



## REFRESHING WIND?

After two big meetings between San Martin de Amacayacu and Palmeras, these communities have agreed to join each other in the initiative to get the complete or at least administrative independence of the area which on the map on the next page is surrounded by red dots from the Tikuna Kokama Yagua Reserve. Please, discover the difference in the south with the map shown in newsletter 20. A refreshing wind started to blow at the end of May, after the united leaders of the majority of the communities of this reserve decided to change the president of the Tikuna Kokama Yagua Association, which until now theoretically represented these communities as the highest entity. Because of rampant corruption, characterised by the exclusive management of the government subsidies by this president, the absence of a treasurer, and zero request on so many questions about why several community projects were only partially or not at all financed in the end, the bucket was full and for three days the leaders spoke in San Martin about how to move on. By voting (picture), a new directive board was nominated for the Association,

amongst which two members from San Martin. Benicio Amado Joaquín is now vice-president and José Gregorio Vásquez is the coordinator of territorial management. The current president was vice-president in the former board, and there are new faces, such as the women's representative from Palmeras. During the meeting, the decisive power over and the management of the government subsidies was returned to the individual

community leaders, called *curacas*. The current accounts and projects were frozen until decided how to manage them. The members of the former board have so far not handed in any documents of their period of government. Even worse: new locks were placed on the doors of the Association's headquarters in Puerto Nariño.

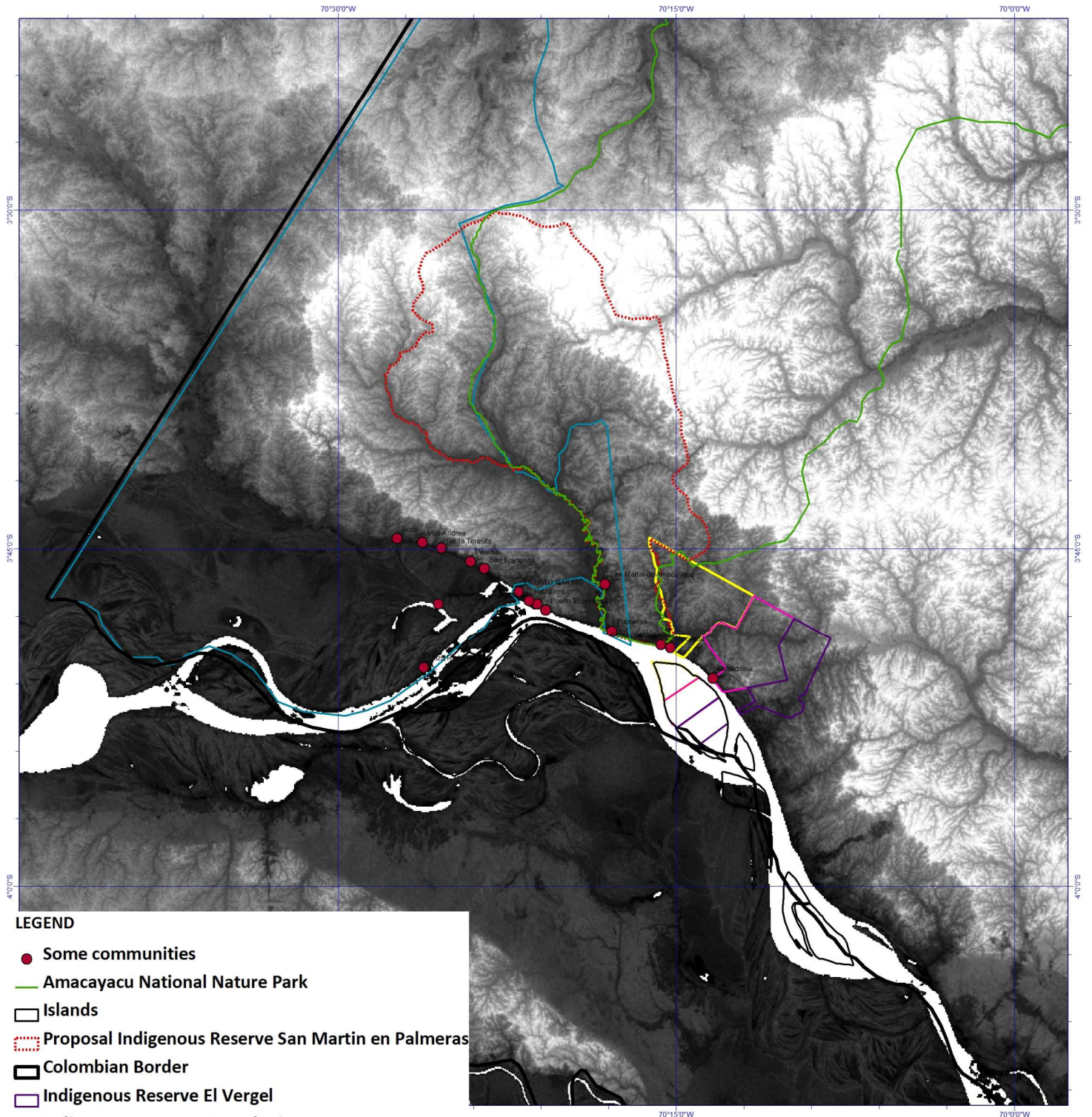
It is an enormously heavy task the new board is facing. Putting right so many irregularities, starting again with the development of politics: what do we want and where do we start? This after at least five years of not doing so much, apart from the development of the so called "lifeplan" (Plan de Vida) for the whole Reserve, which was financed by a load of Dutch euros and by means of newborn local NGO called CODEBA. This plan in the end has become a nice booklet, with which no one identifies himself because of the lack of involvement in the process towards its establishment. Ah yes, because it had to be finished in two years, and so there wasn't any time to ask everyone's opinion? The world upside down, if you consider that this is supposed to be the Reserve's compass for the future.



