

# IMPACT

## 2020 REPORT

How COVID-19 Changed  
Our Strategy in 2020

The Long View:  
A Conversation  
with Céline Cousteau

Preventing the  
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# It's Time for Boldness 2020 –

**A YEAR UNLIKE ANY OTHER!** I think most everyone will be happy to have this year in the rearview mirror.

As I write this, Santa Ana winds are today threatening southern California with more fires. Hurricane Eta's devastation across Central America in November capped a record-breaking storm year that forced us to use the Greek alphabet after exhausting the English alphabet with the most named storms in history. We cannot forget the images of the fires that burned some 4 million acres across California and the western US in the biggest and most destructive season on record, turning skies eerily orange in San Francisco and sending ash all the way to New York. Over 5 million acres of the Amazon were burned this last year, another dire record. This climate destruction all took place in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic that has killed over 270,000 people in America (more than all deaths from Vietnam, Korean, and Iraq wars combined) and over 1.5 million across the globe. We lost our own dear colleague Leila Ruiz from our Brazil team to the virus last month. The pandemic has changed all of our lives in so many ways.

Yet I am feeling stirrings of real hope as we come out of this very dark time. In 2020 so much important work was done to lay the runway for tremendous climate action in 2021, even if that work didn't dominate news headlines. In this Impact Report, we describe some of what Forest Trends was able to achieve this year despite the Coronavirus (see page 4).

As we look forward into 2021 and beyond, these are some things to keep your eyes on:

- Signals in the recent US election results that were below the surface, but that are truly transformational. Climate and the environment were squarely on the ballot this year for the first time ever. Gallup polls found that close to 65 percent of



Credit: Julio Angulo Delgado

*New modeling from climate scientists shows that if we get emissions down to zero, forests and other natural carbon sinks quickly would begin reversing the damage by absorbing excess carbon out of the atmosphere. In other words: climate change can be stopped.*

the US public favored taking care of the environment, even at the expense of economic development. And having John Kerry, a great friend of forests, appointed to be the Climate Czar and sitting in the National Security Council is a very big and systemic change.

- A wave of “net zero” emissions commitments from thousands of companies and investors, pointing to sustained leadership from the private sector that feels quite different from years past. Actors with net zero commitments now represent an incredible 25 percent of global emissions and over 50 percent of global GDP.
- A ten-fold increase in cities and regions around the world establishing net zero emissions targets. China committing to net zero emissions by 2050, which we never would have imagined as recently as last year.
- A powerful youth movement has issued a clarion call for action on climate. Amazing to think that Greta started her “Fridays for Future” sit-ins less than a year and a half ago, declaring she was not going to do her homework if we grownups did not do ours!

This is a strong foundation to build on as we set our sights on significantly ramping up our action and ambition. And forests are in the middle of those ambitions and any serious climate response. Please turn to page 8 for an overview of our key priorities for 2021.

So let’s get moving. We are discovering how vital healthy natural systems are for planetary functions like climate stability and water security. Forest products like sustainable timber and bioplastics offer society renewable alternatives to carbon-intensive building materials like steel and cement. Let’s include this “natural infrastructure” in our planning just as we do built infrastructure like our schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges.

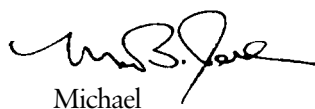
Tropical forest ecosystems including the Amazon and Congo Basins are the global storehouse of biodiversity and the world’s largest undiscovered cornucopia of new foods and medicines. We have seen with COVID-19 how exploiting and damaging natural systems can trigger global pandemics (see page 14). Let’s instead invest in forest conservation at the same time that we upgrade our health systems and commodity supply chains.

The indigenous and local communities who have for millennia been the stewards of these forests and natural systems are the keepers of biodiversity knowledge, and equally importantly, our teachers on how to live in harmony with natural systems. Let’s recognize that they are the “first responders” to the climate crisis.

Science tells us we have only nine years to turn this climate crisis around. The need for action is now and the effort must be bold and massive.

There is no greater gift or legacy to leave our children and grandchildren. Please join us.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

  
Michael



# In 2020 How COVID-19 Changed Our Strategy

**You can't run conservation trainings, gather partners, meet with government ministers, or conduct scientific field work during a pandemic—at least not the way you normally do.**

COVID-19 required Forest Trends' staff to do some quick re-strategizing when it became clear in March that travel and in-person contact would not be possible for many months.

The pandemic forced us to be creative. Since we can't provide training and technical support in-person to our partners right now, we now do it all virtually: e-learning courses, podcasts, CNN-style interviews with experts, webinars, YouTube 360 videos, and more. We use WhatsApp to stay connected with indigenous leaders in South America.

We've focused on developing our pipeline, so that projects are "shovel-ready" when windows of opportunity open. We've reallocated resources toward much-needed research and development. We're engaging with governments so that economic recovery plans are truly "green" and put countries on a path toward a safe climate.

The pandemic has taken its toll. Last month, we mourned the passing of our dear colleague Leila Ruiz from COVID-19. Other team members have taken sick but thankfully recovered. We have done our best to support our team as they juggle working from home with caring for their families and their own wellbeing. Here's how we pivoted this year in response to the pandemic:

## **COVID-19 emergency relief for indigenous territories in Brazil**

Forest Trends is not an emergency relief organization, but in the Brazilian Amazon, we had to become one this year. Mortality rates for indigenous peoples in Brazil were double the national average in 2020. Access to healthcare

is poor to nonexistent: indigenous villages in the Amazon are on average 315 kilometers from an ICU bed in the Brazilian public health system. Food security and information about pandemic prevention became a major issue for some communities, as indigenous territories closed to outsiders and government services proved to be unpredictable.

- Forest Trends and our partners acquired and safely distributed food, cleaning supplies, and more than 30,000 masks to indigenous communities.
- We backstopped food security, securing funding for traditional gardens and agroforestry systems, and created new sourcing partnerships and food distribution systems.
- We launched a COVID-19 prevention campaign, and shared security protocols and opportunities to access emergency funds with all of our indigenous partner organizations.
- Communication between communities has been interrupted, so we've secured resources to work on identifying connectivity gaps, install internet access points, and develop training and informational materials to improve health care at the village level.

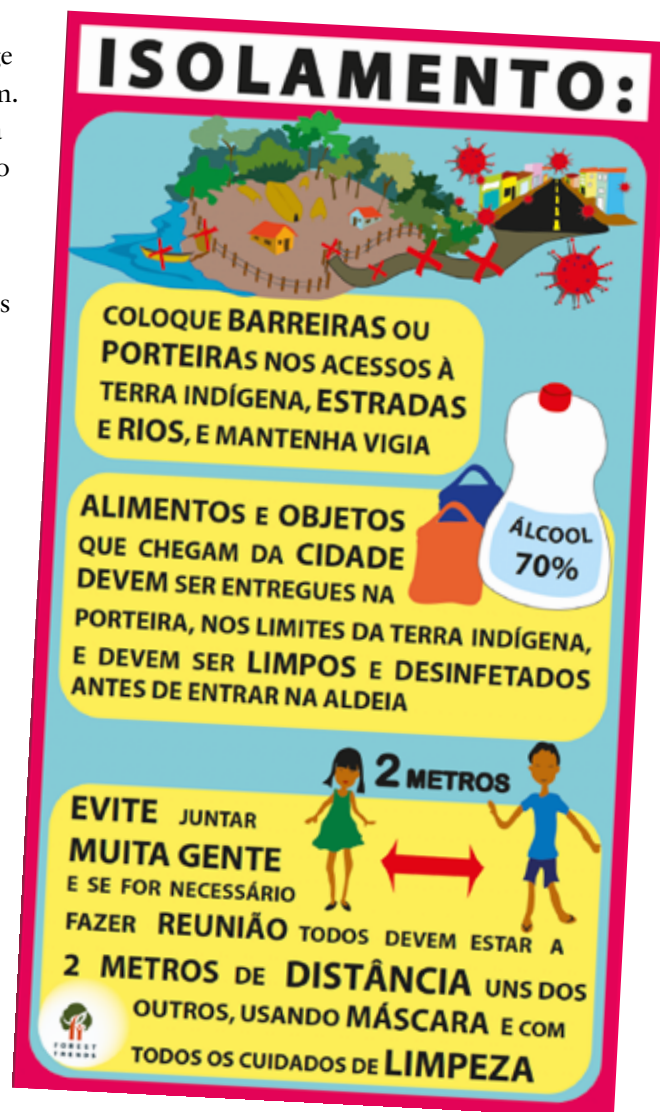
### Positioning water security investments in Peru's economic recovery

In Peru, our work focuses on ensuring that officials, engineers, water utilities, and communities have the know-how and information to manage natural landscapes in a way that guarantees clean, reliable water supplies for years to come. But several regions remain under a quarantine and state of emergency, and there are significant risks associated with social contact, especially for remote communities. All the scientific field work and capacity building we had planned for 2020 got a lot more complicated.

- We brought our capacity building strategy fully online in 2020, training more than 1,000 people to date. Online engagement has been exceptional: we've tripled attendance compared to pre-pandemic trainings.
- We introduced a protocol for all field visits to protect vulnerable, isolated communities from the virus.
- We've built a pipeline of over \$66 million in natural infrastructure investment projects as of Q3 in 2020. Ecological restoration and conservation need to be part of Peru's national economic recovery plan: these projects are fundamental to public health and good for rural economies. Forest Trends and partners can make sure projects are on the shelf and ready to go.

