



**WORLD
LAND
TRUST**

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**FUNDACIÓN
ECO MINGA**
Red de Protección de Bosques Amenazados

PROTECTING A SANCTUARY OF WATERFALLS AND WILDLIFE IN EASTERN ECUADOR

Our Buy an Acre project with Fundación EcoMinga



Black-and-chestnut Eagle

Country

Ecuador

Partner/Organisation

Fundación EcoMinga

Biome

Tropical and Subtropical Moist Broadleaf Forests

Ecoregion

Eastern Cordillera Real montane forests

Habitats

Located on the eastern slopes of the Ecuadorian Andes, the project site mainly consists of montane and high montane forest with smaller patches of páramo grassland – a high-altitude grassland habitat unique to Central and South America, as well as many waterfalls.

Project summary

This Buy an Acre project in the Llanganates–Sangay corridor builds on World Land Trust’s (WLT’s) long-term support in the region, with the aim of strengthening connections between a network of small but important reserves. The wider initiative will secure **578 ha (1,428 acres) of new habitat** and legalise a further **1,031 ha (2,547 acres)**, helping to link the existing Chamana, Olivier Currat, and Nelson Palacios Reserves into a larger, more resilient conservation area.

WLT’s support will focus on the purchase of **485 ha of land**, creating a direct connection between the 80-hectare Olivier Currat Reserve and Sangay National Park. In addition, funding will support the legal adjudication of a further **215 ha**, which will then be donated to EcoMinga by the current landowner, linking the 40-hectare Nelson Palacios Reserve to the national park.

In May 2026, the project was expanded to include the purchase of an additional **45 ha**, further strengthening the protection and connectivity of the Palacios Reserve.

Main threats to the area

The main threats facing this landscape include deforestation driven by agricultural expansion for both crops and cattle. Slash-and-burn clearance also increases the risk of forest fires. In addition, illegal hunting driven by poverty poses a threat to key species such as the Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), Mountain Tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*) and highly threatened amphibians.

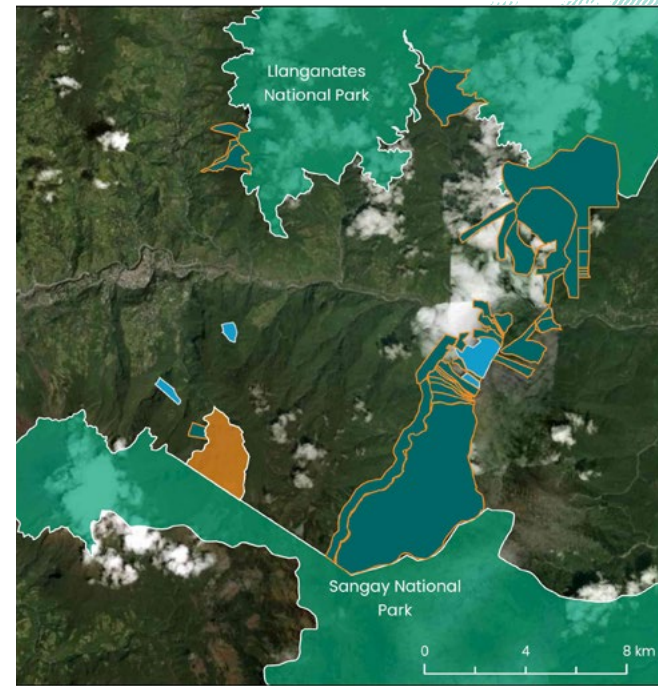
Global prioritisation

The project site falls within the Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot and the Llanganates–Sangay Corridor Key Biodiversity Area.

Biodiversity

The project site is home to a diverse array of species, many of which are highly threatened and found nowhere else on Earth. These include the Critically Endangered and endemic Punzan Rainfrog (*Pristimantis punzan*), the Endangered Tungurahua Rainfrog (*Pristimantis tungurahua*) and *Riama balneator*. These are joined by over 10 species of reptile and 15 species of large- to medium-sized mammal including the site’s flagship species, the Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) and Mountain Tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*).

