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newsletter 1, 2003

Rainforest Foundation-US

the turtle hides its eggs

A wrong that almost wiped out a culture was made right in July. Justice took a full generation before the Panará people could sit on their ancestral land to discuss investing a $420,000 reparations award.

The reparations alone are a landmark. In Brazil, the payment represents a rare official redress to Indigenous people after 500 years of colonization. By historical standards, the plight and triumph of the Panará, from first cultural contact to capital fund investment, is a short story. But for the Panará, the balance between what they won and lost — most of their relatives and territory, and a generation of youth born on unfamiliar ground — will endure as a cultural lesson.

At a special village meeting in July, the Panará decided to invest the principal of the award into a fund and to use the interest for immediate community needs. They call their new bank fund Kypakre, or “the hole where a turtle hides its eggs.”

It all started with a highway. In the 1970s, a military government decreed that economic progress demanded a commercial thruway in the Amazon Rainforest. Before the construction workers appeared, the Panará existed only as a myth of “giant indians,” black-painted warriors hidden deep in the jungle. The real-life Panará proved neither giant nor immune to infections carried from the outside world. The majority succumbed to the common cold and diarrhea before the government realized its expressway would bury an ancient people. In 1975, the survivors were airlifted from their ancestral land to an indian reservation nearby.



Photo by Ana Valéria Araújo

For the next 20 years, as the Rainforest tried to colonize the highway, the Panará’s resolve to return grew stronger. Like a turtle sticking out its neck, they looked to the very culture that lifted them out of isolation. There they found allies – anthropologists and lawyers, map makers and activists – who believed in a giant idea called justice. And so the painted warriors fought their battles in the court room. In 1996 the Panará won legal title to their ancestral lands. Since then they have returned to the remaining territory not destroyed by gold miners and loggers during their long exile. In 2000, they won the right to monetary damages for the jungle highway that almost drove them to extinction.

To celebrate the payment, the Panará danced and sang as their ancestors have for uncounted generations. And the lawyers from the Socio-environmental Institute, the RF-US partner who represented the Panará for almost ten years, donated their legal fees to the turtle’s nest egg. From now on, the Panará will live, as they always have, in harmony with the environment. Only this time, in a more endearing cultural exchange, the turtle will climb out of the bank with dividend payments.



Patrice di Filippo

[l-r] RF-US Executive Director Ana Valéria Araújo, Sérgio Leitão, André Lima, Akâ Panará and Nilto Tatto

panará celebration

Executive Director Ana Valéria Araújo and husband Sérgio Leitão were original members of the Panará legal team with RF-US partner, the Socio-environmental Institute (ISA). RF-US first provided financial support for ISA’s Panará legal defense program in 1996. Since 2000 we have worked more directly with ISA and the Panará themselves through our Capacity Building Program. In July Ana traveled to the Panará village of Nansepotiti to join in their celebrations. Below Ana offers a personal account of her trip.

“I was told that the Panará have been celebrating for almost two months. By “celebrating” I mean that the men and women wake up every day around 2:00 am, and dance and sing in the middle of the village. This ritual ends around 5:00 am, when they rest. In the afternoon, they dance again for a while. Sérgio and I woke up on Tuesday at 4:30 am to watch them. It was cold — very cold! And the sun was about to come up — a beautiful orange-blue sky. We got to the center of the village, where the Panará had been dancing for hours already, to witness a bit of their joy.

Around 9:00 am, the Panará were ready to meet with us. Almost everyone in the village attended — men, women, and children — to discuss how to use the compensation money. A drink made of sweet potatoes was served. We also had baked peanuts that they grow in the village, and bananas. It was a long morning, because explaining the idea of "investing" money to the Panará wasn't exactly easy. It was a bit abstract, especially once you translate from Portuguese to Panará.

