



TRILLION
TREES



Forest Update

After an inspiring World Environment Day (5 June), which officially launched the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and our recent focus on [reasons for hope](#), we can't resist talking about two of our amazing restoration projects.

We're also sharing news about what else has been happening with Trillion Trees Partners this year; our research study showing that forests can and do regrow if we let them; and a special story on how partner efforts aren't just about protecting nature, but also about ensuring that the communities in the landscapes we work in are supported.

Restoring Madagascar's magnificent Makira forest

The Trillion Trees ReForest Fund will give a valuable boost to restoration work in Madagascar's Makira Natural Park

The Makira Natural Park in North East Madagascar makes up the largest remaining intact humid rainforest in Madagascar. The country is known for its astounding endemic biodiversity. More than 80% of Madagascar's fauna and flora are found nowhere else, and 20% of all Madagascar's biodiversity is found in the forests of Makira, with 17 species of lemur and many amphibian and reptile species making the forest their home.

The lush forest contributes to some of the highest rainfall rates in the country, helping to power one of Madagascar's important hydroelectric power plants.

Despite their size and significance, the forests of Makira remain under threat from deforestation and unsustainable use of natural resources. Rising population numbers have driven demand for agricultural land, mainly for rice-growing. According to Global Forest Watch, the Analanjirofo region, where the majority of Makira is located, lost 460,000 hectares (4,600 km²) of tree cover between 2001 and 2017, an area larger than the park itself.

Since 2012, Trillion Trees partner WCS has been engaged in efforts to reduce deforestation in the area, and worked with communities to secure land and resource-use rights and improve land use practices. Deforestation rates in the park and its buffer zone have been reduced so successfully that restoring the forest has become a realistic possibility. With support from USAID, LCAOF, Eben!Holz and Zurich Zoo, the Madagascar team has begun the work of re-planting trees in areas previously de-forested.

Restoration within the park focuses on particular forest 'corridors' which are important to increase the resilience of the forest landscape, and to allow species such as endangered lemurs greater freedom to move.

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Preparing seeds for planting, Makira Natural Park, Madagascar © WCS Madagascar

Our conservationists work with 75 community groups and Madagascar's Forestry Administration to create community tree nurseries, reforest community areas and help set up sustainable agroforestry farming systems, including support for cocoa, clove and vanilla plantations.

Tree planting involves members of the local community working together with the WCS team at the forest frontier. Local knowledge helps inform seed collection, preparation and planting, and the teams look after newly planted sites for up to five years to ensure survival of the seedlings. In 2020 alone, nearly 341,000 seedlings were transplanted across five forest corridors in Makira Natural Park; and in neighbouring Masoala National Park, over 15,000 seedlings were transplanted and 250,000 previously planted seedlings were protected.

This year, a significant grant from the Trillion Trees ReForest Fund – thanks to the support of our generous donors – will help increase the scope and scale of this effort to protect and restore one of Madagascar's most biodiverse and important forest landscapes.



Looking after seedlings in a tree nursery, Makira Natural Park, Madagascar
© WCS Madagascar



Scarlet macaw, national bird of Honduras.
Photo: Julie Larsen Maher/WCS

The Perfect Firestorm: Emergency Covid-19 Response in Mesoamerica's Five Great Forests

Nearly half of Mesoamerica's Five Great Forests are governed by Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities who have lived and worked sustainably in them for centuries.

Last year, on top of coronavirus, forest fires ravaged the region, polluting the air and increasing everyone's susceptibility to COVID-19 mortality. The primary hotspots were Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, the Moskitia Forest of Honduras and Nicaragua, and Nicaragua's Indio Maíz Forest. To further exacerbate matters, 2020 saw a record-breaking hurricane season. Within two-weeks, two massive hurricanes pummelled Mesoamerica, causing mass devastation to the Moskitia Forest.

Trillion Trees partner WCS worked collaboratively with Global Wildlife Conservation, the Mesoamerican Alliance for People and Forests, local communities, USAID, and other partners to secure funds and provide urgent emergency food and supplies to the Indigenous and local communities during both the fire and hurricane relief efforts. In Honduras, local conservation teams helped to airlift 1.6 tons of emergency food and supplies to communities in the Moskitia. These efforts helped communities to recover, rebuild, and continue their vital role as guardians of one of Mesoamerica's Five Great Forests.

Tree-planting champions in Tanzania

In the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 1000 local people have raised 540,000 seedlings in just one season – exceeding the goal of 520,000.

