



RAINFOREST  
TRUST

# Saving the Brazilian Amazon and Beyond

## Conservation's Greatest Challenge & Opportunity: The Amazon

The Amazon is the world's largest and most important tropical rainforest, originally spanning 1.7 billion acres—nearly the size of the continental U.S. It is a refuge for a third of Earth's terrestrial species and stores more than 123 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, more than four times the combined annual emissions of the top 10 CO<sub>2</sub> emitting nations. The Amazon is also the ancestral territory and current home to many of the world's Indigenous Peoples.

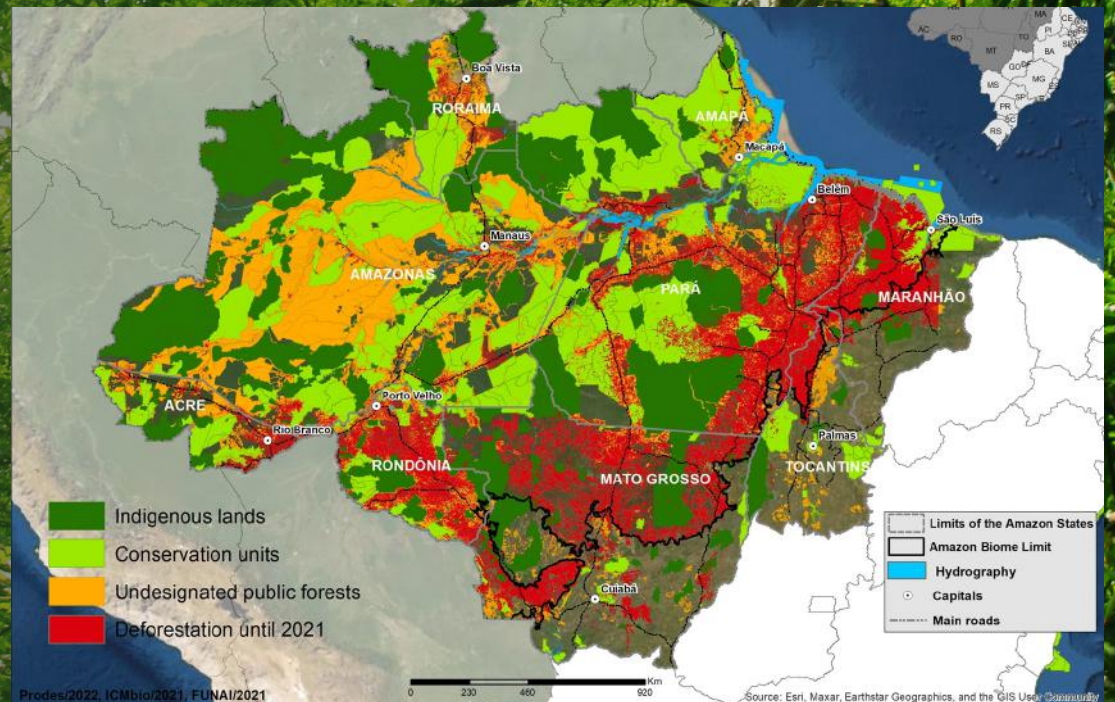


Fig. 1. The Brazilian Amazon, with deforestation in red, protected areas in shades of green, and the huge expanse of government-owned, intact, but unprotected forest in orange. Protecting the orange is the number one objective of our strategy.

# The Challenge: Stop Deforestation

Approximately 18% of the Amazon has been deforested, mostly to create pasture for commercial beef rearing or large-scale soya farms to feed cattle. In 2007, Rainforest Trust's board member Tom Lovejoy (1941-2021) hypothesized that deforestation, if left unchecked, would interrupt the recycling of rainwater and cause a positive feedback loop between less forest and less rain. Accumulated evidence since then indicates Lovejoy was right. As the Amazon withstands its second year of severe drought in 2023, the ecosystem is nearing the tipping point where much of the remaining forest will degrade to savanna woodland, altering the climate across South America and beyond.

**Some 60% of the rainforest lies in Brazil.** There, strategies to reduce deforestation—including the creation of protected areas and safeguarding of Indigenous territories—under then-President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva led to an 80% decline in deforestation between 2005-2012. But since Lula's term ended, deforestation has rebounded, with 2.9 million acres of forest destroyed in 2022 alone.

## A Brief Window of Opportunity

Lula's return in 2023 as Brazil's president provides an extraordinary second chance to expand protected areas and halt deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. Approximately 29% of the original forest is substantially intact, owned by the government, but currently unprotected—by far the largest area of intact, unprotected tropical rainforest in the world. The window of opportunity is narrow: Lula's term is four years and it can take several years to create protected areas and safeguard Indigenous territories.



Protect **20 million acres** at a cost of **\$40M**

## Critical Neighbors

As momentum has grown to save the Brazilian Amazon, land-grabbers, agribusiness, deforestation and fires have been displaced to neighboring regions, including Brazil's Pantanal and Cerrado and the bordering Amazonian regions of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana and Suriname. To save the Amazon ecosystem, it is critical that we protect and conserve these regions as well.

