

TReeS News No.65

November 2008

La ley de la selva ('The law of the jungle')

Concerns for the future of the Peruvian Amazon have reached their most critical stage for many years as the Peruvian government seeks to open up the rainforest to greater exploitation and development. In recent press releases the Federation of Native Peoples of Madre de Dios (FENAMAD) directorate has sought to alert the global community and to squarely link developments to the signing of the free trade agreement earlier this year with the USA. This requires Peru to open up its resources to 'free' exploitation – by national and international companies. The environment and rights of indigenous and other peoples should be protected by the Peruvian constitution and Peru's signatory of various international treaties such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169. In reality these are ignored as the government of the day seeks to develop resources and wealth for a privileged minority.

In 2007 President Garcia argued for the issuing of large-scale property concessions in the Amazon to encourage 'development' of forestry resources and hydrocarbons. He suggested that continuing to offer only small-scale concessions would not attract long-term investment nor new technology. He also proposed that 'unused' community land should be termed 'abandoned' and made available to those who could 'develop' it.

In Spring 2008 Congress passed a new law – No.28852, to promote reforestation and agro-forestry private investment. It increased the duration of 10,000 hectare concessions for state lands from 10 to 60 years but the proposal to permit the private purchase of these lands was rejected.

As a result the government then proposed modifications to the law to –

- permit the private sale of state lands, including the rainforest, to national and foreign interests;
- increase the size of plots that could be sold from 10,000 to 40,000 hectares;

In effect, the modifications would have redefined forested lands as 'potential' agricultural lands and would have opened the way for large-scale forest clearance.

At the same time, another new law proposed to reduce the proportion of members of rural communities needed to agree to the sale of community lands to outside investors.

These policies provoked widespread opposition throughout the Peruvian Amazon. In early July strikes and road blocks caused severe disruption. The protests were very strong in Puerto Maldonado, Madre de Dios, where the regional government complex, occupying a whole block, was completely burnt down.

The protesters included miners, farmers, loggers, indigenous peoples, brazil-nut collectors, etc with many coming in to town for the demonstration. However, the next day it was indigenous and farmers leaders who were, primarily, held responsible for events and many of them were forced in to temporary hiding. It was widely accepted that the most severe damage had been caused by informal miners.

President Garcia was forced to send the recently appointed Environment Minister – Dr Antonio Brack Egg – to P.Maldonado to diffuse the situation. He issued an amnesty and met with local leaders to hear their concerns. However, at the end of October arrest warrants were again issued for FENAMAD President Antonio Iviche and several other local community leaders.

In the meantime, the Peruvian Congress has rejected the modifications to the law as a result of the widespread protests

Baltimore Eco-tourism project

The long-term settler community of Baltimore is located nearly 40kms upriver from Puerto Maldonado and stretches for 3kms along either side of the Tambopata river. Families are dispersed along the river bank with each family *chacra* (farm) occupying several hectares and approximately 100 metres of river frontage. At the core of the community there is a primary school, health post and meeting house.

The community tourism approach has not developed as in some other communities on the basis of rotating guests between families. Instead, each family has developed a particular attraction so that, depending on the interests of the visitor, they can choose to visit one, or more, homes.

For example, the Ramirez family home lies adjacent to the impressive El Gato waterfall. Their forest trails provide access upstream of the waterfall where visitors can fish.

The Suyco family focus on the production of handicrafts made from natural resources from the rainforest – seeds, leaves, nuts, etc. They have reforested part of their land with appropriate plants to provide the raw materials for the handicrafts. This year they sold (\$750) of handicrafts (woven bags, seed necklaces, wristbands, etc) to tourists.

The Raffaele family farm an abandoned *chacra*, created many years ago. Rather than clearing away the secondary growth and more forest to farm the land, they have established an integrated garden containing a huge variety of fruit trees.

The project is a recipient of EU funding but this was delayed for some months earlier this year. TReeS stepped in to keep the project going until the EU funding resumed. The TReeS funding focused on the development of the tourism product: home infra-structures, tourist management and marketing.

With nearby lodges now offering wi-fi and mobile phone access, and costing on average \$100 / day, there would appear to be a market for a more rustic experience costing nearer to \$25 / day.



InterOceanic Highway update

Work continues apace on the Highway, especially in the Quincemil district where the road rises up from the lowland forest in to the Andes. However, construction of the suspension bridge over the river Madre de Dios is on hold while new cables are manufactured.

Aside from several buses each day connecting Puerto Maldonado with Cusco / Juliaca, Transportes Civa now offers a service to/from Lima with a change of bus in Cusco. A further sign of the improved access to the region includes the sighting of a 'Hummer' vehicle on the streets of Puerto Maldonado !

Puerto Maldonado is already growing apace with a vast new market building being constructed on the airport road as well as new schools, many new hotels, plus the arrival of Peruvian chain stores.

