

Rainforest Trust's 2030 Ambition:

A Plan to Prevent Extinction,
Stabilize Climate, and Deliver
Permanent Protection



RAINFOREST
TRUST®

2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan

We are at a defining moment for the future of life on Earth. Nowhere is this more urgent than across the tropics, where habitat loss is driving species extinction and degrading the ecosystems and climate systems that sustain all life.

The consequences of inaction will be permanent. Species lost to extinction will never return, irreplaceable ecosystems will collapse, and the wilderness that stabilizes our climate and sustains communities will be gone forever.

For more than three decades, Rainforest Trust has focused on one clear and effective solution: permanently protect the habitats most critical for species, ecosystems, and the planet's climate. Working with local organizations, Indigenous Peoples, communities, and governments, we have built a model that delivers enduring protection for wildlife, wild places, and the natural systems we all depend on.

Together with our donors, Rainforest Trust has protected more than 66 million acres of vital habitat, with another 80 million acres currently in progress. This work has benefited 3,400 threatened species, including 508 bird species, 448 amphibian species, and 509 mammal species. Additionally, these protected and in-progress areas store more than 19 billion metric tons of CO₂ equivalents. These results reflect a shared commitment to strategic, cost-effective approaches grounded in science and implemented by those whose lives are closely tied to the landscapes we seek to protect.

Our 2026–2030 strategic plan builds on this strong foundation and takes advantage of a unique window of opportunity. **Almost all the nations of the world (197) have committed to protecting 30% of the planet's land and 30% of its waters by 2030.** In many countries, from Panama to Madagascar, that commitment is spurring action to create protected areas. Meanwhile, for the first time, conservationists and Indigenous Peoples have united in recognition of the critical role of traditional guardianship and life-or-death imperative to save natural habitats.

