



## Improving the Land Protection Capacity of the Suruí People of the Western Brazilian Amazon



Following a partnership to conduct land use mapping of their 612,000-acre reserve, the Suruí (Paite) indigenous people of the western Brazilian state of Rondônia and the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) turned their attention to the publication and initial implementation of a reserve land management plan and to associated efforts to increase the capacity of the Suruí to protect their reserve and improve their standard of living.

### **Publication and Initial Implementation of a Reserve Management Plan**

In 2008 ACT, in collaboration with its partner NGO Kanindé, was able to lead the Suruí association Metareilá in the design, publication and commencement of implementation of a land management plan for the tribe's *Sete de Setembro* reserve, encompassing 247,870 hectares. The plan, published in September 2008, embraces capacity-building (ACT will develop and conduct Suruí park guard training courses); agroforestry management; territorial protection; land monitoring; biodiversity research; food supply security; healthcare; education opportunities; cultural preservation and advancement; and housing.

The Suruí already have mapped natural resources including wildlife and plant life through the cultural mapping process. This will now be expanded through biological surveys to determine the level and type of animal and plant life that reside in their reserve. The surveys will provide a significant part of the necessary scientific basis for the management plan, help the Suruí better determine how to zone their areas, and provide confirmation as to which areas have the greatest



biological importance. Implementation of the surveys will take the better part of 2009.

### **Google Earth Training Courses to Enable Indigenous Remote Monitoring**

From June 1-30, 2008, to assist the Suruí in their reserve management efforts, ACT facilitated a training course in use and application of Google Earth software for 20 Suruí representatives led by an outreach team from the Google Corporation. The course was held in Rondônia in a training center inaugurated by ACT and its partners to advance the Suruí efforts. Participants received instruction from Google technicians in placing information and photographs into Google Earth layers to provide a comprehensive visual assessment. The tool will allow the Suruí to monitor the state of their reserve using satellite imagery. The course was repeated in September 2008 to include those unable to participate in the first session as well as members of the neighboring Arara tribe.



**ACT partner Chieftain Almir Suruí with Google's Rebecca Moore**

A particular challenge was that most of the indigenous participants had never before used a computer. In effect, this gave ACT and its partners a chance to “kill two birds with one stone.”

## **Development of a first Indigenous REDD Project**

ACT now is working together with the Suruí organization Metareilá, Kanindé and California-based Forest Trends and its affiliate the Katoomba Group to develop the very first Reduction in Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) project with an indigenous community in the Brazilian Amazon. Other parties involved in the project include the Swiss Amazonian conservation NGO Aquaverde, IDESAM (an Amazonian NGO that developed the Project Design Document for a carbon credit project in the Juma Sustainable Development Reserve in Amazonas state, the first to receive gold certification in the Amazon), and FUNAI. Hence, the project is the most advanced of this type currently in the Brazilian Amazon as it involves the government, private consultancies, law firms, and many NGOs. Results will be presented at the UNFCCC COP-15 meeting in Copenhagen in December, which will determine a post-Kyoto framework.

## **Sustainable Development Initiative: Organic Coffee Project**

The Suruí urgently need help to develop alternatives to the illegal logging and soybean farming that drive the local economy. To complement its reserve management plan, the Suruí association Metareilá is preparing a plan for sustainable income generation emphasizing non-timber forest products for local and national markets and certification and marketing of organic coffee. ACT helped reform a coffee grounds processing machine that previously was never installed and is now helping to construct a space for this machine within one of the main Suruí villages as well as transport it and to maintain it. Long-term plans include the development of a Suruí organic brand.

