governments **to create new protected areas and indigenous reserves** that safeguard ecosystems as diverse as the Amazon lowland forest, Beni Grasslands and high Andes wetlands and glaciers.
- Work with indigenous communities and governments to establish protected areas that provide the basis for **sustainable resource use**, and that safeguard the territorial rights of **uncontacted indigenous groups** and others.
- Ensure **connectivity among key protected areas** that strengthens landscape-scale conservation, effectively ensuring these areas remain intact.
- **Strengthen management and protection of key protected areas** by providing the science and technology needed to make better decisions, detect illegal activities, and monitor habitat health.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL:

- **Support the elimination of illegal gold mining and logging** across 2.5 million hectares to protect key corridors connecting Manu and Madidi National Parks.
- **Support declaration** of 3 million hectares of new protected areas and indigenous reserves.
- **Build connectivity and climate resilience** across the 9.5 million hectare Manu-Madidi landscape that links the high Andes with the lowland Amazon forests and grasslands.

PIONEERING BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

Amazon Conservation created the first conservation concession in the world in 2000—Los Amigos—which protects 146,000 hectares of Amazonian forests in Peru. Strategically located, Los Amigos provides a crucial buffer for key uncontacted indigenous territories and one of the largest and most biodiverse national parks in the world, Manu.

This innovative conservation model establishes a public-private partnership for managing public lands for the purpose of conservation. This new way of partnerning with governments to safeguard forests continues to be replicated across the Amazon and around the world.

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EMPOWER PEOPLE

By strengthening the capacity of local people and governments to protect their lands and resources we can help them tap into the potential for the sustainable use of their forests and put the power of conservation into their hands.

If managed well, the millions of hectares of Amazonian forest hold the possibility to create wealth for local people through enterprises that promote and protect standing forests. These places provide an opportunity for communities and governments to work together to conserve their region's irreplaceable biodiversity as part of a sustainable development path.

To empower people to take this path, we will:

- **Strengthen environmental governance** by providing tools and building capacities of governments and communities to work together to reduce threats, improve the context for conservation, and apply the law.
- Work with communities and concessionaires to develop and **improve the sustainable production** of forest products including Brazil nuts, açaí berries and precious tropical hardwoods.
- Directly **train and provide the technology that communities need** to better monitor and manage their resources and improve production.
- Work with forest users to **protect their lands and resources** from threats such as illegal logging, gold mining, and an encroaching agricultural frontier.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL:

- **Improve sustainable production** of açaí, Brazil nuts, and other products across 7 million hectares.
- **Improve the capacity of communities and governments** to protect their lands and natural resources from illegal activities across 29 million hectares.
- **Strengthen fire prevention and management** across 24 million hectares of fire-prone areas, including protected areas, indigenous reserves and forest production areas.

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GROWING LOCAL ECONOMIES AND PROTECTING FORESTS WITH AÇAÍ BERRIES

Through supporting sustainable livelihoods that keep forests standing, we are empowering local communities like Santa Rosa del Abuná in Bolivia. We've partnered with them to improve how they manage the açaí berry—the popular palm fruit dubbed as one of the ten new superfoods in the world.

Using our expertise and technology, we developed a GIS program to locate and manage their açaí trees, designed an innovative safety harness to make harvesting berries less dangerous, and taught best practices for transforming the fruit (which only lasts a few days after being harvested) into pulp and storing it to generate higher profits. In the picture above, our field specialist Mario helps Omar Espinoza, a local açaí harvester from Santa Rosa del Abuná, learn how to use his new safety harness.

Working together has improved incomes across the community, making their lives better and their forests healthier.

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PUT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO WORK

Since its founding, Amazon Conservation, in partnership with hundreds of scientists and universities, has **driven scientific investigation** and monitoring and put innovative technology to use to promote better understanding and inform the decisions and actions that protect the Amazon. The centerpiece of these efforts has been our network of three **world-class conservation hubs** in the Peruvian Amazon, with each facility functioning as a research station, ecolodge, conservation area, and training center. Through these living laboratories, we carry out and **host robust scientific research**; develop and test **cutting-edge technologies**; and **facilitate learning** and education to inspire and train the next generation of scientists and conservationists.

