

TReeS News

The Tambopata Reserve Society
Newsletter, No. 28

October 1994

Mobil Oil Exploration in Madre de Dios – the latest developments.

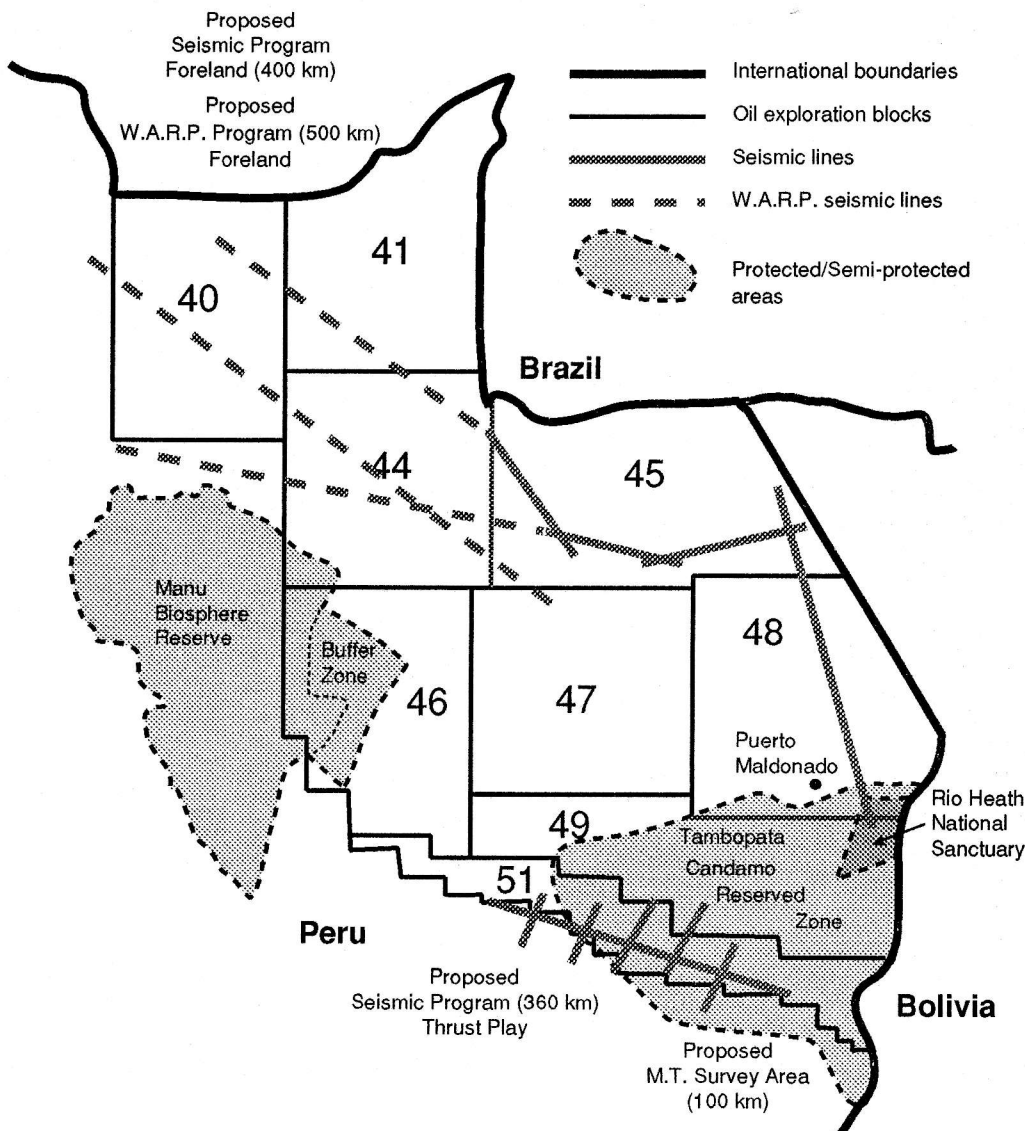
Mobil have appointed 2 sub-contractors to undertake seismic surveys in Madre de Dios. Mondina S.A. propose to cut seismic lines to the north of the Madre de Dios river, however, after consulting with INRENA (National Parks Authority) decided not to proceed with the extension of one of the lines to the south of the river across the Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone (TCRZ) and into the Pampas del Heath National Sanctuary (PHNS) because the latter is a fully protected area. Mondina also asked Centro EORI, an institute providing support to the native people of Madre de Dios, to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for their survey area.