### Crafting scaling strategies for forest investments post-pandemic

- To keep up momentum in light of international climate negotiations being postponed to 2021, together with our partners including leaders from the United Nations REDD Programme and conservation groups the



*Forest Trends and partners created a COVID-19 information and prevention campaign for isolated indigenous communities in the Amazon.*





Emergent Forest Finance Facilitator, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Architecture for Trees, we launched the “Green Gigaton Challenge.” We’ve set an audacious — but achievable — goal of securing funding for one gigaton of emissions reductions transacted from tropical forests every year by 2025.

- We announced a new partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation to plant one million trees and strengthen indigenous livelihoods in the Brazilian Amazon over the long term, after emergency relief winds down.
- We grew our research and advisory on zero deforestation supply chains for companies and investors — a critical piece of the puzzle for ending runaway forest loss and degradation that could trigger the next pandemic.

### Helping decision-makers navigate choppy waters

Providing robust information for decision-makers is even more important during this very fluid time. Governments and companies are staying the course on climate change and deforestation, but COVID-19 has created new uncertainties. Demand for our data and insights on forest-risk commodity trade, carbon markets, and corporate sustainability is higher than ever.

- We’ve focused on tracking and communicating reliable information on climate action throughout the pandemic. (2020 hasn’t been a “lost year” for climate the way many expected! See page 22.)
- We’re working behind the scenes advising governments on new legislation to tackle illegal deforestation, and companies on climate and sustainable supply chain strategies.

*In Peru, the Leadership Program for Women in Water Management moved its trainings online.*

- We’ve been able to focus on research and development, putting together the largest collection of resources in Latin America on nature-based

solutions for water security. This is a region where basic scientific data on things like precipitation aren’t always available. Nor is good information on working with Andes-specific ecosystems or indigenous water management practices widely available. With our partners, we’re filling that gap. 🌱







Credit: Omar Jhair Gómez Rengifo

# How We Work

**B**Y DESIGN, FOREST TRENDS stays small, nimble, and committed to working in partnerships. This means we can move quickly when opportunities arise, and maximize our impact through cooperative action. It also means that a key legacy of our work is the capacity built with our partners around the world.

## WE ARE:

### INCUBATORS OF THE NEXT BIG IDEA

We specialize in demonstrating and disseminating cutting-edge business models, tools, and strategies for conservation. For example, we created the first global standard for biodiversity offsets, and partnered with the Surui people of Brazil to launch the world's first indigenous carbon project. Our Incubator laid the foundation for Peru's ground-breaking investments in nature-based solutions.

### COALITION BUILDERS

For 20 years, we've been convening diverse coalitions, partners, and communities of practice that have shaped conservation policy and finance in dozens of countries and companies worldwide.

### KNOWLEDGE CREATORS

Transparent information is key to the transition to a green global economy. Decision-makers rely on our data and analysis of environmental markets, global trade in high-risk timber, and conservation finance.

### CONNECTIVE TISSUE

Behind the scenes, we're working to create the enabling conditions for investments in nature and green growth - whether through advancing science, identifying regulatory bottlenecks, or acting as a trusted advisor to governments and businesses.







**2020 has been a rollercoaster.**

We expect 2021 to be a rocket ship. Here are the key priorities we'll be pursuing when January arrives.

**1. Climate action and environmental conservation must be part of economic recovery packages.** Conservation investments are one of the best defenses against future pandemics (see page 14). They are also an infinitely more sustainable choice for rural economic stimulus than ramping up mining and other natural resources exploitation. We're preparing pipelines of investment-ready projects as stimulus spending gets underway in the places where we work. We'll also work with the incoming Biden administration and Congress on policy and regulation for climate. This includes a focus on international climate leadership as well as internal investments in domestic "natural infrastructure" that support climate, water, food, and job security.

**2. Build a public-private coalition to secure half of the global emissions reductions the planet needs, by funding tropical forest protection.**

Tropical forest countries need assurance that there will be a long-term return on investment if they protect their forests instead of converting them for development. The Green Gigaton Challenge, launched by Forest Trends and four partners in November 2020, provides that signal. It aims to mobilize funds for transacting at least one gigaton of high-quality jurisdictional REDD+ emission reductions per year by 2025 (see page 23).

**3. Help companies and investors deliver on their deforestation and climate pledges through market intelligence and strategic advice.** As the private sector hastens to eliminate climate and deforestation risks from their portfolios, we'll build out our environmental markets and finance information services to meet the need for decision-critical insights and data. Efficient markets need transparency – which happens to be our specialty. Forest Trends is also in a unique position to both advise investors on a deforestation-free





portfolio, and to work with forest communities and jurisdictions to access sustainable finance that meets their needs.

**4. Be a tireless ally to indigenous and ethnic communities, the planet's best guardians of forests.** In the Amazon, we'll remain a steadfast partner of indigenous groups as they defend their territories from illegal incursion by loggers, miners, and ranchers. Our strategy is to support strong indigenous territorial governance and economic opportunities for sustainable forest-based enterprises, like Brazil nuts, coffee, and açai (see page 16). Equally important is helping women artisans grow their businesses: the artisan sector is the second-largest employer in the developing world after agriculture. In Myanmar, we'll work with ethnic minority groups to strengthen local management of forests, as these communities strive to determine their own futures after Myanmar's decades-long civil war. In the Mekong region, our focus is on ensuring smallholders have secure land rights and sustainable livelihood options, so that forests can count on having local defenders for the long haul. On the

international stage, we'll advocate for full recognition of the role indigenous peoples play in protecting global carbon sinks, and of the importance of traditional knowledge as we rebuild our relationship with nature in the 21st century.

**5. The world's attention is on forest loss in the Amazon, but the Mekong is also a "hotspot" of deforestation—and that's where we're ramping up efforts.** In 2021 we're focused on the commodity trade that drives deforestation there: timber, rubber, sugar, bananas, coffee, and pepper. We'll continue to work with governments in both countries exporting these products (Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand) and importing them (the EU, UK, US, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and China) to end the global trade in products linked to illegal deforestation.

**See yourself in any of these strategies?** At Forest Trends, we believe that building strong, diverse coalitions is the only way the world will solve the big problems. To learn more or partner with us, please get in touch. 🌱



# The Long View

The Javari River, Amazonas, Brazil.

## A Conversation with

*Beto Borges, Director of Forest Trends' Communities and Territorial Governance Initiative, recently sat down (virtually) with Céline Cousteau, humanitarian, environmental activist, filmmaker, and founder of the Javari Project for a conversation on her work with indigenous communities in Brazil.*



**BETO BORGES:** Thank you for being here, Céline. You've recently created a film, *Tribes on the Edge*, about the struggles of indigenous peoples in the Javari Valley, Brazil, and you've founded the Javari Project, an impact campaign born of the film. I

think both you and the Javari Project have a beautiful story. Could you tell us how your journey with filming *Tribes on the Edge* started?

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** The Javari territory in Brazil is the second largest in the country, about the size of Austria or Portugal. As far as I know, there are six contacted tribes. There are also the largest number of uncontacted peoples in the entire Amazon living in this region. Which makes them very vulnerable to outsiders. And this is a region that has been declared irreplaceable in terms of biodiversity by the IUCN.

I first went to the Javari in 2007. That's when I met Beto Marubo of the Marubo people. He is the reason I created the film. In 2010, Beto [Marubo] wrote me an email asking me to tell their story, telling me they trusted me with it.

