

# 12 THINGS A STANDING FOREST CAN DO FOR US...

... while we don't even realise!



Access to natural resources

1 We don't need to walk a large distance to get our non-timber forest products (firewood, cohune leaves, medicinal plants, etc.)

Game population replenishment

2 Protected forests hold healthy, growing populations of game animals. The excess individuals spill over to our village lands, where we can hunt them... securing our traditional food supply.

Flagship species for tourism

3 Only large tracts of forest can maintain good populations of species such as tapir, jaguar, and colourful birds that are very important for attracting tourists to Belize, and especially the Toledo district.

Natural pollinators of crops

4 The variety of plants in the forest houses many natural pollinators that increase the production of our crops.

Natural pest control

5 The variety of natural predators in the forest prevents any pest species from becoming so abundant that it could substantially damage our crops.

Soil stabilisation on the river edge

6 Forests located on the river edge prevent your farm's top soil to be washed away in case of floods.

Clean water availability

7 Forests on river edges filter pollutants from the ground water before it reaches the river. They also keep the water clean after floods.

Reducing flood risk

8 The roots and trunks of trees slow down the run-off water after heavy rains, so that it has more time to sink in the soil, hence lowering the water level in the rivers.

Soil doesn't dry out as fast

9 The canopy of trees provides shade that prevents the soil from drying out when the sun hits, leaving more moisture for plants.

Carbon storage

10 To grow, trees take up carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air. CO<sub>2</sub> is one of the gasses that causes climate change, resulting in hotter, drier and more unpredictable rainfall. Removing it from the air is good.

Provision of oxygen

11 While growing, trees 'exhale' oxygen. Oxygen is the single most important gass that every living animal needs to live. The forest provides us and other beings the air to breathe.

Local rainfall generation

12 When the sun hits the canopy, trees start to 'sweat'. The water on the leaves evaporates and forms rain clouds in the air. A cool wind takes the clouds to a neighbouring area and causes the rain to fall.