



# NATIVE FUTURE

Protecting Cultures • Conserving Threatened Lands

## Wounaan Communities Map Boundaries of Traditional Lands; Encounter Active Deforestation in Progress

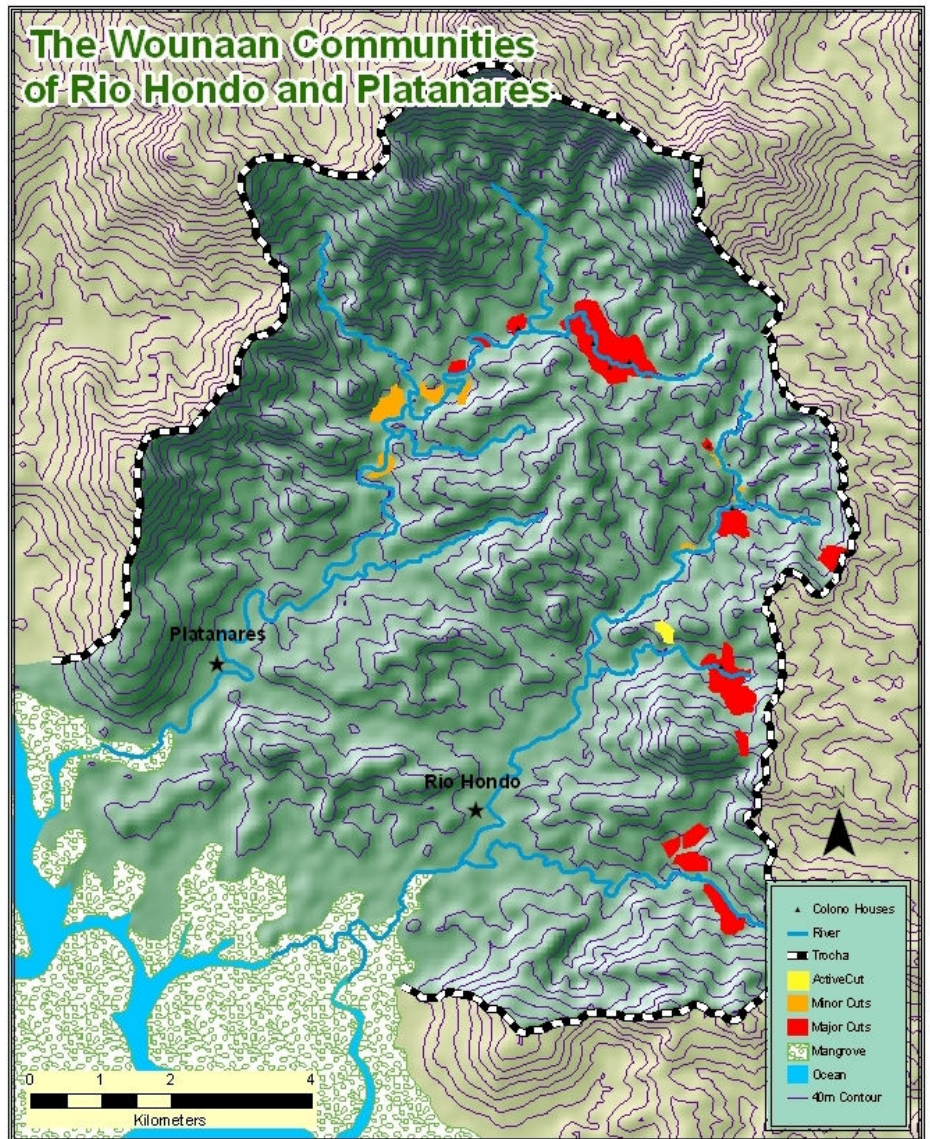
The Wounaan Communities of Rio Hondo and Platanares recently mapped the boundaries of their traditional lands, and found that a total of 3.5 square kilometers of their forests have been cut down by migrant cattle ranchers, or *colonos*. Native Future supported the mapping project with technical assistance provided by Cameron Ellis of Pan-American

### Newsletter, Spring 2008

Community Mapping .....	1
"Spotlight On" .....	2
Challenge Campaign Results ...	2
Message from the President ...	3
Scholarship Distribution .....	3
Invitation to Wounaan Basket Show and Benefit .....	4

Cartography, and Julian Dendy, Native Future Board Member and a former Peace Corps Panama volunteer who lived in the community of

Rio Hondo. The mapping team used a handheld GPS device to determine the exact boundaries of the Wounaan lands, and to identify the locations and extent of the cattle ranchers' incursions into their lands. While mapping, the team came across a group of *colonos* actively cutting down more for-



Map of Wounaan communities' boundaries , with location and extent of cattle ranchers' incursions onto their lands.

## SPOTLIGHT: MILDA TEUCAMA & TONNY MEMBORA



The *New York Times*' society pages might describe Milda Teucama and Tony Membora as a Wounaan "power couple." Milda is a master weaver, who has gained such renown for her baskets that she has been selected to teach basketweaving workshops to other Wounaan women. She is also a vice president of the *Fundacion para el Desarrollo del Pueblo Wounaan*, a registered Panamanian nonprofit organization, run by the Wounaan to serve their people.

