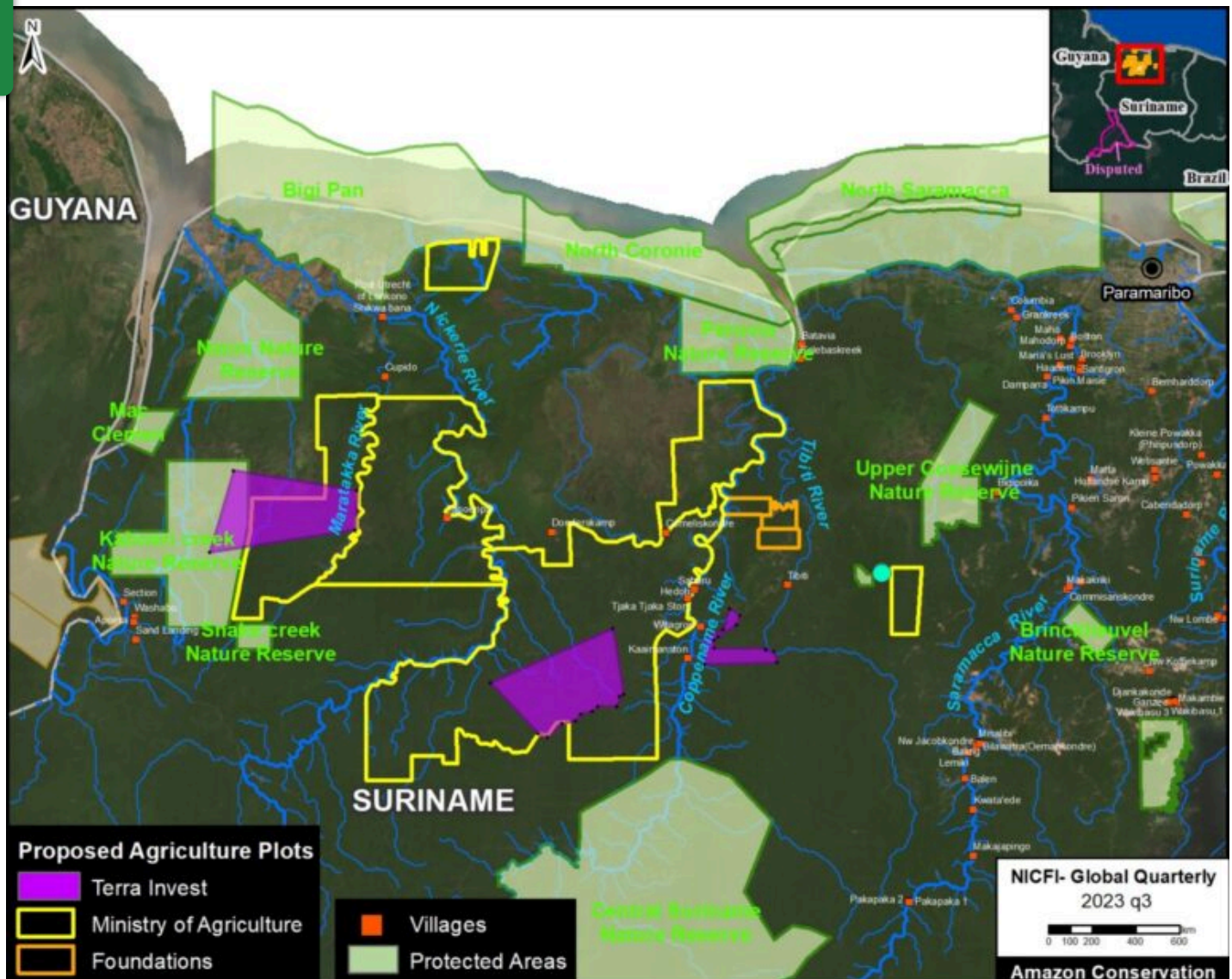


MAAP #206: Direct Link Emerges between Mennonites and Potential Large-scale Deforestation in Suriname

January 23, 2024

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In the recent **MAAP #203** (<https://www.maaprogram.org/maap-203-massive-planned-deforestation-in-amazon-of-suriname/>), we reported that the government of Suriname is planning to clear 1.1 million hectares of primary forest for agriculture.

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1,100,000 hectares (1.1 million acres) of primary forest were threatened in the proposed agricultural plots.

Intertwined with this issue are additional reports indicating that groups of **Mennonites** are in the process of relocating to Suriname from Bolivia. This raised alarms given the extensive large-scale agriculture deforestation caused by Mennonites in the Amazon regions of both Peru (<https://www.maaprogram.org/2023/mennonites-peru/>) and Bolivia (<https://www.maaprogram.org/2023/soy-mennonites-bolivia-amazon/>).

Here we report the **first evidence directly linking the Mennonites with potential large-scale deforestation in Suriname**.

As background, the agricultural real estate company **Terra Invest** is responsible for all aspects of the project to bring select Mennonites families to Suriname from Bolivia¹. As detailed in the Bolivian news outlet Nomadas (<https://www.revistanomadas.com/bolivian-mennonites-bring-the-hell-of-deforestation-to-suriname/>), the Suriname government would grant the agriculture land to Terra Invest, who would then transfer the land to **societies formed by Mennonites in Suriname**.