Tanzania's Southern Highlands fall within one of the world's 25 'Biodiversity Hotspots' and are home to over 2 million people, most of whom rely on natural resources for food, medicines, building materials and income. The mountains and forests are also vital to national and local economies through soil conservation and water catchment.

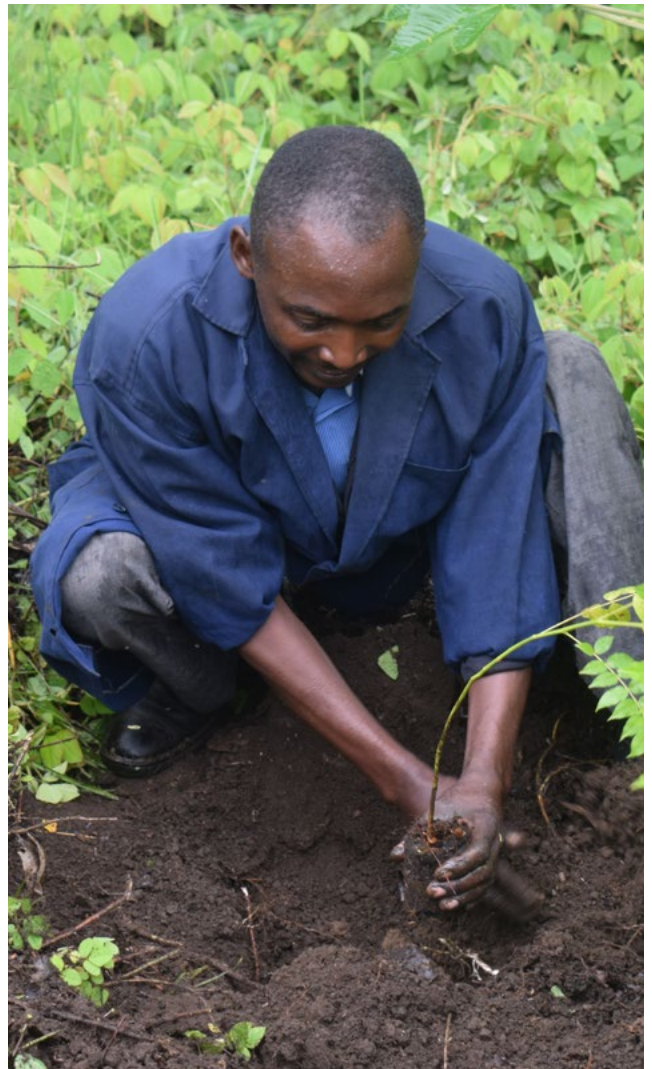
But the natural habitats across the Southern Highlands are still severely threatened by unsustainable use of the land and resources. Forests have been targeted for timber, fuelwood and charcoal, and cleared for commercial farming, all of which pose serious threats to the region's water supplies and cultural identity.

Trillion Trees partner WCS has been running its Southern Highlands Conservation Program since 2000, putting in place community forest conservation and restoration projects to protect and restore water catchments, reforest degraded areas and promote sustainable, alternative fuel and timber sources.

In 2019, the Tanzania programme received support from Ecosia, the search engine that plants trees, to restore tree cover to the Southern Highlands. Working in collaboration with district council and Community Based Organisations, the project aims to restore degraded areas, protect water catchments and create community woodlots, with the ambition of planting 900,000 new trees over two years.



Tree-planting in Southern Highlands, Tanzania. © WCS Tanzania



Tree-planting in Southern Highlands, Tanzania. © WCS Tanzania

Over 1000 local people have so far been involved in training and planting sessions, and in 2020, despite setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 541,000 seedlings were raised in the nurseries; and over 464,000 of those have been planted across 113 sites. These were a careful combination of indigenous species for forest restoration to benefit biodiversity and safeguard resources, and fast growing species for woodlots to provide a sustainable timber and fuel source for local people.

To make sure their planting efforts are successful, the communities are using an app to register and monitor the restoration work across the 113 planted sites in seven districts – including 38 water catchments, 16 restored areas, and 59 woodlot farms. To facilitate this tree planting effort, WCS has supported the expansion of seven local tree nurseries, some operated by community based organisations. Given the growing need for sustained efforts on forest restoration, we are helping these nursery managers to develop business plans to ensure a sustainable supply of good quality seedlings in future years.