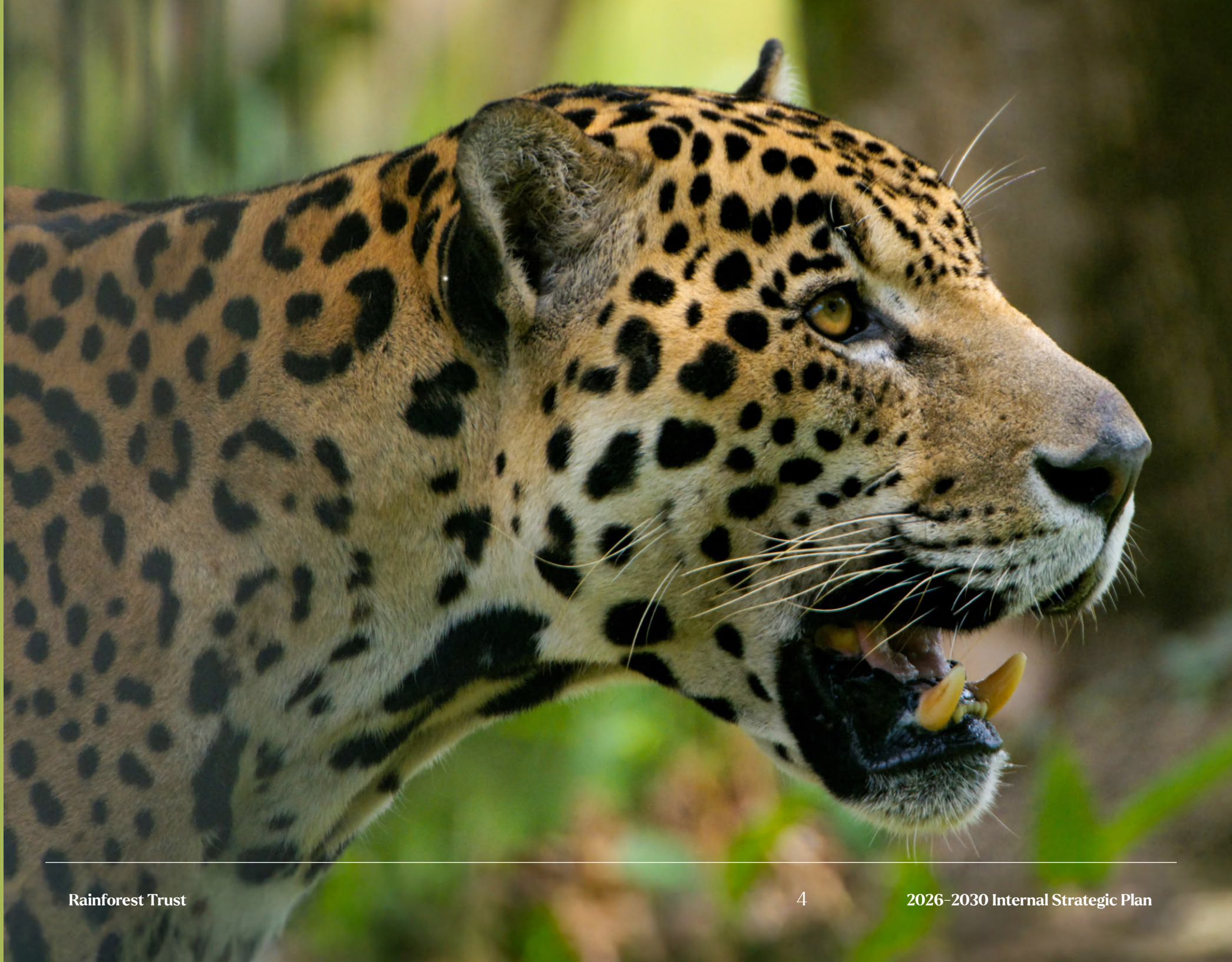




Our 2030 ambition is to protect the most important lands and waters for biodiversity and planetary function, contributing substantially to the global goal of **safeguarding 30% of the planet** by 2030. **We will expand our impact from protecting 140 million acres to 220 million acres, and with the support of our donors, we'll mobilize \$350 million to make this happen.**

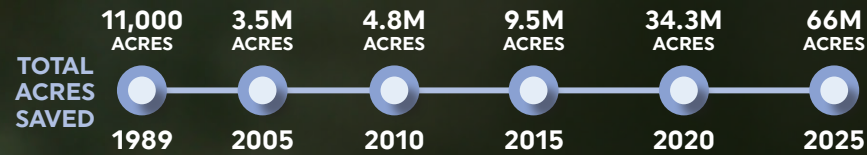
The next five years are critical to the future of nature and humanity. With a proven model and extraordinary global partnerships, Rainforest Trust is positioned to deliver high-impact conservation at scale. As always, our role is to act as a bridge between donors seeking the greatest possible impact for their conservation investment and the very best conservationists and projects to save species and protect our planet.

This plan outlines how we will achieve these outcomes.



Rainforest Trust 2025 Achievements

66M+
acres protected



80M+
acres in progress



21.4 BILLION METRIC TONS CO₂ EQUIVALENTS

stored securely in proposed and protected areas (three times total annual U.S. emissions)

3,400

threatened species benefit from habitat protection in Rainforest Trust-supported projects



Our Strategy at a Glance

VISION

A world where species thrive, ecosystems flourish, and the planet's natural systems return to balance.

MISSION

Rainforest Trust permanently protects habitat critical for species and the planet.

APPROACH

We create and expand Protected Areas and Conserved Areas and help secure legal recognition of Indigenous and Traditional Territories in the tropics and subtropics through partnerships with donors, local NGOs, local communities, and governments.*

2030 AMBITION

- Protect the most critical unprotected lands and waters on Earth for biodiversity and ecological functioning, contributing to the global target of 30% of Earth's lands and waters protected by 2030.
- Raise \$350 million over five years to expand our impact from 140 million acres to 220 million acres.**



*For brevity, in this plan and elsewhere, we sometimes say "protected and conserved areas," or even just "protected areas," but we always mean to include all of these land-use designations.

**Unless otherwise stated, most metrics in this plan are cumulative since our founding in 1988 rather than incremental since 2025 (as the Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 target is also cumulative). Most also include estimates for active projects that are progressing towards but have not yet achieved legal protection (since forests and species are generally well-protected by active projects).

VALUES

Partner for Impact

We believe partnerships are critical to achieving our impact. We bridge diverse communities to serve a shared mission, approaching relationships with humility and collaboration. We build trust-based partnerships with local NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, other conservationists, and donors to bring lasting benefits to nature and people.

