



**WORLD
LAND
TRUST**

Charity Number 1001291

Saving land
Saving species

Your impact as a Carbon Balanced supporter in 2024

Addressing the climate crisis
through our Carbon Balanced
project in Guatemala

Decisive action against the climate crisis

Tackling the climate crisis has never been more urgent. Each year, climate records are being topped and 2024 is set to be the Earth's warmest year in recorded history. As global temperatures increase, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and damaging, often hitting the most vulnerable people and ecosystems the hardest.

Despite the clear imperative to act, national climate action plans are "falling miles short" of what is needed, according to the UN. In addition, leading climate policy experts – including Christiana Figueres, former head of the UN's climate body (UNFCCC) – have declared the annual Climate COP summits "no longer fit for purpose". But while governments fail to act at the scale and urgency required, businesses around the world are stepping up to the challenge.

At World Land Trust (WLT), we are very grateful for your support of our Carbon Balanced programme. Established in 2005, this programme is closely aligned with the recommendations of the International Panel on Climate Change, which asserts that the single most effective climate action we can take is to avoid further forest loss, particularly in the tropics. Trees are the oldest and most reliable carbon capture technology we have and by protecting and restoring tropical forests, we also deliver an array of other benefits for people and wildlife.

We are proud to be supporting a committed network of organisations who are actively working to reduce their environmental impact and tackle climate change. In so doing, you belong to a thriving and diverse community of Carbon Balanced businesses dedicated to making a difference at this critical time. By striving towards net zero, you are contributing to the low-carbon economy that this world desperately needs.

We are delighted to share with you the most recent updates from our Carbon Balanced project in Caribbean Guatemala. By working closely with the local community, FUNDAECO are delivering a wide range of social and environmental benefits, all while tackling the climate crisis.



Baltimore oriole (*Icterus gularis*)



The Conservation Coast, Caribbean Guatemala

WLT partner: Foundation for Ecodevelopment and Conservation
 Area of forest protected : 59,524 hectares (147,084 acres)
 Total estimated carbon benefit¹: 24,445,681 tCO₂e

Guatemala's Caribbean coastline lies within one of the most wildlife-rich regions on Earth, the Mesoamerica Biodiversity Hotspot. With a diverse mosaic of lowland and tropical forests, lagoons, and mangrove swamps, this coastline is home to many highly threatened species. Among these are the Endangered Yucatan Black Howler Monkey (*Alouatta pigra*), Keel-billed Motmot (*Electron carinatum*), and the largest native land mammal in Central and South America, Baird's Tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*).

But today, this precious mosaic is under threat from cattle ranching, agricultural expansion, and coastal property development. These carbon-rich forests and wetlands are not only essential in the global fight against climate change but also buffer the impact of increasingly severe storm surges. Thanks to your continued support, FUNDAECO are ensuring that the forests, wetlands, and wildlife of the Caribbean coast are not lost.

Community engagement for forest protection

There are 111 communities living within the project area, 69 of which are from the indigenous and historically persecuted Maya-Q'eqchi' ethnic group. FUNDAECO work very closely with these communities to support livelihood diversification, such as eco-tourism, thereby reducing demand on the surrounding forest.

As part of this, Carbon Balanced funding helped FUNDAECO to deliver training to 216 people (107 women and 109 men) within the project area during 2024. This training covered food preparation, food hygiene, and the breeding and rearing of laying hens. FUNDAECO also continued to support the Maya-Q'eqchi' with setting up small-scale agroecological farms – a communal and regenerative form of farming which they practiced for many generations prior to the Spanish Conquest.

Through 2024, FUNDAECO also provided technical support for 348 forest landowners, thus enabling them to access government funds for forest protection. This two-pronged approach, supporting livelihood diversification and providing subsidies for forest protection, has garnered significant community support.

¹ Total estimated carbon benefit for the whole "Conservation Coast: REDD+ in Caribbean Guatemala project over the whole project lifetime.

Supporting the next generation

Funds from the Carbon Balanced programme enabled FUNDAECO to continue supporting children's education in the region. This included awarding 49 girls with scholarships so they can complete their Elementary and High School Education.

