

WAWAZONIA NEWSLETTER

Project Status and Future Plans



Foto: Linda Vargas, Yaanua Vargas and Carmelina Vargas in Musap Community

STATUS AND FUTURE

The Wawazonia project began planting balsa in August 2021. Today we have planted over 35.000 trees on roughly 24 hectares of old farmland and are about to plant an additional 21.000 trees these months, thereby reaching 32 hectares around June 2023 with the current donors. By this, the project successfully establishes a basis for sustainable forestry and development in the communities, and we have also secured 98 hectares of pristine Amazon Rainforest. We also protect 1 to 3 hectares of rainforest for each hectare we plant. We aim to establish 200 hectares of sustainably managed forest plantations in 10 communities by the end of 2030. By achieving this goal, the project will protect around 1000 hectares of pristine rainforest and create sustainable income and improved livelihoods for all the Shuar and Kichwa communities.

Over the coming years, we also want to establish plantations of mixed endangered timber species. We are already experimenting with the local endangered timber species and have established small local forest nurseries to produce 2-3000 new seedlings for planting. While searching for seeds, local villagers discovered that the rare and endangered mahogany tree is still growing in community forests. The project supports a Shuar Climate Fund for each tree that we plant. The Fund wishes to add some banana rows to the balsa forest to have additional crops until the balsa is mature.



NEW COMMUNITIES

In March 2023, the project expanded to include two new villages, Sumac Pakcha, and Kaapar. Sumac Pakcha is a small Kichwa village along the Copataza River, and the name means the beautiful waterfall. Sumac Pakcha has around 60 inhabitants, and chief Carlos Santi looks forward to planting balsa. Kaapar is a small Shuar village with 50 residents close to the Arútam community. Founder and chief Elias Wampanti will establish 1,5 hectares of balsa this April, just as 2 hectares will be planted in Sumac Pakcha.



Top: Workers from Chinimp Tuna Community gathered after planting.

Middle: Villagers and chief Carlos Santi from Sumac Pakcha

Bottom: Villagers and chief Elias Wampanti from Kaapar Community





COMPUTERS AND INTERNET

As a wonderful surprise, we had 3 Chromebooks donated to the project by Mentech A/S. The project has established a satellite internet connection, and the school's children can now use the computers for homework and research as well as by the project's employees and for video meetings



TELEPHONES

Although we are located in the middle of the Amazon, communication is essential to a successful project and management. Before departure, private donors donated eight used iPhones equipped with covers and fortified glass from Mentech. The phones have been distributed to the project communities, and they will improve the possibility of getting updates from the project as well as for video meetings. Additionally, we have created a photo competition for the children, where they get an amount of money for each picture of insects, reptiles, and the like they send. With the money, the children get a subsidy for their education and bring the project more knowledge about the biodiversity of the rainforest.



Naichap (left) and Nunkui (right) making homework using the new Chromebooks



THE WORK IN THE Balsa FOREST

The balsa planted so far shows impressive growth. We have measured the balsa trees; the largest trees grow more than 1 centimeter per day in height and more than 1 cm in diameter per month. The villagers work hard to ensure the successful establishment of the balsa plants. This means lots of weeding with a machete during the first two years after planting. After this, the balsa trees will form a canopy that will provide shade and reduce the competition from weeds.



NEW TRAIL CAMERAS WILL DOCUMENT WILDLIFE IN THE RAINFOREST.

When we plant 1 hectare of balsa forest, we also protect 1-3 hectares of primary rainforest. In March, the project bought two new trail cameras. The cameras are going to be installed in the rainforest, which the donating companies help to protect to document the wildlife there as well as in the new balsa plantations. The cameras have been installed, and the first photos are expected to be published in May.



GET PROJECT UPDATES



The Wawazonia project is both on LinkedIn (wawazonia) and Facebook, (Wawazoni) where you can follow the project for updates from the communities and planting



NOT ONLY A TREE PLANTING PROJECT

Wawazonia not only provides work for the residents of the villages, but we also use many workers from the neighboring villages. Kaapar has a small school with 27 students from first to sixth grade. Wawazonia invited the students from school on a field trip to see the project and gave all the children a t-shirt as a thank-you for a visit. There was great joy among the children, and more cooperation between the project and the school is coming up.



Above: Seeds from the Doncel tree (*Otoba parvifolia*)

Below: Seeds from the Maria tree (*Calophyllum brasiliense*)

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

As a side effect, the project is strengthening women's position and possibilities. Many traditional societies are male-dominated. In Wawazonia, three of our five coordinators are women, and our cashier is a woman.

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