Respect and Empower People

We honor the interconnected relationships between nature and people. We value diverse perspectives, uphold fairness and respect, and create conditions that elevate stakeholder voices and priorities. We recognize the irreplaceable knowledge, experience, and rights of the people who have lived within and stewarded rainforests for generations.

Act with Integrity and Transparency

We know that integrity is paramount to achieving our mission. We commit to the highest ethical standards and transparent communication with our stakeholders, maintaining accountability by openly measuring our performance, learning from our mistakes, and sharing our impact.

Lead with Data

We recognize that making informed decisions requires data that integrates the latest science, technical analytics, traditional knowledge, and diverse lived experiences. We leverage this data in every aspect of our work, from fundraising and operations through grant-making and implementation.

Invest Resources Efficiently

We know that every donation can generate impact for species, people, and the planet, and we meticulously manage the resources our donors entrust to us. We deliberately invest in projects and partnerships that maximize the potential for cost-effective, durable conservation.

GOALS

Save Species

- 225 species saved from habitat loss
- All of our projects will be in the world's most irreplaceable sites
- Harbor 50% of threatened birds, 45% mammals, 25% reptiles and amphibians, 20% other taxa

Protect our Planet

- Protect 220M acres globally
- Protect 92M acres of the three largest tropical rainforests (Amazon, Congo, New Guinea)
- Protect 45M acres of other critical ecosystems
- Secure storage of 35 billion metric tons of carbon

STRATEGIES

Partner with People

- Funders
- Implementing NGOs
- Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Governments

Design for Resilience

- Resilient protected areas
- Resilient Rainforest Trust

Goal: Save Species

Intent: Urgently prevent species extinctions caused by habitat loss

Justification

Long after tropical forests have recovered and the Earth's atmosphere has stabilized, the most lasting impact of the last 200 years of human history will be the countless species lost to extinction.

Over-exploited animal populations and polluted rivers and lakes can recover in decades. Clear-cut forests and our greenhouse-gas-polluted atmosphere can recover in centuries. But plant and animal species lost to extinction will never be replaced, even after thousands or millions of years.

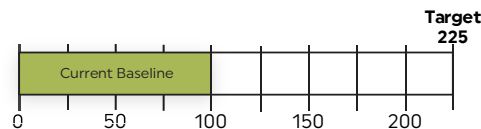
Today, habitat loss is the leading cause of extinction, with most of these extinctions occurring in key tropical regions where many unique species face grave threats. We prioritize these vulnerable areas for conservation.

Strategic Approach

Our approach centers on permanently protecting areas of high endemism and threat as identified by priority-setting exercises, including Key Biodiversity Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction Sites, Conservation Imperatives, and Biodiversity Hotspots. Protection may be achieved through land purchase, government designation of protected areas, or the strengthening of Indigenous Peoples' and traditional local communities' land tenure and management of natural resources.

Critical Results

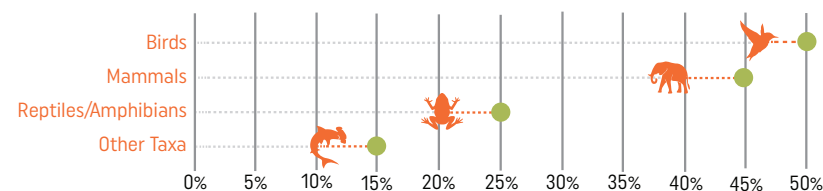
Result 1 | Rainforest Trust protects the essential remaining habitat required to safeguard 225 globally threatened species from extinction. **Baseline: estimated at 100** (subject to further review)*



Result 2 | All new Rainforest Trust species-focused conservation investments are made within globally accepted priority areas for species conservation.

Result 3 | According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) range maps, Rainforest Trust project sites, though they comprise less than 1% of Earth's land area, harbor:

- Goal: 50% of IUCN Red List threatened bird species
Baseline: 46%
- Goal: 45% of threatened mammals
Baseline: 39.5%
- Goal: 25% of threatened reptiles and amphibians
Baseline: 20.4%
- Goal: 15% of all other threatened taxa
Baseline: 10.8%



*Baselines represent the level of the metric at the end of 2025.



Cherry-throated Tanager | ©CIRIO ALBANO/NE BRAZIL BIRDING

Saving the Cherry-throated Tanager from Extinction

For more than a century, the Critically Endangered Cherry-throated Tanager was believed extinct. Its rediscovery in southeastern Brazil revealed a fragile reality: a few birds survived in a single, highly vulnerable fragment of Brazil's Atlantic Forest, leaving them at immediate risk from encroaching development.

