



the small world foundation

28 - December 2009

REINALDO'S LAST TRIP

On Thursday October 29th, Reinaldo DaSilva and his team returned for the last time from the jungle with the geographic locations of all important sites in the ancestral lands of San Martin de Amacayacu. This day can be called historic! Over the last four years, 24 such trips have been made by many different people from the community to map the area. A unique endeavour!



AND NOW WHAT..

All at least 300 GPS locations and relevant (historic) data for the digital map of the ancestral lands of San Martin de Amacayacu were to be organized during the months of November and December by the Wageningen University MSc student Mirte Gosker. Unfortunately, Mirte was not able to finish her work for the community as she already

returned to the Netherlands due to understandable personal reasons. This was disappointing for all involved (also for herself!), because everyone in San Martin had been waiting for her, and because the contribution she could have made is so important. Firstly, the community does not possess the technical knowledge to digitally organize the information so it can be easily manipulated afterwards for several goals. Secondly, it is about time to get everything organized, before notes and memories disappear! Thirdly, the community does not possess the financial means to pay someone to do the job. The Small World Foundation budget is very limited, and will be very much needed when the meetings with the stakeholders continue (Amacayacu National Park, the Tikuna Cocama Yagua Reserve, neighbouring communities), when the socio-economic study will be carried out by a professional, and when people will have to travel to Bogotá.

Fortunately, Inge Kuiphuis (newsletter 16, December 2007) had already made the first steps to organize the third version of the Zeezicht charity dinner kafe de Overkant in Wageningen on the 19th of November. Inge has become an expert in this theme, as she also coordinated the second version of this dinner. Mirte, back in the Netherlands, also helped out for the occasion. About 35 people rocked up and the profits were about 200 euro! Thanks very much, volunteers and visitors!

EDIXSON BACK IN SAN MARTIN

We decided to dedicate the profits of the Zeezicht charity dinner to the payment of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) expert Edixson Daza (newsletter 19, June 2008) who will assume the task of organizing the data about San Martin's ancestral lands. We are waiting for his arrival....

FISHPONDS...

At the moment of writing, there is still no financing agreement between INCODER San Martin de Amacayacu. Fortunately, it is clear that there are no problems with San Martin's project, and this agreement should be a fact soon. The delay comes from the institute itself. We would have liked to publish the first finished fishponds in this newsletter, but reality is just a little different in Colombia. As long as there are no INCODER funds on the community's bank account for the ponds, we can not spend the BN/DeStem funds. Otherwise, we will face another problem later on: that of double purchases of one item, and too little funds for the other.

OTTER STUDY FINISHED

The mini study about the population situation of the small (*Lontra longicaudis*) and giant (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) otter in the ancestral lands of San Martin, sponsored by Conservation International (also newsletter 19), has been successfully finished. In the area of more than 20 x 30 kilometers, divided over five main rivers (and their respective river arms), 10 living sites of the giant otter were observed and 11 of the small otter. These living sites (picture above right) of the giant otter are usually found near the birthplace of the small rivers. These sites are used permanently, in the rainy season as well as in the dry season. On the contrary, the small otters have been shown to be more mobile and move their living sites according to the water level. In total the population of giant otters is estimated at 50 individuals. The population of small otters is probably bigger, but also harder to estimate as they are shy, often observed alone (not in groups), and harder to recognize. For the people of San Martin it is clear that the populations have recovered very well since the seventies, the period when they were wanted for their skin. Shortly after, it was hard to observe an otter while fishing. Now this even happens frequently, and at sites where they did not occur before.



FEET IN THE EARTH / VOETEN IN DE AARDE

Last November, the small scale Dutch NGO Feet in the Earth (Voeten in de Aarde www.voetenindeaarde.org) contributed to the cause of San Martin de Amacayacu by sponsoring 5 water tanks of 1000 liters with all accessories. This is a very valuable contribution considering the situation of drinking water in the community. Most homes have a roof made of leaves with which no drinking water can be collected. If people have an aluminum roof (paid for with the yearly government subsidy for the community), than people often do not have the money to buy a water tank. The result is that drinking water often has to be collected from the river with buckets or pans. Those who have a tank (picture) usually wait for a really big rain to be able to clean the tank and fill the tank again. In the meantime, this tank has become quite dirty and covered with algae. Of course, this



causes diarrhea and intestinal parasites, especially amongst children. The five tanks will be allocated at five home which currently lack a tank and are strategically located, to other inhabitants of the community can also make use of it. For more tanks, we are working with the fast developing www.getitdone.org, an initiative of www.cheruto.com.



1 NOV: ALL SAINTS

Like in many other catholic countries or regions, last month San Martin remembered those who rest in peace. Before the first of November, the graveyard had been cleaned of weeds with machetes. On the day itself, most graves were decorated again with flowers, paint (also with leftover paint from the mapping field work!), or given a cross. Together, people prayed, remembered, ate fruit (for a good harvest), and drank masato (check the bucket on the picture). This time a horrible thunderstorm followed up on the incredible heat of the morning, so the get together was continued at the house where the masato came from!



LET'S CONTINUE TO 2010!

Still without the official recognition of the ancestral territory, but with a load of energy and resistance: let's continue to 2010! The Small World Foundation as well as the community. The delay in this process to recognition which we experienced this year due to the replacement of the board of the big Tikuna Cocama Yagua reserve is normal in this kind of tropical regions, and in any case reality. San Martin would also have preferred differently!

The aim of the Small World Foundation is not to exist forever or to maintain people financially. The aim is to continue supporting the most important local initiative of San Martin de Amacayacu until necessary. This compromise means a lot of patience and understanding of local circumstances. After all, it is a local process which has to be carried out by the people themselves. Just like the situation on the picture, where children in San Martin bring firewood to the school: Little by little we make progress, and nothing can be skipped.



We hope that also you can share this philosophy, and keep giving your support to San Martin de Amacayacu. Each contribution is valuable and welcome. Think about organizing (small) charity activities or events in your neighbourhood, with your club or family. Inform us of occasions (preferably in Brabant) where we can sell the unique handmade jewellery from the Amazon. Or maybe you know organizations that could be interested in supporting San Martin? Let us know! For more information or advertising material you can contact Heike van Gils at heike_van_gils@hotmail.com.

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.

Or check out the online contribution possibility on: http://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 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.

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