



“ECOVIA” GETS PERMISSION

There have been plans for years to build a concrete walking path of about 7.5km straight through the rainforest between Puerto Nariño (± 6.000 inhabitants) and San Martin de Amacayacu (± 550 inhabitants). But really, no one expected that this path would actually be built one day. Because that is what usually happens in the Amazon...

Until April 2016, when a huge boat arrived in San Martin to dump an even huger load of sand on the shore. For the walking path. Mainly the Amacayacu National Nature Park and San Martin's environmental guard soon send a complaint to the Colombian Ministry of Internal Affairs, because there had never been a so called *consulta previa* with the involved indigenous communities. Freely translated, a *consulta previa* is a timely, transparent and neutral space of consultation or dialogue in which the stakeholder in charge of a project has to provide all relevant information to the communities, so that they have a clear understanding of the project and can then decide through their own traditional decision making procedures whether this project should be allowed or not.

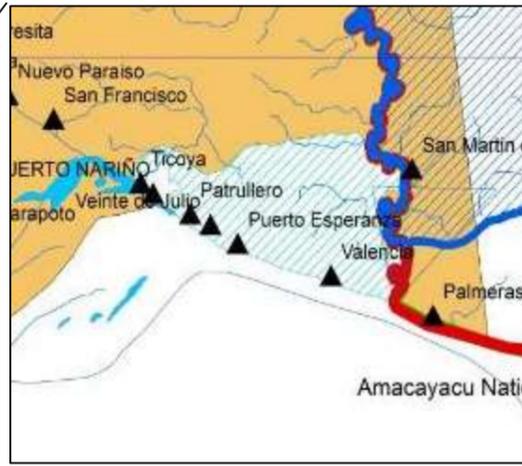
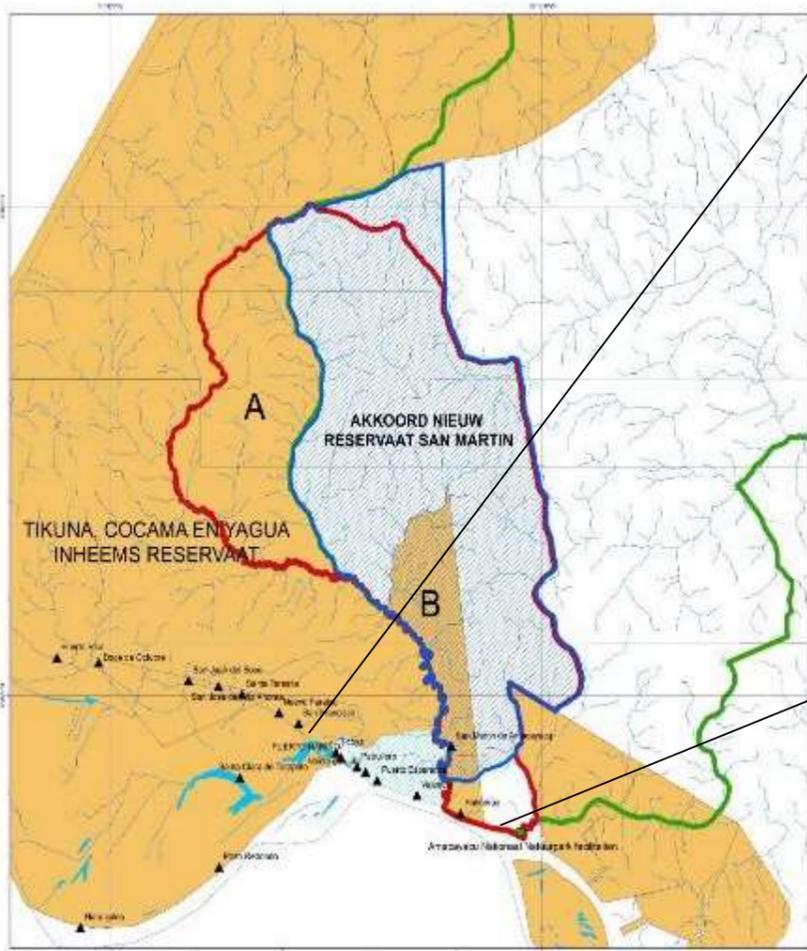
So the “Ecovia”-project was ordered to be stopped at the beginning of June, awaiting this *consulta previa*, which was finally held at the end of August in Puerto Nariño. The result was that the project was allowed to continue.

The Amacayacu National Park and San Martin de Amacayacu understand clearly that the walking path itself does not necessarily bring only problems, but also provides some opportunities to the people of this region. Think about tourism and access to and from the communities. However, usually sorely lacking in the Amazon is a clear management plan and economic resources to carry it out

properly. For example, according to the project description there is no permission to cut down forest or build infrastructure along the walking path. After all, the walking path is meant for tourists who come to visit the rainforest. Despite this prohibition, since April many areas of forest have been cut and even a few houses have been built.