The montane and páramo vegetation is equally diverse, with many endemic orchids and approximately 70 species of endemic, herbal species. Due to the mountainous landscape, the endemism is often extremely localised meaning some of the species found here are not found in any other EcoMinga reserves. This underscores the importance of this specific Buy an Acre project to securing the conservation of the region’s wildlife.



Cartistat Geographics

- Sanctuary of Waterfalls Reserve extension for purchase
- Fundación EcoMinga’s WLT-supported properties
- Fundación EcoMinga’s wider project areas
- Other protected areas



Key species¹

Mammals

Mountain tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*, EN); Spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*, VU)

Birds

Black-and-chestnut Eagle (*Spizaetus isidori*, EN); Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*, VU)

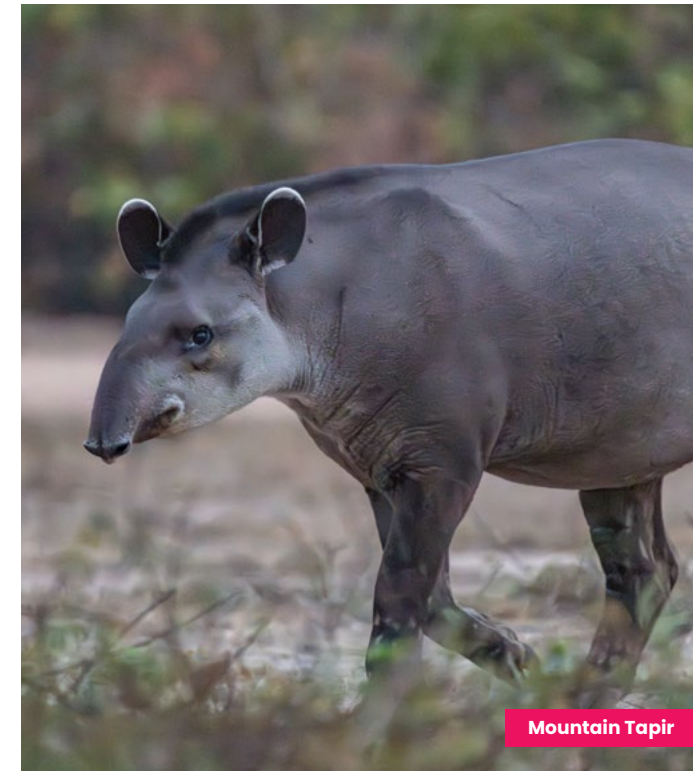
Amphibians

Punzan rainfrog (*Pristimantis punzan*, CR); Pastaza Rainfrog (*Pristimantis pastazensis*, CR and endemic); Tungurahua rainfrog (*Pristimantis tungurahua*, EN and endemic)

Plants

Aphelandra harlingii (EN and endemic)

¹The Red List of Threatened Species, maintained by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), includes categories of Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC) and Data Deficient (DD).



Mountain Tapir



Andean Condor

Local communities

A major part of EcoMinga's work involves supporting local community members and helping them to identify alternative revenue sources. Although this specific project is predominantly environmental in focus, it will indirectly create employment opportunities in reserve monitoring. This will help provide them with a sustainable income through guiding, hospitality, and other tourism-related services.

Partner/Organisation

EcoMinga is an Ecuadorian NGO dedicated to the conservation of the unique foothill forests, cloud forests, and páramo grasslands of the Andes. In particular, they focus on the edge of the Amazon basin in east-central Ecuador and the western Andean slopes of the Choco region in northwest Ecuador.

WLT has been supporting EcoMinga since 2007 to protect and expand their reserves between Llanganates and Sangay National Parks. In addition,

EcoMinga rangers have been supported through WLT's Keepers of the Wild programme since 2011. These rangers patrol EcoMinga reserves and protect them from poaching and illegal logging.

UN Sustainable Development Goals directly advanced by this project:



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