



AMAZON PROGRAMME:

biodiversity, indigenous peoples and the source of the Amazon River

Model Experience

Purus: the Amazon in its original state

Protecting an entire country with the richest tropical forests in the world would seem unattainable. But in a way, this has been accomplished in Purus thanks to the joint efforts of WWF, the authorities and local peoples.

One of the main Amazon tributaries, the Purus River, originates in southeastern Peru, in the heart of one of the most diverse and unexplored Amazon forests. An area of over 2,7 million hectares of forests (larger than El Salvador) extends along it, creating the conservation complex formed by the Alto Purus National Park (the largest in Peru) and the Purus Communal Reserve, officially created in 2004 with the support of WWF Peru, among other important institutions.

The Purus complex is an enormous tropical forest region with cedar and mahogany trees that give shelter to jaguars,



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monkeys and peccaries; is the place of origin of rivers inhabited by giant otters and pink dolphins and also houses at least eight ethnic groups, including an unknown amount of indigenous people in voluntary isolation. In short, it is a vast portion of the Amazon in its original state.

Stewards of the forest

For years, activities such as illegal logging and poaching had exerted pressure on these unique forests and their biodiversity, disturbing indigenous communities and, even worse, generating inconceivable impacts upon isolated populations.

In order to put an end to this and guarantee the conservation of Purus, in 2004 the government established the national park and communal reserve, which was internationally acknowledged by the Gift to the Earth Award, granted by WWF to the President of Peru. Since then, WWF Peru has supported control and surveillance actions carried out by the park and reserve authorities, equipping

Protected areas and local involvement

The protection of natural areas is one of the most effective means to conserve our biodiversity, as long as the local population is actively involved. WWF Peru takes this premise into the field, where it works side by side with the population, local authorities and partners, promoting an inclusive participation model that guarantees concrete and lasting success in some of the most important areas in the Peruvian Amazon.

and helping them implement seven strategic control posts and form an efficient parkguard team conformed by experienced technicians and local indigenous peoples with broad knowledge of the rivers and forests which they now protect.

Today, the indigenous communities have formed the organization ECOPURUS with the intention of directly assuming the surveillance actions of the reserve and their community lands, complementing the actions carried out by the park and reserve authorities who have jointly controlled illegal logging and restored tranquility in the forest.

From the abuse of resources to their sustainable management

Local populations are the natural guardians of the richness in Purus. This is the reason why WWF Peru works with Junikuni and Sharanahua communities, among others found in the buffer zone surrounding the park, and with the local indigenous federation,



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involving their leaders, strengthening their capacities and promoting their traditional practices of sustainable resource use. In turn, indigenous community members assume their role as sustainable fishing and hunting promoters, monitoring their own use of resources in key sectors in order to guarantee the sustainable management of the goods offered by the forest.

In a short time, the use of an approach prioritizing the participation of the indigenous and local peoples has not only achieved the mitigation of the main existing threats, but also consolidated a shared management system of the natural resources that make this Amazon region unique.



Key facts:

- The Alto Purus National Park is home to some of the last indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in the world.
- With WWF support, authorities, indigenous communities and local partners protect one of the largest national parks in the Amazon.
- The Mashco Piro Territorial Reserve, established before the national park was created, is now part of the latter.

We work with: Jefatura del Parque Nacional Purus, Ejecutor del Contrato de Administración de la Reserva Comunal Purus (ECOPURUS), Asociación Peruana para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (APECO), ProNaturaleza, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Federación de Comunidades Nativas del Purus (FECONAPU) and Purus indigenous communities.

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