Creating new confidence and trust in the communities will be tough. And because all government subsidies were already destined for 2009 and are now frozen, there is not a single peso for fuel to

travel to each community for a first dialogue. Additionally, being leader of one community is difficult, let alone of 22! Despite the previous, the two new board members from San Martin are confident and hope to be able to facilitate the plans of their community and Palmeras from their position.

# MAP OF THE SOUTH OF COLOMBIA WITH THE LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED RESERVE FOR SAN MARTIN DE AMACAYACU EN PALMERAS



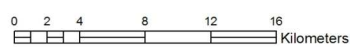
## LEGEND

- Some communities
- Amacayacu National Nature Park
- Islands
- ⋯ Proposal Indigenous Reserve San Martín en Palmeras
- ▬ Colombian Border
- ▭ Indigenous Reserve El Vergel
- ▭ Indigenous Reserve Macedonia
- ▭ Indigenous Reserve Mocagua
- ▭ Indigenous Reserve Tikuna Kokama Yagua

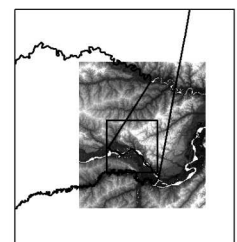
## Altitude map



## SCALE



## REFERENCE MAP



## INTERESTING DISCUSSIONS

In response of the verbal distributions of the plans of San Martin and Palmeras, some discussions were to be expected amongst the involved parties. Conversations with some people gave the impression that they are concerned that the plans have egoistic motives, and they are afraid that the community will start exploiting nature at a large scale if the plans are approved by the government. The simple answer is that if the community had this

as an aim, they would have done so long ago. One of the most indicated entities that should control this, the Amacayacu National Nature Park, has shown for years that for some reason they could

not have stopped this. Boats full of sand, gravel and timber, taken from the ancestral lands of San Martin and with great frequency from the Park itself, with destiny *not* the TIKOYA Reserve or the Park, pass their doorstep regularly and nothing happens.