In response, Rainforest Trust partnered with Instituto Marcos Daniel, a Brazilian NGO, to secure and expand critical habitat by purchasing and protecting the Kaetés Reserve. Across three phases of investment, donor funding moved the species from having no protected habitat to full protection of its entire known range. This work more than doubled the reserve's size and transformed an isolated forest patch into a permanently protected landscape. To date, 1,862 acres have been protected.

Rainforest Trust support has enabled our partner to establish environmental patrols, manage invasive species, develop sustainable ecotourism, and conduct community outreach—all critical for the long-term resilience of the reserve and the species.



Observation tower in Kaetés Reserve | ©INSTITUTO MARCOS DANIEL/ GUSTAVO MAGNAGO

Today, the Kaetés Reserve supports approximately 20 individuals, up from 4 to 12 birds documented during the first two years of the project. The future of the species is not 100% assured, but it is vastly more likely to survive than it would be without Rainforest Trust's supporters.

Goal: Protect our Planet

Intent: Safeguard the ecological functioning of our planet for species, climate, and people

Justification

Many of the world's species depend on the largest, most intact, and most biodiverse ecosystems in the tropics and subtropics, such as the world's three great rainforests: the Amazon-Andes, Congo Basin, and forests of New Guinea. That dependency will only increase as the world's climate changes and smaller ecosystems are degraded and fragmented. But these species strongholds also play another role critical to all species, providing vital "ecosystem services" such as carbon storage and sequestration, and maintenance of continental water cycles. And these forests provide Rainforest Trust and our supporters with an opportunity to preserve nature on such a vast scale as to have truly planetary impact. For all these reasons, conserving large, intact, biodiverse ecosystems is vital to the long-term future of our planet and all its species, very much including ourselves.

Strategic Approach

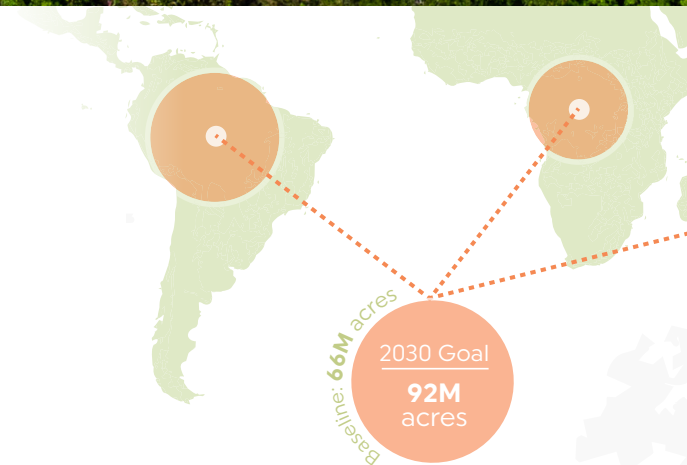
We permanently protect the largest, most species-rich, intact ecosystems on Earth, in most cases through strengthening land tenure or supporting government designation, and occasionally (since the cost is usually prohibitive) through land purchase. We identify priority areas through respected analyses, including the Forest Landscape Integrity Index, Last of the Wild initiative, and Human Modification Index.

Critical Results

Result 1 | Protect or be in the process of protecting 220 million acres globally.
Baseline: 140 million acres



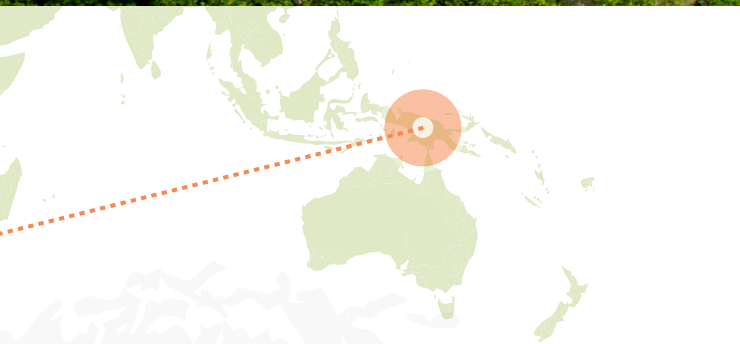
Amazon rainforest, Brazil | ©LUCAS NINNO