Her husband Tony was the moving force behind the Wounaan political effort to unify traditionally independent communities under a single national tribal government, or "Congreso." Tony succeeded in attracting others to his vision, and in 1998, he became the first president of the Wounaan Congreso. He stepped down in 2003, and although he no longer holds an official post, he remains one of the most respected and influential of the Wounaan national leaders. Tony and Milda own a small cooperative shop in Panama City, where they sell Wounaan baskets and other handcrafts. Both Tony and Milda will be at the Michael Smith Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the Fourth Annual Basket Show and Benefit, from July 10-July 17.

## Wounaan Communities Map Boundaries, cont'd

est, well within the boundaries of the Wounaan lands. The *colonos* threatened the Wounaan, and challenged them to a physical confrontation to determine the matter. The Wounaan declined, preferring to work through more peaceful means. This map, and the information it contains, will be an invaluable part of that peaceful resolution. It will assist the Wounaan in their efforts to demonstrate to the Panamanian government the legitimacy of their claims, and the extent of the problem that they face. It will also be an important tool to help them monitor further *colono* expansion into their lands.



Map of Panama showing location of Wounaan communities of Rio Hondo and Platanares, mapped on previous page

## Challenge Campaign Exceeds Goal and Raises \$36,702.37 for Land Tenure

A big thank you to those who participated in our 2008 *Wounaan Land Tenure Challenge Campaign*. Thanks to the generous support of more than forty old and new friends, we raised \$36,702.37 for the Wounaan Land Tenure Project. This exceeded our goal of \$30,000, and allowed the Wounaan Land Tenure Project to start on time in January with the community mapping of the traditional lands of Rio Hondo and Platanares.

We would especially like to thank the sponsors of the Land Tenure Challenge Campaign — Michael Smith, Peter Hetz, Douglas & Gale McNish, Jean Lujan, Clive Kincaid and Joel & Leslie Dendy— as well as those who were particularly generous in stepping forward to meet the sponsors' challenge — Mona Threlkeld, Kenneth E. Louder, Gerry Lutes, David & Karen Cowan, Steve Erb, and Paul & Gwen Ueoka. And last, but certainly not least, a very humble thank you to the Semilla Fund of Community Foundation of Sonoma County for their exceptional \$10,000 grant. Your support put us over the top!



## Native Education Project Awards Over \$10,000 in Scholarships to Schoolchildren in Ngäbe-Bugle Comarca

The Native Education Project, headed by Sara Archbald, recently awarded over \$10,000 in scholarship aid to primary and secondary school students in the Ngäbe-Bugle Comarca in western Panama. Some 38 students received direct scholarships, while another 30 will benefit from Native Future's support of a church-run boarding house for indigent schoolchildren. The money was raised through the grassroots supporters of the Basilio Perez Scholarship Fund, which Sara started after completing her service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Panama in 2003. In 2006, Sara joined her program with Native Future, and the Native Education Project was formed. Sara continues her work in the Ngäbe-Bugle Comarca, and has now begun working with Wounaan leaders to help them institute a similar scholarship program for rural Wounaan children whose families cannot afford to send them away to high school or college.



Padre Niscasio Miranda and three scholarship boarding students with Sara on her most recent trip



Marsha Kellogg

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Native Future hit the ground running in 2008 and has much to report! Maps have been made of illegal cuts in Rio Hondo and Platanares; we raised over \$36,000 to launch the Wounaan Land Tenure Program; and the Basilio Perez Scholarship Fund gave out 68 scholarships to Ngäbe-Bugle students. All of this in the first quarter! Over the next six months, we are excited to invite you to the Fourth Annual Wounaan Basket Show & Benefit at the Michael Smith Gallery, to launch the Wounaan Project Management Committee, and to attend the 2008 Panama Returned Peace Corps Volunteer reunion in Panama. Native Future's mission is rooted in Peace Corps experiences and has been nourished by returned volunteers who decide to continue their service to Panama's indigenous peoples. Our board boasts eight such returned volunteers, including Janice Jorgensen, former Peace Corps Panama Country Director (1997- 2002) and Joe Torres, former Peace Corps Panama Associate Director (2000-2002). I am also happy to welcome Christine Ageton to Native Future's Board of Directors. Welcome Christine! Christine is a conservation planner now living in Panama (alongside Peace Corps Associate Director Tim Wellman) after years of working with native communities in New Mexico. We also give a heartfelt thank you to Sam Tsosie for his years of service as a Director of Native Future. Sam, a returned Peace Corps Panama volunteer (2002-2003) will be placing his energies into his two young children, his new photography business, and challenges faced in his Navajo homeland. It is obvious, when looking at Native Future, our mission and our board, that the Peace Corps experience made a positive and long-lasting impact on our lives and on the Panamanians we continue to serve. I hope you will join us in our commitment to the indigenous peoples of Panama.



*Fourth Annual Wounaan Basket Show and Benefit*  
*Michael Smith Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico,*  
*526 Canyon Road • July 10-17, 2008*

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

- Beautiful Handmade Baskets — 50% of Proceeds to Benefit Native Future
- Weaving Demonstrations by Wounaan Master Weaver Milda Teucama
- Discussions with Tonny Membora, first president of the Wounaan Congreso
- Gallery Opening on July 10 at 5:30 p.m. with Native Future Board Members



We hope to see you there! For more details, please call the Michael Smith Gallery at **(505) 995-1013**. Benefit baskets can also be purchased online at [www.michaelsmithgallery.com](http://www.michaelsmithgallery.com).



Native Future  
2101 Piihola Road  
Makawao, HI, 96768