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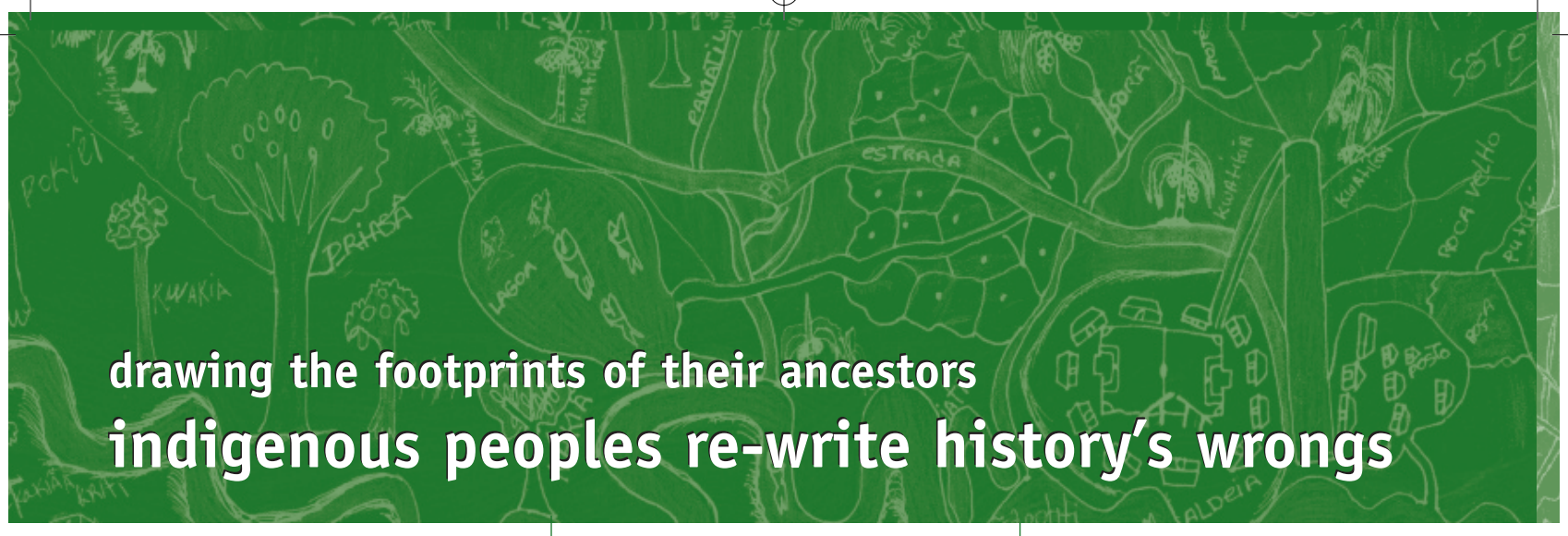


drawing the footprints of their ancestors

indigenous peoples re-write history's wrongs

You may have noticed that many RF-US projects involve community map-making. In recent years we have assisted the Panará in Brazil, Saramaka Maroons in Suriname, and Amerindians in both Guyana and Suriname to document their territories. So what's the big deal with all these maps?

Some five hundred years ago, when European colonists landed on the shores of what they would call the "Americas," map-drawing was one of the very first tasks at hand. With Indigenous "scouts," these explorers set out to name what they considered uncharted territory.

To the scouts, these lands were already well-marked with the footprints of their ancestors. Raised in oral, rather than written, traditions, Indigenous peoples kept "mental maps" inside their heads and on the bottoms of their feet. Despite this native environmental knowledge, the colonists still drew their maps of "discovered" lands.

Nowadays, Indigenous peoples are re-writing history. They are combining their traditional knowledge with state-of-the-art technology to paint their ancestors' footprints on paper once and for all.

Most start to map for legal land claims, but in the process they learn how maps record their history for future generations.

why map?

Mapping is a first step for Indigenous peoples to establish legal claims to the last remaining pockets of Rainforest. Although they have lived in harmony with the Rainforest for thousands of years, governments do not readily recognize their land rights. It took the Panará of Brazil more than 25 years to return from a reservation to their ancestral territory. The Panará first used maps for their legal strategy. Now they formulate maps to monitor their territory from invaders and document resource management.