Concern has been expressed about the lines that will run across northern Madre de Dios, in the area

of the Las Piedras and Purus rivers, to the north of the Manu Biosphere Reserve. This area, almost certainly, contains uncontacted groups of Mashco-Piro or Yura, or both. Mondina have stated that guides speaking both languages will be employed, advance parties sent out and no firearms will be taken into the area. In the most sensitive areas, along the Las Piedras and Purus rivers, the WARP method of seismic testing will be employed. The traditional method is to cut lines, about 2m wide, straight through the forest along which seismic charges are set off at regular intervals. With WARP lines existing trails and rivers will be used to access the area and short trails made from them to the test sites.

In the opinion of INRENA, FADEMAD and several other local organisations, MONDINA have so far acted in a responsible manner. However, serious reservations remain with respect to the possibility of contact being made with uncontacted native groups. In all recent examples of such occurrences, in Madre de Dios and Brazil, introduced diseases have led to many deaths in newly contacted communities.

In the Upper Tambopata region the sub-contractor is Gema S.A. They propose cutting lines across the Guacamayo and Candamo river basins. This region was considered to be an area of exceptional biodiversity by both the Conservation International RAP team and the TReeS expedition in 1992, and is one of the core areas of the proposed Bahuaja-Sonene National Park. Gema have made minimal contact with local organisations and plan to use traditional survey methods. INRENA made strong representations to Mobil about GEMA's proposal and, subsequently, Mobil's requested an EIA for the area from Centro EORI. Their



report drew heavily on the report of the TReeS 1992 expedition.

News is currently awaited from Peru as to the outcome of Mobil's meeting with the Peruvian government which would determine whether they will be permitted to fully undertake the proposals. Given the country's recent economic history the Peruvian government is keen to exploit significant deposits of natural resources to finance economic growth. Consequently, Mobil is likely to be granted permission to undertake all, or nearly all, of its intended explorations. As a result the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park proposal, currently being processed by the Ministry of Agriculture, is likely to be put on hold until Mobil has determined its exploitation options.

In the light of the above, TReeS and the Royal Botanical gardens at Kew have written to President Fujimori. The letter asks the Peruvian government to create the National Park as soon as possible. It acknowledges the recent economic problems faced by Peru and that the government wishes to use resource exploitation to stimulate economic growth. However, it requests that permission is withheld from Gema to proceed with seismic testing in the highly environmentally sensitive Upper Tambopata region. Furthermore, it suggests that Mobil must establish a model of sound environmental practice for their operations, which can be applied to future explorations in such areas, as a condition of their contract.

The dark shadow hanging over the proposal is the history of oil extraction in the Oriente of neighbouring Ecuador. There, minimal government controls on oil companies have led to severe environmental and cultural degradation. However, one optimistic pointer within Peru is the banning of oil companies from the Pacaya-Samiri National Park, near Iquitos. The Peruvian government originally gave permission for oil exploration within the Park but withdrew it in the face of strong opposition to the plan.

TReeS will continue to monitor the situation and, in conjunction with other organisations, will raise awareness accordingly.

FENAMAD News

In the last FENAMAD Congress in August 1993 disagreements between the representatives of the Harakmbut communities of central Madre de Dios and those from the lower Madre de Dios led to the meeting ending without the election of new Secretaries, and agreements on new policies and programmes. Several FENAMAD programmes are virtually suspended until a new Congress can be held. This is now planned for October/November in the Harakmbut community of Santa Rosa de Huacaria, in the Alto Madre de Dios. TReeS has offered some funding, if required so that the Congress can be held as soon as possible. In the

