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An Extraordinary Partnership Saves Two Million Acres of the Bolivian Amazon from Fires and Deforestation

Top international skincare influencer Hiram Yarbro sparks social change for forest conservation

WARRENTON, Va., August 9, 2021—Rainforest Trust, Fundación Natura Bolivia, the indigenous people of the Bajo Paragua forest, and Selfless by Hiram have joined forces to hold the line on deforestation in the Amazon, announcing the creation of the 2.05-million-acre Bajo Paragua San Ignacio and Concepcion Municipal Protected Areas. With support from the partnership, the communities will manage the new protected areas which are also home to spider monkeys, jaguars and at least 1,273 vertebrate species. Conservation of the forest permanently locks up 337,162,504 metric tons of carbon dioxide which would otherwise contribute to climate change.

“The Bajo Paragua forest is ground zero in the fight to save the

Just over one-and-a-half times the size of Delaware, the Bajo Paragua San Ignacio and Concepcion Municipal Protected Areas lie on the Amazon's deforestation frontier, with massive fires and forest loss to the south and some 5-10% of the park itself burnt in 2020 as part of intruders' efforts to convert the forest for pasture and agriculture. Rainforest Trust, Fundación Natura Bolivia and Selfless by Hiram are providing fire-fighting equipment, training and technical support to the indigenous residents to manage the protected areas.

Comprised of swamp, riverine and floodplain forest habitats, the Bajo Paragua is rich in endangered Amazon species. The proposed protected areas will safeguard at least 1,273 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and many charismatic large mammals. These include the Crowned Solitary Eagle (EN), Black-faced Black Spider Monkey (EN), Giant Otter (EN), Tapir (VU) and Jaguar (VU). The site also houses globally threatened timber species like Broadleaf Mahogany (VU), Umburana Do Cheiro (EN) and Spanish Cedar (VU).

A newly described golden bat species will also benefit from this protection. Although its conservation status is yet to be determined, it is highly likely to be classified as Endangered and endemic given its limited range and increasing habitat loss. Species numbers are still preliminary and likely to increase, as much of the biodiversity in the area is still unknown to science.

To date, Rainforest Trust has safeguarded more than 37 million acres around the globe, and Selfless by Hiram's commitment has not ended. The two partners will continue to channel the power of social change to establish new protected areas across the tropics targeting high impact forests, rich in biodiversity and for the carbon they store.

Selfless by Hiram identified Rainforest Trust as a partner that shares its vision of a future where every person can have impact through their choices. Beyond Yarbrow's extensive skincare knowledge lies a passion for commitment to use his platform and voice to raise awareness of issues that have affected him personally as well as those that are having the greatest impact on the planet. It's this passion and ability to speak to these issues candidly and with compassion that has allowed him to connect and engage with his audience in a way that transcends skincare.

For more information on Selfless by Hiram, visit www.selflessbyhiram.com. To learn more about Rainforest Trust and the Bolivian project and partners, visit www.rainforesttrust.org

About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been safeguarding imperiled tropical habitats and saving endangered species by establishing protected areas in partnership with local organizations and communities. With its partners, Rainforest Trust has safeguarded more than 37 million acres of vital habitat across Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Rainfores