



Kuntanawa do Alto Rio Tejo – Aldeia Sete Estrelas

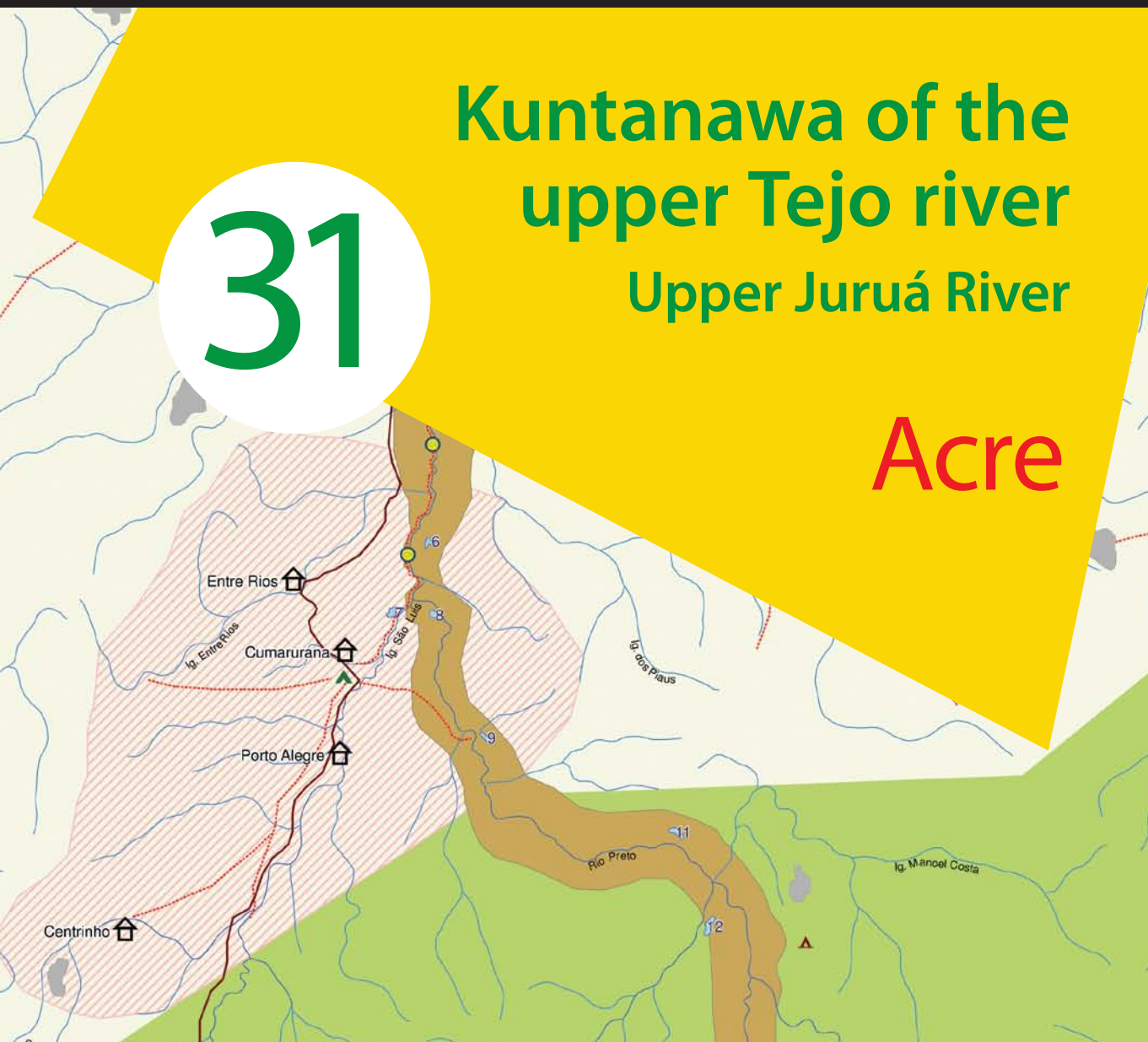
Kuntanawa of the Upper Tejo River – Sete Estrelas Village

New social cartography of the Amazon

31

**Kuntanawa of the
upper Tejo river**
Upper Juruá River

Acre



Projeto Nova Cartografia Social da Amazônia
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PNCSA's coordination

