



## Letter from Earth

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*June 2020*

In 2019, we started working with Wildlife Works, a local company based in Mill Valley that specializes in conserving forests and wildlife, by helping Indigenous Forest Communities earn money in return for protecting their forests from deforestation. They achieve this by helping the community calculate how much carbon the trees in their forest store, and how much would be released by deforestation if not protected.

If the community and WildlifeWorks can prove they've successfully protected the forest against clear and obvious historic threats that had been resulting in deforestation, they can claim verified emission reductions, or 'carbon credits' on a per tonne of avoided pollution. WildlifeWorks can then sell these credits to anyone seeking to mitigate the impact of, or 'offset' their unavoidable annual emissions. Typical buyers would be airlines, banks, and consumer product companies. This field is now referred to as REDD+, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation of forests.

This exciting work took us down to the Colombian Pacific Coast, to deploy our smartphone and satellite-based monitoring system to help the indigenous communities of Miramar y La Plata, and Bahia Malaga monitor the health of their forests. This year the communities will receive their first check of around \$5 million from the sale of their emission reductions/carbon credits, in a financial transaction that promises to transform the economic outlook for the communities and establish a paradigm shift, where their forest is worth more standing than deforested.

To trace the roots of this innovative solution, we need to go back to 1992 and the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, which led to the creation of the Climate Change Convention and set into motion a series of events from the Kyoto Protocol in 1998, to the Paris Agreement in 2015. This led to the concept of putting a price on carbon and allowing the creation and sale of carbon credits to incentivize the lowering of our global carbon footprint.

As I think about these communities working on the frontlines of conservation, I'm reminded of an indigenous tradition where they recognize their spiritual ancestors and give thanks to the ancestral lands

upon which they stand. For those of us living in Marin County, it's the traditional homelands of the Coast Miwok people, a people who lived in harmony with their natural environment.

While the Miwok thought local by necessity, we find ourselves living in a vastly more complex and interconnected world. A world where the climate doesn't recognize our international borders and one, where the decisions we make locally can have a significant impact on the wider planet and ultimately ourselves.

So let's take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we stand, and when we next buy a flight or sign up for a banking service, remember the pioneering work of WildlifeWorks and consider directing your purchasing power towards companies, that are supporting carbon offsetting and the restoration and protection of our planet's forests, as a key frontline defence against climate change.

A holistic strategy that benefits everyone and promises to support a more sustainable and healthier planet.

*Andrew Dudley*

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*Andrew Dudley*



*Community member using the Earth smartphone application to patrol and monitor the mangrove forests along the San Juan River.*



*Daril Perez of Earth PBC introducing the Earth platform to the Bahia Malaga community*