To put science and technology to work for conservation, we will:

- Establish a **comprehensive real-time monitoring system across the entire Amazon that combines field-based and top-of-line remote sensing technology** to improve communities and governments' ability to detect, report, and act upon threats in real-time.
- **Train the next generation of conservationists** to become stewards of the landscape we are trying to protect.
- **Pilot cutting-edge technology at our premier conservation hubs** — such as acoustic monitoring, camera traps, and environmental DNA analysis — to develop tools to monitor ecological health, provide a clear understanding of the current state of biodiversity, and drive innovation in conservation.
- **Conduct scientific investigation and put innovative technology to use** to monitor the Amazon's ecological health, climate change impacts, and the impacts from our efforts, and to promote better understanding and drive conservation decisions and actions.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL:

- **Expand the scale of our real-time satellite and drone monitoring program** and holistically integrate it with capacity building, law enforcement, expanded media coverage, and other monitoring platforms.
- **Develop and facilitate conservation technology programs** at our conservation hubs focused on biodiversity protection, understanding, and threat monitoring that can be replicated across the Amazon.
- **Train 2,000 students and visitors** in citizen science, conservation methods, and field biology, and track the impact of the station alumni.
- **Utilize our conservation hubs as a model climate adaptation corridor,** scientifically documented with partner institutions.

Marcelina Gamarra, a local forest entrepreneur in Peru, learned how to use drones to detect illegal deforestation activities in her forest through our program.

REAL-TIME MONITORING OF DEFORESTATION

The vastness of the Amazon can be a major challenge to keeping it protected. We're using technology to change that. Our monitoring system is helping reduce deforestation by using satellite imagery, drones and GIS to find, analyze, and report deforestation as it happens in real-time. To date, we've exposed over 1 million hectares of deforestation. Not only do we provide this vital analysis in real-time, we are helping bridge the gap between generating information and taking action on the ground.

To achieve this, we partner with Peruvian government officials, park guards, police, judges, and prosecutors to train them on the use of satellite and drone imagery as a legal tool to prosecute offenders. Together we have been able to stop several incidents of illegal gold mining and logging, including in protected indigenous territories.

CONSERVATION HUBS: Living laboratories providing solutions through science, conservation and education

Located where the Andes meet the Amazon, our three conservation hubs are the cornerstone of our work and a vital asset to further the world's understanding of the Amazon. Each conservation hub advances our mission by serving as:

BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH STATIONS Comprising the only network of biological stations in the world arrayed along an elevational gradient from Andean cloud forest to Amazon lowlands, our facilities enable scientists to study the impacts of climate change, monitor the forest's ecological health, and deepen our knowledge of species, habitats, and ecosystems.

CONSERVATION OUTPOSTS Protecting and connecting major conservation areas and indigenous territories, our hubs guarantee our permanent presence and long-term support for conservation in the Amazon.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTERS Our hubs provide a platform for applying research to conservation practice and policy, where students, researchers, and policymakers can learn and explore solutions to conservation challenges.

PREMIER ECOLODGES Our conservation hubs offer a gateway for conservation-minded tourists to explore the Amazon while having their trip support the very forest they visit. We created a social enterprise, Amazon Journeys, as a funding mechanism, where tourism revenue advances our conservation work.

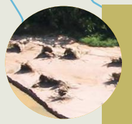
Our conservation hubs, like Wayqecha pictured above, offer picturesque lodging for ecotourists as a way to promote and support conservation.

Carla Mere, a Peruvian biologist and scholarship recipient, installs camera traps at our Los Amigos Conservation Hub to monitor biodiversity health.

Our hubs safeguard the habitats of thousands of species, including the glass frog (centrolene sabini), a vulnerable frog species discovered at our hubs.

Achieving Enduring Conservation across the Southwest Amazon

Our bold strategy increases our impact across the southwest Amazon by ensuring enduring conservation across 50 million hectares. Larger than the state of California, this region contains a distinct set of interconnected iconic landscapes (shown on this map) whose unique characteristics shape our approach in each place, helping expand the scope and impact of our work.