Alfredo Wagner Berno de Almeida
NCSA / CESTU-UEA, PPGAS-UFAM, CNPq

Research team

Terri Valle de Aquino CPI-ACRE
Mariana Ciavatta Pantoja UFAC

Photography

Mariana Ciavatta Pantoja
Txai Terri Aquino
José Flávio Haru Xinã
Elizani de Alves
Antonio Barbosa de Melo

Map

José Frankneile de Melo Silva
Geoprocessing division of the Acre's Pro-Indian Commission

Editing

Mariana Ciavatta Pantoja
Terri Valle de Aquino

Graphic design and editing

Design Casa 8 www.designcasa8.com.br

Translation to English

Gabriel Locke Suchodolski

Translation editing

Helen Catalina Ubinger

Translator's note

What follows are transcriptions of verbal interviews and discussions, translated from Portuguese to English, attempting to preserve the meaning and being faithful to the informal speech dialogues as much as possible, respecting the forms of expression of the social agents who participated in the map workshops.



Kuntanawa participants in the map workshop done on October 2008, in Sete Estrelas village, in the upper Tejo river.

Milton Gomes da Conceição Mr. Milton, Kuntanawa chief
Maria Feitosa do Nascimento Leitão Mrs. Mariana, Kuntanawa matriarch
Osmildo Silva da Conceição agroforestry indigenous agent
Kuntanawa, Damião do Nascimento Leitão Kuntanawa, Pedro da Silva da Conceição Kuntanawa, Maria de Lurdes Silva da Conceição Kuntanawa, José Iraldo do Nascimento Kuntanawa, Francisco Róbson Pinheiro Nascimento Kuntanawa, Jucimar Nogueira Leitão Kuntanawa, Maria Gracilene Rodrigues Pinheiro Kuntanawa, Raimundo Nonato Nobre da Silva Kuntanawa, Maria Eva Bandeira da Silva Kuntanawa, Charles Bandeira da Silva Kuntanawa, Carlene da Conceição Lima Kuntanawa, Maria Lisanete N. Leitão Kuntanawa, José Osmildo do Nascimento Kuntanawa, José Amiraldo do Nascimento Kuntanawa, Romário Nogueira Leitão Kuntanawa, Marlene Silva Kuntanawa, Adriano Silva Kuntanawa, Antônio Alisson Silva Lima Kuntanawa, Elibmarque Andrade Kuntanawa, Maria Ilde Silva da Cunha Kuntanawa, Maria Leci Barroso Moreira Kuntanawa, Rosilda Virgílio Kuntanawa, Giliarde Silva Kuntanawa, Karina Batista da Silva Kuntanawa, José Mauro Nogueira de Queiroz Kuntanawa, Edir Carlos Conceição Lima Kuntanawa, Raquel Silva Kuntanawa, Esaú Silva da Conceição Kuntanawa, Antonia Silva Kuntanawa, Elias Andrade da Conceição Kuntanawa, Enoque Andrade Kuntanawa, Edemarque Andrade Kuntanawa, Daniela Kuntanawa, Francisca Kuntanawa, Daiane Kuntanawa, Gleisse Silva Kuntanawa

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Stories from the time of the *correrias* (forced runaways)

“Well, one day my mother’s father arrived in his brother’s village. When he arrived there, he told him [the brother] that the whites, the *cariús* as they say, would do a *correria* on our people, which were the Kuntanawa, because the other indians [another ethnic group] had robbed the *cariús* and had passed through the yard of their *kupixawa*. My grandfather went after those so-called indians. Within about five days, a brother of my mother arrived and brought her a *terçado* (large knife) that he had taken from the other indians which he had chased, together with my grandfather. She said that she was very satisfied with the knife.



Mrs. Mariana, Kuntanawa matriarch, at home, resting in the hammock with her parrot

Then one day, they went into the forest: herself, her brother-in-law and her sister. When they had gone very far, they found an armadillo in a hole. Then her brother-in-law said: ‘I will kill this armadillo’. She said: ‘Let’s go, look out for the *cariús*. The *cariús* are after us’. Her brother-in-law answered: ‘No, but they aren’t coming here. They don’t know we are over here’. As he dug into the armadillo’s hole, my mother picked an *aricuri* straw, placed it on the ground and laid on it. And his wife sat, who was my mother’s sister. When they heard a noise, an animal flew and sat farther away. It was a *jacu* bird (guan). Her brother-in-law said : ‘I’m going to kill that *jacu*’. She said: ‘You don’t shoot, watch out for the *cariús*. If they hear the gun shot, they will come after us’. Then he said: ‘I’m going to try my rifle, to see if it’s still good’. He shot and the *jacu* fell. Her sister went to get the *jacu*. When she was skinning the *jacu*, she heard a cracking. She turned around, looked and saw, it was the *cariús*!