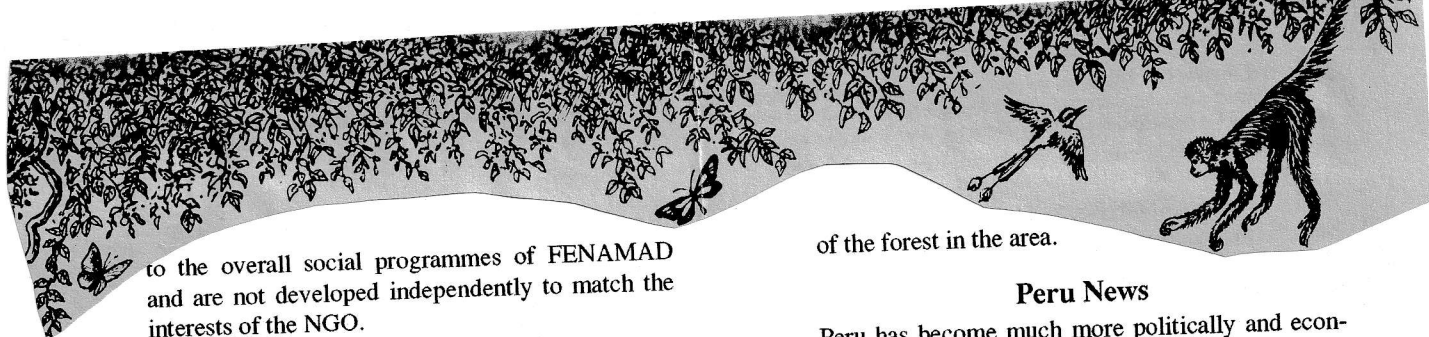
meantime, no significant funding is being provided to FENAMAD other than to cover the costs of the Health Secretary and the Centre caretakers. TReeS will consider part-funding a new Health programme subsequent to the election of a new Secretary and the development of an appropriate plan.

However, discussion regarding the future of Centro Ñape (the former AMETRA 2001 centre), in the native community of Infierno, are proceeding in conjunction with CESVI – an Italian NGO. CESVI have substantial Italian government funding to work in the three Ese'eja communities adjoining the TCRZ – Infierno, Sonene and Palma Real. However, subsequent to securing the funding they have reviewed their proposal and are now conducting surveys in each community to determine best how to utilize the funding! The options for Centro Ñape are based on the responsibility for it being handed over by FENAMAD to Infierno. The concept of a Centre in a native community is alien to native culture and it is by no means certain that the native people can formulate a programme that will prove workable. It is important that the future of the Centre is based on self-funding in the long-term and not continued donations. However, Infierno is a split community with colonists settled along the western bank of the river, while the Ese'eja live along the eastern bank, the bank on which the Centre stands. It is known that the colonists are keen to establish new 'chacras' on the land surrounding the Centre.

TReeS now awaits further comments from CESVI with a view to the joint funding of a proposal, should one materialise. The current ideas of native members of Infierno which could be developed include the small-scale commercialization of plant remedies, the treatment of patients from the local community, a model 'chacra' to enable the Centre to be partially self-sufficient, tourist visits to the medicinal plant garden and courses for native people to pass on knowledge about the production of traditional health practices and artesanía.

Another new development along the Tambopata river is the establishment of a Scientific Research Centre half an hour up-river from the Explorer's Inn by Newton College, of Lima. They have applied for custodianship over 1000 hecs of forest running back from the river to include all of Lake Sachavacayoc. The Centre will be used by Newton College's pupils, plus pupils from other private colleges in Peru and the Americas as a rainforest classroom. Newton College has also made contact with the Ese'eja communities: handing out medicines and school materials to them.

With both CESVI and Newton College, TReeS has tried to encourage them to refer to previous work undertaken in the area, to consult with Centro Eori and other people with experience of working in the area. Furthermore to establish projects which relate



to the overall social programmes of FENAMAD and are not developed independently to match the interests of the NGO.

RESIDENT NATURALIST NEWS from the Explorer's Inn

Climate

Mon	Temperature		Rainfall mm.	Humidity	
	Av.Mx.	Av.Mn.		Days	
April	28.0°C	21.8°C	256	15	94.6%
May	26.3°C	21.8°C	250	14	92.9%
June*	25.7°C	19.0°C	94	13	92.9%

* data missing for 4 days.

Recent Sightings -

Some very exciting sightings over the last couple of months. A Jaguar was seen on the trail across the La Torre river and another was encountered inside a tree hollow close to Katicocha. A Puma was also sighted, at 4000m on Tapir trail, while a Short-eared dog ran along Main trail, in front of an RN, at 300m. RN's have been able to make regular trips to the Colpa, accompanying tourists and sightings en route have included Tapir and Black Spider monkeys.