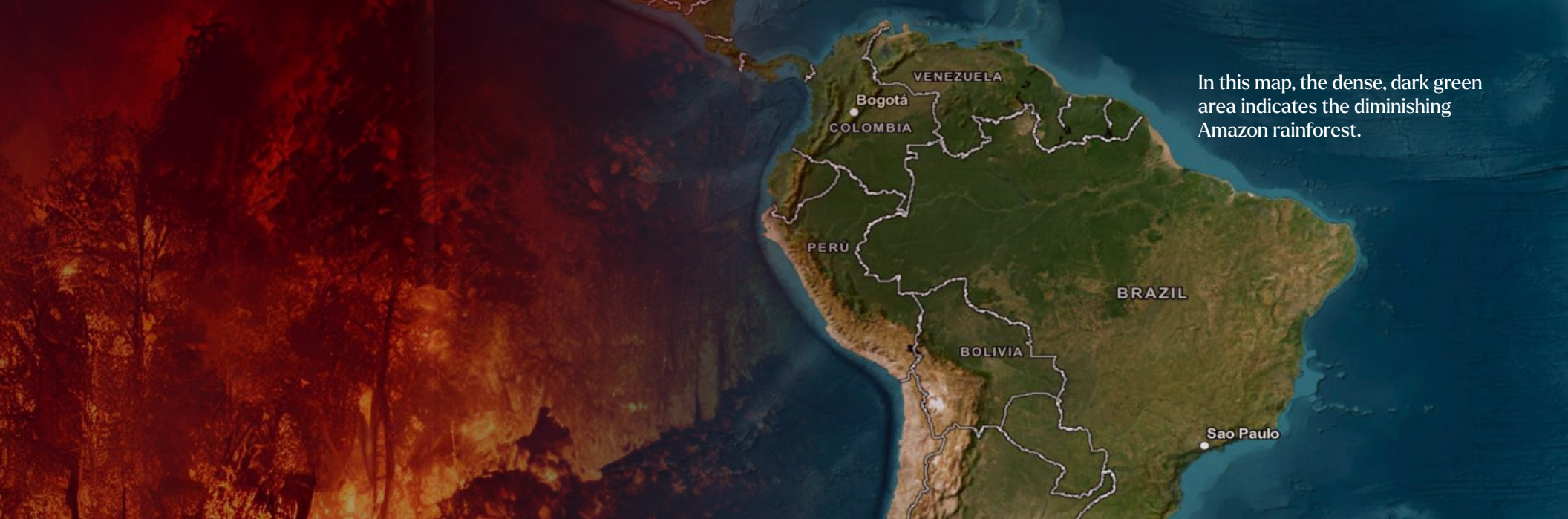


Safeguard habitat for at least **70 threatened species**

## Goals and Objectives

Rainforest Trust's goal is to permanently safeguard **20 million acres of intact forest**—an expanse the size of South Carolina—as new protected areas and Indigenous territories during Lula's term. By doing so, we will:

- Pull the Amazon back from the tipping point
- Safely lock up **6 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>** equivalents (more than the U.S.'s annual total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions)
- Provide a permanent home for at least **70 species** currently listed by IUCN's Red List as threatened and countless species not yet listed
- Secure the territories, cultures and livelihoods of **150,000 Indigenous people**



In this map, the dense, dark green area indicates the diminishing Amazon rainforest.

## Our Approach

Rainforest Trust's approach has been honed over 35 years. Our staff have been on the ground in Brazil and neighboring countries identifying the most effective nonprofit organizations and community groups to partner with, the most strategic conservationists, the leaders of Indigenous Peoples, and the most promising project opportunities.

Many projects will expand Indigenous territories in Amazonas State, Brazil, the core of the Amazon Rainforest, where their effective conservation guardianship is the best strategy for keeping the forest and its biodiversity safe over the long run. We are



Secure territories for 150K Indigenous people

also working with and have the support of Brazil's Ministers of Environment and Indigenous Peoples and the Governors of Amazonas and Pará states, and we are collaborating with the other Protecting Our Planet Challenge funders including the Bezos Earth Fund and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

### Partnering mainly with local and national NGOs permanently committed to the Amazon, our projects will:

- Formally designate unprotected forest as protected areas and Indigenous territories
- Assist communities to develop management plans that ensure the forest is protected and that small-scale livelihood activities are sustainable
- Demarcate and defend boundaries from land-grabbers and illegal miners
- Prevent and fight forest fires

- Monitor and report annually on deforestation and fires as well as progress toward formal protection and sustainability

## What It Will Cost

We estimate the total cost to achieve these ambitious goals is \$40 million, to be raised during 2023 - 2026. As always at Rainforest Trust, 100% of donors' funds will support conservation; our fundraising and management costs are covered by our board and other sources.



Lock up 6 billion mT CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents—comparable to the emissions of 1.2 billion gas-powered vehicles driven for one year

## Projects Under Consideration

- Title 7.3 million acres as Indigenous territories with Coordenação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira
- Title 3.6 million acres for uncontacted and early contacted peoples: the Piripkura, Tanaru, Pirititi, Ararë and Ponékuru
- Expand Mamirauá Reserve, one of the region's most successful community conservation initiatives, to protect freshwater turtles
- Title more than a million acres of Indigenous territories around the Putumayo and Iça Rivers with Amazon Conservation Team
- Create Sustainable Development Reserves in the Amazon Estuary with Rare
- Title 300,000 acres of Afro-Brazilian territories with Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas
- Create Jurupari State Forest in Acre with Earth Innovation Institute
- Expand Jaú National Park by ¾ million acres with Wildlife Conservation Society
- Title ½ million acres of Lago Capanã Indigenous Territory with Centro de Trabalho Indigenista
- Designate 1.4 million acres of Common-Use Territories for traditional communities buffering the Tefé National Forest with Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil
- Protect over a million acres of coastal mangroves with Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação Indígena
- Create the ¼-million-acre Capinarama Protected Area with SOS Amazônia



RAINFOREST  
TRUST

Rainforesttrust.org | 1.800.456.4930  
P.O. Box 841, Warrenton, VA 20188