FUNDAECO is committed to improving young people's future job prospects. A mainstay of this work is their *EcoVeleros* (or *EcoSailboats*) programme. Run by FUNDAECO's Justo Rodríguez, a former fisherman who was born and raised in the coastal town of Livingston, the programme equips young people with environmental awareness, practical skills, and perhaps most importantly, confidence in themselves. During this fantastic hands-on course, the students are tasked with repairing an old sailboat. Working together and learning on-the-job, they gain skills in everything from fibreglass work, carpentry, and mechanics to electronics, navigation, and tourism. When the boat is ready, they are then taught how to sail and show tourists along the coast. In 2024, 28 youngsters – most around 17 or 18 years old and many the sons of fishermen – took part in this programme. By providing these exciting opportunities, FUNDAECO are playing a pivotal role in supporting both marine wildlife and coastal communities.

Regular patrols for forest protection

With your support, FUNDAECO are able to regularly patrol the forests within the project area, ensuring they are safe from illegal logging. During 2024, a total of 901 patrols were carried out, collectively racking up an impressive total distance of 18,500 km. Of these patrols, 73 were performed by members of the local community, further strengthening collaboration with FUNDAECO.

Helping women's health

Since FUNDAECO started this project, they have developed the largest network of Community Health Clinics within Guatemala, with 26 in total. Through these, FUNDAECO have been supplying medical services, equipment, and sexual and reproductive healthcare to women, as well as legal support for cases of sexual violence.

In 2024, your funds enabled 1,451 people to attend 47 training activities, covering human rights, the rights of women and children, and sexual and reproductive health. In addition, 14 health journey sessions were run, addressing both general health and sexual and reproductive wellbeing.



This initiative is an excellent example of how your Carbon Balanced support lays the foundation for a whole host of other social and environmental benefits. There is also an increasingly clear relationship between human health and people's resilience to climate change. This link is particularly strong for people living in isolated communities, such as those across the project region.



Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*)

Wildlife surveys and rescues

Your support has enabled FUNDAECO to continue supporting the monitoring of bird and amphibian populations and, where necessary, wildlife rescue and relocation. Regular wildlife surveys are essential because they provide an up-to-date account of how different species are responding to climate change and other threats. For example, Red-capped Manakins (*Ceratopipra mentalis*) and Golden-crowned Warblers (*Basileuterus culicivorus*) have both undergone population declines linked to unusually high rainfall in 2023. By keeping a close eye on these changes, FUNDAECO are able to respond quickly and put appropriate measures in place to tackle any further declines.

This conservation work is vital, especially given that the project area is a crucial stopover and wintering site for over 100 bird species – including the Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*) – which make their biannual journey up and down coastal Central America. The region is also home to 12 threatened species of amphibians, making them the most threatened taxonomic group here.



Tackling forest fires during record-breaking heat

2024 in Guatemala was marked by an extended dry season and record-breaking temperatures as a heat dome persisted over the country for weeks on end. FUNDAECO took pre-emptive action before any fires broke out, enlisting the support of specialist aerial and ground-based fire brigades and providing them with a substantial US\$60,000 to support their efforts.

With these funds, the aerial and ground-based operations went smoothly, successfully extinguishing fires across three key regions: Río Sarstún, Modesto Méndez-Chocón Nacional, and Cerro 1,019. More than that, the forest protected by the Carbon Balanced programme survived unscathed. This not only highlights the realities of the climate crisis faced by our partners, but also the extraordinary difference that your support makes.

This partnership with FUNDAECO supports the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):





