



Dec 15, 2014

Dear Friends and Supporters of The Elders Project,

Greetings! We send our very best wishes to you this holiday season and for the coming year. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all of you, for your generous support of the Kogui, Wiwa and Arhuaco elders of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (SNSM), Colombia. Your continued participation is needed and greatly appreciated as our work continues.

2014 has been a very productive year for The Elders Project (TEP). We completed our 4th Black Line Journey in February and are planning a 5th journey to take place in February of 2015. These annual sacred pilgrimages have served to build a solid foundation for the unification of the Arhuaco, Wiwa and Kogui Mamos around the traditional practices that have defined these pueblos as caretakers of "The Heart of the World" for thousands of years.

When TEP was formed to assist the elders in 2009, there were only a few hundred indigenous people supporting the spiritual work of the Mamos. Today there are over 5,000 people in the pueblos helping with this work. As these numbers have increased, the appreciation for TEP has grown exponentially. The Elders and communities increasingly express their deep trust and gratitude for the value of our presence and support.

Given that the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta has been under siege from western incursion for some time now, it is crucial that the communities mount a strong unified spiritual defense of their homelands. Not doing so would in essence spell their extinction as original pueblos (in Colombian constitutional "legal" terms), and give the Colombian government and developers greater access to the vast array of riches within the SNSM. The fact that these pueblos have passively resisted the countless atrocities inflicted upon them over the past 500 years in order to protect and defend the rich expression of life of our Mother Earth, makes them most worthy of our support.

I thank you on behalf of the elders of "The Heart of The World" for your continued interest and financial support for this essential work. (Your donations to TEP are tax deductible)

Sincerely,

Rick Harlow
TEP Director

Make your check payable to: "The Elders Project" and send it to:
Earth Action, attn: The Elders Project,
P.O. Box 63,
Amherst, MA 01004

I could write pages of information about all the work TEP is involved in, but I thought you might rather like seeing some photos from the last Black Line Journey so I am including this mini album for your personal enjoyment. Feel free to share this PDF with friends and family.

These photos are the copyrighted property of the Arhuaco pueblo so please do not publish, or post any of these photos on line without permission. Thank you for your respect and understanding.



Arhuaco territory above Pueblo Bello, about 6000 feet above sea level.



The 2014 Black Line delegation walking along a beach in Santa Marta towards one of the sacred sites.



A road has been cut through the mountain at this sacred site. The Mamos say that this is like cutting a finger off of our mother. For these people, the entire Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is a living being.



Some of the sites on the Black line are only accessible by boat.



Collecting shells for offerings to be brought up to the glacial lakes near the snow capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada.



The mamos are always observing nature. They say one can read the natural world like a book.
"It is where our Law of Origin is written"



TEP team member Nora Diaz (2ed from left) talking with Arhuaco mamos after a long days work



Rick Harlow, Mamo Norberto Torres, and TEP team member Jesus Ortiz.



After the Black Line Journey all the gathered materials from the trip are brought back to Nabusimake where they are organized and blessed.



The materials are then ground into powder and wrapped in corn husks to be used as payments to be offered at various sacred sites within the Sierra Nevada.



Watching the video I shot during the Black Line Journey, on my laptop, under the stars.



Mamo Javier's Children and a puppy wrapped in a blanket



96 year old Mamo Norberto with his wife Francesca.

Known as the Spiritual Geographer of the Sierra Nevada, it was Mamo Norberto who had the vision to begin making these Black Line Journeys for the spiritual defense of their ancestral territory. He is most grateful to supporters of The Elders Project for funding these pilgrimages so he can pass on his knowledge of all the sacred sites and the materials used as offerings, to Arhuaco, Kogui and Wiwa mamos as well as to the younger generation of apprentice mamos. For Mamo Norberto this is his duty and legacy to the original pueblos of the Sierra Nevada for the cultural permanence of the caretakers of the Heart of the World.