UNCONTACTED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HOMELAND

In this area, Peru is honoring its commitment to protect the traditional territories of uncontacted tribes to safeguard their well-being and the natural resources on which they have relied for millennia. | *5.5 Million Hectares*

MANU-MADIDI BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR

This chain of diverse protected areas interspersed with other lands is anchored by Manu National Park in Peru and Madidi National Park in Bolivia, offering the opportunity to protect the most biodiverse landscape in the world. | *9.5 Million Hectares*

ANDEAN LIVING WATERS

These highland wetlands and cloud forests are key headwaters of the Amazon, providing crucial natural resources for people and nature and safeguarding highland biodiversity. | *9 Million Hectares*

PRODUCTIVE FORESTS

This stretch of land is endowed with an abundance of valuable, renewable natural resources where sustainable forest enterprises can support long-term biodiversity conservation and improved human well-being. | *14 Million Hectares*

AMAZON SAVANNAS

One of the largest savanna complexes in South America and the largest lowland wetlands complex in the world sits in this area of the Amazon basin. | *12 Million Hectares*

BRAZIL
PERU
BOLIVIA
Lima
Cobija
Riberalta
Manu National Park
Los Amigos Conservation Concession
Puerto Maldonado
Machu Picchu
Cusco
Madidi National Park
Trinidad
Lake Titicaca
La Paz

OUR CONSERVATION HUBS

RAMSAR WETLANDS
Designation for internationally important wetlands, as established by UNESCO

100 Km

MANU-MADIDI BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR

Ensure connectivity, functionality and ecological integrity of the most biodiverse landscape in the world

At the heart of the southwest Amazon lies the Manu-Madidi Corridor, **a chain of diverse protected areas anchored by Manu National Park in Peru and Madidi National Park in Bolivia,** embedded within a mosaic of indigenous communities and other protected areas, forestry concessions and private lands. This 9.5 million-hectare stretch of forest traverses a dramatic altitudinal range from the high Andes Mountains to lowland rainforest, creating habitats for a staggering diversity of plant and animal species. Global climate change only increases the Manu-Madidi corridor's significance as its mountain slopes offer a safety net for species to migrate and adapt to new habitat ranges as the climate warms.

THE CHALLENGE

Uncontrolled development, including the paving of Peru's Interoceanic Highway and a boom in informal and illegal gold mining as well as agricultural expansion, threaten to fragment these vast forests. Breaking apart these contiguous habitats would destroy their ecosystem services and prevent wildlife from moving across uninterrupted swaths of forests—vital for species survival. New, poorly-planned roads have the potential to disrupt millions of hectares of lowland tropical forest and upset the cultural integrity of forest peoples. Low monitoring and enforcement capacity by communities and the government, overlapping land rights, and weak government capacity to manage protected areas limit the ability to adequately address these threats.

OUR SOLUTION

Our comprehensive approach harnesses our technical expertise in protected-area management and science as well as close partnerships with national park agencies and other authorities in Bolivia and Peru, including indigenous and rural communities living in and around these areas. **In this landscape in particular, Amazon Conservation's real-time deforestation monitoring system provides key data for law enforcement, decision-making, and management.** We are taking action to:

1. **Strengthen long-term protection and climate resilience** of existing protected areas and indigenous territories by developing management and decision-making tools, training and guiding on their use, and creating forums for greater coordination.

© Oscar Dewhurst

2. **Improve connectivity and shielding of protected areas** through development of forest-friendly enterprises as well as strengthening tenure.
3. **Develop and deploy remote-sensing monitoring systems** to improve the ability of communities and governments to detect, avoid and mitigate impacts from major threats.

OUR APPROACH ICONS: Protect Wild Places | Empower People | Put Science and Technology to Work

UNCONTACTED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HOMELAND

Protect the territories of uncontacted tribes to safeguard their well-being and natural resources

The Peruvian Amazon is home to 15 of the estimated 100 uncontacted indigenous tribes remaining in the world. Uncontacted groups depend on large-scale, intact forest for their very survival. Peru has recognized the human and territorial rights of uncontacted tribes and in 2016 created a legal framework that designates specific lands as indigenous reserves. To date, three reserves have been created and an additional seven are slated for declaration; collectively, they will cover almost 7 million hectares of pristine tropical rainforest.