This project is supported by rigorous carbon standards

Certification and verification

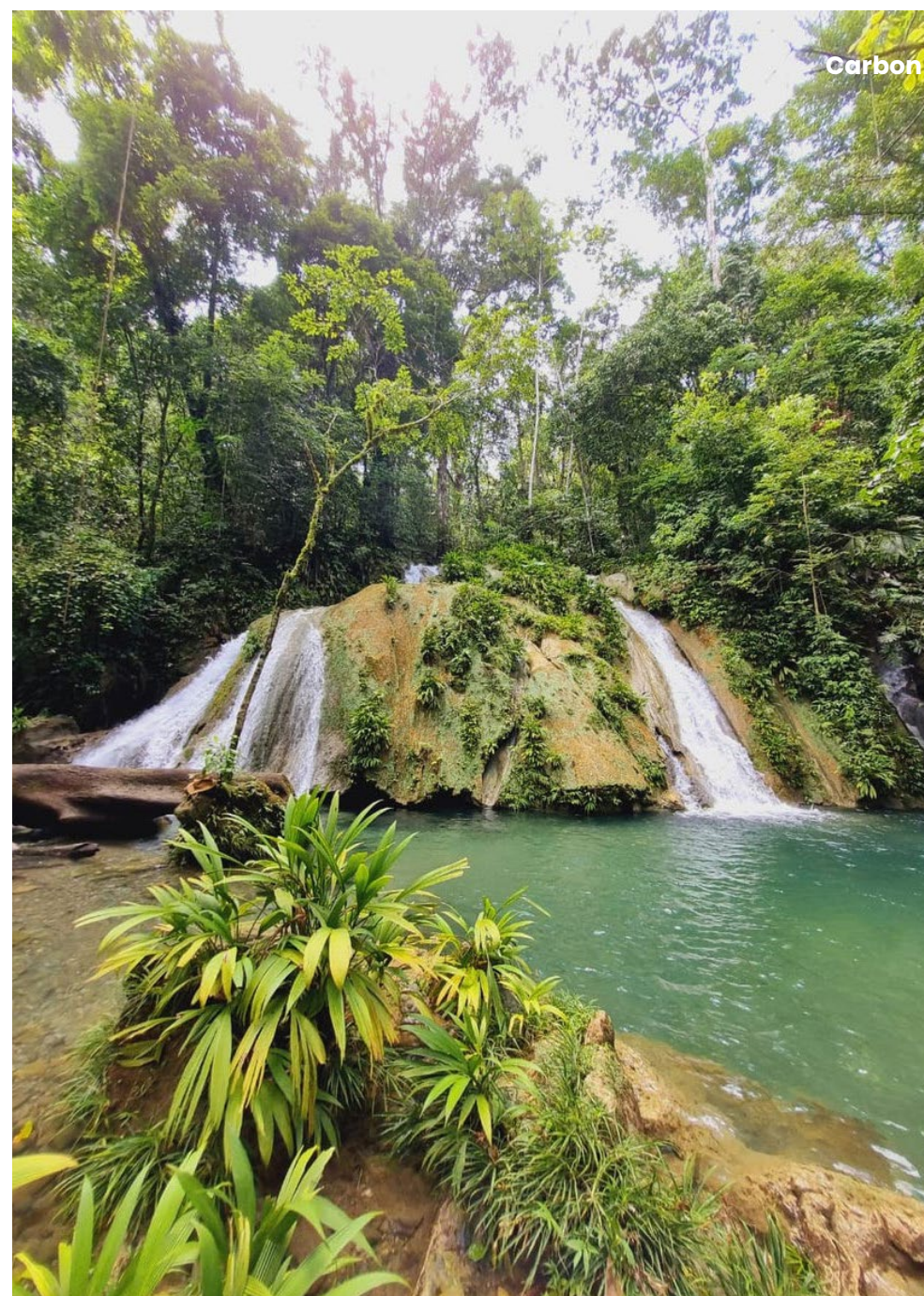
The emissions reductions resulting from a carbon project may be officially certified by third-party certification bodies. Certification involves a robust auditing process which ensures carbon credits are of high quality and offer measurable and reliable emissions reductions.

Certification can also assess whether carbon projects provide additional and measurable benefits to the communities in which they operate. This also checks whether projects protect and support the rights of local and indigenous peoples.

Verified Carbon Standard (VCS)

The Conservation Coast project is certified by Verra. Verra manages the VCS, the world's leading and most widely used voluntary carbon standard.

The VCS also requires projects to establish mechanisms for communication with local stakeholders during project design and implementation. This enables concerns to be raised about any potentially negative impacts. Any concerns raised must be relayed to the auditor at the validation stage and at every subsequent verification. The managers of the project must demonstrate that they have taken into account all concerns and input received.



Climate, Community, and Biodiversity Standard (CCB)

The CCB Standards are also managed by Verra and offer an additional level of certification. As the name indicates, projects certified to CCB Standards deliver impacts in three key areas and provide the best option for organisations interested in protecting ecosystems and the life they sustain.

Such projects can bring sustainable livelihoods to local people through initiatives like ecotourism and the diversification of agriculture. They can also help communities become more resilient to the effects of the climate crisis. CCB-certified projects support the protection of biodiversity by saving threatened species from extinction and restoring and protecting the world's ecosystems.



Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)

The Conservation Coast project is not only certified to CCB standards, but was awarded the CCB Gold Level for Biodiversity, recognising its substantial contribution to the conservation of highly threatened species and habitats.

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)

REDD+ is a methodology applied as a mitigation measure against the climate crisis and is widely used in conservation projects around the world. Verra's certification of this project ensures that it reduces emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) while also enabling forest conservation, the sustainable management of forests, and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks (+).



Thank you!

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