

# The Amazon

A land of superlatives where words fall short of capturing its magnificence and significance to human life.

As vast as it is diverse, the Amazon is a repository for one in every ten species on the planet, the highest concentration of bird and primate diversity, and one-third of all freshwater fish species. A few acres of forest in certain regions of Perú may contain as many species of trees as found within the entire continental United States.

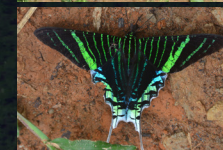
Divided across the expanse of rainforest between Perú and Brazil, the Matsés, or Jaguar People, live in the very heart of Amazon, a land of staggering natural beauty and almost inconceivable biodiversity. Today, their territory is deeply troubled and beset with threats from hardwood logging, petroleum companies, gold speculation and mining.

Tribal peoples understand and value the rainforest because they evolved with it. This relationship extends beyond a utilitarian reliance—there is a spiritual link to the forest, an interconnectivity of all its inhabitants. It is not a coincidence that the remaining tracts of pristine rainforest in the Neotropics overlap with areas of indigenous inhabitation.

## Effective Conservation through Trust & Partnership

More than 10 years ago, we engaged with the Matsés people in the Galvez region of Perú, in the heart of one of the most biodiverse regions and cradles of life on our planet: the Amazon Rainforest. Today, we are excited to share with you how we are partnering with indigenous communities, the true protectors of the Amazon, to preserve our shared heritage.

Visit our website and see how our projects strive to maintain their self-sufficiency. Your support goes directly to our work in the field.



Sustaining  
the Amazon  
with its  
Indigenous  
Peoples

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acaté   
AMAZON  
CONSERVATION



**Acaté** is dedicated to sustaining one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet by supporting the knowledge and well-being of its inhabitants.

Our team comprises indigenous peoples, physicians, social entrepreneurs, permaculturists, and academics with decades of experience in conservation.

Operating at the cutting edge of conservation, our projects integrate culture, health, and ecology, recognizing indigenous wisdom that the well-being of a people, their culture, and environment are interdependent.

Uncommonly close, and essential, partnerships are formed with the indigenous communities our initiatives serve. Acaté's field coordinator, Dr. Dave Fleck, lives in one of the most remote Matsés villages and is an integrated member of their community. Dr. Fleck has written over 30 scientific publications on the Matsés culture, language, and ethnobiology.

Acaté also has a daily presence in Iquitos, Perú, the gateway city to the Amazon, allowing us to work with Matsés traveling to the city and provide an essential link for their communities to the outside world.



*Acaté Field Coordinator Dr. Dave Fleck with Matsés elder and community teacher Manuel Tumi.*

*Dr. Fleck is working with elder Matsés shamans to produce the first Matsés Traditional Medicine Encyclopedia to preserve and pass down their medicinal knowledge for generations to come.*



*In one of the last frontiers, the Matsés and neighboring tribes refuse to sell out their homelands to highly-funded extractive industries interested only in short-term financial gain. But they need your help in their struggle.*

## Transparency & Accountability

Real and measurable progress drives all of our initiatives in indigenous medicine, sustainable commerce and permaculture.

Our work is constantly evaluated to maintain our core values: **impact**, **transparency**, and **sustainability**. An advisory board of indigenous leaders selected by the community helps create and guide each initiative.

Although local in focus, our projects seek to be global in relevance through the development of scaleable models for the preservation of indigenous culture and territory throughout the Amazon, and beyond.

## Non-Timber Forest Products

Acaté works to develop much-needed economic opportunities for indigenous communities. Acaté assists the Matsés in the sustainable harvesting and marketing of natural products such as *copaiba* and *sangre de grado*.

We partner with communities to demarcate locations of trees within their territories, developing optimal techniques for sustainable extraction, and facilitate access to international markets. All proceeds return directly to the indigenous communities.

## Traditional Medicine & Resiliency

The health of Amazonian peoples has always depended on the wisdom of their elders. Passed down through the centuries, the medicinal plant knowledge and techniques accumulated are a product of deep spiritual and physical ties to the natural environment. In a world in which environmental and cultural change is destabilizing even the most isolated societies, the healing knowledge of the Amazonian shaman is rapidly disappearing.

It is hard to overstate just how quickly this knowledge is lost. Once extinguished, this knowledge, along with their self-sufficiency, is lost and can never be fully reclaimed. What follows is total dependence on the rudimentary and low quality external health care provided in such remote and difficult-to-access locations.

Acaté seeks to maintain self-sufficiency of health care at this critical juncture by providing programmatic support for elder shamans to teach and impart the knowledge of the rainforest to younger generations of Matsés. As a first step, we are working with Matsés elders to document and preserve, in their own language, their knowledge of medicinal plants for the benefit of future generations in their communities.

*A Jivaro healer teaches Acaté President and physician Christopher Herndon, M.D. the powerful sap of a rainforest tree used to combat bacterial and fungal infections.*



Empowering indigenous peoples is the most effective approach for sustainable rainforest conservation.

Utilizing the vibrancy, diversity, and natural functions of the Amazon Rainforest, we can ensure resiliency for generations to come.

## Permaculture Systems & Solutions

Following contact, most Amerindian forest tribes were compelled to reorganize their traditional settlement patterns into larger nucleated villages along the rivers to facilitate centralized access to trade goods and healthcare. As a consequence, the communities were obliged to cut additional forest, increasingly edging their fields farther away from the village. Small scale agriculture is one of the most important and least addressed drivers of deforestation.

To remedy this trend, Acaté works with indigenous communities to apply concepts of permaculture. Permaculture is a sustainable design philosophy that utilizes nature's inherent patterning and design to craft beneficial living systems for both people and the environment. The goal is to adapt their farming practices around their fixed settlements to more sustainable methods, increasing biodiversity and soil fertility on farmland closer to villages.