



XIXUAU XIPARINA RESERVE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2008



Dear friends,

As 2008 draws to a close the Amazon Association and the people of the Xixuau-Xiparina reserve wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a very happy New Year.

As yet another year ends we look back at the events of the last twelve months and are proud that it is now 16 full years that we have been preserving the region of the Xixuau and Xiparina rivers and improving the standards of living of not only the people from there but of the entire Rio Jauaperi as well.

2008 has seen members of our community travel to Brasilia to meet with government officials and lobby for the creation of the Lower Rio Branco-Jauaperi Extractive reserve, as well as participating in numerous events, conferences and technical courses throughout the period.

Important projects have been realized like the building and installation of fresh water wells in all the villages along the river.

A young girl from the river has been sent to Manaus for an 18 month course to become a nurse and we have signed an agreement with the local health authorities of Roraima that once she is trained they will employ her to run the health post in the Xixuau and look after the people of the Jauaperi. She began her studies at the CEPI professional institute in October.



A number of organizations have contributed to our project to install a water distribution network in the village which will be built early next year.

Many inhabitants of the Xixuau have been through training courses in subjects like community leadership, fish stock monitoring, turtle farming

in the rivers and to become environment agents. They have also joined the newly established Rio Negro Network and are working to renew the ban on commercial fishing in our river when it ends in April next year.

On the environmental protection front the Association has partnered with WWF Brazil, the Social Environment Institute, the National Rubber Tappers Council and the Vitoria Amazonica Foundation to push the federal government to declare the new Extractive reserve. Plans are underway for all of us together to help local community leaders make yet another trip to Brasilia to lobby the government over this and also to set up a new on line petition where we will join forces to have President Lula, the home office and the environment minister bombarded with emails demanding the immediate creation of this conservation unit. We will be asking for participation in this petition when it is ready to go on line early next year.



The government of Roraima continues in its rigid opposition to this reserve and has stepped up its attacks against the Association and the local people

who support its creation. In September a mission composed of the Land Registry Office and the state environment control Institute, together with armed police, raided the Xixuau and closed down the community's visitor centre applying a 2 million euro fine on Chris for alleged environmental crimes. They also blocked the work on the building of the new visitors complex which began earlier this year with a donation from the local government of Trento through the Association Trentino Insieme.

As this team left the area the home of Francisco Caetano, the president of the local community association and tireless champion of the reserve, was mysteriously burnt to the ground.

A team of lawyers from the Federal University of Amazonas have agreed to represent us in this grotesque criminal accusation. But all agree that the problem is political and so our lawyers have been travelling to and from Roraima and talking with the local government institutions and politicians to see if we can reach an agreement. This culminated in a recent visit by representatives of the association and the community to the newly elected mayor and the signing of cooperation agreements with him.



Our work is steadily becoming more political and we will be meeting with the state governor early in the new year to try and come to an agreement which satisfies all parties.

In the meantime the people of the Xixuau are forming a tourism cooperative to meet the growing demand for visits to the reserve and appease the local government.



Throughout this year we have been working with colleagues in London to set up the Amazon Charitable Trust which will be led by our friend Robert Pasley-Tyler and count on important and internationally recognized trustees. This new trust will be inaugurated in London on January 29th 2009.

Contacts have been made with many British environmental and Amazon orientated organizations and a number have begun an active collaboration with the new Trust and the AA. Volunteers from the UK, Toby Richards and David Waldman have made a short publicity film of our work, which can be seen at <http://www.b-movies.co.uk/film-projects/amazon-association.htm>.

The Association has been awarded the International Environment Prize, A Forest for Kyoto and our president Plinio will be travelling to Rome in early January to receive it from the Italian environment minister at a ceremony in the town hall on January 13th. He will then do a major tour to a number of Italian cities to give speeches and conferences before going on to London for the inauguration of ACT.

As you can see a lot is happening and there is still

much to do. For this we ask for and thank you all for your continuing support for our ever increasing and important activities in this region of the Amazon.

Most of all we thank you for your help in ensuring that for yet another year the Xixuau-Xiparina Nature reserve has remained as intact and pristine as ever.



*Amazon Association,
inhabitants of the Xixuau-
Xiparina Reserve and the fauna
and flora of the area*