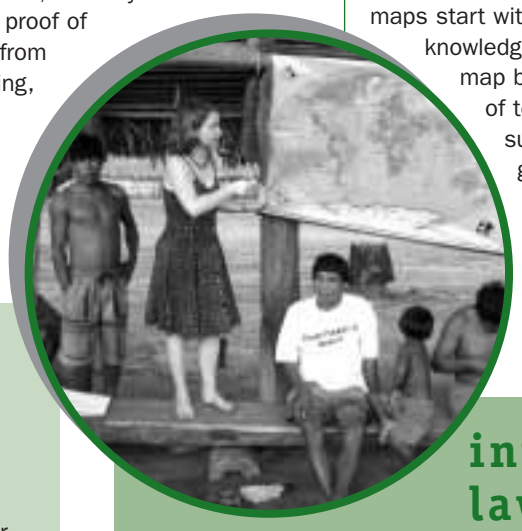
In recent years, a community mapping movement has taken root among Amazon peoples. Maps not only help them win back their lands, but they also provide proof of devastation from logging, mining, and other invasions. For example, aerial maps of the Amazon Rainforests in Brazil clearly demonstrate that where Indigenous territory begins and ends marks the difference between the Rainforests' preservation and their destruction. Maps, by their very nature, provide graphic proof.

types of maps

Hand-drawn maps first record an Indigenous people's knowledge of their land — re-naming not only the rivers and hills, but identifying where they have hunted, fished, and harvested medicinal plants for generations. At this level, map-making is truly a community experience, as elders pass down stories about the land.

More technical maps are usually composed to "counter-map" against government, commercial, or increasingly, conservationists' claims to their land. Still, all maps start with traditional geographic knowledge. The more scientific a map becomes, the more layers of technologies are added, such as remote sensing, global positioning systems, and computer-based image manipulation.

continued on back



Christine teaches high finance in the Amazon
Photo by Nina Kahn

panará celebration continued from cover

Around lunch time, we had a break. The sun around this time is so hot that it is hard to bear. It is time to take a bath in the river, have something to eat, and lay down in our hammocks to rest. Around 4:00 pm after the Panará had danced again, we resumed the meeting. At this point, there was baked fish, "beiju," a dish of manioc flour, and sweet potato to share. The discussion was now about what to do with the donation made by the lawyers to the "kupakre," the Panará's name for the reparations fund. After that, we went to the office of the Panará community association where they have a solar-powered computer and wrote the minutes of the meeting. The minutes would be needed when three Panará went to the bank in the nearby city of Guarantã do Norte to invest the fund.

Wednesday morning I was invited on a tour of the village to see the places where they develop their projects (organic honey, for instance), the school, storage rooms, and repair rooms, etc. Around lunch time, we started our journey back: forty minutes on a small plane, fourteen hours by bus, and then a regular four-hour flight from Cuiabá to São Paulo. The Panará were about to set out on a long hunting expedition. It was my impression that they were very happy." — AVA

international law

In March, a little bit of solidarity went a long way: from Brazil to New York to Washington, DC, when three Indigenous lawyers attended an RF-US workshop on international law.

The lawyers, Paulo Pankararu of the Warã Brazilian Indigenous Institute, Vilmar Guarani of the General Council for the Defense of Indigenous Rights, and Joênia Wapichana of the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR), an RF-US partner, attended the workshop in our New York office and then headed to the Organization of American States (OAS) to review a draft declaration on Indigenous rights.

Once there, they hit the ground running. By the meeting's end, Joênia had personally lobbied members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' (IACHR) and the Brazilian OAS Ambassador to protect Raposa Serra do Sol Indigenous Territory. Meanwhile, a petition that President Lula da Silva ratify the territory enjoyed nation-wide press in Brazil.

The IACHR first wrote the Proposed American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1997. As the document was composed without their participation, Indigenous peoples pressured for their own representation in the OAS. In 2001 Indigenous leaders declared the Declaration could be valid only if it recognized Indigenous peoples, their territory, and their right to self-determination. Once approved, the Declaration will serve as a legal basis for international law on Indigenous rights.



working with partners

Our Legal and Capacity Building programs — the work we do on the ground with our grassroots partners — are the very heart of the RF-US mission. Here's a sampling of what our two program coordinators were doing this year.



Andre Vasconcelos, CIR

legal program

Brazil Raposa Serra do Sol is one of the most important struggles that your support keeps alive. Working in an environment of violence and harassment, RF-US partner, the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR) is on the frontlines of a political battle between more than 15 thousand Indigenous people and local economic interests.