THE CHALLENGE

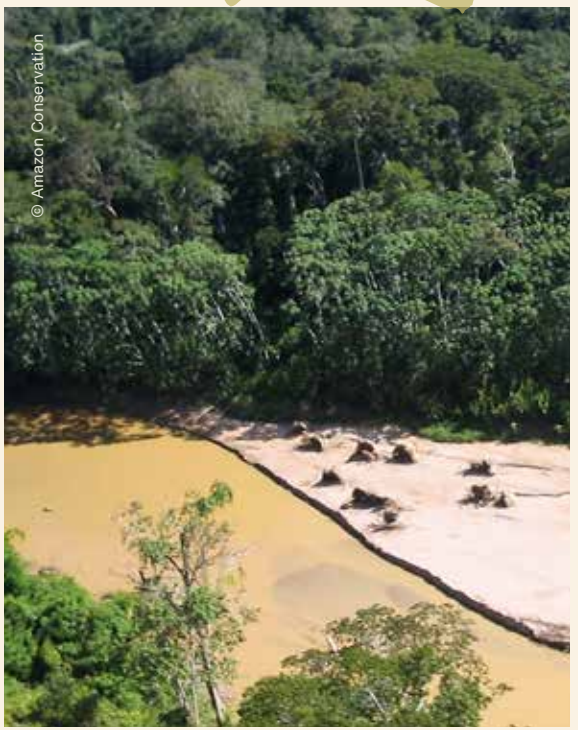
Remote forests inhabited by uncontacted peoples are rich in natural resources. This, paired with isolation from the rest of society and limited monitoring mechanisms to prevent invasion, makes indigenous reserves uniquely vulnerable to invasion by illegal loggers, illegal miners, and drug traffickers, as well as encroachment by road construction and land clearing. These pressures erode the biodiversity on which they depend and puts their lives at risk due to low immunity to western diseases and potential violent conflict with illegal actors and neighboring settlements.

Indigenous peoples are the original guardians of the forest. Creating a sustainable landscape for uncontacted peoples, their neighbors, and the forests on which they both depend requires strengthening the monitoring of growing threats, enforcing the law, fostering ecosystem connectivity, and building a culture of sensitivity.

OUR SOLUTION

Amazon Conservation will apply our field-based capacity in monitoring and protecting the Madre de Dios Territorial Reserve, where our staff are experienced in responsibly handling unplanned contact and sensitizing neighbors to the needs of these populations. **Our work will support 10 Indigenous Reserves covering almost 7 million hectares together with a mosaic of neighboring indigenous communal territories.** We are taking action to:

1. **Strengthen protection of existing and future indigenous reserves** in partnership with Peru's Ministry of Culture to improve threat detection and response to those threats.
2. **Support establishment** of seven new indigenous reserves across Peru.



3. **Build capacity of indigenous communities bordering uncontacted indigenous reserves** to strengthen their forest monitoring capacity and provide them with the technology and legal tools to protect their lands.

PRODUCTIVE FORESTS

Ensure long-term biodiversity conservation and human well-being through sustainable forest enterprises

The Amazon's vast ecosystems are home to millions of people who rely on forest products for food, fiber, and medicine. Both Bolivia and Peru have well-established legal frameworks for sustainable resource management, and provide local people with land and resource use rights through indigenous territories, timber and Brazil nut concessions, and protected areas. Local communities are pioneering enterprises that rely on standing forests, such as harvesting Brazil nuts and açaí berries. This landscape generates 80,000 tons of Brazil nuts annually, representing up to 85 percent of global production. Some Bolivian communities derive more than 80 percent of their annual income from collecting Brazil nuts and açaí berries.

THE CHALLENGE

To realize the potential of these sustainable enterprises for long-term conservation of this area at scale, **we are addressing resource access and land tenure issues, management and production challenges, and direct threats to forests.** Right now, encroachment from illegal logging, gold mining, and agricultural expansion fragments the forest, weakening ecosystems and leading to diminished harvests. Poor market positioning, inefficient production, and lack of business capacity and investment reduces economic stability and eventual viability for many producers. At the same time, the changing climate causes unreliable and reduced production and increases fire risk. If unchecked, these factors will diminish the economic benefits of sustainable use and leave forests vulnerable to destructive practices that only provide short-term financial gains.

OUR SOLUTION

To achieve the long-term conservation of this iconic landscape, which stretches across 14 million hectares, while encouraging and enabling people to use its resources sustainably, **we will provide tools, training and market connections for forest-friendly enterprises.** We will also harness legal and management tools as well as emerging technology to help communities protect their territories. We are taking action to:

1. **Build forest-friendly enterprises with Brazil nut and açaí harvesters** and sustainable wood producers so they can diversify income, integrate climate-smart planning, build business skills and increase market access.

© Ana Caroline de Lima

2. **Scale up sustainable production** by partnering with producer associations, governments, and other organizations, extending the collective reach of smaller enterprises.
3. **Create and strengthen conservation areas** that serve the dual purpose of forest protection and sustainable resource use by solidifying resource rights and land tenure.
4. **Improve producers' abilities to manage and protect their lands** through cost-effective technology and science-based solutions.

