



WHO WE ARE

The Upper Amazon Conservancy (UAC) is dedicated to protecting the biological and cultural diversity of the upper Amazon River in southeastern Peru. We work in partnership with Peru's park service, indigenous federations and communities, and other conservation organizations to strengthen protected areas and build the conservation capacity of local inhabitants. UAC's programs are implemented by staff based in the US and through our Peruvian partner organization, ProPurús.



WHERE WE WORK

Our field activities are focused on the vast, roadless frontier of tropical rain forest surrounding the headwaters of the Alto Purús and Yurua rivers in Peru's Ucayali and Madre de Dios departments. Accessible only by plane, the region, referred to as the "Alto Purús", is one of the most remote and inaccessible parts of the world, where intact plant and animal communities sustain some of the last isolated indigenous tribes on earth.

WHY THE ALTO PURÚS?

Recognizing its extraordinary ecological and cultural value, Peru designated the core of this region the Alto Purús National Park in 2004. It is Peru's largest park covering over 6 million acres of lowland jungle and serves as the central link to a huge contiguous network of strictly protected land the size of Costa Rica. This network of protected areas forms the best-preserved and perhaps most important wilderness corridor in the entire upper Amazon. The region harbors a full spectrum of Amazonian flora and fauna, including numerous rare and endangered species such as the jaguar, giant river otter, and harpy eagle. Outside the protected areas, over a dozen different indigenous tribes are represented in sparsely populated communities. These people are in various stages of initial contact with outside society, and survive on traditional subsistence activities such as hunting, fishing, and tending small gardens.

While still largely intact, the region is threatened by deforestation, including road construction, drug cultivation and production, and the expanding agricultural frontier. In recent years it has also come under siege by illegal loggers intent on cutting the world's largest stands of mahogany, among the world's rarest and most valuable timber species. The logging is detrimental to the ecosystem, exploits the local communities, and is an immediate threat to the survival of the still-isolated people in the forest interior. Entire tribes have been wiped out by illnesses brought by loggers and other outsiders, and violent conflicts are increasing as these hunters and gatherers struggle in a last-ditch effort to protect what remains of their traditional lands and way of life.



HOW WE WORK

UAC is responding to this conservation and human rights crisis with a combination of on-the-ground measures intended to achieve these overarching goals:

- 1) Strengthen the Alto Purús National Park and adjacent reserves for isolated peoples in order to prevent illegal activities, protect uncontacted tribes, and maintain ecosystem health.
- 2) Build the capacity of local indigenous communities to participate in and benefit from conservation so they can assume the role of stewards of the Alto Purús region and their community lands serve as an effective conservation buffer to the Park.

Our success is directly related to the trust-based relationships we have with local people, developed over the past 20 years when members of our staff first began working in the region. This trust results from our commitment to working in the most vulnerable parts of the region, where illegal activities and community exploitation often go undetected, despite the difficulties, dangers, and high-costs of working in such remote areas. Local people participate in all of our activities, as we believe that the future of this remarkable region ultimately depends on their active involvement as effective protectors and stewards.

Our programs include:

Alto Purús Park Protection



We work closely with Peru's park service (Sernanp) to protect the Park and its buffer zone from illegal activities. Current support includes constructing and staffing a new Park office, facilitating guard training workshops, creating the official manual for park guards, and conducting patrols and overflights to monitor illegal activities.

Vigilance Committees



UAC supports, trains, and funds committees of local men and women working as voluntary guards to assist Sernanp in protecting the Park. Working directly with the Park's director, UAC has been instrumental in creating eight vigilance committees comprised of 45 members. Since 2007, UAC has provided the committees with patrolling equipment such as boat motors and GPS units, held training workshops on critical conservation topics including protecting endangered species and avoiding conflict with isolated tribes, and conducted regular monitoring and training patrols with teams of committee members and official park guards.

Sustainable Resource Management in Buffer Zone Communities



UAC works with several remote communities to protect threatened species and promote sustainable resource use in the buffer zone surrounding the Alto Purús National Park. Recently, we joined forces with the indigenous organization, EcoPurús, to protect seed-producing mahogany trees and generate income through seed harvests as an alternative to illegal and unsustainable logging. Later this year, we will finish a three-year comprehensive study of natural resource use in four communities to inform future conservation and sustainable development projects.