CIR receives Justice Minister In June, the Brazilian Minister of Justice, Márcio Thomaz Bastos, met with three thousand CIR members and local authorities in the northern state of Roraima. Bastos claimed the visit would clarify issues around the demarcation of Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol, the traditional home of the Macuxi, Wapichana, Ingarikó, and Tuarepang peoples.

CIR has been fighting for more than 25 years for this ancestral land. They have waited since 1998 for the final signature of the president — a formality blocked by local politicians with economic interests in these lands.

Bastos declared that his decision would benefit everyone. CIR was emphatic that there was no decision to be made: The geographic space occupied by Raposa Serra do Sol has already been legally defined. To backtrack on the lengthy legal process sets a dangerous precedent for other Indigenous lands awaiting demarcation.

RF-US campaigns

In June Isabela Figueroa, our Legal Program Coordinator, traveled far into the Amazon to the Indigenous village of Tabalascada in Roraima. Isabela and leaders from CIR focused on new developments in international law, such as Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization, and the Indigenous rights declarations of both the UN and the OAS.

As an international supplement to CIR's national efforts, RF-US recently organized two letter-writing campaigns. Late last year, we urged supporters to pressure the outgoing Brazilian president to ratify Indigenous Territory Raposa Serra do Sol. The latest campaign targeted new President Luis "Lula" da Silva.

top photo
Isabela leads the discussion

bottom
guyana women's meeting



Christine Halvorson

capacity building program

Autonomy for Indigenous organizations is crucial for the Rainforest. While they follow the traditions of their ancestors, Indigenous activists are learning a few tricks of the trade. Our Capacity Building Program offers our Indigenous partners practical training in such skills as financial management, strategic planning, grant-writing, and administration.

Brazil In March Christine Halvorson, the coordinator of our Capacity Building Program, traveled to Boa Vista to initiate a series of workshops with CIR and its sister group, the Organization of Indigenous Women of Roraima (OMIR).

Over 30 CIR regional leaders participated in a project planning workshop. In addition to a strategic planning session with OMIR, Christine also provided one-on-one training.

Throughout her visit, forest fires raged across Roraima. Government officials, including Minister of the Environment Marina Silva, a long-time advocate for the Rainforest, flew to Boa Vista for emergency visits. By month's end, heavy rains chased away the fires, leaving only a burning scent and a fear of more frequent, larger fires in the future.

The Panará think about Portfolios Who talks of finance in the middle of the jungle? In June, Christine Halvorson and Nina Kahn, her homologue with partner the Socio-environmental Institute (ISA), traveled to the Rainforest to do just that. For four days they trained young Panará leaders in financial management — from filling out account books to handling money. The timing was perfect: Later that month, the Panará received their reparations payment from the Brazilian government.

The funds will be managed by these young leaders in the Iakiô Association. Although Iakiô is a new experience, the Panará regard it as an important instrument to achieve autonomy and preserve their land rights.

Guyana: Women's Workshops In July, Christine conducted a workshop for nine Indigenous women, members of the Amerindian Peoples Association. This workshop focused on proposal writing and communications strategies. In their evaluation, participants agreed that the workshop was a good experience and provided them with useful tools to write a proposal or a letter to the editor on their own, rather than depending on others.

One of the participants, Dorothy James, of Aishalton village in the Deep South Rupununi, said "I didn't know how to prepare a proposal, but now I can plan a good project". She is starting with a project to build a flour mill for locally-grown manioc, which she has promised to bring to our next workshop in September.

Indigenous peoples rewrite history continued from inside...

The hand-drawn map of the Panará territory (reproduced inside) was created to record their knowledge of the natural resources on their territory. Once this traditional knowledge is recorded, it can serve as the basis for discussions about sustainable development. Contact with the outside world brought new needs and technology to the Panará — now they have a taste for refined sugar and use a tractor for farming — that require cash-raising solutions.

Mapping has also been crucial for Amerindians in Guyana to claim legal title to their land. Since the colonial era, the Guyanese government has been slow to recognize traditional peoples' land rights. In contrast, it is granting logging and mining corporations concessions on Amerindian lands at an alarming rate. To justify its actions, the government only documents individual villages, as opposed to the whole territory used by a people. In an effort to save their territories from environmental destruction, many Indigenous communities "counter-map," using both land lore and sophisticated satellite technology.

global ripples

To re-write a history of wrongs. To record the past for the future. To prepare concrete evidence of land use and occupation. To document natural resources for preservation and sustainable development strategies. These are just a few of the reasons native communities map out their territories. Once they establish land tenure, Indigenous peoples are the most viable guarantee for the Rainforest's long-term survival.



