



WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

**EMERGENCY AMAZON
FIRE FUND REPORT**

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Fires in the Amazon are a seasonal occurrence, but last year's fires captured the world's attention. At the peak in August 2019, there were **30,901 fires** – three times the number compared with August of the previous year.

Thanks to your generous donations, we raised almost **\$2 million** in the US for fire response and recovery. This is our second report summarizing the impact of your support, including stories from the field, and what's next for WWF in the Amazon.

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THESE FUNDS:



Protected 137.8 million acres, including about 14% Brazilian Amazon - an area larger than Spain and Switzerland combined



Benefited 26 civil society organizations, nine government agencies, and more than 117,000 people from 77 Indigenous lands & conservation units



Donated more than 6,000 pieces of equipment



Conducted 50 training sessions & workshops with more than 2,800 participants





Alcides Pinto inspecting fire damage in the Chiquitano Dry Forest, a region heavily impacted by the Amazon fires in 2019.



WWF donated almost 700 fire-fighting tools and personal protection equipment to the State of Amazonas Fire Department.



Polonia Supepí collecting copaiba oil, a raw material used by women in the Chiquitano Dry Forest Region to create soaps and other goods.

FIRES IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

2019 FIRE SEASON A YEAR IN REVIEW

The Amazon fires of 2019 that drew international attention generally followed a pattern of **DEFORESTATION**

Major drivers of deforestation in the Amazon include:



Fire incidence in the Amazon in 2019 was higher than 2018, by **30%** and by **81%** in Brazil and Bolivia, respectively

THE TOTAL AREA THAT BURNED DURING THE 2019 DRY SEASON WAS AT LEAST **21,621 SQUARE MILES**
THIS IS ROUGHLY HALF THE SIZE OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

Source: Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE)

Amazon fires fall into one of three categories:

- 1 Deforestation fires used to clear forests to prepare an area for agriculture
- 2 Fires on cleared land used to remove weeds and create farm-fallow systems
- 3 Fires that get out of control and invade standing forests

2020 FIRE SEASON PROJECTIONS

As deforestation pressure grows and climate change continues, the **RISK OF FOREST FIRES INCREASES**

Climate change can impact fires in a number of ways:



IT'S ESTIMATED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 3,400 MI² OF DEFORESTATION IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH IS **34% HIGHER** THAN A YEAR AGO

Though some wildfires are triggered naturally, such as by lightning, in recent years, it is estimated that humans are responsible for **75% OF ALL WILDFIRES**

Between January 1st and August 20th **35,308 FIRES** were detected in the Amazon, with about 58 % of these taking place in the month of August

Despite the presence of the Army in the Brazilian Amazon and the federal decree banning the use of fire for four months, **6,803 FIRES** were reorded in July, an increase of 28% compared to the same time last year.

Source: Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE)



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

WWF IN THE AMAZON

WWF envisions a future in which people and nature flourish. For the Amazon, that includes securing this critical ecosystem that underpins life for those who live in the region and around the world, and ensuring we are better prepared to manage fires as the climate continues to change. **We are:**

Shaping a new approach to fire emergencies.

Around the world, fires in 2020 are on course to be worse than in 2019 – and fires are a critical global issue that needs urgent global solutions. WWF is leading efforts to transform how we prevent, respond to, and mitigate fire disasters for the benefit of both people and nature. Some recent examples include:

WWF issued a [global report](#), produced in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), analyzing fire trends and what they mean for people and the planet, and setting out recommendations to address key causes.



In Brazil, [WWF provides](#) both immediate support for fighting fires and works continuously to curb deforestation in the Amazon.



In Colombia, [WWF supports](#) “Friends of the Forest” – a group of community leaders working to prevent wildfires around the Chiribiquete National Park, an area of the Colombian Amazon most threatened by deforestation.



In Bolivia, WWF established a forest fire emergency program and has launched [a petition calling for action](#).

Working for people and nature.