OUR APPROACH ICONS: Protect Wild Places | Empower People | Put Science and Technology to Work

ANDEAN LIVING WATERS

Protect and manage the highland wetlands and cloud forests to secure water and protect biodiversity

The mighty rivers of the Amazon basin find their start in the high Andes, where ice and snow fields, wetlands, and cloud forests channel life-sustaining water to the forests, rural communities, and cities below. The Quelccaya Ice Cap, the largest tropical glacier in the world, is a part of this landscape.

Indigenous and traditional rural communities have long coexisted with this landscape which provides them with livelihoods and vital resources. Herds of alpaca and vicuña, a mainstay of communal economies, pick their way through marshy, high-altitude wetlands whose diverse plant life captures both water and carbon. Cloud forests cover some 1.7 million hectares and their dense vegetation captures and slowly releases water to the Amazon basin below. The governments of Bolivia and Peru recognize the critical importance of this landscape, with an extensive system of protected areas covering 1.3 million hectares, including the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary.

THE CHALLENGE

Agricultural expansion and poor management practices threaten ecosystems and livelihoods, and contribute to climate change. Slash-and-burn agriculture of subsistence crops, livestock, and coca reduce forests and degrade water quality, leading to forest fires that often burn out of control. Overgrazing by llamas and alpacas in highland wetlands decreases water availability, and the need for firewood results in further degradation as slow-growing native trees are overharvested. Illegal, informal, and artisanal mining also damages and contaminates watersheds with mercury and other contaminants. Together, these pressures erode the ecosystems that local communities rely on for their survival. Additionally, the warming climate melts glaciers, reducing water availability in the dry season and further exacerbating stresses on ecosystems and communities.

OUR SOLUTION

Drawing on sound science, technology-supported data and traditional knowledge, **Amazon Conservation partners with communities and governments to prioritize critical watersheds and ecosystems and promote their improved management within this 9 million hectare landscape.** We are taking action to:

1. **Improve water and land management to sustain natural resources** by using science and traditional local knowledge, improved grazing practices, and reforestation.
2. **Share best practices** to promote sustainable economic activities including reviving ancestral indigenous agricultural and livestock management practices and implementing fire-prevention approaches.
3. **Establish new conservation areas** and improve the operations and sustainable resource use of existing conservation areas.
4. **Research and share knowledge** with local and national leaders to support climate change adaptation solutions.

© Ronald Catpo

AMAZON SAVANNAS

Conserve one of the largest savanna complexes in South America and the largest lowland wetlands complex in the world

Northern Bolivia is home to the Beni, one of the most extensive savanna ecosystems in South America. **In the vast Beni landscape—more than 11.7 million hectares—is a unique mosaic of savanna, lowland wetlands, forest islands and rivers.** Seasonal flooding and fire play a central role in its ecology. It encompasses most of the *Llanos de Moxos*, the world's largest Ramsar wetlands complex (a renowned designation for globally important wetlands). The landscape is home to globally-recognized wildlife, such as the maned wolf, and a rich diversity of aquatic and avian species, including the Bolivian river dolphin and Blue-throated macaw. The Beni is economically and culturally important, as it is home to large-scale cattle ranching as well as the traditional livelihoods of indigenous communities.

THE CHALLENGE

Legal and illegal expansion of the agricultural frontier is destroying irreplaceable grassland and wetland habitats. Invasive fish compete with ecologically and economically valuable native fish populations. Legal and illegal gold mining contaminate waterways with toxic mercury that affects the health of aquatic species as well as that of humans that depend on this water. Climate change leads to extreme drought and flooding conditions, throwing the ecosystem off balance. Fires, used to manage cattle pasture lands, harm wildlife and quickly expand to damage surrounding forests. And, poorly planned roads are bringing increased uncontrolled development into the savannas.

OUR SOLUTION

Building on our track record of ecological research and management expertise in Amazonian savanna, **we will lead and build partnerships with key stakeholders including indigenous peoples, municipal governments, producer associations, and protected area managers.** We are taking action to:

1. **Develop and implement fire management** strategies with indigenous communities, livestock farmers, and government.
2. **Develop and pilot models** that demonstrate how sustainable resource use can improve livelihoods while also conserving savannas.