She screamed for her sister, who was my mother, that was laying down, she was still little. She yelled: ‘*Tipin utxi!*’ As she got up and looked, the *cariús* were already shooting with rifles. Pa! Pa! Pa! Her brother-in-law suddenly fell, shot dead. They ran through the jungle and the *cariús* after them. A *cariú* guy named Raimundo Pereira da Silva caught my mother. And Chico Curumim, Sueiro’s father, who was Kaxinawá, caught my aunt. Then brought them. They walked a lot and, when it was dark, they camped early. They cut a bunch of straw and covered the ground with it. And one of them brought a hammock and set it from one branch to the other, and put them both [the sisters] in it. When they finished, they [the men] laid under their hammock so they [the sisters] wouldn’t run away.

When it was night, my mother told me she was awake, she was a little girl, then she got up very slowly, passed over all the men. Under the night’s veil, she saw where they had put the guns and the bullet cartridges. She got her large knife, took a box of bullets and was leaving. When she was a little ahead, she remembered her sister that remained sleeping in the hammock. She thought: ‘No, before I’ll get my sister, otherwise they’ll kill her’. She went back and called her sister. She put her hand over her [sister’s] mouth. Then she woke up and they went. When they were passing over the last *cariú*, her sister stepped on him. He screamed, all of them woke up and grabbed them. They stayed up talking and didn’t sleep anymore. They woke up and remained awake for the rest of the night through the early morning.

When it was morning, they got out and left. In the afternoon they arrived at their boss’s shack (*barracão do patrão*). My mother lived there for another two years at this boss’ house, the old man Cajazeira and his wife called Maroca. Two years later, when she was already tamed, the *patrão* (boss) gave my mother to the *cariú* that had caught her on the *correria*.” Maria Feitosa do Nascimento, Mrs. Mariana, 80 years old, daughter of a Kuntanawa indigenous woman captured in a *correria* in the upper Envira river in the beginning of the 20th century

"I was born here in Tejo's waters. When I was two years old my mother took me to the Jordão. I lived for a long time there on Jordão river. There is where I spent my childhood and got married. When I got married to my first husband, I lived with him for five years. After I separated from him, I got together with Milton, who is my husband today. With my old Milton I built a family and am with him until this age [until now]. But it was only after my mother died that I came closer to my father. I was 23 years old when I came back to Tejo. At that time, my father lived close to the São Francisco *seringal* (rubber tree grove)." **Maria Feitosa do Nascimento, Mrs. Mariana**, 80 years old, Kuntanawa matriarch of the Sete Estrelas village, in the upper Tejo river

"My father was caught in a *correria* done in the *igarapé* Xinane [an affluent river of the left margin of the upper Envira river]. He was caught by the *cearenses* (people from Ceará state, Northeastern Brazil). The person who brought him up was an old man by the name of Tibúrcio. By chance, as the story goes, and by what my mother-in-law Regina told me, she said that my father was about eight years old when the *cearenses* kidnapped him in a *correria*. He was Neanawa, of the Jacamim people. His relatives were killed and he was brought up in the world of the rubber tree groves. I was born and raised in the rubber tree groves of the Jordão river and of the Tejo river [tributary of the right margin of the upper Juruá river]. So it went on and on until I met this woman, who is from the Kunta (*cocão*) family, and we fell in love and married afterwards. From then on, we started our life, building our big family. Mariana already had three children when I got together with her. And with her I have seven children. That means we've raised ten children already. And from these ten, we already have almost one hundred grandchildren, not counting the great-grandchildren we have. Today, the Kuntanawa and Neanawa population together is of 320 people. But only 120 live in the area now delimited by our people." **Milton Gomes da Conceição, Mr. Milton**, 73 years old, Kuntanawa chief, son of a Neanawa indian captured when still a child in a *correria* made in the Xinane river, in the upper Envira river

"Txai Macedo [sertanista of FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) who was the regional coordinator of the *Conselho Nacional dos Seringueiros* (National Rubber Tappers Council), in Cruzeiro do Sul, Acre], when he arrived in our house there in *Restauração*, he already came to us speaking the *Kaxinawá* language. Mariana must have understood his words, which were of the *Kaxinawá* language, but I didn't understand anything. As I already said, my mother-in-law, Regina, taught me and then I started to learn, but the whites made fun of it: 'What is that slang you're using with us?' Because she taught me like this: 'Milton, turtle we call *shawe* and squirrel we call *kapa*.' And like that she would teach me the names of the animals. Some of those names remained in my memory, others I have forgotten. I don't remember anymore.