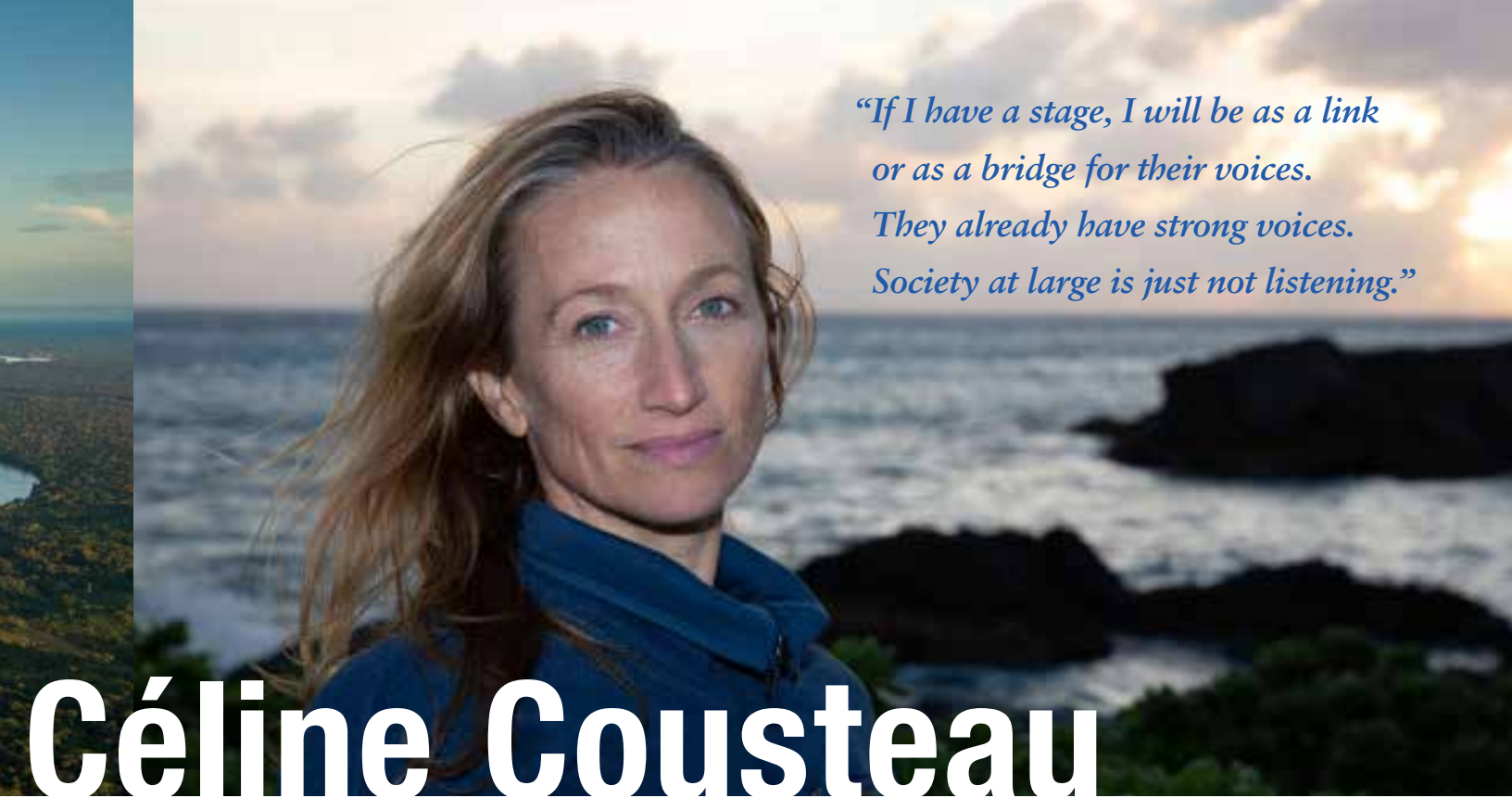
So I returned to the Javari in 2013 to begin filming. *Tribes on the Edge* has become much bigger than I ever thought it would. Back then, I imagined it would be an 8 to 10-minute film. It's now a 78-minute film and we've done numerous grassroots screenings with a big focus on educational outreach. I really believe in order to do some good, I have to honor my promise to them to tell their story, and I've chosen to do more. Thus, the film has become a catalyst for the Javari Project.

**BETO BORGES:** What's the situation there now? What is threatening the people of the Javari?

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** The threats are very much like the ones elsewhere in the Amazon: illegal deforestation, illegal gold mining, which pollutes the rivers, natural resource depletion, illegal fishing and hunting. There are aggressive interactions between illegal trespassers and the indigenous peoples themselves.

On top of that, there is an administration in Brazil that's not very friendly towards indigenous rights and the environment. Even though Javari peoples have land that has been designated as their territory, there's not much defense or support from the government.





*“If I have a stage, I will be as a link  
or as a bridge for their voices.  
They already have strong voices.  
Society at large is just not listening.”*

# Céline Cousteau

It’s also the age-old story of outsiders coming in and bringing their diseases, which is even more evident now with COVID-19. The message I get from them is: we’ve seen this before. And it’s because they saw malaria come in, tuberculosis, hepatitis.

The less obvious threat to people in the Javari is that when some indigenous people leave the territory, they don’t really have a good support system. There are not a lot of resources and opportunities available to them. So they go to the border town of Atalaia do Norte, which is a challenging place, to say the least, and unfortunately, some of them fall into illegal activities as sources of income because there is no alternative. This is detrimental to their own land. If provided with other options and solutions for economic self-determination, they would be more ready for alternatives.

**BETO BORGES:** Tell us a little more about this role you have adopted as you tell the story of the Marubo and other peoples of the Javari.

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** At the Javari Project, we’re not saying that we think the future of the Javari should look a certain way – we want to help its people preserve their cultures and achieve the future they’re looking to build. I don’t come from there [the Amazon], I won’t live there. I won’t pretend to be anything except a very steadfast ally. And that has been something that, in recent years, I have grown to understand.

It’s been a journey to feel confident about what my role is and what it means, being vocal. Saying, “I don’t suffer the same things that they do, but I stand with them to defend and protect [their lives and homeland].” And where they cannot be, if I have a stage, I will be as a link or as a bridge for their voices. They already have strong voices. Society at large is just not listening.

**BETO BORGES:** What has stood out in the process of becoming a true ally? How do you develop a reciprocal partnership with local and indigenous peoples, instead of bringing in your own agendas and hopes?

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** The type of ally I have become is one who is constantly checking my reason for doing this work. It is always on my mind that I am part of this network for them. A main part of our partnership is about listening and asking. Sometimes it’s difficult, even with the best of intentions.

That’s part of the reason I have to ask myself, “What am I getting out of this? Am I motivated by ego in any way, or is my motivation for them?” Regardless of what the answer is, I think that it’s important to understand this and ask yourself these hard questions.

Beto Marubo is the one that teaches me to calm down when I’m too anxious about what’s happening to them. He’s become like my little brother. I call him, and I say, “Do you need protective gear? Do you need this or that?”



Credit: Diego Perez

*Participants in Forest Trends' Capacity Building Program for Territorial Governance.*

*"Knowing where to begin is a huge challenge in many ways, when indigenous peoples are facing so many threats at once."*

Can I do more?"

And he says, "Céline, *calma*. This problem didn't happen overnight. You by yourself are not going to solve it overnight. You're here for a marathon, so take your time." He helps me remember where my place is in all of this. Change is going to take a really long time, and we need to pace ourselves.

**BETO BORGES:** We connected earlier this year and have discussed the future of the Javari Project and an evolving partnership between your team and Forest Trends' Communities and Territorial Governance Initiative. It would be great to hear your thoughts on what we are building together.

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** We have come to understand that helping bring economic value to the Javari through the people that are there will be one of the ways to support their cause and contribute to conserving their forest homelands. One of the best ways to do that is to help people in the Javari strengthen sovereignty over their territories.

That's why we came to Forest Trends, to learn about territorial governance and how to have the right conversations that will lead to actionable plans for indigenous communities.

Partnerships are essential to us getting this work done. To me, the authenticity with which people do what they do is more important than the resources they might have. Much like my team and I have built trust and credibility with people in the Javari, investors, and other collaborators, we recognized that Forest Trends has done the same where it works and has the expertise we need in a partner on the Javari Project.

**BETO BORGES:** Knowing where to begin is a huge challenge in many ways, when indigenous peoples are facing so many threats at once.

Forest Trends has developed a capacity building program on what we call territorial governance. It connects indigenous participants with key stakeholders, brings together indigenous groups, and helps them develop a life or vision plan over a yearlong process to give everyone involved more clarity about what is needed for them to meet their self-determined goals.

We have to trust that process, because, like you and Beto Marubo say, this is a marathon. If we want to help support lasting change that helps people and the environment long term, we need to be thinking about both urgent needs and the long view. The Javari is an amazing example of a place with so much richness: the people, their cultures, the forests they have been protecting for centuries.





*The Javari River, Amazonas, Brazil.*

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** The fact that your territorial governance process is replicable resonates with me a lot. I love the notion of “open source” in the tech world and I feel that’s what we should be doing as cause-focused organizations and people. If we figure something out, we owe it to all causes and peoples to give it away. It’s a real issue I have with our sector: we’re all looking for resources and end up competing against each other sometimes. And that for me, is a real source of sorrow, even though I understand it.

**BETO BORGES:** In the case of the Javari, hopefully the territorial governance program can be a catalyst for the other changes that need to happen: more direct support from government agencies, healthcare, ensuring their rights are in place, promoting food security over time. People often think that developing economic alternatives is the cure-all. That’s important, but it’s not a silver bullet.

I see our partnership as a chance to demonstrate how efforts like this can work. How reciprocity and respect and the long-term view look on the ground.

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** I agree, the Javari is a place of incredible potential. And I like how you speak of the life plan being a process, because you can’t just show up to do a workshop, then disappear. Everything is connected, including the threats these communities are facing.

What I still find amazing about working in the Javari is that there’s no panic button there. In many of these indigenous cultures, there’s always the long view in sight, future generations.

This principle can become such a part of you that there’s no other way of thinking. Work like this touches people’s lives, not just those we’re helping, but the people who are helping us, and that is part of the process, whether it’s “our project” or not.

**BETO BORGES:** An awareness of interconnectedness that is so much needed.

**CÉLINE COUSTEAU:** So much needed. It’s a gift – all these moments in my work that have added up to an understanding of the interconnectedness of everything. [When] you know that no one person or place is separate, you see yourself as part of one global community and act from that understanding. 🌍

*“What I still find amazing about working in the Javari is that there’s no panic button there. In many of these indigenous cultures, there’s always the long view in sight, future generations.”*





# Preventing the Next Pandemic

*Coronavirus is the latest in a string of new infectious diseases, including Ebola, SARS, and avian flu, that are on the rise as we continue destroying and degrading habitats around the world. It won't be the last.*

**H**UMANS ARE PRESENT IN MORE AND MORE places on this planet. As growing populations push back the wilderness frontier around the world – turning forests into cropland or pasture, building roads, digging mines, expanding the trade in wildlife – there are simply more opportunities for a new disease to make the jump from animals to humans.