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3. **Strengthen management** of officially declared conservation areas through providing management tools and technical training.
4. **Fill the information gaps** needed to better conserve this area through essential science and innovation research on ecosystem function, traditional land management practices, social and ecological aspects of fire, and climate change vulnerability.

OUR APPROACH ICONS: Protect Wild Places · Empower People · Put Science and Technology to Work

One of the best defenses we have against climate change is to keep forests standing. All of our conservation solutions, including our Los Amigos concession pictured here, work together to accomplish this unified goal.

Building a Climate Resilient Amazon

As temperatures rise and precipitation changes, the very landscape in which we work is becoming more valuable as a refuge for species that increasingly need to move to find the right conditions. The southwest Amazon's protected areas and corridors, indigenous territories, and areas under sustainable production provide the size, functionality and interconnectedness needed for plants, animals, and people to thrive. Reinforcing conservation of these still-intact ecosystems—and building the resilience and adaptation capacity needed in the face of climate change—is imperative to keep not just this vital place but the Amazon as a whole from reaching its tipping point.

The urgency of climate change requires that we infuse our work with a focus on climate. All of our on-the-ground efforts are geared towards building greater climate resilience and adaptability. From research that provides key information on the health and changes within ecosystems, to building sustainable use of forests and waters through climate-smart practices, and providing fire-free alternatives to slash and burn agriculture, we are integrating climate change planning and actions into the protection and management of the southwest Amazon.

Strengthening the interconnectivity of high biodiversity areas and forging a sustainable development path are the best hopes for a healthy ecosystem. Our efforts help further Bolivia's and Peru's climate commitments under the United Nation's Paris Agreement, targets from the Convention on Biological Diversity, and U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

"We are achieving large landscape conservation in Bolivia and Peru with a holistic approach that works, and reaching across boundaries to share and scale our impact across the Amazon."

— ENRIQUE ORTIZ, tropical ecologist and co-founder of Amazon Conservation

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Scaling Our Conservation Efforts Across the Amazon

The 50 million hectares where we focus our on-the-ground efforts is a microcosm of the wider Amazon, and a living laboratory for finding solutions that are applicable well beyond our boundaries. We scale our impact by engaging and bringing together partners at the national level in Bolivia and Peru, as well as across the entire Amazon. Leading national and international collaborations also brings greater knowledge, political support, and investments back to our focus area in the headwaters of the Amazon.

BOLIVIA AND PERU: GOING FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL

We work with national governments in Bolivia and Peru to improve the conditions for conservation in each country. Through our longstanding partnerships with governments, NGOs, communities, and academic institutions, our actions and impact on the ground are helping drive national-level policy changes. For instance, our pioneering efforts introduced conservation concessions as an innovative public-private tool for forest protection, and our current real-time deforestation monitoring work has helped create the governmental framework in Peru that uses cutting edge technology to systematically take action against illegal deforestation.

CONNECTING TO THE WIDER AMAZON

We are committed to bolstering conservation across the Amazon by sharing our approach to managing protected areas, building sustainable and resilient livelihoods, and applying science and innovative technology. Rather than doing it alone, we seek out local partners like us and build cross-boundary opportunities to bring this approach to scale, which avoids duplication of work and enables best practices to be implemented across international borders. For instance, we are extending our real-time deforestation monitoring using satellite imagery across the entire Amazon basin. We do this by building the capacity of local partners to pilot this technology, verifying its effectiveness and impact, and bringing it to scale in their own countries.

ADVANCING CONSERVATION ACROSS THE AMAZON
Our on-the-ground work across 50 million hectares in Bolivia and Peru is driving national-level policies that promote conservation. This approach is creating a comprehensive model that will help our partners bolster conservation in other Amazonian countries.

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Local people like Luis, a Peruvian artisan and farmer in the high Andes village of Upis, are already seeing the effects of climate change in their daily lives. We are working on building climate-resilient conservation solutions to help thousands of people like him adapt and protect their homelands.

The Time To Act Is Now

There is no time to waste to keep the Amazon from reaching its tipping point.

The effort we make over the next ten years will be critical to its survival. **That is why we are building and strengthening our partnerships, scaling our work, and innovating to combat threats, conserve biodiversity, and foment the sustainable development of the region.**

Our goals to go deeper and broader are ambitious because the stakes are high. By achieving enduring conservation across 50 million hectares of one of the Amazon's most biodiverse areas, we will help both people and nature reap the full benefits of a healthy ecosystem and a strong forest-based economy. And, by bolstering conservation across the basin through sharing our conservation strategies and solutions, we can help stop deforestation, species extinctions, and build a more climate resilient Amazon.