Current and Recent RN's and visitors to the Explorer's Inn include -

A.Wilson - re-organising display materials.

O.Gonzales - aquatic bird distribution study.

A.Frizzell - re-organising the RN library.

T.Roulston - undertaking a bee pollination study.

S-A.Hopwood - trail re-cutting, re-marking and re-measuring.

D.Brown & K.Oram - renewing and expanding the reptile photo guide.

Oliver Philips is spending time at both Cuzco Amazonicus and Explorer's Inn to reassess the tree plots. S.Maser of the University of California spent some time collecting data for a publication about 'Fruits, Seeds and Flowers of Neotropical Flora'. In September a Conservation and Tourism Forum for Peruvian students was held at the lodge with about 30 participants.

Due to a variety of reasons several RN's were unable to complete their intended projects due to guiding requirements. Two of the bungalows have been rebuilt and the capacity of the Explorer's Inn is once again 56 pax. After many years as lodge manager Marcia Morrow, well-known to many former RN's and tourists to the EI, has left the lodge and is temporarily looking after matters in PM. Responsibility for the lodge operation is now in the hands of Mrs Gunther until a new manager is appointed.

TReeS has supplied a small quantity of materials to the library at Tambopata Jungle Lodge. Several British students acted as guides at the lodge over the Summer and the lodge is keen to fully establish its RN programme. In our view the more research being undertaken along the river Tambopata the better the long-term prospects for the conservation

of the forest in the area.

Peru News

Peru has become much more politically and economically stable during 1994 - inflation is projected to be below 20% and GDP 7%. As a result tourism has recovered dramatically with 250,000+ visitors expected by the year end. In his Independence Day speech President Fujimori stated that his aim was to attract 500,000 in 1995. The next Presidential elections are due to be held in April 1995 and currently Fujimori is the clear poll leader. Perez de Cuellar, the former UN Secretary General, is likely to be the main opposition candidate.

The actions of Sendero Luminoso have diminished markedly though they blew up the northern oil pipeline in May. However, groups of bandits robbing buses at night, principally in the central Andes, remain a threat to travellers.

In the central and northern jungle regions the extraction of 'Una de Gato' has been making the headlines. A vine, the bark of which it is claimed may hold the cure to cancer and AIDS has become big business. It is reported that up to 3,000 people may be collecting around 30kgs each per week from the forest for which they can obtain just \$1/2kgs.

Madre de Dios -

'Biological capital of Peru'

Government law No.26311 (21.5.94) declared the department of Madre de Dios 'Peru's capital of biodiversity'. The Puerto Maldonado town council had already declared the town 'the biological capital of the world' following a TReeS/Wanamey (a local conservation group) initiative 4 years ago.

TReeS Meeting

Andrew Gray, the anthropologist, gave a fascinating talk to the TReeS meeting held at Green College, Oxford, about the history of the native people of Madre de Dios. The following is based, in part, on his talk:-

There are 60 ethnic groups in Peru and 17 of them are found in Madre de Dios but little was known about them until the C20th. The Inkas and Spaniards traded with them but never attempted to conquer the region. As a result the location of the ethnic groups remained stable for many centuries.

In the late C19th, however, the lives of native people in Madre de Dios changed dramatically with the arrival of the rubber boom. Fitzcarrald, a Peruvian of Irish descent, controlled the rubber trade on the Ucayali and Urubamba valleys while Suarez, a Bolivian, operated along the Madeira river. The shipment of rubber from Madre de Dios down the Madeira to Manaus was lengthy and costly until, in 1894, Fitzcarrald realised that two tributaries of the Urubamba and Manu rivers came to within 500m of each other. He then proceeded to

haul a steamer – the remains of which can still be seen in the jungle just outside P.Maldonado – over the land isthmus dividing the two river basins and thereby gained control over the rubber reserves along the Madre de Dios river. There were many skirmishes with native people – most tragically at the cliffs of 'El Gran Mirador' where it is said that 2,000 Toyeri died. Much of the killing was done by other native people enslaved by Fitzcarrald in his more northerly operations. Small communities of Shipibo, descended from the much larger grouping in central Peru, remain to this day scattered across Madre de Dios and have only recently begun to recognise their native roots.