COVID-19 appears to have made that jump sometime in late 2019. But the nature-human collision the pandemic represents has been happening in slow motion for decades. Coronavirus is the latest in a string of new infectious diseases, including Ebola, SARS, and avian flu, that are on the rise as we continue destroying and degrading habitats around the world. It won't be the last.

The places with the greatest risk of new infectious diseases originating from animal-to-human transmission are tropical forested regions with 1) a high rate of forest loss and other land use change, and 2) significant wildlife biodiversity. That risk becomes even greater where there's a bustling illegal trade in wildlife.

Those are the places where Forest Trends' work is concentrated, as well. As this year has shown us, deforestation and the wildlife trade aren't just a climate or biodiversity risk: they're also major public health issues, and they're getting worse. One of the best ways to alleviate these issues over the long term is to end illegal deforestation, which is one of the leading causes of forest loss around the world.







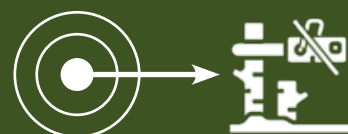
# Habitat Destruction and Preventing the Next Pandemic

Forested tropical regions with high biodiversity and rapid deforestation and land use change are hotspots for new zoonotic infectious diseases.

Zoonotic pandemics happen in three stages. Our best bet is to stop them early, by limiting irresponsible encroachment into natural areas and ending large-scale habitat destruction.

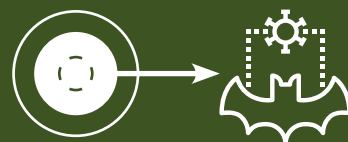
## 1 Pre-Emergence

Encroachment into wildlife habitat and changes in land use



## 2 Localized Emergence (EBOLA, NIPAH VIRUS)

Expansion of the wildlife-human interface



## 3 Pandemic Emergence (COVID-19, SARS, HIV/AIDS)

International travel and trade

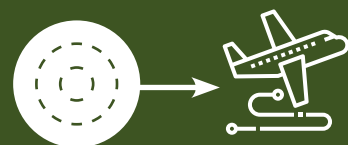


Figure adapted with permission by the lead author, from "Prediction and prevention of the next pandemic zoonosis," by S.S. Morse et al, 2012, The Lancet, 380(9857), P1956-1965.

Here's what we know about ending illegal deforestation:

### 1. It is possible, and already beginning to happen.

Many countries, including Australia, Japan, the US, and European Union member states, have policies to ensure they are not importing products associated with illegal logging. These policies have been shown to work, as long as they are effectively enforced.

### 2. It requires forest nations to expel bad actors, invest in attracting sustainable, responsible industries, and embrace full transparency.

### 3. It will only succeed if governments and the private sector work together to encourage deforestation-free supply chains.

Cleaning up supply chains for soy, palm oil, timber products, and beef – the commodities that drive the majority of forest loss – require larger scale coordination and stronger commitments to deforestation-free products and tracking them to their source.

Recall the risk factors for the emergence of a new zoonotic pandemic: forest destruction and significant local biodiversity. We are acutely aware that the Amazon could be ground zero for the next pandemic. We think that underscores the urgency of our work there. Stabilizing the forest frontier stops global warming, protects indigenous wellbeing, and safeguards public health. 🌳

*You may be surprised  
to learn that the  
Amazon in many ways  
is much closer to a  
carefully tended garden  
than a wilderness.*

**T**RADITIONAL AMAZON SYSTEMS have been based on diversity, not monoculture, taking advantage of a multitude of different crops and wild-harvested foods, drawing carefully on different forest types and cultivated areas, and keeping the overall landscape intact. You may be surprised to learn that the Amazon in many ways is much closer to a carefully tended garden than a wilderness.


**The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fragility of global food supply chains.** This year, it took \$17 trillion in fiscal stimulus and central bank support, massive debt repayments suspension by the IMF and

# THE AMAZON STRATEGY

## How to Build Resilient Supply Chains and Food Systems Post-Pandemic







**The Amazon rainforest has been shaped for millennia by human occupation** but of a kind that is very different from the logging, razing for cattle ranches, and plowing for soy that we see today.

G20 countries, and a flood of donations to the World Food Programme to stave off widespread famine caused by COVID-19. Of course, the pandemic is not over yet.

**We saw this year how COVID-19 provided cover for a spike in deforestation in many countries.** This undermines an important source of food security for many rural and indigenous communities. Indigenous communities in the Amazon, already buffeted by economic pressures, invasions of their territories, and violence against their leadership, are under incredible pressure.

Recovery planning should mimic the original Amazon strategy: instead of relying on single-product economies based on beef, soy, or palm oil, we can create a diversity of supply chains based on the incredible natural wealth of the region. We can focus on products that sustain the forest and the communities living there, instead of products that drive forest loss.

### **Our Amazon strategy is threefold:**

1. First, partner with indigenous communities to incubate new value chains for products that can be grown and harvested without cutting down forests.
2. Next, create market demand and viable supply chains for these products by working with a broad network of buyers, restaurants, food writers and culinary influencers, entrepreneurs, and conservation groups in South America and around the world.
3. Finally, it's necessary to take on the other side of the equation – and engage companies and governments in the battle to reduce global demand for illegal and unsustainable beef, soy, and timber, and enforce existing laws to protect forests and the rights of indigenous peoples.

These efforts mutually support each other and deliver more resilient livelihoods and food security for communities. They also create an economic engine to keep the Amazon forest intact – something that is non-negotiable if we're to meet climate and biodiversity targets.

*...Instead of relying on single-product economies based on beef, soy, or palm oil, we can create a diversity of supply chains based on the incredible natural wealth of the region.*







Credit: Tashika Yawanawa

*Living Pharmacy apprentice from the Yawanawa tribe, Brazil.*

## A portfolio of forest-friendly products

Investments in agroforestry projects in indigenous communities, like Forest Trends' new partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation, are a triple win. They improve food security, while also increasing carbon storage and supporting biodiversity. Agroforestry projects also focus on marketable crops like açai, Brazil nut, cocoa, and babassu that bring in additional income.

Another initiative, backed by the IKEA Foundation, focuses on bringing back traditional knowledge of medicinal plants from the brink of extinction. The Yawanawa and Surui Tribes are working with Forest Trends to create "living pharmacies" by building new medicinal plant gardens in their villages and cultivating these plants in agroforestry systems in surrounding tropical forest. Each living pharmacy is a space where elders can pass on their traditions to the next generation. The Yawanawa have the knowledge of about 2,000 medicinal plants, some of which are probably unknown to western botanists.

Losing this kind of traditional knowledge threatens more than just local community health; most of today's pharmaceuticals are derived from natural plant extracts – at least 25 percent of modern medicines trace their roots to an estimated 50,000 medicinal plants, only a fraction of which have been studied in labs before commercial use.

Small investments can add significant value. Together with the solar power enterprise GoSol and the Surui Indigenous community, we're piloting solar installations for drying and roasting forest fruits and nuts. A process that would otherwise take up to a week or be outsourced from the community can now be completed in less than a day, saving time and energy, and increasing producers' profit margins.

Strong forest-based economies are not limited to food products. The artisan sector, often dismissed as "women's work," is the second-largest employer in the developing world, and an incredibly important source of income for women. Thanks to long-standing support from the IKEA Foundation, we have focused on indigenous women's artisan enterprises in the Brazilian Amazon. Working alongside TUCUM, a socially conscious company with an e-commerce platform, we are building indigenous women's entrepreneurial capacity and providing them with an online sales platform. To date, we have increased indigenous women's incomes by 10 percent, benefiting more than 2,000 people.

## Building forest-friendly supply chains and market access

Growing enterprises also need access to markets and capital. This is true for medium-to-large enterprises marketing products like Brazil nuts or açai to mainstream export markets.





But there are also excellent opportunities for small enterprises to sell specialty products like bottled aji negro sauce or smoked paiche fish to local and niche national markets. Some Amazonian products have shown the potential to expand into larger global businesses, like Sambazon, which brought the superfruit açaí to the US consumer market. Many, many others have the potential to become self-sustaining micro-enterprises and small community-run businesses that support conservation efforts. But these projects still need support to overcome obstacles such as market access, training, and access to capital.

Targeted support to communities with big positive conservation footprints means that even enterprises with modest revenues have the potential to make a difference over very large landscapes.

### **A culinary revolution that celebrates Amazon ingredients**

One major opportunity lies in Latin America's flourishing food scene. Celebrity chefs and Michelin-starred restaurants across the continent are highlighting local ingredients and traditions. This could be a powerful engine for economic development in forest communities.

Cumari is an exciting new "Rainforest to Table" food movement that provides a model for sustainable development and conservation of the Amazon rainforest. Cumari connects restaurants directly with

*Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, owner of Lima's Malabar and Amaz restaurants, shares the magic of rainforest ingredients at a special event organized by Forest Trends at the Aspen Ideas Festival. Schiaffino is a leading force behind the "Rainforest to Table" movement in Latin America.*

small-scale producers of unique rainforest products. Both parties benefit from small-volume, personalized sales: restaurants get access to high quality local products and small enterprises get increased access to premium buyers.

### **Strong communities, strong foundation**

Markets are not a panacea. The underlying goal in building business models and supply chains for forest-friendly products is to strengthen indigenous peoples' ability to protect their lands and cultures.

In that sense, it's important that new income streams align with indigenous communities' vision for securing their rights, livelihoods, and cultures – all of which must be in balance with keeping their forest homelands vibrant and standing.

