

Impact Spotlight

Alto Mayo REDD+ Project Q1 2023

**EVER
LAND**

**CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL**





SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

In the Andean Amazon of Peru, the Alto Mayo REDD+ Project protects 182,000 hectares of high-elevation rainforest and cloud forest. The Project's Community Patrol initiative was conceived as part of their strategy to build an alliance between local communities and Peru's Natural Protected Areas Service (SERNANP). They do this by including community members as an integral part of patrolling activities that take place in the project's buffer zone. The main objective is to deter migration into the Alto Mayo Protected Forest (AMPF) project area. Community Patrol Committee members are able to share their first hand testimony with migrants about their own experiences and help new migrants understand why it is not feasible to enter the AMPF.



TARGET 15.2





KEY ACTIVITIES

Community Patrol Committees join rangers to survey the buffer zone of the protected area. With support from the project, SERNANP provides training, basic equipment, food supply and other requirements to accomplish this task. SERNANP recognizes each committee, certifies each member as a Volunteer Ranger (after full training has been completed), and is responsible for the annual implementation of the patrolling plan. The AMPF Office identifies the priority areas in the buffer zone where these committees are needed or will add the most value to the management of the protected area.

Considering the fact that hundreds of migrant families live within the protected area, its management must be participatory to be effective. In that sense, the more activities that include local communities as an integral part of the process, the more sustainable and durable a process it is. Community Patrol Committees members serve as key spokesmen of the protected area. It is much easier for them to help new migrants understand why it is not feasible to enter the AMPF with their own lived experiences, which allows the project to avoid social conflicts and to empower local communities in favor of conservation processes.





MILESTONES

Community Patrol Committees are very effective in mitigating new migration into the protected area by educating people about the existence of SERNANP and all the legal frameworks involved. In addition, since new migrants are aware of their peers, the message of not entering the protected area is more welcomed, avoiding any possibility of conflict against rangers.

There is recognition of five Community Patrol Committees by SERNANP, including the recognition of 61 volunteer rangers.





During the reporting period, the patrol committees joined six patrols with SERNANP in the buffer zone of the protected area. Another local community located in the buffer zone in the San Martin region has shown interest to be part of this strategy and the first steps in coordination have been made with the Head of the Protected Area to establish a team.

The new SERNANP's Ranger Recruitment process will also be launched during the next semester. Some of the members of the recognized committees are interested in becoming part of SERNANP's official staff and will participate in this process. Several investment opportunities are needed, including establishing well equipped voluntary ranger stations and the development of a training program for volunteer rangers (including themes beyond the existing one) as well as the hiring of specific project staff to focus on proposals for the committees.



THE FUTURE

Conservation International will be co-managing the AMPF until at least 2032. After this phase, SERNANP and local communities should have robust relationships to tackle all the threats the AMPF may face. In that sense, Community Patrol Committees are the unique legal means SERNANP has to include local people within patrolling activities. Since they have been recognized by SERNANP, the budget for the basic operation of these committees is included as part of the public funds the Peruvian Government annually delivers to SERNANP. Because members of these committees are recognized as volunteer rangers, they have more opportunities to become a SERNANP ranger through any protected area recruitment process.

In the short term, the existing committees will continue to support the patrol activities of SERNANP and patrolling activities are set to expand. Other local communities have been contacted and invited to be part of this strategy. Ideally, in the longer term, all key areas of the buffer zone would have established a Community Patrol Committee. Success for this initiative is reflected in no new migration into the protected area, as well as most of the new SERNANP rangers coming from the Community Patrol Committees. Furthermore, this definition of success will be realized if public funds (different from SERNANPs) begin flowing to support optimizing the functionality of the committees and the critical contribution they play in realizing the project's theory of change.