Result 2 | Protect or be in the process of protecting 92 million acres of the world's three largest intact tropical rainforests: the Amazon-Andes, Congo Basin, and forests of New Guinea.
Baseline: 66 million acres

Result 3 | Outside these three great forests, protect 45 million acres of other relatively large, intact, and biodiverse ecosystems (such as the largest intact forests of Central America, largest intact tropical and sub-tropical dry forests, largest intact tropical wetlands and grasslands, etc.)
Baseline: 25 million acres





Result 4 | Secure 35 billion metric tons of vulnerable carbon stored in vegetation and soil (equal to six years of all U.S. CO₂ emissions)

Baseline: 21.4 billion mT



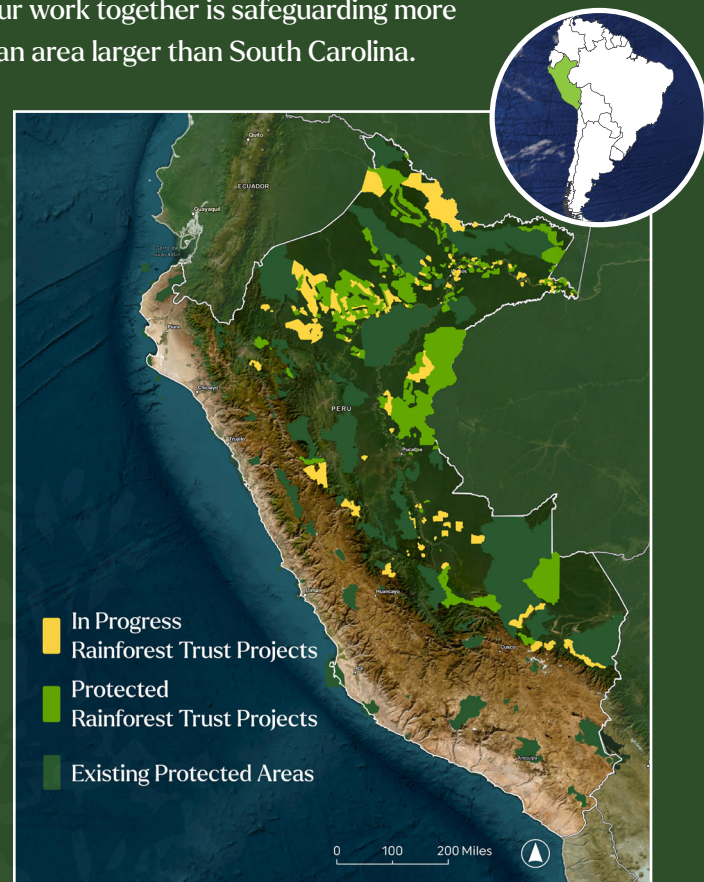
Baseline: **25M** acres

Preserving a Planetary Lifeline

Peru has the second-largest expanse of Amazon rainforest after Brazil. As in Brazil, the Peruvian Amazon harbors myriad species, stores vast quantities of carbon, generates and recycles rainwater for all of South America, and is home to Indigenous Peoples whose stewardship has protected the forest for generations. However, the forest and its people face growing threats from logging, mining, and industrial agriculture.

Since 2002, Rainforest Trust has driven landscape-level protection across the Peruvian Amazon by working with our local partner, Centro para el Desarrollo del Indígena Amazónico (CEDIA) to establish protected territories and secure land tenure for Indigenous communities. To date, our work together is safeguarding more than 22 million acres of rainforest, an area larger than South Carolina.

Partnering with CEDIA and other Peruvian NGOs, Rainforest Trust has protected or is in the process of protecting a total of 28 million acres, 17% of the standing primary rainforest in Peru. The wood and soil in these 28 million acres safely store some 6.9 billion metric tons of carbon, comparable to nearly all U.S. CO₂ emissions in 2024. This scale of impact, essential to planetary health, is a tribute to the extraordinary partnership between Indigenous Peoples, Peruvian NGOs, and Rainforest Trust's donors.



Strategy: Partner with People

Intent

Serve as a trusted partner and bridge between donors, implementing NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities living in and around our projects.

