

Ethnographic Land Mapping in the Western Brazilian Amazon



Based on the invitation of the tribal leader Almir Suruí Narayamoga, the **Amazon Conservation Team** was able to expand its biocultural conservation mapping and management methodology into the indigenous rainforest lands of the Suruí people of Rondônia. As always in ACT's ethnocartographic process, the information assembly procedure commenced with an extensive introductory methodological and technical training workshop for indigenous researchers. This was followed by the researchers traveling their traditional territory with GPS units and drafting materials to collect data; followed by workshops to collect the data, plot the data, and set agendas for the following field expeditions; followed by the expeditions themselves. ACT's work was facilitated by its partnership with Kanindé, a Brazilian NGO that has been working with the Suruí for many years. ACT was the first international NGO to form a concrete and effective partnership with the Suruí people through the mediation of Kanindé.

The map now may serve as a resource conservation planning tool, an incipient management plan, a potential legal document in the struggle against the timber and extraction industries, and of course a means of perpetuating invaluable tribal information across generations and to the outside world. ACT now is working to help the Suruí to create and implement a comprehensive biodiversity management plan for the Terra Indígena Sete de Setembro in order to strengthen and extend the protection work that has already been undertaken in the Rondônia corridor.

In 2007, Smithsonian Magazine and the San Francisco Chronicle both ran full pieces on the plight of the tribal leader Almir Suruí and his people, as well as the assistance role of ACT.

Smithsonian Magazine link:

<http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2007/march/amazon.php>

San Francisco Chronicle link:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/06/10/MNGR0QC65E1.DTL&hw=google+earth&sn=003&sc=910>