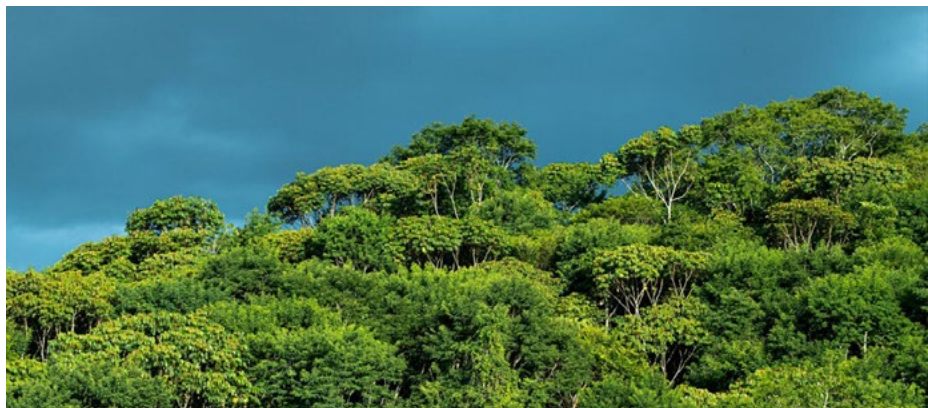
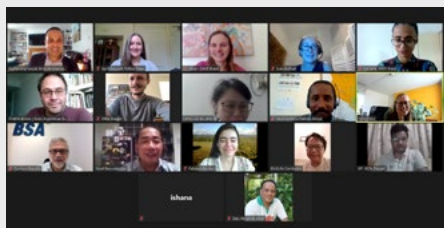
Welcoming new partners to the Forest Accelerator

At the end of May, people from 15 countries came together virtually to exchange, cultivate collaboration and face a big challenge for conservation: how to move away from unsustainable funding cycles towards long-term solutions for landscapes.

The Accelerator Online Conference was a week-long event for a diverse portfolio. The Forest Accelerator, led by Trillion Trees partner BirdLife International and initially funded by Trillion Trees, supports BirdLife Partners to seek solutions that create the right incentives and income streams for the long-term protection of biodiversity. Solutions range from the production of bird-friendly yerba mate tea in Paraguay and Argentina, to developing quality carbon projects, to local entrepreneurship for restoration. So the Accelerator Online Conference was diverse too. All sorts of topics were covered, such as how to build meaningful value-led partnership with businesses or deal with the risks of taking on finance. The team explored these complex issues with games, exchanges, interactive knowledge downloads and role plays. It was a lot of fun!

This year, the Accelerator is expanding. We're proud to announce five new Partners from Nepal, Malaysia, Philippines, Colombia and Mexico who will join the Accelerator 2021 cohort. Each is seeking a more sustainable future for forests by accelerating mechanisms that transform landscapes, conserve nature and support a thriving green economy.

Read more about the Accelerator here.
www.birdlife.org/accelerator



Atlantic Forest ©WWF

Not all bad news: forests can and do regrow if we let them

Our new research shows that forests the size of France have regrown in the last 20 years

Nearly 59 million hectares of forests – an area larger than mainland France– has regrown since 2000, according to new analysis from Trillion Trees. This area of forest has the potential to store the equivalent of 5.9 Gt of CO₂e – more than the annual emissions of the US.

The study is designed to help inform forest restoration plans worldwide, giving a picture of the areas where focusing restoration efforts could be most beneficial. It is part of a two-year research project, led by Trillion Trees partner WWF, which involved examining more than 30 years' worth of satellite imaging data and surveying experts with on the ground knowledge of more than 100 sites in 29 different countries.

The research points to the Atlantic Forest in Brazil as one of the success stories for regeneration, where an estimated 4.2 million hectares – an area roughly the size of the Netherlands – has regrown since 2000, through a combination of planned projects to restore the forest, more responsible industry practices and other factors including migration trend towards cities.

In the boreal forests of Mongolia's northern wilderness, the study suggests that 1.2 million hectares of forest have regenerated in the last 20 years, in part thanks to the work of WWF, and increased emphasis from the Mongolian government on protected areas. Other regeneration hotspots include central Africa and the boreal forests of Canada.

Globally, we are still losing forests at a terrifying rate, much faster than we are able to restore them. Studies have shown that between 2001 and 2019 - a similar time-period to this study – 386 million hectares of tree cover were lost worldwide. That's over seven times the area of naturally regenerated forest identified in the research.

We're now reaching out and seeking further input to validate or adjust the map and deepen our understanding of the conditions that led to regeneration. We're inviting individuals with on the ground knowledge to contribute online via forestregeneration@trilliontrees.org

To view the map and learn more visit tinyurl.com/globalregen