

## **REFUGIO AMAZONAS CONSERVATION IMPACT**

Work at Refugio Amazonas has just begun. Lodge construction was completed in May 2006. Since our establishment in the small 200 hectare private reserve we have come to understand the role we need to play in the locality. Refugio Amazonas is positioned to directly influence the long-term health of the 250 000 hectare Tambopata National Reserve. It lies 20 kilometres from the Interoceanic Highway, on the opposite side of the Tambopata River. In a decade, human encroachment can be expected to have reached the banks opposite to Refugio. Therefore Refugio and its area of influence need to act as an effective buffer between this belt of development and the Tambopata National Reserve behind us.

To that extent, we plan to establish alliances with neighbouring families in much the same manner as we have in Posada Amazonas. In exchange for connecting to the benefits of ecotourism via employment and supplier development we will ask for certain agreements to the use of resources. For example, in our first winter there, we asked the neighbouring Brazil nut concessionaries to refrain from hunting in their concession. This, of course, costs them, because they obtain their protein from the hunted meat. So the lodge owners pay them in beef. So as to not create a paternalistic relationship, we have asked that the beef be paid in exchange for hosting groups during our visits to the Brazil nut farms.

We plan to expand these kinds of arrangements to the 100 or so families that live in the communities of La Torre, Baltimore, Sachavayoc and Condenado. This would mean we would have established relationships with all families along the Tambopata River, beginning in the northernmost limit of Infierno and ending at the Tambopata National Reserve's Guard post to the south.