We work at the village level with our indigenous partners to reflect deeply on an economic development strategy that aligns with their reality and aspirations. Forest Trends created the Capacity Building Program for Indigenous Territorial Governance with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The program's goal is to strengthen community leadership so they can address the complex challenges of governing large territories.



Credit: Diego Perez

A PFGTI graduation ceremony, Colombia.

### Making bad business models obsolete

Of course, when we fail to address the unsound incentives that drive forest loss, even the most promising projects will have a hard time succeeding. Nearly half of all tropical forest loss in the first decade of this century was illegal.

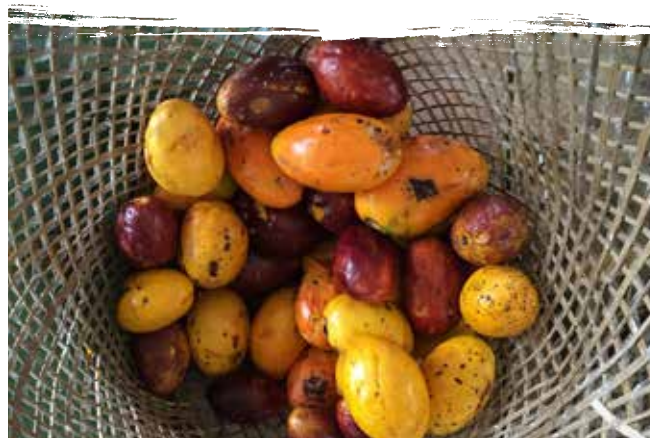
That's why Forest Trends has dedicated programs that focus on the policy and legal strategies for protecting forests and ending corruption and illegal deforestation. We also are a widely respected source of trade and market data, which helps governments and companies make better procurement decisions. Our data shows that the timber import legislation we've influenced is helping keep illegally harvested wood off the market in the EU and the US. We're also working on similar strategies for beef, soy, and palm oil.

### The vision: resilience at the forest frontier

Our work with community enterprises building more resilient food systems and supply chains has already benefited more than 12,000 people living in rural communities in South America, and has contributed to the conservation of 1.8 million hectares of rainforest.

What if we could scale these models to a whole continent? This is not a theoretical exercise. The Amazon is a likely origin of the next emerging zoonotic disease-turned-pandemic if the current rate of deforestation and violence towards the best stewards of the forest – indigenous people – continues. All of the ingredients are in place. Rampant forest loss and habitat destruction have stressed wildlife and pushed them into more interactions with humans. We've already seen surges in malaria and yellow fever in Brazil.

The communities that tend forests with care and traditional knowledge are our front line, not only against emerging pandemics, but climate change and biodiversity loss. Forest Trends will continue to do everything we can to support these communities in their work. 🌱





# OUR IMPACT



## Communities

**MARCH 2020** We celebrate the graduates of our latest training program to build strong internal governance and leadership in indigenous communities. After completing the program, members of the Kijus community in Ecuador initiated Community Investment Plans, which will bring income to their community for every hectare of forest conserved. In Peru, the Korinbari community created a territorial monitoring system to detect, stop, and prosecute illegal fishing, hunting, and logging.

**MARCH 2020** Forest Trends and our community partners in the Amazon redirect energies to a COVID-19 emergency relief campaign. Our network distributes food, cleaning supplies, over 30,000 masks, and COVID-19 prevention information to indigenous communities.

**APRIL 2020** Forest Trends and the Arbor Day Foundation announce a partnership with indigenous communities to plant one million trees in nine indigenous lands in the Brazilian Amazon. Marketable “agroforestry” crops like açai, Brazil nut, cocoa, and babassu will provide sustainable income, while the trees planted will enhance carbon storage and biodiversity.

**SUMMER 2020** Forest Trends’ COVID-19 relief efforts in the Amazon continue, with a strong focus on food security and access to information on pandemic prevention. Together with partners we provide support for indigenous community-based food production systems, including traditional gardens and agroforestry systems. We establish sourcing partnerships with family farming organizations and create a food distribution system with Brazilian government agencies FUNAI and SESAI. And we help secure resources for an indigenous-led communication network to ensure internet access, to improve health care at the village level.

**SEPTEMBER 2020** Forest Trends publishes a provocative analysis showing a “catch-22” in climate funds: since REDD+ funding is based on successfully reducing present rates of deforestation, indigenous territories with low rates of deforestation (i.e., communities that have historically protected their forests) can’t access the money. We argue this is not only a climate justice issue: it weakens the world’s chances of achieving climate targets. 🌱

Credit: Ana Castañeda



Women artisans in Piuray microbasin, Peru.

IMPACT REPORT 2020

Our Impact: Communities



## Corporate Climate Change Ambition and the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear in February, many in our sector predicted that climate change would end up on the business world's back burner. Amid economic and social upheaval, surely companies would try to delay or downsize their ambitions.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports that 2020 would be the death of corporate climate action have been greatly exaggerated.

Our data show just the opposite: corporate climate commitments remain strong, despite the pandemic. In fact, 2020 greenhouse gas abatement looks set to outpace 2019.

Forest Trends' Ecosystem Marketplace initiative has benchmarked voluntary carbon markets every year since 2006. In doing so, we've helped answer fundamental questions about the size, scope, and direction of voluntary offsets. Our State of the Voluntary Carbon Markets reports are the gold standard for international financing institutions, governments, businesses, and private investors looking to go "carbon neutral" or understand emerging investment opportunities.

When the team conducted a survey of carbon market participants in April, we found that broader corporate demand for voluntary carbon offsets was actually increasing. Then, as the

year progressed, so did the number of carbon neutral pledges from individual companies like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft – pledges that have since proliferated among companies that had never taken climate action before.

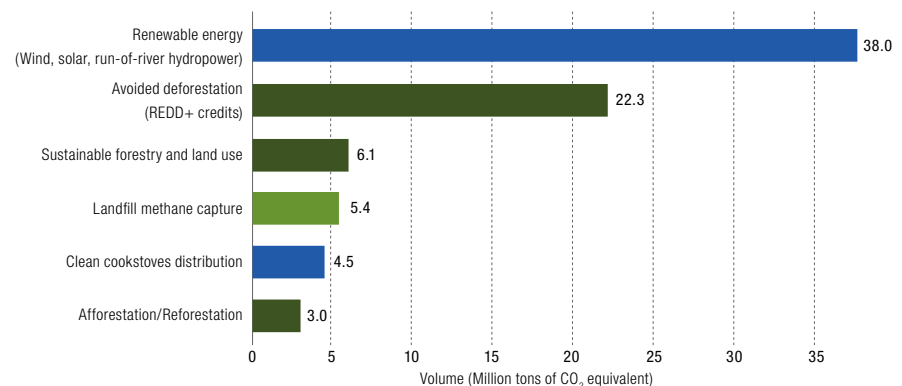
Here's what you need to know about companies' "net zero" efforts this year:

- A near-record volume, 104 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, was either removed or prevented from entering the atmosphere through carbon credits. This is a 6 percent increase over the previous year.
- There is increasing interest in carbon credits associated with

"nature-based solutions," projects that reduce emissions by improving management of natural ecosystems or farmlands. Prices for these offset types increased by 30 percent from the previous year.

- Meanwhile, renewable energy is gradually losing market share – which is good news. It's a sign of the world's transition toward clean energy. Carbon markets have historically been used to finance renewable energy because the technology was more expensive than traditional energy sources and couldn't be implemented without carbon finance. This is changing as renewable energy becomes more affordable and cost-competitive with other energy sources. As a result, carbon standards are phasing out recognition of renewable energy offsets. 🌱

### What were the most popular offset project types bought by companies?





# OUR IMPACT

## Climate

**MARCH 2020** Ecosystem Marketplace publishes supply and demand forecasts for the forthcoming aviation industry's carbon market, including for a "middle way" market management scenario that avoids a flood of potentially low-quality credits entering the market. Three days later, the International Civil Aviation Organization announces it will pursue the "middle way" option.

**JULY 2020** We publish a white paper offering a blueprint for a "Gigaton Bid" to harness tropical forests as a climate solution, through a public-private coalition to deliver one billion tons of emissions reductions – nearly 10 percent of annual global emissions.

**SEPTEMBER 2020** Forest Trends is invited to join the global Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets, led by former Bank of England Governor Mark Carney. The Taskforce aims to grow markets at least fifteenfold in order to expand global carbon sinks and move toward net zero emissions.

**SEPTEMBER 2020** A special "State of the Voluntary Carbon Markets" report released for Climate Week NYC shows that that voluntary carbon offset demand grew in 2020, despite COVID-19, thanks to a surge in climate action by businesses voluntarily acting to shrink their carbon footprint.

**NOVEMBER 2020** We announce the "Green Gigaton Challenge," a new partnership with the UN Environment Program, Emergent Climate, the Architecture for Trees (ART), and the Environmental Defense Fund, modeled on our July 2020 paper. The Challenge aims to mobilize funds for at least one gigaton of high-quality forest-based emission reductions per year by 2025: the equivalent of 257 coal-fired power plants taken offline for a year, or growing 16.5 billion new trees. 🌳







# Deforestation CAN'T BE STOPPED BY VOLUNTARY ACTION ALONE

- ~ Half of tropical deforestation is illegal.
- ~ Illegal and unsustainable timber and goods are flooding global markets.
- ~ Many companies need regulation to incentivize them to behave ethically.