As long as environmental degradation is considered an acceptable byproduct of economic growth, the Amazon will remain at risk. We must innovate new development pathways through which people and nature can thrive together. As we support a resilient recovery of the Amazon – in which people and nature are better prepared for a hotter, drier future – we are also addressing the main drivers of decline. A tsunami of infrastructure development could transform the region. Growing demands for agricultural commodities continue to drive deforestation, especially as governments relax land protections. Some governments are also making it harder for Indigenous peoples to defend, manage, and legally secure their lands. We are using a systemic, long-term strategy that places the value of nature and nature's benefit to humans as coequal and focuses on sustainable infrastructure, conversion-free commodities, and protected and conserved areas.

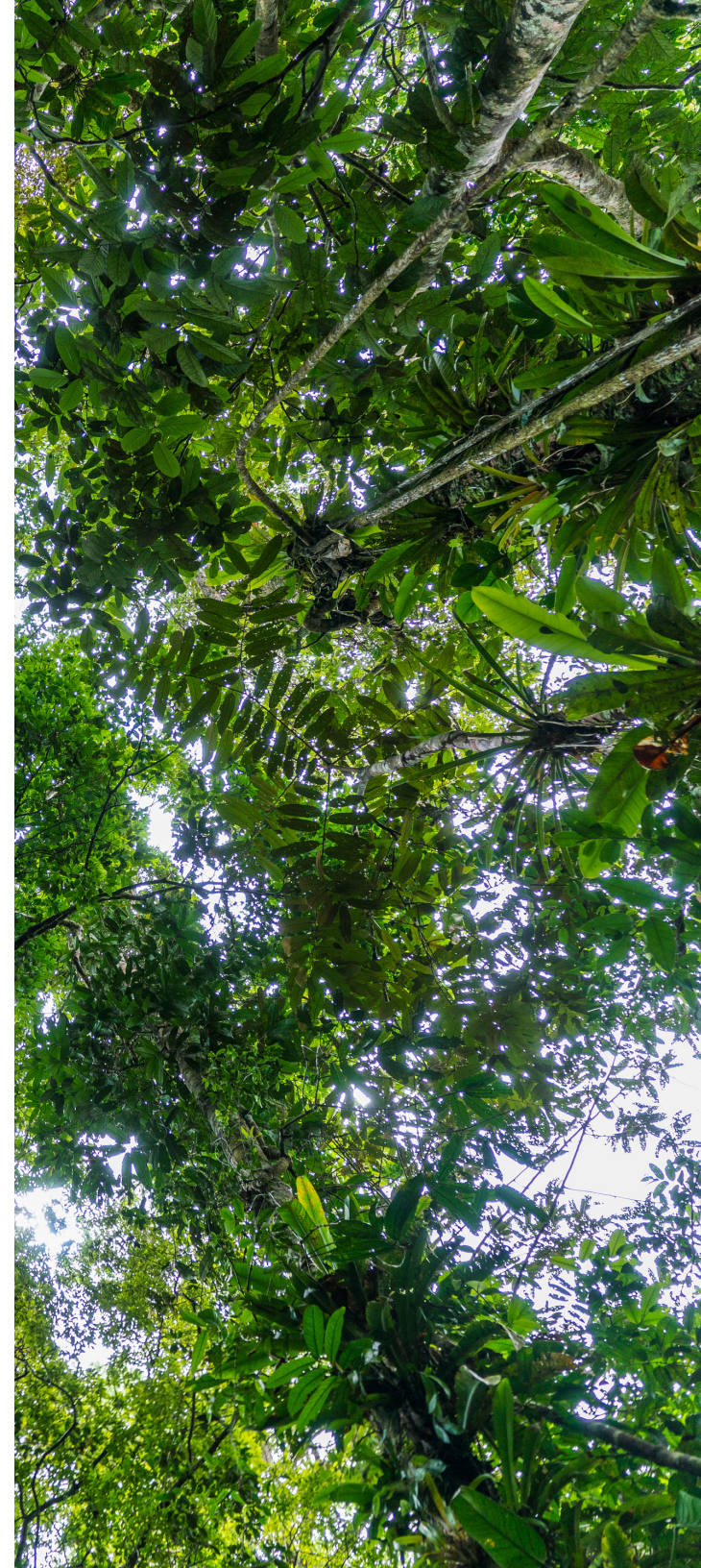
Securing some of the most critical parts of the biome.

