

Case Study of a 25 Million Acre Carbon Absorption Project in the Peruvian Amazon

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Introduction: In August, 2023 Save the Rainforest brought together the Upper Amazon Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society to discuss the possibility of undertaking a High Integrity Forest (HIFOR) project in the Purús Manu Landscape of Peru. This landscape is a remote and pristine rainforest that is not immediately threatened by deforestation. Consequently – despite its importance as a carbon sink – it is not in a region that has received funding through projects such as REDD+ that produce carbon credits for avoided deforestation initiatives. To address this lack of funding that is essential to the “preventative care” of such forests Wildlife Conservation Society is producing and marketing a new carbon asset called removal units. These units represent carbon that is being absorbed from the atmosphere by pristine forests. The units will not be eligible to offset carbon emissions, but buyers of the units will be able to claim they have made a measurable contribution to societal net zero. With the help of the Upper Amazon Conservancy, that has been working on the ground in the Purús Manu Landscape for two decades, the Wildlife Conservation Society is now evaluating the potential for the project using satellite imagery to confirm forest cover. Contact Save the Rainforest for project updates.

Purús Manu Landscape: (Courtesy of Upper Amazon Conservancy). The Amazon headwaters of Southeastern Peru contains some of the most remote and intact forests in the entire world. Healthy jungle ecosystems support a full spectrum of Amazonian flora and fauna and over a dozen different indigenous tribes including some of the last isolated tribes on Earth. The region’s core is made up of two of the most important protected areas for both biodiversity and indigenous cultures anywhere on the planet: the Alto Purús and Manu national parks. The parks are surrounded by other protected areas including four reserves for isolated tribes, and dozens of titled communities representing 10 different tribes in various stages of contact with the outside world. Living in small familial villages, they survive mainly on subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, collecting forest resources, and tending small gardens. Together these conservation areas and indigenous lands comprise a massive 25 million acre (10 million hectares) mosaic of protected lands roughly twice the size of Costa Rica called the Purús – Manu Landscape. It is among the largest and wildest ecosystems left on Earth. See a remarkable, award winning photo journal at <https://www.jasonhouston.com/recent-work/last-wildest-place>

HIFOR: For more information visit <https://www.wcs.org/our-work/forests-and-climate-change/hifor>