So, this big friendship with txai Macedo has a lot to do with our indian face, even when we did not yet declare ourselves as indians. With his cheerful and chatty way, txai Macedo always

encouraged us to declare ourselves as indians, although during that time we were more concerned with creating the *Reserva Extrativista do Alto Juruá* (Upper Juruá Extractivist Reserve). The first time he came to our house was in 1988, but we only declared ourselves as indians in 2001. Today we are the only survivors of the Kuntanawa [Cocão's people] and Neanawa [of the Jacamim's people], who were massacred by the *correrias* – chases organized by the *patrões dos seringais* (rubber tree bosses) of the upper Envira, Tarauacá, Jordão and Tejo rivers." **Mr. Milton Gomes da Conceição**, 73 years old, chief of the Kuntanawa Indigenous Land



The couple, Mrs. Mariana and Mr. Milton, together for more than 50 years

Claiming the Kuntanawa ethnicity

"Look, I'm going to explain the reason why we want to have an indigenous area inside the *Reserva Extrativista do Alto Juruá* (Upper Juruá Extractivist Reserve). First, because we are indians. We never looked after our rights because we created a reserve with so many complications, hoping that there wouldn't be devastation, as is happening now inside the Reserve itself. We created the Reserve to preserve the forest, the rivers, the water springs, the wild game, the fish, the hardwoods. To preserve so many other things of nature. And the aim I see today, besides wanting to enslave us again, I see great destruction of the forests. Many farms are appearing and Vila Restauração is growing a lot, today with a little over 130 houses, one landing strip is being built in the village of the reserve. A lot of hunting is being done with dogs in the forests of the reserve, to sell meat in that village. There is also a lot of hardwood cutting in the reserve for the construction of houses financed by the housing credit of INCRA (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform).

Another reason was because my granddaughters study in Vila Restauração's school, and one of them came back to my house crying one day. I went up to her and asked: 'My child, why are you crying?' She told me: 'No, it's nothing!' Then I said: 'Nothing? You've never come back home crying like that. Something happened!' Then she told me: 'My teacher said that the whites should have finished off all these indians, killed them all already, because in this way there wouldn't be a place for indians in the school.' I was very upset about that. I was angry, I



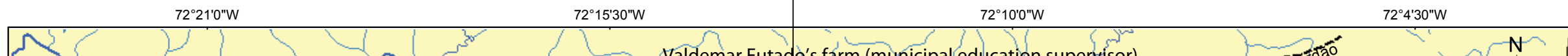
Mr. Milton, Kuntanawa chief, during the cartography workshop, in October 2008, were he participated actively



Marlene, granddaughter of Mr. Milton and Mrs. Mariana: female, young and indian

KUNTANAWA OF THE UPPER TEJO RIVER INDIGENOUS LAND

Delimitation proposal and natural resources usage areas



KUNTANAWA LAND OCCUPATIONS

Number	Houses
1	Osmildo
2	Mr. Milton's house (Sete Estrelas village) 5 houses: Mr. Milton, Sidoca, José Rivelino, Lurdes, Iraldo
3	Ivo/Nirlene
4	José Osmildo and Elizanete
5	Antonio Zico / Ideone and other 9 houses: Edcarlos, Carlene, Raimundo Ferreira da Costa, Robson Pinheiro Nascimento, Ademir Vieira Nascimento, Orsete, Charles, Osterno, Maria Genoca
6	Altevir Pinheiro and Elionora
7	Manoel Cavalcante Ribeiro and Lindalva
8	Damião Nascimento and Francisca Nogueira
9	Carla Fontanele and Rubeval
10	Raimunda Vieira and Francisco Araújo
11	José Teixeira and Raimunda V. Nascimento
12	José Amiraldo do Nascimento
13	Mildo Pinheiro da Silva and Lucia Nascimento
14	Francisco Luna 5 houses: Francisco Luna, Leca (Francisco Luna's son-in-law) and Lúcia, Antonio Luna and Marinez, José de Luna and Marilene, Evaldo Teixeira e Sandra de Oliveira
15	Tobias Borges and Antonia
16	Carlos Borges and Dulcinéia
17	Raimundo and Francisquinho