Christine Halvorson

Printed on Recycled Paper



Isabele Figueroa

raising awareness the panará visit new york

The Rainforest traveled from Brazil to New York City in April to speak through six Panará delegates. The Panará inaugurated this year's Rainforest Awareness Week, a central RF-US event to raise awareness.

In New York, they performed traditional songs and dances after the screening of a documentary about their struggle. Later they participated in a panel discussion about Indigenous rights and the environment, co-sponsored by RF-US, the New York University Law School Institute for International Law and Justice, and the NYU Environmental Law Journal.

Describing their evolution over the last thirty years from an isolated people to legal warriors, Patikâ Panará said, "It was our idea to fight for our ancestral land. It was our idea to make allies. It was our fight."

The task ahead is formidable. Protection from new threats requires constant vigilance. Their perseverance deserves our continued support.
For a full photo travelogue of the Panará's New York go to, http://www.Rainforestfoundation.org/1panara403.html.

photos top to bottom
the panará in the big apple
and leaving brazil

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Rainforest Foundation-US

raising funds

"true gems" broadway benefit for the rainforest

Some of Broadway's hottest stars dazzled their brightest at the Manhattan Center in the RF-US "True Gems" benefit in May. The evening was sponsored by Swiss jeweler Piaget, but it was the Broadway gems on stage that brought the house down. The well-attended benefit honored Rainforest Foundation co-founder Trudie Styler who, according to the invitation was "The tru in true gems."



ken roberson
true-gems creator

The show was produced and directed by the multi-talented Ken Roberson with Zane Mark. According to Roberson, the repertoire was chosen for songs written by men to be performed exclusively by women, as a tribute to Trudie. In a surprise appearance, Sting jumped on stage to present his wife with the special necklace donated and designed by Piaget to commemorate her commitment to the Amazon Rainforest and the peoples who live there.

The benefit raised over a quarter of a million dollars as well as $45,000 from the silent auction. The Chairs of the evening were: Sting, Glenda Bailey, Mark McEwen, Suki Sandler, John Sykes, and Yves Piaget.

The performers included: Marva Hicks (LION KING), BJ Crosby (CHICAGO), Orfeh (LOVE, JANIS), LaChanze (RAGTIME), Julia Murney (WILD PARTY), Regina Ahlgren (SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER), Rosa Arredondo, Bertilla Baker (TITANIC), Renee Brown (JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT), Dennis Collins (CHICAGO),



Yves Piaget & Sting bejewel Trudie
Photo courtesy of Suzanne Vreeland

Aisha de Haas (RENT), Jenny Douglas-McRae, Annie Golden (THE FULL MONTY), Angela Lockett (BROADWAY INSPIRATIONAL VOICES), and Sharon Wilkins (THE LIFE).

the magic behind true gems

The Rainforest Foundation US wishes to thank director and choreographer Ken Roberson for his invaluable contribution to the success of the True Gems benefit. Ken volunteered to help us during an extraordinarily busy time in his career. This year alone he was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for "Avenue Q", as well as a Lucille Lortel award for "Harlem Song." Along with associates Zane Mark and Gwen Gilliam, he gathered a star-studded cast, most of whom volunteered their time, and scouted out the best venue. Ken believes volunteering for a good cause enables him to "stay close to the magic."

corporate marketing & licensing

natural decorations, inc. becomes a rainforest partner

Corporate partnerships have always been integral to the survival of the Rainforest Foundation US. Natural Decorations Inc. (NDI), a creator of high-end floral and botanical reproductions, recently committed to saving the Rainforest with a sales donation to RF-US.
"We have always been committed to making our floral arrangements as true to nature as they can be, so it's a natural choice for us to support the Rainforest Foundation by donating a portion of our proceeds to help the Rainforest and the peoples who live there," said Joe Gordy, NDI president. Natural Decorations Inc. was founded in 1964 initially to showcase dried flowers, natural pods, and preserved grasses. The company is donating a percentage of sales from its Urban Rainforest collection to RF-US. To see this beautiful Rainforest-friendly collection, go online to **http://www.ndi.com/**