That is why our strategies to protect wild places, empower people, and put science and technology to work for conservation are the best pathway that Amazon Conservation can offer to reach a thriving Amazon for us all.

But we can't do it alone. We need the support of people who care, like you.

Whether you want to put your passion and commitment for nature forward through making a financial contribution, starting a partnership, volunteering your time and expertise, sharing content on social media, or visiting the tropic's best ecolodges to see conservation in action, we stand ready to work together.

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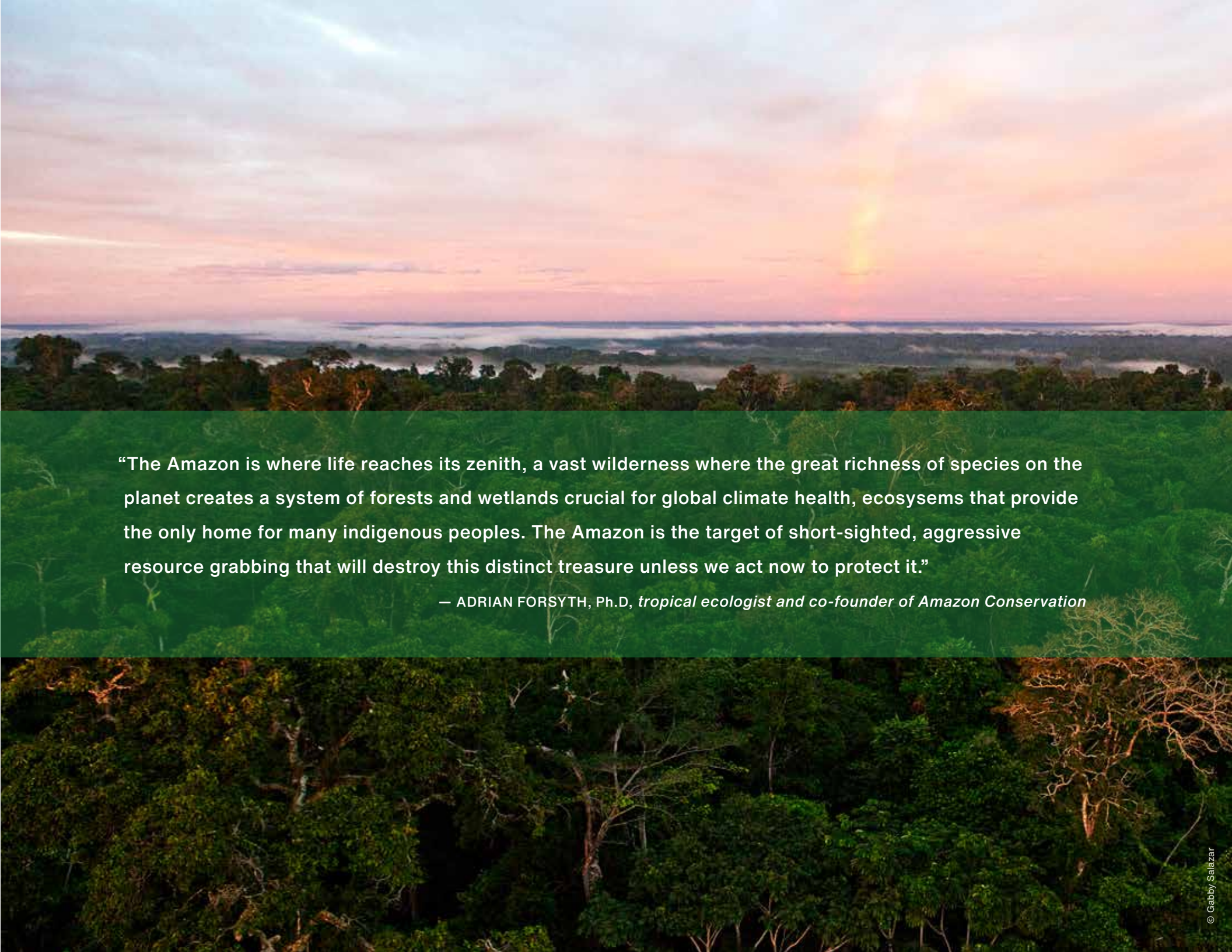

"The Amazon is where life reaches its zenith, a vast wilderness where the great richness of species on the planet creates a system of forests and wetlands crucial for global climate health, ecosysems that provide the only home for many indigenous peoples. The Amazon is the target of short-sighted, aggressive resource grabbing that will destroy this distinct treasure unless we act now to protect it."