TReeS Library - forthcoming deposits will include:

- Preliminary report of an investigation in to ant diversity of the family *Pheidole*, (untranslated);
- Analisis de los decretos legislativos que afectan a los pueblos indigenas (Ley no.29157), CAAAP, (untranslated);

TReeS Merchandise for Birdwatchers

NEW - 'A Field Guide to the Birds of Peru': by J.Clements & N.Shany, Lynx Ediciones (2001). The guide refers to 1800 species, most of which are illustrated on the 127 plates. The text describes the main identification features of each species, plus its range in Peru, preferred habit and worldwide range. **TReeS members special price - £20.00**

Other TReeS merchandise for birdwatchers includes: **'Where to watch birds in Peru'** by Tomas Valqui, **TReeS 'Birds of SE Peru' cd;** and **TReeS 'Tambopata Bird Checklist'** (See page 6 for full details).

**** Special Xmas 2008 Offer - all 4 items for £50.00 ****

Dr Liz Nicholson (1970-2008)

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Dr Liz Nicholson earlier this year. Liz graduated in Biology from the Ricardo Palma University, Lima. She was a resident naturalist (RN) at the Explorer's Inn in the early 1990s where she met fellow RN Barry Nicholson, recently returned from a TReeS sponsored research expedition up the Tambopata river to the Tavera tributary.

Barry and Liz married in 1994 and then lived in Hong Kong for 3 years before setting up home in Norwich where Liz established a career in plant research. She also developed an interest in orchids, propagating many species in her greenhouse. Liz was an enthusiastic TReeS member and supporter, who contributed to the development of the Society.

Donations in Liz's memory can be made to 'TReeS' in support of the '*Becas program*'.

TReeS Membership

TReeS membership rate increase - in line with other similar Societies, members are advised that, with effect from 1.1.2009, the basic TReeS membership rate will rise to £15 / annum.

We would be most grateful if members could amend their bank orders accordingly.

**TReeS Membership:
£15 per annum**

TReeS contact details –

**P.O.Box 33153,
London NW3 4DR**

www.tambopata.org



Young Vic

A Young Vic/People's Palace Projects co-production

Amazônia

Music and dance...
Laughter and adventure...
Christmas, Brazilian style!

A spectacular Amazonian adventure for all the family, inspired by Brazilian people's hero Chico Mendes

'Spectacular first-rate Christmas fare'
Daily Telegraph

'The finest family show in town'
Evening Standard

www.amazonia-london.com | 020 7922 2922

Uncontacted indigenous peoples update

Great concern remains about the indigenous peoples living in the Reserve for indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation who were displaced earlier this year and fled over the border from Peru (northern Madre de Dios) to Brazil (Acre) to escape loggers working illegally in the area. In late September further evidence of their presence, in the form of arrows, were found on the Brazilian side of the border. President Garcia has publicly suggested that 'uncontacted tribes' do not exist and that they have been 'invented' by environmentalists opposed to oil exploration in the Amazon. However, the Peruvian government did send a commission to investigate the initial reports and promised in June to report on the issue within 100 days. No report has, so far been made public.

Antonio Iviche, President of FENAMAD, is also Co-ordinator General of the international pan-Latin America group (CIPIACI) concerned with the rights of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation from Paraguay to Colombia. CIPIACI will hold its latest meeting in late November in Asuncion, Paraguay. This is a major international meeting which a range of indigenous peoples representatives and human rights experts will attend from Latin America and beyond.

TReeS funded the visit of a FENAMAD representative to Asuncion to organise the meeting – funding for the meeting itself has been secured from other international sources.

In Washington, AIDSESEP (the umbrella organisation representing Peruvian Amazonian Indigenous Federations) has recently made representations to the US Congress with respect to the threats facing indigenous peoples living in isolation within Peru.

XII Peruvian National Botanical Congress

Over 4 days in mid-September the XII National Botanical Congress was held in Puerto Maldonado. The event included the seventh Symposium of Ethnobotany and Economical Botany and the third meeting of the Peruvian Botanical Society. Guest speakers included TReeS member Dr Tim Baker of Leeds University who writes - "The first ever national-level conference to be held in Madre De Dios was organised by the Sociedad Peruana de Botanica and the Universidad Nacional Amazónica de Madre de Dios (UNAMAD) from 18-21 September 2008, in Puerto Maldonado. The twelfth Congreso Nacional de Botánica brought together over 300 researchers and students to discuss their work on the composition, diversity, ecology and uses of the Peruvian flora. The event was well publicised in the region and very successfully organised with the help of over 100 enthusiastic student volunteers and the excellent facilities of UNAMAD. Particularly noteworthy was the strong level of international interest with presentations by researchers from countries including Brazil, Denmark, Ecuador, UK and USA. The conference also included field trips to the forest reserves managed by Inkaterra and UNAMAD. Overall, the conference demonstrated the progress that has been made at UNAMAD in establishing degree programmes and training with a strong botanical component. These initiatives offer exciting possibilities for collaboration with future research projects. In particular, the advances in establishing the Al Gentry herbarium mean that students studying the plant diversity of Madre de Dios have an alternative to travelling to Cusco to compare their botanical specimens with herbarium collections.