Indigenous Capacity Building and Leadership



Local communities on each major river are organized into indigenous federations. Stronger federations are critical to counter destructive practices that threaten indigenous livelihoods and the environment, including illegal logging and road building. UAC has partnered with the Alto Purús and Yurua federations since 2006. Current UAC support includes salaries for personnel, funds for river travel to allow federation staff to visit their community constituents, and conservation and sustainable development training. UAC also employs three young men of different ethnicities on our field team, providing them with the experience and training necessary to grow into effective leaders for their people.



Shelters abandoned by isolated tribes inside Alto Purús National Park

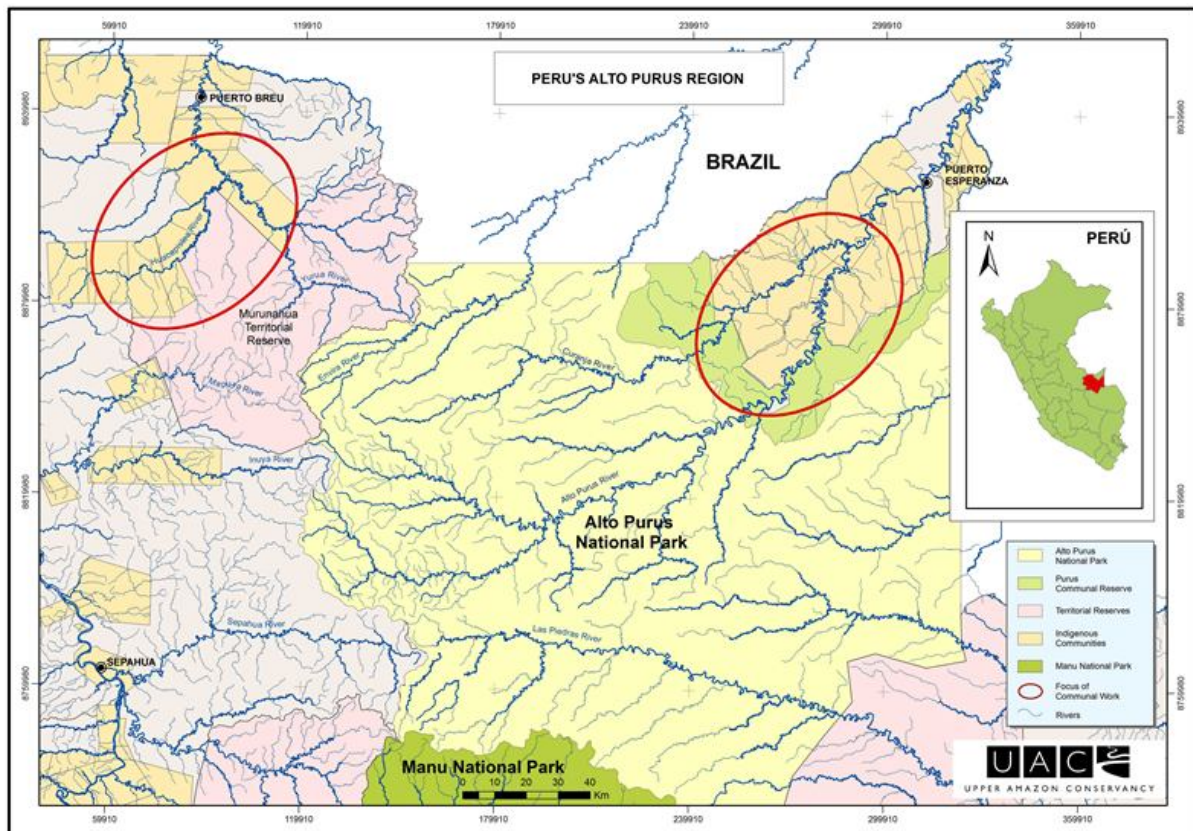
WHY SUPPORT THE UPPER AMAZON CONSERVANCY?

UAC is an organization wholly dedicated to protecting the Alto Purús region—one of the wildest places on the planet. Our strict focus and daily presence allows us to develop thoughtful programs that take into account the many logistical, ethical, and social challenges involved in effective conservation work in delicate, remote areas. We work through the Trust for Conservation Innovation, a San Francisco based organization that provides a non-profit administrative and financial management platform and maintains our 501 (c)(3) registration with the US government. As a non-profit, UAC is 100% reliant on grants and donations from individuals and foundations for its field and operational expenses. Your contributions, of whatever size, provide critical support for efforts to protect one of the wildest places left on earth.

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The greater Alto Purús region protects one of the richest cultural assemblages in the entire Amazon if not the world, harboring several indigenous groups in isolation and others in various stages of initial contact.