*By Brian Schatz, Senator from Hawaii (D), United States Senate  
Michael Jenkins, President and Chief Executive Officer, Forest Trends*

**D**EMAND FOR A FEW COMMODITIES, particularly palm oil, soy, beef, and pulp and paper, is driving tropical deforestation around the world. By destroying these tropical forests, we are gambling with the stability of our climate, threatening the existence of vulnerable species, and undermining the critical role they play in the health of our planet.

Half of all tropical deforestation is illegal. This happens when producers clear more than permits allow, give bribes for land or permits, fail to follow procedures for identifying pre-existing rights with communities, and more.

These violations result in environmental damage, social conflict, economic injustice and inequality. They also result in lost revenues to governments that could otherwise be used to advance the social good – with conservative estimates of global losses at more than \$17 billion per year.

A key part of the global effort to reduce tropical deforestation has come from the private sector, with multinational corporations committing to eliminate deforestation products from their supply chains. Sustainable and legal producers can meet demand for agricultural products without





## Demand side regulation is needed to eliminate deforestation from global commodity supply chains

Existing voluntary zero-deforestation commitments by leading companies are essential to reducing deforestation. However, these voluntary actions will never achieve the systemic change required without complementary demand side regulation.



Half of all tropical deforestation is the result of **illegal** conversion of forests to industrial agriculture.



Some ecosystem conversion to industrial agriculture is **legal but** is still **unsustainable**, impinging on the rights of local communities and causing harm to the climate and biodiversity.



A small but growing proportion of forest-risk commodities are **deforestation-free** and can be tracked to sustainable and legal producers who support rather than exploit local communities and the natural world.



any additional forest conversion; however, they face stiff competition from the cheaper illegal and unsustainable products that are flooding global markets.

In other sectors – such as illegal timber, conflict minerals, and illegally harvested seafood – voluntary efforts by companies were often an important or even necessary step to demonstrate leadership and show what was possible.

But promises alone – even those backed up by financial resources – historically have not been not enough. Success was only achieved when effectively complemented by national and/or international

regulations and agreements.

Ultimately, some companies are leaders: They consider good environmental and social practices to be critical to their success, and as a result invest in robust systems to ensure them. Other companies will be laggards: For them, sustainability and social practices are just not a concern.

A strategy based only on voluntary zero-deforestation

Deforestation Can't Be Stopped by Voluntary Action Alone

commitments – driving leaders towards progress and converting laggards to leaders – will not be sufficient. There are just too many heel-draggers, many of whom are not highly exposed to public pressure to change.

## Out of reach

Currently, only 12 percent of companies active in agricultural commodity supply chains have a zero- or zero-net deforestation commitment that applies to all their sourced commodities. Additionally, the pace of new commitments has slowed dramatically over the past few years. Even if every leading company with a zero-deforestation commitment achieved zero deforestation at the firm level, the shared global goal of reaching zero deforestation supply chains across entire sectors of the economy would remain well out of reach.

Regulations prohibiting the import of illegally produced agricultural products will force the laggards to reform or find new unregulated markets. When companies are exposed to legal liabilities, they will demand far more information and transparency from their suppliers, making it more and more difficult for producers who rely on illegal deforestation to find a market for their goods. Well-documented and traceable legal and deforestation-free production will become more valuable on the global market, and its supply will increase to meet demand.

As companies throughout the supply chain improve their capacity and technology to track supplies to source regions in order to document legal production, it will become easier for them to avoid all deforestation entirely. Demand-side regulation that requires legality has the capacity to open the floodgates for additional voluntary zero-deforestation commitments.

Together, voluntary zero-deforestation commitments and demand-side regulation to prohibit illegality will:

- Force all traders and buyers to know their sources and supply chains.
- Squeeze out the “worst-of-the-worst” illegal production, reducing corruption and improving the economic health of producer countries.
- Increase zero-deforestation production and the number of companies willing to go completely deforestation free.



In the United States about a decade ago Congress extended trade protections to illegal timber. These measures have not only significantly reduced imports of illegal wood, but they have also helped spark similar policy reforms around the world.

This year, I [Schatz] will introduce legislation that will make it illegal for companies to import the products of illegal deforestation. Meanwhile, Forest Trends continues to work on governance and regulatory issues in both producer and consumer countries to combat illegal deforestation. We cannot continue to undermine other countries’ efforts to manage their rural economies and keep their forests standing by buying up the products of illegal deforestation. Buying stolen trees is bad; buying the products from entire swaths of stolen, illegally deforested land is that much worse, and must be stopped. 🌳



Wood market in Mandalay, Myanmar.



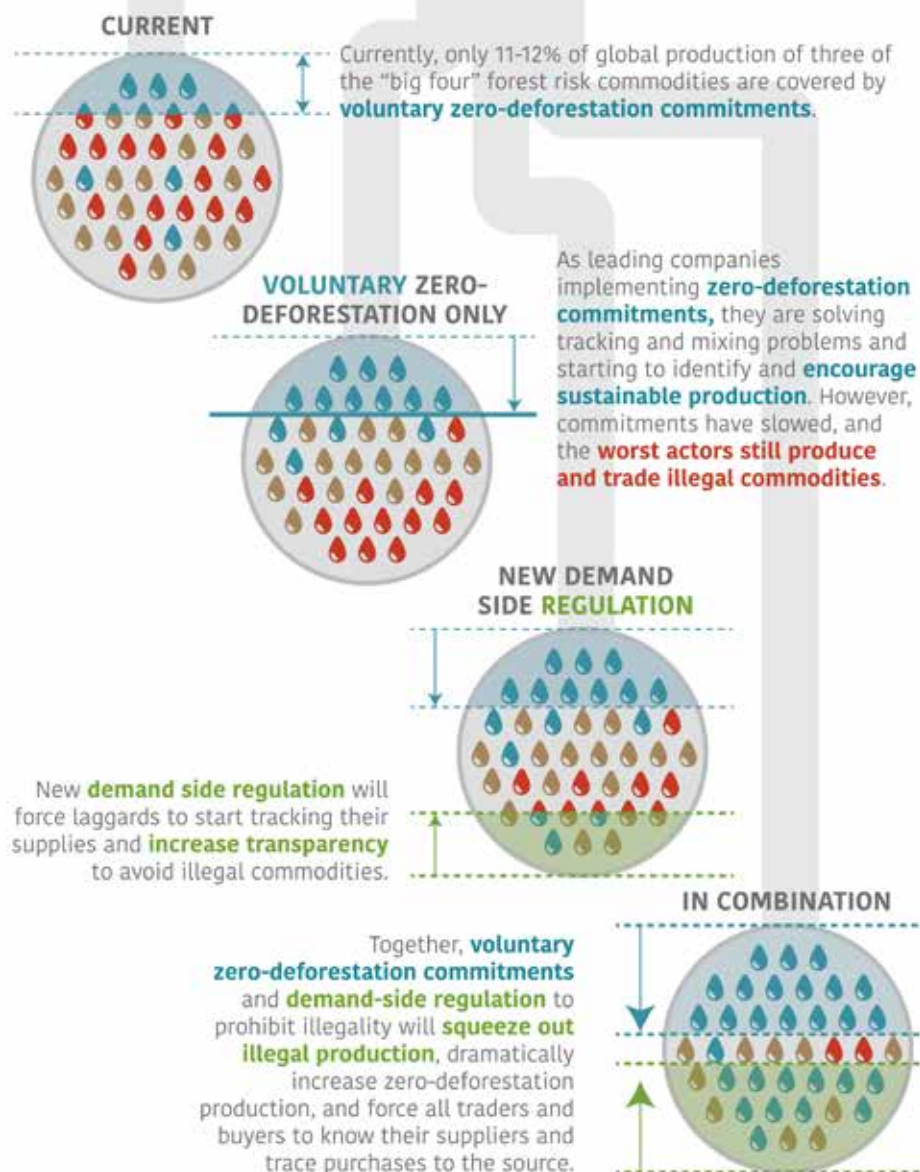


*We cannot continue to undermine other countries' efforts to keep their forests standing by buying up the products of illegal forestation.*



## Not all deforestation is equivalent

Voluntary commitments cannot achieve zero-deforestation without regulation.



Source: Forest Trends Association. | Date: January 2020. | Contact: [kcanby@forest-trends.org](mailto:kcanby@forest-trends.org)  
<https://forest-trends.org/demand-side-regulation.html>

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Deforestation Can't Be Stopped by Voluntary Action Alone





# OUR IMPACT

## Forests

**FEBRUARY 2020** Vietnam's Prime Minister directs ministries to develop procurement policies to ensure the government sources only legally harvested wood, following recommendations by Forest Trends and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Thirty to forty percent of timber imports in Vietnam come from countries considered high-risk for illegal logging.

**MARCH 2020** We release groundbreaking research detailing inconsistencies in enforcement of the European Union Timber Regulation between Member States. Myanmar teak has been essentially banned due to a high risk of illegal harvesting. But while some European countries have curtailed their imports of Myanmar teak, others have increased. The European Anti-Fraud Office subsequently opens an investigation.

**APRIL 2020** Forest Trends signs an MOU with the Vietnam Sugar Association, part of our growing engagement with forest-risk commodities beyond timber. The Association approached Forest Trends to develop the MOU, proof positive that our model of engagement with industry trade associations (including for timber and rubber) is bearing fruit.