Justification

Permanently protecting habitat for species and the planet requires deep, trusting, and abiding partnerships among those willing to support conservation.

This includes those who live in and around biodiversity hotspots and wilderness areas and who have traditionally acted as stewards of nature; committed conservation leaders and their organizations in rainforest nations; donors seeking to maximize the conservation impact of their investments; and host governments who bear legal responsibility for protected area and Indigenous territory designation.

Rainforest Trust's role is to build and safeguard these partnerships, and provide a trusted and efficient conduit for funds.

Rainforest Trust VP of Conservation, James Lewis, and staff from our partner, Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IIEB), Lake Tefê, Amazonas, Brazil | ©ANDREA CARNEIRO/RAINFEST TRUST

I. Funding Partnerships

Intent: Provide donors with the highest impact and most cost-effective investment opportunities in conservation, accelerating protected area creation to achieve the extraordinary conservation outcomes outlined in this plan.

Strategic Approach

Align our donor and conservation goals so that all priority projects are funded, donor capacity is optimized, and available funds are rapidly allocated. Our focus will be to recruit and maximize the giving of principal and major donors, build a strong donor pipeline, and become the regranter of choice by stewarding resources efficiently and responsibly to those best positioned to deliver durable conservation outcomes.

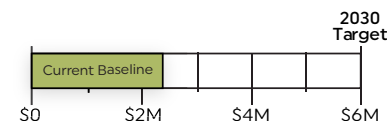
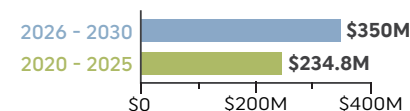
Critical Results

Result 1 | Raise \$350 million from 2026 through the end of 2030, building from annual revenue of \$50 million in 2025 to \$80 million in 2030. **Baseline:** \$234.8 million (2021-2025)

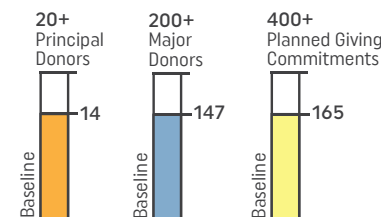
Result 2 | Raise unrestricted giving sufficient to cover our operational costs after interest income, with an estimated target of \$6 million in 2030, so that 100% of restricted donations can continue to go to conservation. **Baseline:** \$2.4 million

Result 3 | Achieve a diversified active donor base of at least 15,000 donors, including at least 20 principal and 200 major donors and 400 documented planned gift commitments. **Baseline:** 7,140; 14; 147; 165

Result 4 | Maintain our 100% Charity Navigator rating. **Baseline:** 100% rating



Baseline:
7,140
Active
Donors



Bobolink Foundation: A Key Conservation Partner for Latin America

"We've partnered with Rainforest Trust on several major conservation projects in Latin America, and we always appreciate the strategic thinking, commitment to collaboration and transparency, and the knowledge and understanding they bring to each project. Working with them has given us greater confidence to support local NGOs in landscapes where we have less familiarity."

– Amanda Paulson, Bobolink Foundation Board Member
and Special Projects Officer

The partnership between Rainforest Trust and Bobolink Foundation demonstrates the transformational opportunity for philanthropic investment to protect biodiversity across critical landscapes. By aligning expertise, resources, and networks, we can direct funding where it is most needed.

In recent years, Rainforest Trust and Bobolink Foundation have worked together to advance their shared commitment to long-term conservation. Bobolink Foundation has been a key project development and funding partner in a number of geographies, supporting projects across Latin America, from Ecuador's Antisana Volcano to critical Jaguar habitat in Belize's Maya Forest. Most recently, Bobolink Foundation has been instrumental in advancing urgent projects in the Pantanal and assisting and encouraging Rainforest Trust to lead the Ecuadorian Chocó Initiative (see "Building a Resilient, Interconnected Landscape").

This collaboration reinforces the power of strong partnerships: together, we can achieve more than either could alone.

II. Partnerships with Implementing NGOs

Intent: Seek to find and support the very best implementing partners to successfully and cost-effectively achieve both legal habitat protection and the long-term conservation of species and ecosystems, aiming to be the most equitable, transparent, and supportive funder in conservation.