We seek to protect the pieces of the Amazon that are currently intact and thriving. With partners, WWF is establishing durable protections and long-term financing for over 210 million acres of the Amazon biome through Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiatives in Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, and we are exploring similar opportunities in Bolivia and Guyana. The Amazon is the world's largest remaining free-flowing river; we intend to keep it that way. Indigenous territories make up over 35% of the Amazon region, and the people who live in these communities and depend on nature's abundance are the best stewards of its future. Stronger land rights, increased governance, and improved capacity for Indigenous peoples can be a powerful means to protect nature, absorb greenhouse gases, and contribute to countries' climate and sustainable development goals. We are committed to helping resolve tenure conflicts, strengthening protections for the lands of Indigenous and traditional communities, and empowering local people.

“Protecting the standing forest, whether through parks or Indigenous territories, is important. Larger blocks of intact forest with more continuity provide resilience in the face of the decreasing precipitation and increasing temperatures that are raising the probability of fire.”

Meg Symington

Managing Director, WWF Amazon Program



FROM FIRE TO SOAP COMMUNITY RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE AMAZON FIRES

In 2019, Bolivia experienced a record-breaking year for fires, with climatic factors including a high water deficit and the highest average temperature compared to previous years, accelerating and intensifying forest fires. The Chiquitano Dry Forest was hit particularly hard, with more than 4.7 million acres of forest impacted by the flames. The fires brought on devastating economic impacts as they damaged valuable timber species, copaibo and cusi resin, whose oil is a raw material used by women in the area to make soap and other goods.

“In the beginning we arrived to extinguish the fire,” said Polonia Supepí, President of the Association of Women Producers of Copaiba Oil Río Blanco Community, “but the sad thing is that we couldn’t do it. Even the earth was burning. It was really sad to us when the fires arrived in the area where we had the copaiba trees. It means a huge loss to us women because they are our main source of income for our families and household.”

Activa – a Bolivian-based woman-owned natural cosmetics company – is now co-creating with women from the Río Blanco community to bring new products to the national market. Activa uses unique and high-quality local raw materials, such as cusi and copaibo, that comes directly from the Río Blanco region to create their products. By working together with small communities, Activa hopes to support the reconstruction and reforestation of Chiquitania and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for local women. *

“We don’t want our product to be sold only here, we want it to be sold everywhere, be sold in all places, and we want people to say, “this soap, this shampoo I’m using comes from the forest and I’m helping take care of it.” Perhaps not directly, but if I use those products, I am collaborating to help save the environment and the forest.”

Ignacia Supepí Cuasace

Former President of the Association of Women Producers of Copaiba Oil Río Blanco Community

* Due to COVID-19, the partnership is currently on hold

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMAZON

BRAZILIAN BUSINESSES TAKE ACTION

A presidential decree was announced by Brazil's leader President Jair Bolsonaro on July 16, 2020 which banned agricultural and forest fires for 120 days during the dry season and set up a military operation against deforestation. This milestone results from years of efforts from businesses, communities, and advocates at all levels.

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon has followed an upward trend since 2015, reaching almost 2.5 million acres in 2019. For years, dozens of Brazilian companies called for action against illegal logging in the Amazon rainforest. This summer, more than 60 civil society organizations delivered a letter to the Presidents of the Chamber and the Senate, foreign investors, and Brazilian and European parliamentarians with proposals to contain the deforestation crisis in the Amazon.

Brazil's three largest banks, Santander, Bradesco, and Itaú Unibanco also announced a comprehensive plan to invest in the sustainable development of the Amazon. The plan is guided by three top-priority targets: environmental conservation and the development of a bioeconomy, investment in sustainable infrastructure, and the guarantee of basic human rights in the Amazon. The banks are organizing a board of experts focused on social and environmental issues in the Amazon to help identify challenges and implement action plans.