Fitzcarrald made an agreement with Suarez to carry all his rubber via Iquitos but in 1897 Fitzcarrald and Vaquadies, the third baron, drowned in an accident at the Sepa rapids, on the Urubamba river. As a result Suarez was left in control of the whole region and the real genocide of native people began. The Toyeri, who were said to number 20,000 at the turn of the century now number just ONE.

In 1902 missionary groups, principally Dominicans, first entered the area. San Luis de Manu was established in 1907 focusing on the Matsigenka and San Jacinto de Puerto Maldonado focused on the Ese'ija and Toyeri. Ethnic group rivalries were played on to gain new recruits – in 1936 Ese'ija along the Madre de Dios advised the missionaries of a small group of Toyeri living far up the river Palma Real Grande. They were brought down to the mission to be 'conquered, clothed and civilised'.

In the 1950's church and government officials – until the 1970's Madre de Dios was the department to which renegade and corrupt officials were sent – forced the Ese'ija living up the Tambopata river to give up their semi-nomadic life. They were settled close to P.Maldonado in a community named Infierno ('Hell!'). Since then the Summer Institute of Linguistics and many other religious groups have continued to try to have a major impact on native culture, though the former have been banned from working in Peru.

In the pre-1890's there were said to be 30,000+ Harakmbut people and 120,000 native people between the 4 main linguistic native groups, in Madre de Dios. Today 1,200 Harakmbut remain; about 95% of the native people of Madre de Dios have been wiped out. The population of Madre de Dios is now 50,000, swelling to 90,000 in the gold-mining season and consists primarily of colonists forced down from the Andes by the lack of land reforms and opportunities there.

TReeS Libraries – New Addresses

The TReeS Oxford library has now been moved to the Plant Sciences Library, Oxford University, South Parks Road, Oxford (Tel: 0865.275082).

If you are planning to visit the London library please ring first (071.258.1823).

Documents recently or about to be deposited in the libraries include the report on J.Forrest's recent trip to Peru, Mobil's oil exploration proposal, Centro EORI's environmental impact assessment for the Upper Tambopata region on behalf of Mobil, etc.

Anglo-Peruvian Society Raffle

– in aid of Peru's Rainforest People.

The Anglo-Peruvian Society has made several donations to TReeS in the past and we hope to apply to them for further donations in the future. We enclose a book of raffle tickets with this Newsletter and we hope TReeS members and their friends will be interested in taking part. Please return the book to the Anglo-Peruvian Society if it is not of interest.

TReeS Merchandise

Goods and Prices as per the last Newsletter.

**** Correction ****

'Bird Songs and Calls of SE Peru' recorded by the late Ben Coffey in the mid-1980's. We now have a few copies in stock. Price £7.50 and not £10 each as stated in the last Newsletter.

Forthcoming Events/Publications

BBC Wildlife Magazine, Vol.12, No.10, October 1994. A photo feature by F.Lanting on the Tambopata Colpa (macaw salt-lick).

Anglo-Peruvian Society Expeditions Evening in conjunction with TReeS –

Tuesday 8th November, 6.30pm, Canning Ho., Belgrave Square, London SW1. The Speakers will talk about: the TReeS expedition in 1992 to the Upper TCRZ, a stay in the native community of Huacaria, a scientific expedition to the Manu Biosphere Reserve and a traditional medicine project in the Andes. Tickets (£6) must be bought in advance from – G.Marshall, The Secretary, 'Anglo-Peruvian Society,' 20 Copperfields, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2NT.

Nature v Development in the Rainforests of SE Peru, a talk by J.Forrest to the Hampstead Scientific Society, 19th January 1995, 8pm, at Burgh Ho., New End Square, London NW3 (5 mins Hampstead Tube). Free.

Third World Fayre, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1 (2 mins Holborn Tube) 9th (4-8pm) & 10th (11-5pm) December. A huge number of stalls selling Third World crafts. TReeS hopes to be there.

The work of TReeS is endorsed/supported by Helpage, OXFAM, Anglo-Peruvian Society, the Body Shop International PLC, several FoE groups and schools, and various small trusts and charities.

Patron – Norman Myers.



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