

# **Community conserved areas in Wapichan territory in Guyana**

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(Equator Prize Winner 2015)

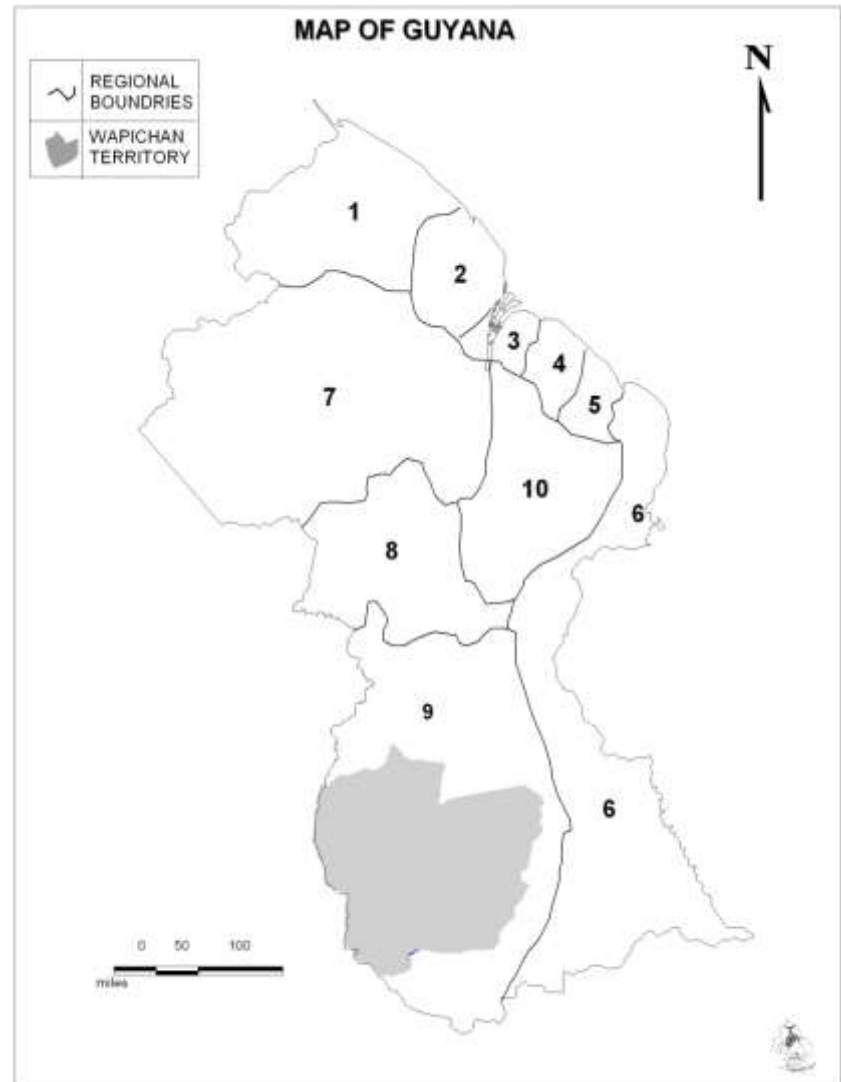
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# Where is Guyana?



# Our people and our territory: 1

- Wapichan people in Guyana number approx 9000 in 17 Villages
- Territory spans South Rupununi savannah and the upper catchments of the Rupununi, Takatu, Essequibo rivers





# Causes of GHG emissions

## **Main direct causes in Guyana:**

- Small and medium scale gold mining
- Industrial logging

## **Indirect causes in Guyana:**

- Insecure land rights of indigenous peoples
- Unjust land allocation and concession system
- Weak land tenure governance
- National development policy based on extractive industries

# Direct Environmental Impacts

- MINING: Deforestation and permanent land use change (loss of habitat, forest cover, soils, biological diversity)
- LOGGING: forest degradation
- Direct damage to hunting, gathering, farming and fishing grounds (spawning and multiplying grounds)
- Complete destruction of water sources and creeks
- Desecration of sacred sites and cultural heritage

# Impacts of climate change

- Prolonged periods of drought (rivers low or completely dry)
- Species migration (deeper into the forest)
- Decline in food security (less fish, fewer bush fruits and lower crop yields in the our farms)