The Panará perform in NYC. Photograph by Suzanne Vreeland



rf-us events…save the dates

for details check http://www.rainforestfoundation.org

2003
November 5 · Individual Donor Party
November 9 · Run for the Rainforest/Virtual World Run Day

2004
December · Calendar Launch Party
April 14th-21st · Rainforest Awareness Week



save the rainforest one day at a time

We're taking orders for the eighth edition of the 2004 Rainforest Foundation US Appointment Calendar
This year our calendar brings you the everyday lives of forest peoples. Beautiful images will carry you to Amazon villages in Brazil, Suriname, and Guyana where ancient ways keep primeval trees standing. Each month you will learn a bit of Rainforest knowledge, from how forest peoples find pure water in the roots of trees to how they build a dugout boat. Every year we produce the calendar to help underwrite our partnerships with Rainforest communities.

As an individual or corporation you can support our work by placing a group or individual purchase. The proceeds from this year's calendar will help fund projects that help forest peoples fight for their ancestral land, the Amazon Rainforest.

Sponsored by Swiss jeweler Piaget, the calendar includes personal messages from our co-founders, Trudie Styler and Sting, and a host of other celebrities.

Large orders can also be custom-made with a company logo or name on the cover for holiday gifts, premiums, and incentives.

For more information, please contact Beverley Hadfield at (212) 431 9098.





Suzanne Vreeland

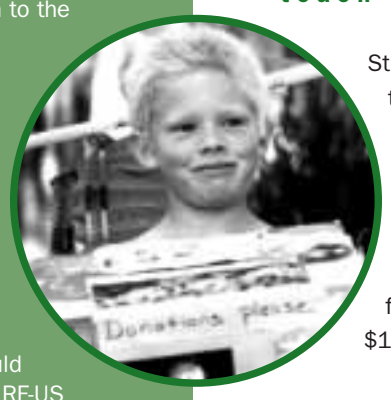
rebecca oehl far left, michelle petri at far right with rf-us volunteers at true-gems

most valuable volunteer michele petri

Michele has continually devoted her time to help RF-US in whatever way possible. Juggling her job and family life so she can volunteer in our NYC office and at our many events has always been a priority for Michele. RF-US recognizes her commitment and hard work and greatly appreciates the time and effort she has given to the organization.

We would also like to thank Rebecca Oehl, who has taken an internship with our Development Department. She has become a valuable member of the team and has worked on many campaigns and events to date. RF-US values her not only as a colleague but as a friend and true believer in our work.

The dedication of RF-US volunteers is the backbone of our work — without you we would not exist. We sincerely thank the rest of the RF-US volunteer corps who also give their time and support throughout the year.



what kids can do: one person makes a difference

Making the best birthday wish of all time, Kyle Sultzer decided to give up gifts and instead asked his friends to help save the Rainforests and the peoples who live in them. By party's end, Kyle had raised over $300 to the benefit of RF-US! Ideas like this are great ways for kids to take an active role in the future of the world they will inherit. Thanks to kids like Kyle, we are able to fund programs in South America that help Indigenous and traditional peoples to keep the Rainforest standing.

teach your children well

Students at Sayre Middle School in Philadelphia turned their classroom into a Rainforest with paper trees, animals, and displays. They also raised $64.50 for RF-US.

Ms. Swinton's class at Seymour Smith Elementary School not only created beautiful books and mugs for our organization's founders but raised over $1,000 doing a 'hop-a-thon.'

saving the rainforest made easy

Make a donation or join online now — please go to our website: www.rainforestfoundation.org. It's quick, easy, and secure: We receive 100% from all contributions pledged online through our secure server — there is no fee deducted. You can also log on for updates on our projects and events, and to purchase RF-US merchandise.

As an organization, we rely on contributions from individuals and corporations to undertake our work.

To donate to our work, please send a check made payable to the Rainforest Foundation and mail to **270 Lafayette Street, #1107, New York NY 10012.** Your donation will help make a difference.

name _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip_____ phone _____

amount $500_____ $250_____ $100_____ $50_____ other _____