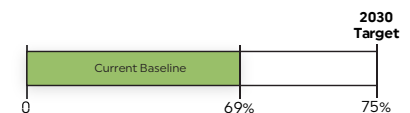
Strategic Approach

We will build and continuously grow a global network of trusted local, national, and international NGOs to deliver measurable protection outcomes aligned with this plan. Where possible, we will work through local and national NGOs that have a strong, legitimate national voice, are permanently committed to their country, and often achieve conservation more cost-effectively than international NGOs. This also enables US and UK taxpayers to efficiently support implementing partners headquartered in the Global South.

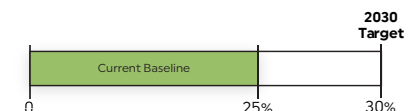
Our grant-making will be outcome-focused, adaptive, and aligned with locally defined priorities and contexts. We will ensure timely access to resources for partners alongside the support needed to achieve lasting results.

Critical Results

Result 1 | 75% of grant money to local and national NGOs. **Baseline:** 69%



Result 2 | 30% of projects with new partners. **Baseline:** 25%



Result 3 | 95% of both full project applicants and active implementing partners rate Rainforest Trust and our systems as excellent or good.



III. Partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Intent: Our relationships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities will be characterized by respect and fairness. By strengthening Indigenous land tenure and traditional guardianship, we will support enduring biodiversity conservation.

Strategic Approach

We recognize Indigenous Peoples and local communities as rights-holders and beneficiaries of conservation, and also as long-term stewards and conservation leaders of global significance. We will develop and roll out systems to ensure partners and projects implement Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and comply with Social Safeguards that are cutting-edge for a private grantmaker of our size. We will invest in land-tenure and livelihood support as leading strategies for enduring nature protection.



Critical Results

Result 1 | 1,200 Indigenous or local communities' land tenure is legally recognized across 100 million acres through Rainforest Trust investments.

Baseline: 817 communities and 80 million acres



Result 2 | 100% of projects comply with a new Rainforest Trust Safeguards commitment once fully rolled out.

Result 3 | 25 projects are implemented directly by Indigenous- or local community-led organizations.

Baseline: 6



IV. Engaging With Governments

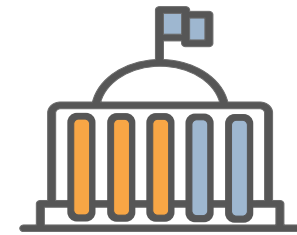
Intent: Actively engage with governments in priority countries where we work to source projects and ensure their success, and partner with governments in priority countries to designate at least 30% of land and water as protected areas.

Strategic Approach

Through international networks (e.g., ICCF, SPACES) and direct engagement, we will develop relationships with government leaders in conservation within priority countries (e.g., heads of state, ministers of environment, directors of national park services, etc.), consult on priorities and legal designation follow-through, and occasionally agree on formal partnerships and pledges. Where the likely outcomes are extremely high and the cost is modest, we will consider supporting processes via NGOs to develop and accelerate the pipeline of new protected areas.

Critical Results

Result 1 | Partner with five national or sub-national governments to develop and implement strategies for protected and conserved area creation to further national, regional, and global 30x30 targets. **Baseline = 3**



Partner with
5 Governments



Rainforest Trust CEO, Dr. James Deutsch, and Director of Latin America Conservation, Dr. Ameyali Ramos, in Suriname in February 2026. The two met with the President, Jennifer Geerlings-Simons (first at left), and her advisor, John Goedschalk (third from right) to discuss conservation priorities | ©RAINFOREST TRUST

Strategy: Design for Resilience



Intent

Our projects and our organization will deliver significant, lasting conservation impact over the long term.

Justification

Rainforest Trust strives to build resilience in our organization, our implementing partners, and the ecosystems we protect. Enduring conservation outcomes require strong institutions and protected areas that can withstand sociopolitical shifts, economic uncertainty, and climate change. Prioritizing long-term viability ensures Rainforest Trust can continue driving high-impact conservation where it is needed most. We recognize that achieving durable protection in a rapidly changing world requires thoughtful risk-taking, adaptive management, and a willingness to test new approaches within the scope of our mission.

Strategic Approach

We will build resilience into our protected areas and our organization by anticipating risks and threats, and intentionally designing to mitigate them. We will experiment with new approaches to enhance resilience that align with our mission, values, and competencies.