Some people are worried that the lack of management will make the path not even suitable for tourists anymore very soon. And how is this path then supposed to generate income for the local inhabitants? Who else is going to use this path and with what purpose? Will there be more hunting and fishing pressure on San Martin's ancestral lands? Will the path be used for drug trafficking? Will it make the region less safe? This kind of questions are on many people's minds.





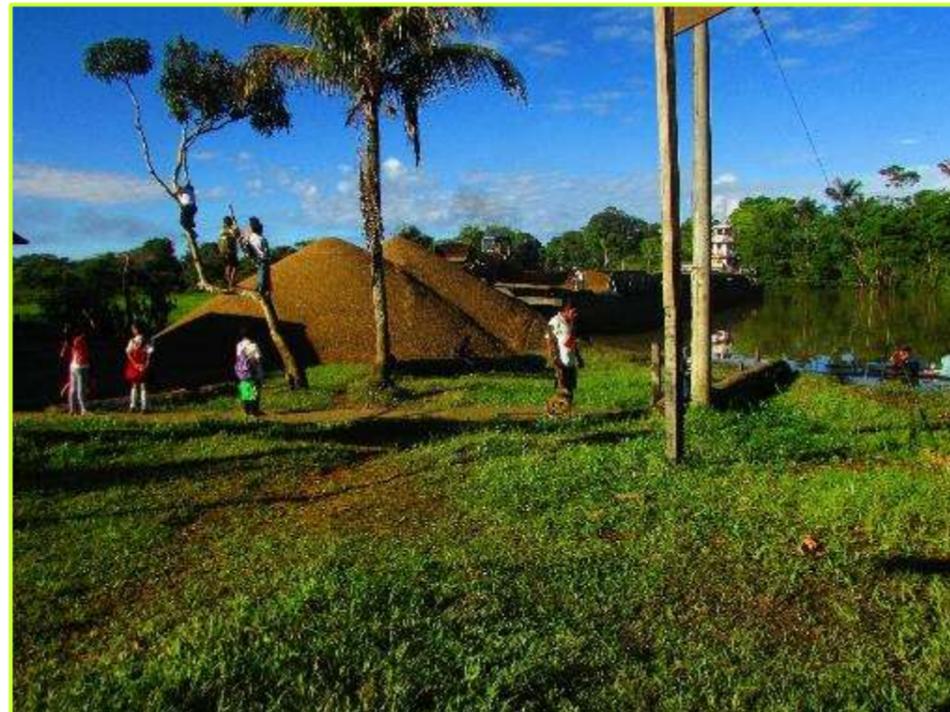
SENDERO ECOTURISTICO ECOVIA AMAZONAS SAN MARTÍN DE AMACAYACU

- USTED ESTA AQUÍ | YOU ARE HERE
- MALOCA
- CANOPY Y DOSEL - BAÑOS | CANOPY - BATHS
- SENDERO ELEVADO | TRAIL HIGH
- CENTRO DE VISITANTES | VISITOR CENTER AND
- MIRADOR Y EMBARCADERO - BAÑOS | WHARF VIEWPOINT - BATHS
- VENTA DE ARTESANIAS | CRAFT SALE
- SAN MARTÍN DE AMACAYACU

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NATIONAL LAND AGENCY

As we explained before, the government entity responsible for the application by San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras for recognition of their ancestral lands as an indigenous reserve (INCODER), stopped functioning somewhere half way 2015. Then this year the National Land Agency was born with pretty much the same mission as INCODER used to have. Until half September this year, there was still not much movement to detect, but then an insider recommended us to send an petition to reactivate the land application of San Martin and Palmeras. So that is what we did and we are currently waiting again for a response! We'll keep you posted!



Would you like to support the Tikuna indigenous community of San Martin together with the Small World Foundation, and stay in touch about the local developments in this remote corner of Colombia?

Please transfer 15 euro yearly (or more!) to the following bank account in the Netherlands:

Account name: Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION

SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U

IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03

Or check out the online contribution module on: www.smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68

Please DON'T FORGET TO INFORM US ABOUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS!!
(heike_van_gils@hotmail.com)

The contributions will be spent exclusively on the development and realization of local initiatives in San Martin de Amacayacu in the Colombian Amazon. No wages are being paid to anyone. The expenses will be mentioned as much as possible in the newsletters. For alternative contributions, please contact Heike van Gils at: heike_van_gils@hotmail.com.

For more information about this initiative, please check the website:
www.smallworldfoundation.org.