**MAY 2020** Forest Trends outreach prompts an interagency team including the US Department of State develop a joint message calling on Indonesia's Ministry of Trade and Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs to maintain timber legality verification rules for exports. Indonesia cancels the proposed regulatory rollback.



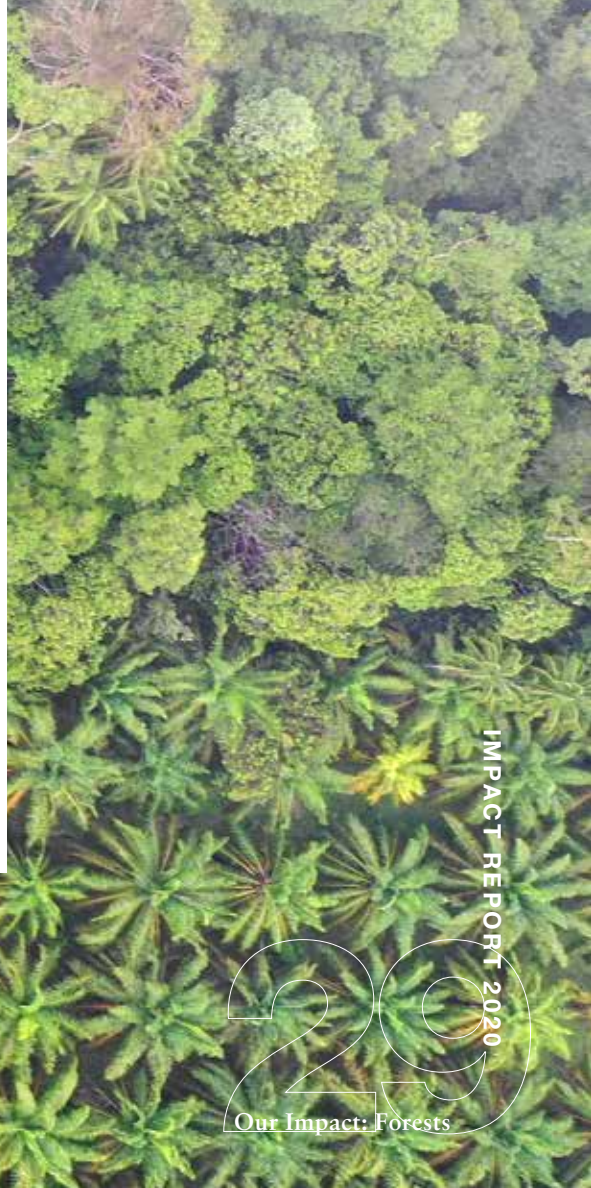


**JULY 2020** Our briefing on the high likelihood of illegal timber entering Vietnam from Russia and Ukraine, often routed through China, results in Vietnam's General Department of Customs tightening timber import controls from those countries.

**AUGUST 2020** Forest Trends analyzes new financial disclosures from Myanmar's forestry sector released by the government. Our analysis and technical assistance influence key changes by Myanmar's government and state-owned enterprises to increase accountability in natural resources management.

**AUGUST 2020** The UK unveils proposed legislation to stop commodities associated with illegal deforestation from entering the country. Forest Trends is a trusted advisor to the UK government in the policy development process, and our data underpins the UK's decision to focus on illegal deforestation. For seven years, Forest Trends has helped officials in the US, Europe, Asia, and Australia coordinate to enforce laws keeping illegal timber out of their markets. Recently we've expanded our focus to other high-risk commodities, including soy, palm oil, beef, and leather.

**NOVEMBER 2020** With technical support from Forest Trends, seven Vietnamese timber associations sign a commitment to build a sustainable timber industry in Vietnam. All members commit to supporting legal timber supply chains, including a ban on importing high-risk timber for use in manufacturing. The initiative also mobilizes industry funding for afforestation and forest protection in Vietnam. 🌱







Credit: Fredy Francisco Ramírez Alévalo

Woman and girls gathering water, Loreto, Peru.

# Why Gender Equality is at the Heart of Our Water Security Strategy in Peru

**P**ERU IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE countries to the impacts of climate change. Those impacts will largely be experienced as water risks: longer, more frequent droughts and more intense flash flooding are just a few of the ways that climate change is expected to increase water stress in Peru.

Peru also suffers from acute gender inequality. One manifestation of the gender gap is the fact that women are rarely adequately represented or involved in water and natural infrastructure-related decision-making.

Peruvian women typically bear primary responsibility for providing drinking water for their families, caring for family members sick from water-borne diseases, and water-related household tasks. But they face





Credit: Ana Castañeda

Ester maintaining her  
reservoir in Antauta, Peru.

*“It’s believed that nature  
doesn’t contribute to  
the economy. We see the  
same thing when we look  
at gender...[These are]  
issues that we must strive  
to mainstream.”*

– FABIOLA MUÑOZ-DODERO  
Minister of the Environment of Peru

substantial barriers to participation in decision-making on water at all levels, including less access to formal education, higher rates of illiteracy, less access to natural resources (e.g., land), salary inequity in the workplace, and expectations to perform more unpaid labor than men.

## Closing gender gaps is a core objective across all of our work on water in Peru

Our focus on gender equity as inseparable from water security, combined with the diversity of partners and sectors involved in our efforts, distinguishes the *Natural Infrastructure for Water Security (NIWS)* project from many conservation initiatives. We are working this way because we know that addressing gender inequity leads to better project outcomes.

Women actively maintain natural infrastructure and manage water resources daily in Peru. But they are still an unrecognized and underutilized source of knowledge and authority when it comes to the institutions that make decisions about water. We see an opportunity to strengthen Peru’s water sector and women’s well being by advocating for increased female representation and participation in decision-making.

Why Gender Equality is at the Heart of Our Water Security Strategy in Peru





Credit: Jorge Luis Segura Cueva

*Families often gather to perform water-related tasks together. Here, three mothers share a laundry tub in La Libertad, Peru.*

## How we're integrating gender equality priorities in Peru

- The NIWS project secured institutional commitments from Peru's two leading national water agencies **to mainstream a gender approach and address gender gaps in the water sector**. These commitments have already led to the first regulation to explicitly consider gender, issued in November 2019.
- Following this ratification, Forest Trends and our partners **kicked off processes to develop comprehensive institutional assessments and Gender Action Plans** in water agencies, with specialized consulting teams and task forces in each institution. Peru's Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations is a key partner and is tasked with mainstreaming gender in all national authorities and local and regional governments. With Forest Trends' support, the water sector is one of the first to tackle this challenge.
- During the **Gender Equality and Water Security Forum** in June 2019, the Peruvian Government represented by three ministries and



Credit: Julissa Nuñez

*Community meeting led by Peru's Ministry of Environment and NIWS partners, Choclococha, Peru.*



6%

Water utilities in Peru where women hold a general management position

10%

Share of management positions held by women in local water user boards

76%

Average hours work per week performed by women. Over half is unpaid labor in the home

22%

Share of agricultural land titles held by women. Land ownership is required to participate in water user groups

70%

Percent of men's salaries earned by women for the same roles. Women in rural areas only make 61%

19%

News stories about water security in Peru where the protagonist is a woman

two agencies, USAID, Canada, and the NIWS project recognized 20 women leaders working for water security in Peru. For many of the women, it was the first time that their leadership was officially acknowledged.

- This forum was also **the first time that women's leadership in the water sector was explicitly recognized and valued at a national level** by the public entities responsible for water governance. The event was attended by over 350 policymakers, advisors, and local water leaders.
- Forest Trends and partners launched a **Women's Leadership Program for Water Management** in June 2020 to support 88 women leaders across multiple sectors by offering training to increase political, technical, and leadership skillsets. (Resources and seminars are currently virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)
- Forest Trends and partners worked closely with the Ministry of Environment to ensure that **a representative of women's organizations will be added to the National Climate Change Commission.**
- The NIWS Consortium is working with civil society, water utilities, and public investment professionals to systematically include a gender focus in our full portfolio of natural infrastructure investments undergoing development. 🌱

Credit: Mauricio Núñez Oporto

*Woman from pastoral Andean community near Arequipa, Peru.*

Why Gender Equality is at the Heart of Our Water Security Strategy in Peru

IMPACT REPORT 2020

33



*“I used to be scared to talk about water at the Commission meetings, because I did not feel I could understand the science or technology. The training programs and events like this one have given me the confidence that I need to participate in decision making for my watershed, and I hope to share this knowledge through trainings and exchanges with other women who want to work in the management of water.”*

- CLARA VÁSQUEZ



Credit: Smith Brayán Benites Ferro

## Clara Vásquez

# THE VALUE OF CAPACITY-BUILDING



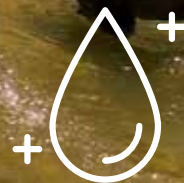
**B**ORN IN THE TOWN OF CAPOTE IN the Lambayeque region of Peru, Clara Vásquez Santisteban has spent most of her life farming 15 acres of rice, fruit trees, and staple crops. Water is very important to her livelihood. But until she began participating in trainings supported by the NIWS project, she never felt she could have a voice in how water was managed in her region.

Vásquez is now the President of the Capote Water Users Commission and conducts trainings on water resource management for women. She was among 20 Peruvian women celebrated at the Gender Equality and Water Security Forum.

**“Water is a scarce resource and, in many occasions, because of being women, we have been the last to receive it and do not have a role in managing it,”** Vásquez explained in a presentation about her local water user group. “Pollution and climate change are problems that affect us all. I ask myself: what planet do we want to leave our children?” 🌱

Clara Vásquez at the National Gender and Water Forum, Lima, 2019.