I. Resilient Protected Areas

Intent: We intend that the protected areas we create will be resilient to threats and change, including:

- Insufficient funding
- Climate change
- Genetic isolation
- Lack of community and political support
- Ineffective governance and management

We recognize that these and other emerging challenges will likely require new approaches to maintain durable protection.

Strategic Approach

We will seek to design resilience into each of our protected area creation projects through discussion with the partner, budget allocation, and engagement of technical assistance. Where these precautions fail and a Rainforest Trust-supported protected area is at risk, we will invest modestly through emergency and capacity-building grants. Finally, we will expand our focus from individual protected-area creation to projects that encompass multiple elements of resilience through comprehensive landscape initiatives.

Critical Results

Result 1 | 95% of forests we have protected since 1988 remain intact.* **Baseline: 98%**



Result 2 | 99% of Critically Endangered and Endangered species persist within Rainforest Trust protected areas.



*Unusually, we allow for our success rate to decline modestly by this measure because we intend to develop relatively more projects in places of greater threat and risk, such as those near the deforestation frontier where the climate outcomes, if successful, are particularly large.



Building a Resilient, Interconnected Landscape

Protecting land is only the first step. Ensuring it endures defines lasting impact. Rainforest Trust develops every protected area with long-term resilience in mind, allowing it to withstand the pressures that can undermine conservation success.

Sustained outcomes depend on strong local institutions and protected areas that remain effective through shifting political, economic, and environmental conditions. By prioritizing long-term viability from the outset, Rainforest Trust creates conservation solutions built to last.

Through our Chocó Rainforest initiative, we are piloting innovative methods to implement this strategy on the ground. The Chocó forest of northwest Ecuador, a biologically rich region where one in four species is found nowhere else, has been reduced to just 2% of its original size.

Rainforest Trust is coordinating a coalition of core funders and 11 local organizations to protect the remaining Chocó. Working in close collaboration, the coalition members have agreed on a shared vision for the landscape: strengthening and expanding protected areas, establishing altitudinal corridors to help species adapt to warming conditions, increasing the capacity of local NGOs, and supporting sustainable livelihoods for remote communities through improved access to markets, education, and critical infrastructure. In some project areas, bioacoustic monitoring is also being used to track human activity and deploy rangers in real time to prevent unauthorized development.

By working jointly and sharing funding across many local partners, this integrated, resilience-focused strategy is advancing conservation efforts to withstand evolving threats and deliver permanence that lasts for generations.



II. A Resilient Rainforest Trust

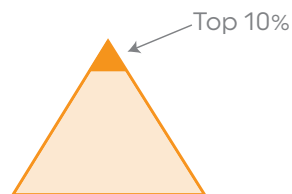
Intent: Enduring programs depend on a resilient, highly engaged organization. We will build and operate an organization equipped with the talent, resources, and systems essential to deliver world-class conservation results for as long as it takes to achieve our vision.

Strategic Approach

We will be an employer of choice, guided by our principled values and industry best practices, with board and staff members who are proud of our work and feel well supported. Our work depends on staff and board teams that include people from various backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, and we commit to keeping Rainforest Trust a place that is welcoming and inclusive. We will prioritize exceptional financial health that enables performance in the near and long term. We will proactively respond to emerging threats and opportunities, effectively mitigating risks and strategically embracing new opportunities.

Select Critical Results

Result 1 | Staff engagement rates rank in the top 10% of peer organizations. **Baseline:** top 7%



Result 2 | High-impact risks and opportunities are identified and effective responses implemented. **Baseline:** partial identification and mitigation without established comprehensive framework

Result 3 | The board reflects and enhances Rainforest Trust's reputation for excellence and fairness in conservation. **Baseline:** yes





Rainforest Trust is like having your own expertly staffed foundation. They have the proven skills and experience to source and develop worthy conservation projects across the globe, analyze the benefits and risks, and bring the very best of them to you. Combined with their superb project management, financial efficiency, and long-term monitoring, it's an unbeatable framework for saving species and tackling climate change worldwide."

– Dr. Eric Veach, Rainforest Trust Board Chair Emeritus

Contact Rainforest Trust

to further your investment in high-impact conservation. Our team is committed to ensuring your support has the most effective and enduring impact on our planet.

info@rainforesttrust.org • (800) 456-4930



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