For the people of San Martin de Amacayacu, the borders of the national park, the municipalities, or the TIKOYA reserve (map on the previous page), drawn so far mostly by external figures and entities, are not borders when it comes to hunting, fishing and cutting wood for daily use. The area was simply always theirs, of their parents, their grandparents or great grandparents. Only in the '70, due to a trend in (western) so called conservation politics, the Amacayacu Park comes into the picture. An later, the municipalities of Leticia and Puerto Nariño are founded. However, if a community such as San Martin wants to claim an abuse of natural resources, or does not agree with other activities, such as certain scientific research, these borders do matter.



It is obvious from the area surrounded with the red dots that many streams are born in the ancestral territory of San Martin de Amacayacu. This means that a rich biodiversity can be found here. Ancient malokas were located here, and most of all because of the

many hectares of abandoned agricultural plots full of tasty fruit and palm trees, a rich community of animal species can be found here. In the times of hunt on animal skins in the '60, many of these animal populations close to the Amazon River were decimated by some local but mostly hunters from elsewhere, to satisfy demands. Some species (such as the *capiguara* -

*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) just did not occur here anymore after that and this is the case until today. SO really, the fact that these species are not very abundant around the community, has not much its cause in the local hunting habits of today, but is often seen as such by people who do not know the history of the area very well. Even more illustrating; at the moment many inhabitants of San Martin complain about the damages caused in their cassava plots (picture above) by the rodents called *borugo* (*Agouti paca*) and the *guarra* (*Dasyprocta* sp.). Sometimes, more than half of the harvest has become useless. Despite this abundance, small cat species sometimes prefer to eat (or just kill and leave behind!) the little chickens of the people. Obviously, they are not very happy with that and design tramps (picture below), with which it is still very hard to catch them, smart as they are. Paw prints of the *jaguar* (*Panthera onca*) also regularly occur on the tracks to the agricultural plots. Considering these facts and so many daily necessities, would you not expect large scale hunting ??

## GPS FIELD WORK

With the trips to the jungle by Reinaldo and other companions, the end is slowly coming into sight. It is expected that about four or five trips are still to be undertaken to get the most crucial part of the whole area marked geographically. On the picture below, Reinaldo's wife (Benilda) with the GPS. In about six months, all data can probably be inserted in Javier Diaz's database, and the final digital map can be printed. Of course, the "analogue" map is still crucial too, because several important sites have been drawn here that can not be marked for logistic reasons, sometimes just because they are too far away.



## BN/DE STEM DEVELOPMENT PRIZE

In the newspaper and on the Small World Foundation's blog you have been able to see all the beautiful pictures and elaborate reports of the Prize ceremony in the Chassé Theater in Breda on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May by Derk Bolt. Many loyal people of San Martin and the Foundation had taken the initiative to be present at this special occasion. A "THANKS FOR EVERYTHING"!

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**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 either on of the following bank accounts:

For the **Netherlands**:

Bank name: **Rabobank**

Bank Address: Singel 4

5111CD

Baarle-Nassau

The Nether lands

SWIFT/BIC Code: RABONL2U

**Account number: 13 27 26 203.**

**Account name:**

**Stichting SMALL WORLD FOUNDATION**

IBAN code: NL28 RABO 0132 7262 03.

For international contributions, please surf to: [http://smallworldfoundation.org/?page\\_id=68](http://smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68)

Please **DON'T FORGET TO INFORM US ABOUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS!!**

(heike\_van\_gils@hotmail.com for The Netherlands or chaquenalt@hotmail.com for Canada) !

The contributions will be spent exclusively on the development and realisation 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](mailto:heike_van_gils@hotmail.com).

For more information about this initiative, please check the website: [www.smallworldfoundation.org](http://www.smallworldfoundation.org).



## PRESENTATION AT DUTCH/ BELGIAN LIBRARY IN AUGUST

Keep the evening of Wednesday August the 26th free in your agenda! Once again, an opportunity will be offered by the Public Library of Baarle-Nassau-Hertog for me to present all adventures of the past and challenges of the coming year!

## CANADIAN ACCOUNT CLOSED

Due to high maintenance costs, and the international online contribution possibility ([http://smallworldfoundation.org/?page\\_id=68](http://smallworldfoundation.org/?page_id=68)), the Canadian bank account of the Small World Foundation has been closed.