— ADRIAN FORSYTH, Ph.D, *tropical ecologist and co-founder of Amazon Conservation*

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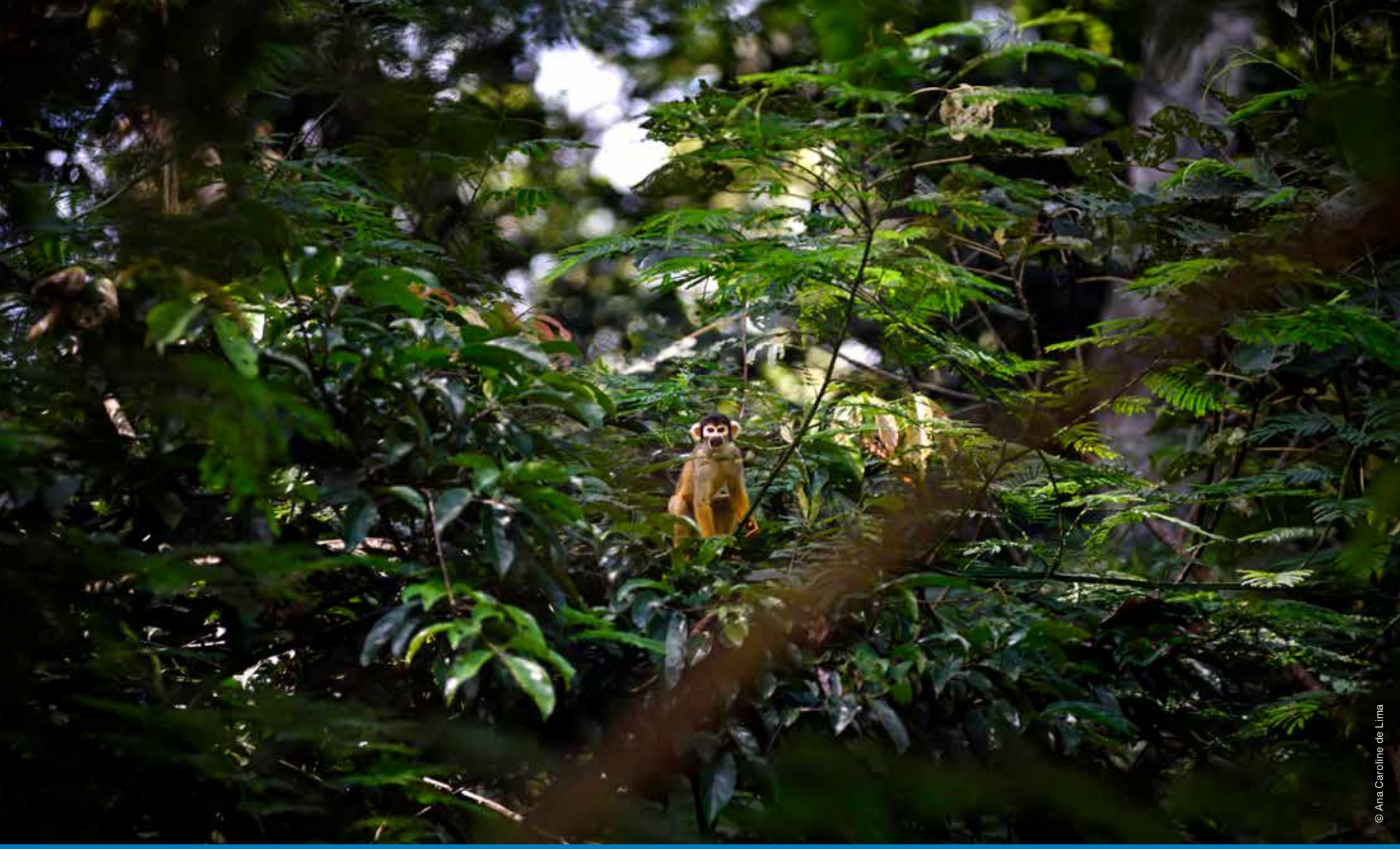

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