TEJO AND MACHADINHO MEADOWS

Campina do Tejo: is a different type of vegetation, where the forest is low and periodically flooded during the time of the winter rains. The highest trees found there are, specially, *mulateiro*, *taxi*, *ingá* and *buriti*. This low vegetation is also formed by diverse types of *cipó* (liana), like the *esperai*, *unha de gato* and *malícia*. There is also a lot of *cansação*, a kind of *urtica* with thorns that burn people, *tiririca*, which is a kind of *capim-navalha* (grasses) that cuts people, *soroca* and a lot of native grasses. The only ones that live in the meadows are alligators, the big anaconda snakes, tortoises, capivara (rodent family, very large) and *pacas* (rodent family) in the summer. Common birds found in the meadows are *socó*, *herons*, parrots, macaw, *cujubim*. Besides the otter, *ariranha* (giant otter), which is big and eats all kinds of fish.

IDENTIFIED LAKES

Number	Name
1	Lago da Cachoeira
2	Lago do Apuí
3	Lago da Melancia
4	Lago do Girau
5	Lago dos Pias
6	Lago dos Peruanos
7	Lago dos Alencar
8	Lago da Cumarurana
9	Lago da Seringueira
10	Lago do Belém
11	Lago do Patoá
12	Lago das Mocinhas
13	Lago Dois Irmãos
14	Lago Raimundo de Luna
15	Lago do Buriti I
16	Lago do Buriti II
17	Lago do Buriti III
18	Lago dos Peruanos

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSES OCCUPIED BY NON-INDIANS

Boa Vista Community

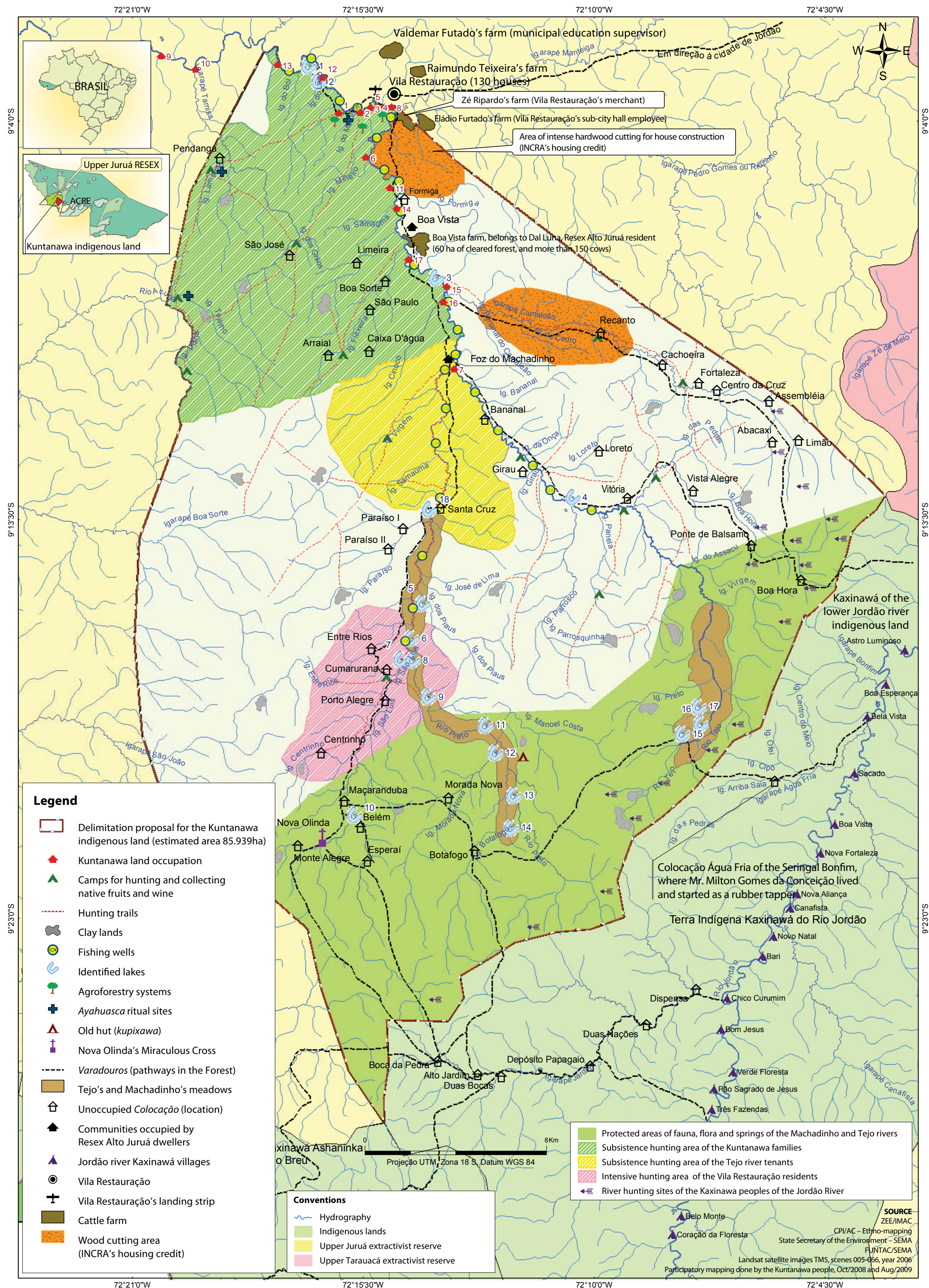
Dal Luna's house
Evandro Sabino
Ireneu
Mundoca
Lurdes
Zé Maria (Bibom)
Bibi
Pita e Marizô
Acrísio Sabino
Ozano Sabino