# OUR IMPACT

## Water

**JANUARY 2020** New government guidelines go into effect in Peru that permit public expenditures to protect and rehabilitate natural infrastructure through the same process the government uses to maintain built infrastructure. It sounds bureaucratic, but this change means public expenditures for nature protection and restoration can be approved in just 10 percent of the time it used to take. Forest Trends and our partners CONDESAN and the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law (SPDA) provided technical and strategic support to the government in writing the new guidelines.

**APRIL 2020** The newly launched “Natural Infrastructure for Water Security” Virtual Classroom brings our capacity building online. We’ve trained more than 1,000 professionals in Peru on how to design, manage, and communicate investments in nature-based solutions for water security.

**JUNE 2020** In June, we launched the Women’s Leadership Program for Water Management, as part of the Natural Infrastructure for Water Security activity’s efforts to close gender gaps in the water sector. Eighty-eight participants will receive training on water resources governance, natural infrastructure

management, a gender approach in water resources management, and leadership skills.

**JULY 2020** Investigative journalism supported by Forest Trends and our partners exposes illegal extraction of peat in Lima’s watersheds. In response, the Ministry of Environment files a criminal complaint with the Criminal Prosecutor of Matucana and proposes a Supreme Decree to strengthen legal frameworks for wetlands protection.

**SEPTEMBER 2020** Together with our partners we celebrate the launch of Peru’s National Committee for Women and Climate Change, a historic milestone ensuring women are represented in climate change policy and decision-making. Forest Trends provides technical support for the Committee.

**OCTOBER 2020** Our Natural Infrastructure for Water Security project advances a pipeline of over \$66 million in natural infrastructure investment projects to be mobilization-ready as Peru’s government looks for ways to stimulate its economy and build resilience coming out of the COVID-19 crisis. 🌱





# The World is Losing its Forests

## Community-led Conservation Can Help.

**W**HEN MOST OF US THINK OF CONSERVATION, we think of remote, wild places. In the United States, the National Park system often represents this ideal. Elsewhere, iconic landscapes like the Serengeti in Tanzania or the rainforests of the Amazon and southeast Asia come to mind. For over a century, the conservation model has been dominated by protected areas and the belief that setting aside land for nature, then limiting human impact and use as much as possible, was the best way to protect it.

This has been a remarkable global undertaking, and in some respects, a success – there are just over 238,000 protected areas across 244 countries and territories.<sup>1</sup> That is almost 15 percent of the land on Earth.<sup>2</sup>

1 UNEP-WCMC. 2018. 2018 United Nations List of Protected Areas. Supplement on protected area management effectiveness. UNEP-WCMC: Cambridge, UK. [www.sprep.org/attachments/VirLib/Global/2018-list-protected-areas.pdf](http://www.sprep.org/attachments/VirLib/Global/2018-list-protected-areas.pdf).

2 Protected Planet. “Aichi Target 11 Dashboard.” Protected Planet, data from UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, updated monthly. Accessed on 29 Sept. 2020. [www.protectedplanet.net/target-11-dashboard](http://www.protectedplanet.net/target-11-dashboard).





## Community-led

Conservation, sustainable resource management, livelihoods, & food security are balanced. Indigenous & local communities lead.



## Top-down

Humans are excluded, impacts & use are minimized as much as possible. Governments & conservationists lead.

However, the limits of a “top-down” protected area model are becoming clear. Biodiversity continues to plummet. The history of protected areas creation is littered with examples of local communities being removed from their traditional lands and banned from activities they depend on for their livelihoods, such as hunting or gathering medicinal plants. And places suitable for new protected areas are becoming scarce.

An alternative model, community-led conservation, offers a way to address these problems. It’s a conservation tool that trusts that local people know how to be good stewards when they have the resources and tools to do so. Community-led conservation often relies on traditional or indigenous knowledge of the landscape, and new research shows it can be equally as effective as conservation approaches that exclude people from nature completely, sometimes more so.

## What is community-led conservation?

Community-led conservation also emphasizes the critical role of managing landscapes to complement protected areas, a principle known as “habitat connectivity.”<sup>3</sup> Sustainable working landscapes can act as bridges between natural areas, allowing species to move across much larger landscapes than is currently possible in our world of isolated protected areas. Maintaining physical connections between habitats, and making sure they are truly usable for species, is one of the most important things we can do to support biodiversity.

## Why is community-led conservation important?

**Community-led conservation has been shown, in some cases, to be more effective in the long term for conserving carbon, biodiversity, and natural resources than projects that don’t allow active landscape management.**

Biodiversity-friendly land management is an ancient practice.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, much protected area conservation is based on the assumption that human presence on a landscape is harmful. Studies are increasingly finding that this is not necessarily true, especially in the case of forests. Indigenous and local stewardship protects forests – not to mention all the life, natural resources, and carbon stores they contain.

<sup>3</sup> Note: While marine and aquatic environments are not discussed in this piece, connectivity is also critical to the conservation of these systems.

<sup>4</sup> Kremen, C. and Merenlender, A.M. 2018. Landscapes that work for biodiversity and people. Science. 362, 6412. doi: 10.1126/science.aau6020.



Credit: Apiwtxa Association

Apiwtxa Asháninka community, Brazil.



For example, when the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala was established in 1990, conservationists were outraged that the government was going to allow community-led management on one fifth of the Reserve, and some refused outright to engage with communities.<sup>5</sup> But thirty years later, it's clear that these communities have protected their land far more effectively from deforestation and other illegal activities than a top-down, no-resource-use-allowed model would have done. Deforestation in community-managed areas of the Reserve has been less than 1 percent since 2005. Meanwhile the deforestation rate is 20 times higher in areas outside their control.<sup>6</sup>

Research by the World Resources Institute and the Rights and Resources Initiative (of which Forest Trends is a founding partner), among others, has shown that deforestation tends to be lower in forests where communities have secure tenure rights and are protecting their land.<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> Forest Trends has made similar observations in the areas we have worked in the Amazon.

## Community-led conservation allows forest benefits to be harvested by communities and countries.

In the Amazon, sustainable forest management not only preserves carbon and biodiversity, it can also support livelihoods. Small-scale enterprises like agroforestry, sustainable timber, artisanal handcrafts, and producing non-timber forest products, like acai, Brazil nuts, or cocoa, allow communities to generate income and ensure food security for themselves.

Forest Trends has supported communities with such efforts for over two decades and has observed first-hand the power and wide-ranging benefits of small investments in community-led forest enterprises.<sup>11</sup> For example, our partnerships with indigenous communities scaling up Brazil nut value chains are already yielding benefits for both indigenous producers and Amazon forests. The planning, management, and monitoring required for these activities also leads to more frequent land patrols, which ultimately increases territorial protection.<sup>12</sup>

*...Protected area conservation is based on the assumption that human presence on a landscape is harmful. Studies are increasingly finding that this is not necessarily true, especially in the case of forests.*

*Women from the community of San Juan de Cañaris in Peru have taken it on themselves to replant and conserve the native cinchona tree in nearby cloud forests. Cinchona has medicinal importance and helps to capture and collect water vapor from the air.*



Credit: Omar Jhain Gómez-Rengifo

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*Forest Trends and WWF developed a 12-month training program for indigenous leaders to strengthen communities' ability to govern large indigenous territories and protect biodiversity.*



## Community-led conservation complements and expands upon other conservation efforts to reverse biodiversity loss.

Protected areas have become increasingly isolated as surrounding lands are degraded and converted for other uses. Without natural buffer areas that connect patches of habitat, species cannot move freely or safely as a natural part of their life cycle, or to escape negative impacts of human activity or climate change.<sup>13</sup> Research also suggests that protected areas will continue to lose species over time if they become isolated from each other.<sup>14</sup>

Simply put, the world will have to stop relying on protected areas to achieve conservation goals because there are not enough suitable places left to put them. Protected areas alone are not sufficient to save species over the long term, and as already noted, they can override the rights and wellbeing of rural communities.<sup>15</sup>

Part of the solution is local stewardship: a patchwork of protected areas connected by biodiversity-friendly, multi-use landscapes that enable species to move freely.<sup>16</sup> For example, landowners in the Caesar River Valley in Colombia planted native species on exhausted farmland, which has helped connect patches of forest, restore soil health, provide habitat for wildlife, help buffer against climate-induced economic losses, and allowed cattle to be more sustainably managed on less land.<sup>17</sup> Forest communities on the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala have observed the return of wildlife that need large home ranges to thrive, such as jaguars and their prey.<sup>18</sup>

What's more, the broad coalitions necessary to launch and support community-led conservation have greater potential to create a collective impact. This has been central to how Forest Trends has operated for 20 years – by acting as coalition builders, we have observed many lasting partnerships and successes on the ground, especially in our work with indigenous and local communities. Collaborations between these communities, grassroots movements, NGOs, and sometimes public-private partners are more adaptable and better equipped to demand changes and drive lasting transformations. 🌱

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# Thank You to Our Partners

**F**OR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, WE'VE BEEN CONVENING diverse coalitions, partners, and communities of practice that have shaped the way forests and other ecosystems are managed across the world. Partnership takes work, but we wouldn't have it any other way.

We'd like to thank the following organizations who have joined us in our work in the last three years. They are absolutely crucial to the impacts we've highlighted in this report.

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