As the first students graduate from UNAMAD, the hope is that this meeting will have encouraged them to take a life-long interest in the diversity of the forests of Madre de Dios, at a time when the need for young, enthusiastic, and informed professionals is greater than ever."

Tim Baker (University of Leeds, UK) & Hugo Dueñas Linares (Universidad Nacional Amazónica de Madre de Dios, Peru)

Peru News

The latest figures indicate economic growth at 9% for 2008, the highest in Latin America, despite the credit crunch. As a result of nine years of economic growth Peru has built up reserves of over \$30bn which will help to protect the economy against the credit crunch. However, as the demand for minerals and steel abroad rapidly declines Peru is likely to see much lower economic growth figures in 2009.

President Garcia's approval rating has fallen to 19% with strong criticism levelled at the slow progress in reconstructing the Ica / Pisco regions following the August 2007 earthquake - only a small proportion of the funds allocated have so far been spent.

In October the whole cabinet resigned over a scandal relating to bribery and the allocation of oil industry contracts though several members were, subsequently, reappointed. However, the new Prime Minister is a left-winger who spent time in prison in the 1990s for suspected links with the MRTA terrorist group – renowned for their siege of the Japanese embassy. This scandal only fuelled public anger at widespread government corruption and lead to further violent demonstrations across the country.

The trial of ex-President Fujimori continues. In June, he came face-to-face with his former adviser, Vladimir Montesinos, for the first time in eight years and in October he, finally, admitted to knowing about all major military and intelligence operations undertaken while he was President.

Several soldiers and civilians were killed and others injured in fighting between the army and narco-terrorists in a remote region of Ayacucho. This was the worst incident involving former Sendero Luminoso members for several years.

TReeS Supported Projects

* **Programa de Becas (small grants program) 2009** –

Following the award of seven grants to Peruvian students to undertake field research in Madre de Dios this year, an internet announcement has been posted calling for applications for the 2009 grants. The grants are offered to Peruvian biology, ecology and resource management students. Details of the awards made will be given in the next newsletter along with an update about those supported in 2007 and 2008.

Appeal: £25+ donations towards the cost of the 2009 grants program to allow more and larger grants to be offered.

* **Indigenous peoples living in isolation support** – see page 3.

Appeal: contributions towards the cost of offering further support to indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation.

* **Baltimore eco-tourism project** – see page 1.

Appeal: contributions towards offering further support to the community when EU funding ends in 2009.

* **Orchid Inventory project** – see page 3.

* **Tri-national Amazon programme (PAT)** - more details in the next Newsletter.

* **COINBAMAD** -

FENAMAD (Federation of Native Peoples of Madre de Dios) has found itself increasingly concerned with indigenous issues at a national level. In the mid-1990s a new representative organisation – COHARIYAMA – was founded to handle day-to-day issues affecting the communities of the Alto Madre de Dios. FENAMAD has now decided that a similar organisation – COINBAMAD - should be established to represent the 12 communities of the lower (Baja) Madre de Dios.

Since its foundation in 2007, the COINBAMAD executive has had few funds with which to begin to carry out its programme. Consequently, TReeS has now funded the executive to undertake its first visit to the majority of the indigenous communities which it represents. This will allow the executive to inform communities about the planned role of COINBAMAD, to find out about the concerns and needs of each community, and to begin to develop its representative capacity. Indigenous communities, through COINBAMAD, will then be able to participate more fully in local decision-making with respect to the InterOceanic highway, oil exploration, tourism, etc.

Appeal: contributions towards COINBAMAD establishing its administrative infrastructure within the FENAMAD office in Puerto Maldonado.

TReeS is grateful to the 'Friends of Conservation' for the support they are offering to TReeS projects.

Orchid Inventory expedition

The Oxford University orchid expedition along the InterOceanic Highway (IOH) has successfully returned to the UK. The expedition identified more than 100 different orchid species in flower, during the winter months of July and August. Three of the species identified are, potentially, new species. One of them, *Telipogon manucensis* has been submitted for publication and is under review at the Kew Bulletin (see below). The other two are still under review. Some informal pictures of our expedition can be seen at:

<http://pa.photoshelter.com/c/quintinlake/gallery-show/G0000969YXyt8Fhw>

The expedition also made contact with a team from Duke University who are preparing an ecotourism plan for the InterOceanic Highway. In due course, orchid data from the expedition will be made available to them. The Duke University team are working with PromPeru (Peruvian Tourism Administration) to promote the IOH as an ecotourism route linking Cusco with Puerto Maldonado. In conjunction with Duke University, a team from the National Geographic were shooting a documentary of the IOH while we were there. You can watch some of their footage on-line at:

<http://www.acrosstheamazon.com.br/site/>

And, also footage recorded by a Brazilian reporter, reporting on the Inter-Oceanic Highway, at:

<http://br.youtube.com/mariaemilia Coelho>

An exhibition of orchid/rainforest photos taken by the expedition is on show at Canning House, London SW1 (nearest tube station – Hyde Park: Piccadilly Line), until the 27th of November 2008.

www.canninghouse.com/content/culture/event/96/