FOZ DO MACHADINHO COMMUNITY

José Cassiano's house
Vagner Cassiano (son of José Cassiano)
Manoel Cavalcante (hairdresser)
Donizete Cavalcante (son of Manoel Cavalcante)
Aloísio Paron
Sebastião Garcia

16 non-indian families of the Reserve occupy the proposed indigenous land

Delimitation proposal and natural resources usage areas



even wanted to go to her school, but later I corrected myself and said: 'No, I won't go!' After 15 days, another granddaughter also came back home crying. So I soon thought that it was probably for the same reason of discrimination and prejudice against indians. I asked her: 'What happened, my child?' She answered: 'My teacher said that the *cariús* should have finished off all the *caboclos brabos*¹, because indians are like wild pigs, where they pass they finish off everything. And if there were no more *caboclos* here, we wouldn't need to teach them

All that prejudice hurt me a lot. And ended up taking me to the city of Cruzeiro do Sul, together with my old lady [wife], to look for our rights. For that reason, we are fighting until today to be recognized as indians. And also to take up an indigenous area for the Kuntanawa people. So, that in our land we won't be discriminated for being an indian. We were massacred in the time of *correrias*. We were enslaved by the rubber tree bosses. My father, who was a Neanawa indian, was also caught in a *correria* organized by bosses and white *seringueiros* (rubber tappers), by the *cariús*, as they say. Do I have or not a reason to look for my rights as an indian? Do we have or not the right to have an indigenous area to preserve, even if it is inside the area of the Reserve?

(...) The last straw was the discrimination that my granddaughters suffered at Restauração's school. Afterwards, we looked for CIMI (Missionary Indigenous Council) in Cruzeiro do Sul and the couple that directed CIMI, Lindomar and Rose, gave us some support to declare ourselves as indians. We do not accept being discriminated as 'Milton's *caboclos*' anymore, like in the time of rubber. CIMI's support was not given through money nor goods. But it was important for parts of our families to declare themselves as Kuntanawa. Besides, only indians have their rights guaranteed by the Brazilian laws." **Mr. Milton Gomes da Conceição**, 73 years old, Kuntanawa chief of the Sete Estrelas village, in the upper Tejo river



Osmildo, indigenous agroforestry agent, leading the agroforestry system's implementation initiatives in the indigenous land