“Such a huge challenge requires firm and prompt action by anyone who can help build a sustainable development model for the Amazon that addresses people’s needs and preserves its natural resources. We can do even more for the region by combining efforts in our industry. The Amazon’s value is incalculable for Brazil and the entire planet”

Sérgio Rail

Chairman of Santander Brazil



TAKE ACTION

HELP STOP DEFORESTATION & WILDFIRES IN THE AMAZON AND PANTANAL

We are once again seeing a historic wildfire season, both at home and abroad. This includes South America's Amazon rain forest and the Pantanal wetlands, which are critically important areas of biodiversity and major stores of global carbon.

In July, fires in Brazil's Amazon rain forest surged 28% over even last year's levels while the Brazilian Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland area, experienced an astonishing 241% increase in wildfires compared to last year. **Tropical wildfires and the illegal deforestation activities that often drive them are a threat not just to countries such as Brazil but to the health and safety of our entire planet.**

To raise awareness and drive urgent actions to protect the Amazon, the Pantanal, and the world's critical habitats from further deforestation and degradation, please sign your name to our petition in the WWF Action Center at worldwildlife.org/AmazonFireFund

“Proactivity and commitment must be at the heart of a global response to fires and must play out at local, sub-national, national, and regional levels. Preventing fires before they occur is paramount, and far preferable in all respects to suppressing them when they are burning. Good intentions on paper mean nothing if they're not followed up with real and effective actions on the ground - and these actions need to focus urgently on forests and addressing climate change.”

Fran Price
WWF Global Forest Practice Lead

A man with short dark hair, wearing a brown t-shirt and blue jeans, stands in a lush green forest. In the foreground, a large, dark, gnarled tree trunk curves across the frame. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The man's t-shirt has a circular logo with a palm tree and the text 'TULUM', 'FOREST OF THE BEACHES', 'LET'S STAY', 'AUTHENTIC MEXICAN MADE', and 'MEXICO'.

FIRES AND COVID-19

The global health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic limits local capacity to respond to fire emergencies as compared to last year. Volunteers cannot be mobilized, and municipal and local authorities allocated their already limited resources to health systems needs in their communities, leaving less for fires and forest management.

Some of our fire response work covered through this fund hinged on physically going to communities and working with our partners. COVID-19 has made it impossible to safely do so. Instead, we're advancing what can be done while respecting social distancing guidelines and preparing ourselves to move quickly on the ground when it is responsible and respectful to do so.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, WWF has helped provide more than 32,000 Indigenous people with food in the Amazon and the Cerrado, as well as hygiene products, and equipment.



THANK YOU

Your generosity is making a difference in the Amazon. We remain committed to regularly and transparently reporting on the activities related to the fire response until they have come to a close.

For more information, visit worldwildlife.org/AmazonFireFund

“Being able to reforest most of the burned down area is a dream to us. That is what we really want. We have the will here to work and get ahead, but we need support from people who have that knowledge so that our work is well done. WWF supported us from the very beginning. They always believed in us because they came to the area to check what was going on. They are still supporting us and we’re really grateful to them for that.”

Ignacia Supepi Cuasace
*Former President of the Association of Women
Producers of Copaiba Oil Río Blanco Community*

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Page 2: Burned tree in the Chiquitano Dry Forest © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK

Page 3: Clockwise from top left: Alcides Pinto in the Chiquitano Dry Forest © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK, Polonia Supepi collecting oil from a Copaiba tree © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK, Donated fire-fighting equipment © Nathalie Brasil / WWF-Brasil

Page 4: Aerial photo of the Uatumã Biological Reserve in the state of Amazonas, Brazil © Ricardo Lisboa / WWF-US

Page 5: Río Pinquen in the Amazon Rainforest © André Bärtschi / WWF

Page 6: Amazon forest in La Chorrera, Department of Amazonas, Colombia © Luis Barreto / WWF-UK

Page 7: Products from the Association of Women Producers of Copaibo Oil Rio Blanco Community © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK

Page 8: Macaws in the Peruvian Amazon Basin © Day's Edge Productions / WWF-US

Page 9: Polonia Supepi next to a Copaiba tree © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK

Page 10: Ignacio Cuyati close to trees burned in last year's fire in Palmatiro, Bolivia © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK

Page 11: Beetle and flower in the Department of Guaviare, Colombia © Luis Barreto / WWF-UK

BACK COVER: Burned trees from the Amazon fires © Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK