



Where Landmine Clearance Meets Lasting Conservation in Colombia

SFA Indigenous Reservations Sol Naciente and Nuevo Milenio

White-bellied Spider Monkey © Wirestock Creators



Indigenous guard © The HALO Trust

PROJECT ACRES	PROJECT COST	COST PER ACRE	CO ₂ e STORED
44,000	\$1,067,129	\$24.25	11,357,942 mT

Between the Andes Mountains and the Amazon Basin in Colombia, the La Macarena conservation landscape serves as an essential wildlife corridor with more than 12,000 recorded species, including the Endangered White-bellied Spider Monkey and Vulnerable Andean Bear as well as the Neotropical Otter, Margay, and Jaguar.

Two Indigenous communities, Sol Naciente and Nuevo Milenio, reside within 44,000 acres of highly intact rainforest in the La Macarena region. The communities are home to approximately 80 families of Nasa and Misak descent who have been pursuing permanent legal protection of their territories for over 10 years. The greatest obstacle to progress on protection is the presence of life-threatening landmines. Meanwhile, deforestation and illegal economies continue to plague the forests and communities here, with illegal logging, mineral extraction, and illegal coca cultivation on the rise.

Rainforest Trust seeks \$1,067,129 to support our partners, The HALO Trust and Amazon Conservation Team (ACT), in their work to secure formal recognition of the two territories as Indigenous Reserves (Resguardos): 3,000 acres for Sol Naciente and 41,000 acres for Nuevo Milenio. HALO will conduct landmine-clearing activities while ACT will assist communities in the legal process of *Resguardo* recognition. Both communities have formally expressed support for the project and have requested our partners' assistance.

The project area supports exceptional biodiversity within a diverse landscape between the Andes, the Serranía de La Macarena mountain range, and the northern Amazon basin. The 44,000 acres of largely intact montane and submontane ecosystems awaiting formal designation will fill an important gap in protection between three national parks covering over 2.7 million acres that shelter thousands of species of flora and fauna.



Support landmine clearing so conservation can move forward

The presence of landmines has prevented Colombia's National Land Agency from completing the designation process on these lands despite over a decade of community efforts to formalize their territories as Indigenous Reserves. With our support, HALO will implement community-based mapping, surveys, and landmine clearance, while ACT will provide legal, social, and technical support to assist communities in completing the administrative process for Resguardo recognition.

Formal recognition of the territories as Indigenous Reserves grants the highest level of permanent land tenure protection available under Colombian law. The status also allows Indigenous communities to maintain their traditional stewardship practices while preventing deforestation driven by illegal logging, coca cultivation, mining, and external colonization pressures. Formal designation is also critical to protecting against a number of small mining titles

and an active petroleum exploration block in surrounding communities. Governance and territorial management will be exercised through recognized Indigenous authorities (cabildos), ensuring long-term permanent protection that cannot be revoked. The project will strengthen community monitoring through the Indigenous Guard, which conducts patrols and oversees resource use within the territory.

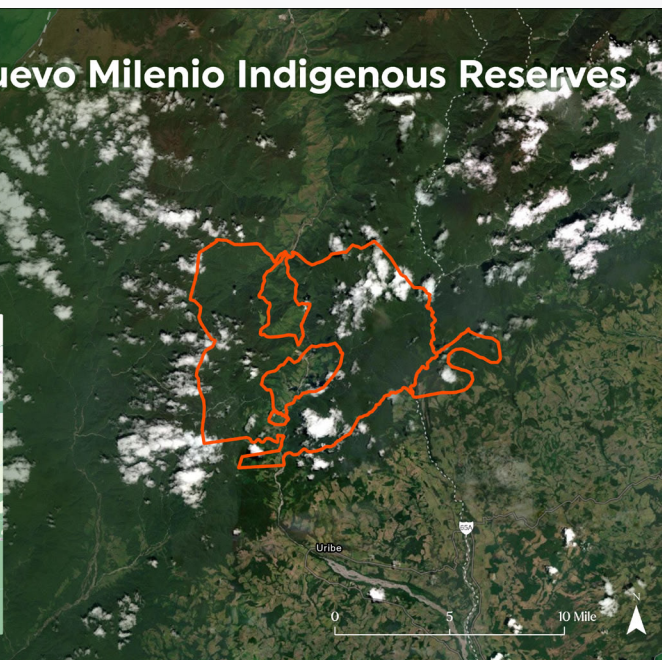
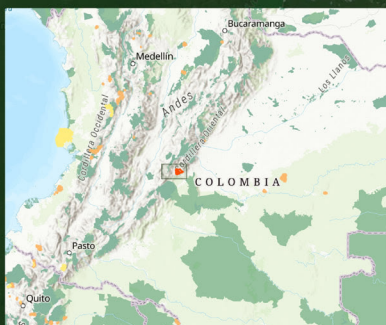
Indigenous Reserves contribute to Colombia's deep commitment to 30x30 goals and their Biodiversity Action Plan pledging to protect and conserve over 34% of its terrestrial and marine areas by 2030.

Reduce the risk of illegal resource extraction after landmine removal

The harsh reality is that clearing landmines can unintentionally open the door to illegal deforestation and resource extraction in areas that were previously—though inadvertently—protected by inaccessibility. This dynamic is playing out elsewhere in Colombia and in other countries, where deforestation rates have been

Sol Naciente and Nuevo Milenio Indigenous Reserves

- Proposed Area for Protection
- Protected Rainforest Trust Projects
- Active Rainforest Trust Projects
- World Database of Protected Areas





rising sharply as the threat from civil unrest declines and mines are cleared. This project resolves that problem by simultaneously moving forward with conservation activities and mine-clearing. The communities have clearly expressed their intention to protect their territories and pursue Indigenous reserve status precisely to strengthen conservation and governance.

Support a creative solution to achieving conservation in complex landscapes

This project reflects the type of innovative approach increasingly needed to secure conservation outcomes in complicated landscapes. The development of this proposal has allowed us to explore new pathways for achieving protection in an area that is extraordinarily rich in biodiversity yet historically difficult to conserve due to conflict-related barriers.

Project landscape © The HALO Trust

PROJECT PARTNER

The HALO Trust and ACT

The HALO Trust is a new partner for Rainforest Trust. They are a globally recognized humanitarian demining organization with over 35 years of experience and accredited landmine clearance operations in Colombia since 2013. They have a strong track record working in Indigenous territories with well-established safety protocols that reduce operational risk.

Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) is a respected regional conservation organization that has supported the creation or expansion of 64 Indigenous reserves protecting more than 6.4 million acres since 2015. Rainforest Trust is working on another project with ACT in Brazil, begun in 2024.



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