"We are a pioneering family in the struggle for the creation of the *Reserva Extrativista do Alto Juruá* (Upper Juruá Extractivist Reserve). Since the first meeting in 1988, the year of Chico Mendes' death, we were leading the struggle for the recognition of this Reserve, along with the people of the Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Cruzeiro do Sul (Rural Workers' Union of Cruzeiro do Sul), with *txai* Macedo, Chico Ginu [union's delegate that led the mobilizations for the creation of the Reserve] and Mr. Mauro Almeida [anthropologist and professor at Unicamp]. Few people knew about our rights as indians, because we lived a long time in the captivity of the rubber tree bosses. We knew that, *txai* Macedo knew, Mr. Mauro knew and also Chico Ginu knew. Our participation was very important in the creation of that reserve. It is the result of the union of the *povos da floresta* (peoples of the forest), at that time people spoke of the

¹ Derogatory, stereotypical designation for indigenous people considered inferior and averse to dominant national society.

Aliança dos Povos da Floresta (Forest Peoples' Alliance). It was a moment of joy and happiness for us to be able to create our rubber cooperative. We created our association in 1988 and the reserve was created in 1990, with more than 500 thousand hectares. We finally got out of the captivity of indebtedness to the bosses and *marreteiros* (suppliers). A true freedom movement of the forest peoples. A thing that presented joy in everyone's heart, the indigenous people as well as the *cariú* rubber tappers, to know that the reserve was to be an area of our forest's preservation and conservation, where we could enjoy extractivism and live with more liberty in the forest."

Osmildo Silva da Conceição, 47 years old, indigenous agroforestry agent of the Sete Estrelas village, upper Tejo river

"We raised our flag when we declared ourselves as Kuntanawa indians. It was our decision. It wasn't because of anybody's influence. I'm young, but soon understood the struggle of my grandfather, Milton Neanawa, and of my grandmother, Mariana Kuntanawa, to be recognized as indians and ensure the rights over the lands traditionally occupied by our families in the upper Tejo river. Ever since I first put a headdress on my head, I wanted it to be on the heads of all the children, youngsters and elders. Until today I like to teach my cousins how to make a headdress, to dance *mariri* in our houses' yards, to sing the *ayahuasca* songs, to make our paintings and sacred *kene* of the Kunta people. One day I called my people to the square, to sing and dance *mariri*. My grandmother Mariana was watching, and, suddenly, she came into the middle of the circle and said: 'You are dancing wrong, we dance like this'. And started to sing and dance the right way, which nobody knew that she knew." **José Flávio Haru Xinã**, young Kuntanawa leader, current secretary of the *Organização dos Povos Indígenas do Rio Juruá – OPIRJ* (Indigenous Peoples' Organization of the Juruá River)

Kuntanawa Indigenous Land

"We have looked forward to organizing and uniting ourselves to show the authorities, because we have the right to be recognized as indians and to ensure our peoples' own land. Not only to say that we have a land just for us, but also for the trees, medicinal and spiritual herbs and all the living beings of the forest. A land that has a management plan that is respected by all, to be worked upon and preserved. So these are things we have been working on. And take the opportunity to write these things, leave a record of the way the Kuntanawa people want to work on the indigenous land. And leave as testimony that this big Kuntanawa family has this gift of taking care of nature, of preserving the wild animals also and respecting the diversity of living beings that live in the forest." **Osmildo Silva da Conceição**, AAFI of the Sete Estrelas village

"As an indigenous agroforestry agent, I have tried to bring awareness to our people to work in accordance with the laws of our country, to preserve the forest and its natural resources. Pointing out a new way of relating among ourselves and with nature. That is why we speak of traditionally occupied land, because we have lived there for a long time and from it we guarantee our survival. We want to make our forests' natural resources management in a sustainable way



Cidoca, distinguished hunter and fisherman, Mr. Milton's and Mrs. Mariana's youngest son, together with his family during the workshop.