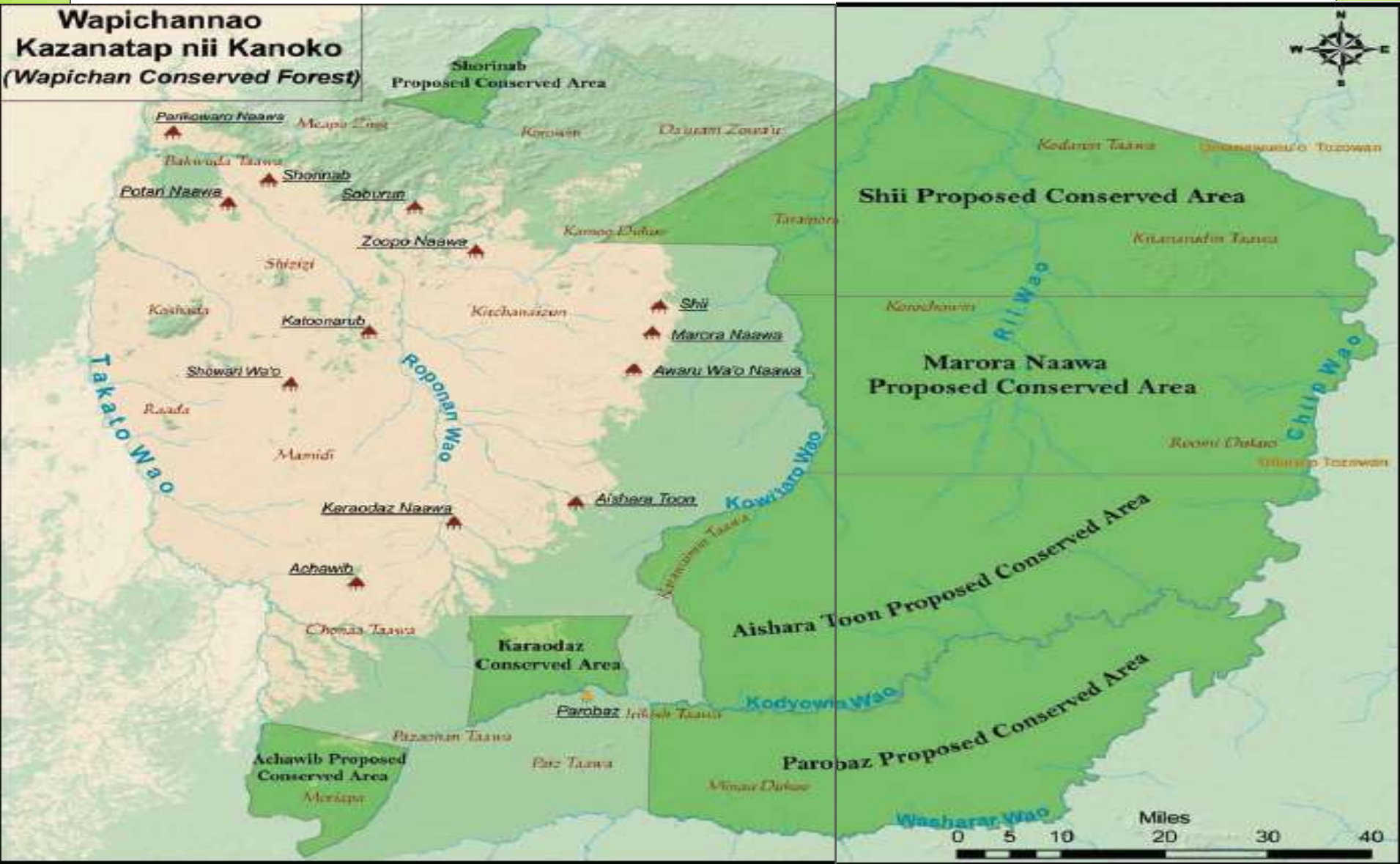




# Our solutions

- In 2012 all of our communities agreed to establish a Wapichan Conserved Forest over 1.4 million hectares of rainforest
- We also agreed to set up more than 100 local community conserved areas to protect specific sites and habitats
  - Spawning grounds
  - Wildlife habitats (Red Siskin etc)
  - No-go zones (spiritually sensitive sites)
  - Extractive reserves (craft and construction materials, medicines)

# Wapichan conserved forest



## Results

- **Food security:** management agreement of conserved zones and monitoring aims to safeguard our hunting, fishing and forest resources
- **Gender livelihoods enhancement**
- **Water security:** our management plan aims to protect water sources and creek heads
- **Land security:** we are actively working on several levels to secure full legal title to our territory (using mapping, land use planning and action research to justify our land rights)
- **Species protection:** we have set aside numerous wildlife sites used by rare bird, reptile and mammal species.
- **Policy impacts:** GFC commitment to prevent logging concessions on **Wapichan wiizi** and \*possible\* annulment of mining blocks (GGMC Commissioner)





# Next steps

- To step up our actions to secure legal title over our territory and conserved areas
- Seek international solidarity and support for our proposal for a community conserved forest
- Build up new governance frameworks to oversee our Wapichan Conserved Forest
- Strengthen and build on our monitoring work
- Compile our own Wapichan guide to wildlife (birds, mammals, trees, plants etc)

# Monitoring trips



Thank you