Kuntanawa people of all generations united in defense of the creation of their Indigenous Land



Uncles, nephews and cousins: the generations nurture and share amongst themselves the Kuntanawa culture

JOSÉ FLÁVIO HARU XINÃ

and guarantee the indigenous land's surveillance and inspection. Our land is also destined to the forest animal's reproduction, for which we are reserving an extensive area of hunting refuge on the headwaters of Tejo and its tributaries. And also to monitor and make inspections, to see how is it going, if there is game reproduction, if another variety of animal is appearing which had stopped coming before, if they are coming back again, to have a record of our land's forests monitoring work." **Osmildo da Silva da Conceição**, 47 years old

"I think that we should be firm in the struggle for the recognition of our indigenous land, but in a peaceful way. We should be clear in looking for our rights, but without war. We want to live in peace with everybody. Also, because there are only two communities of residents on the reserve inside the land that we claim, summing up 16 families." **Mr. Milton Gomes da Conceição**

"How do we make a living? All this area we inhabit, and we always get our food from here, from cleared fields, hunting areas, fisheries and extractivism. Even the water we drink is from the headwaters of the Tejo. Besides the headwaters of the Tejo river, our area includes the Machadinho channel, the Camaleão and Boa Hora rivers and it's smaller currents. There are still many lakes, *igapós* (flooded forests) and wetlands. We will only guarantee these waters if their springs are within our land. If not, someone can come here to contaminate our water's springs. Everybody knows the erosion that is caused when you deforest around the headwaters of a river, of a water channel, of a *igarapé* (small river), of a *igapó* or of a lake. That is the motive for why we want the demarcation of our land." **José Flávio Haru Xinã**, in a meeting in Rio Branco, January 2009

"I also want to say that we want to help IBAMA (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and of Renewable Natural Resources) itself to take proper care of the reserve. In the beginning the IBAMA staff was resistant to our struggle for the recognition of an indigenous land inside the reserve. As we will preserve the forest, the game, the fish, and other natural resources. Acting in this way, we are helping not only IBAMA itself, but all the reserve's residents. Because we will leave a refuge area for game, fish and other nature's resources in the headwaters of Tejo river, of the Machadinho channel and of the small rivers, Camaleão and Boa Hora, because here we have a lot of places for hunting, fishing and searching. We also can make a dam, breed domestic animals and plant a lot of banana, manioc, corn and many fruit trees. I am old and tired already, but still I plant a lot. That is what I want us to produce, so that we are not asking others or anything. So that my children and grandchildren – that are here listening to me – look forward to work so that there is always abundance in our houses. And above all preserving nature. Our land, if it is God's will, will be demarcated in a short amount of time for our people." **Mr. Milton Gomes da Conceição**, 73 years old, Kuntanawa chief

Ayahuasca

"Ayahuasca is a great teacher of ours. My mother-in-law Regina used to say that my Neanawa people, when they would travel far, like from here, the Tejo [river] to the Jordão [river], they drank *ayahuasca* to know if that trip wouldn't have problems. And if there would be trouble, they wouldn't go. I, at least, when I'm going to take a trip, I drink my *ayahuasca* to see how I can do it, how I can work, how is it that I can see the easier things. As I already told you, *Txai*, *ayahuasca* is a strong teacher indeed. It is a thing I have inside myself and I consecrate its knowledge. And the person that consecrates it, as I do, I know and know what I'm saying. My children and my grandchildren are recovering our indigenous culture through the *ayahuasca* itself." **Mr. Milton Gomes da Conceição**, 73 years old, Kuntanawa chief

"When I'm going to drink *ayahuasca*, to me it's the biggest party that exists on Earth. At least for the indians and for myself it is the *cipó* (liana) party. It is something we drink with our family. You don't see anybody looking for a fight. Just harmony. And from there starts that longing for us to live deeper inside the jungle, inside the forest. To learn how it is. The *cipó* is a drink that gives us a lot of teachings." **Damião Nascimento Leitão**, Mr. Milton's and Mrs. Mariana's eldest son, ex-rubber tapper of the Restauração grove, on the upper Tejo river

CONTACT

Haru Kuntanawa: irapuru@ig.com.br
Iraldo Kuntanawa: jkuntanawa@hotmail.com
Osmildo Kuntanawa: kuntanawaosmildo@hotmail.com



MARIANA PANTOJA

On January 2009, in Rio Branco, the Indigenous Land's map was worked upon also by a Kuntanawa retinue that had not participated in the workshop of October 2008



MARIANA PANTOJA

Kuntanawa people have participated in agroforestry activities of the Centro Yorenka Antame, coordinated by APIWXTA Association, in the city of Marechal Thaumaturgo



ELIZANILDE ALVES

The Kuntanawa people study their future territory during the cartography workshop, on October 2008, in Sete Estrelas village

New Social Cartography of the Amazon Project

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Aldeia Sete Estrelas*

Kuntanawa of the Upper Tejo River –
Sete Estrelas Village

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