Newly **leaked government documents**, from Suriname's Ministry of Land and Forest Management dated to February 2023, provide the first available spatial data on the location of proposed lands to Terra Invest.

These lands are broken down into three separate areas, totaling 78,775 hectares.

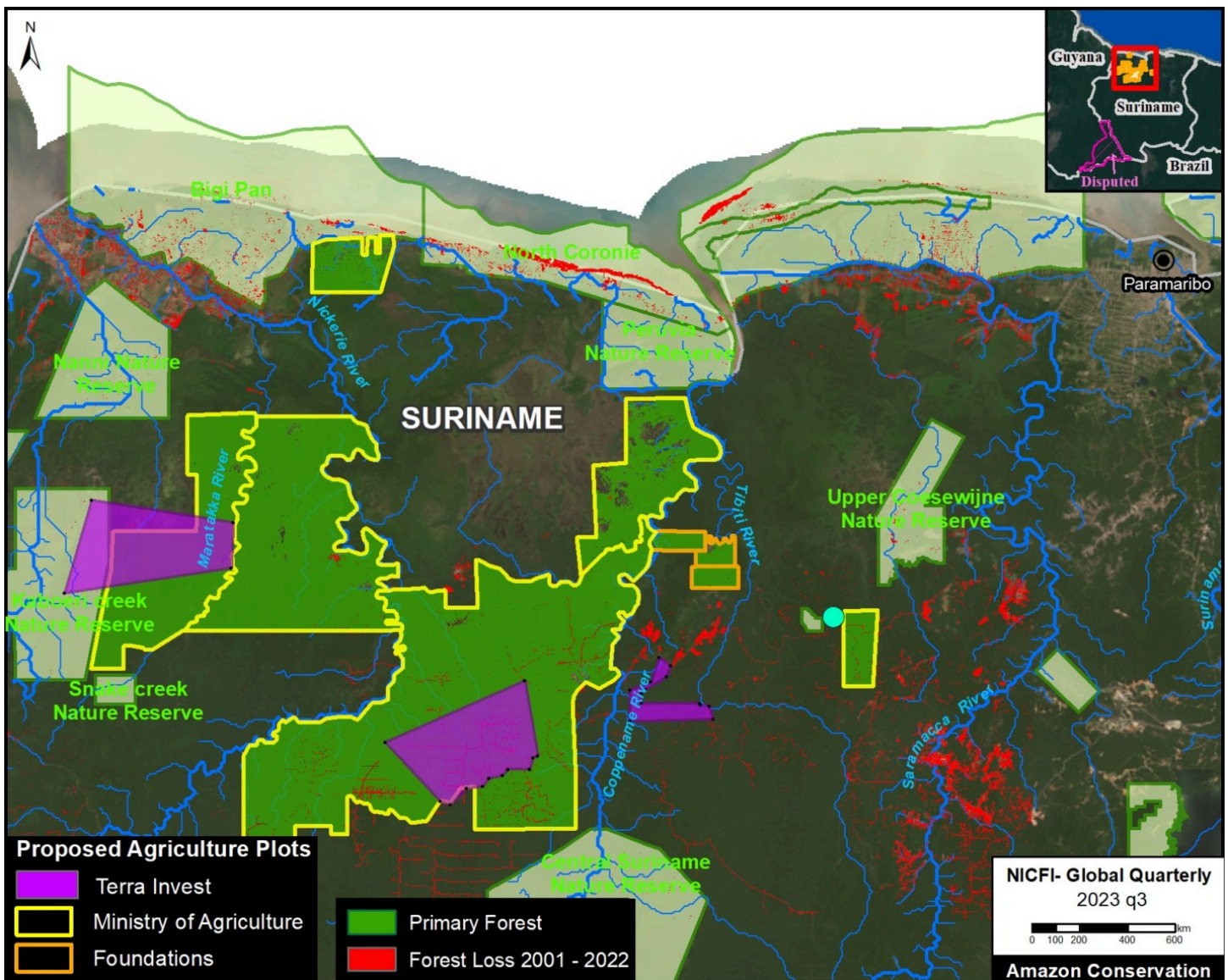
The **Base Map** shows these Terra Invest request areas (purple) in relation to the previously published information on proposed agricultural plots to the Ministry of Agriculture and Foundations backed by private land developers.

Potential Primary Forest Loss

We performed an additional analysis looking at how much primary forest is contained and threatened in these proposed agriculture plots to Terra Invest. This analysis was based on data from the University of Maryland and Global Forest Watch.

In **Figure 2**, we show that the proposed Terra Invest plots threaten **76,932 hectares of primary forest**. Note that 8,991 hectares of primary forest overlaps with **Kaboeri Creek Nature Preserve**.

We also that of the above total, 22,675 hectares of primary forest are in addition to what was previously calculated for the Ministry of Agriculture lands. Thus, we now estimate that **473,675 of primary forest** are threatened across all three types of proposed agriculture plots (Terra Invest, Ministry of Agriculture, and Foundations).



(<http://www.maaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/maaproject.org-maap-206-direct-link-emerges-between-mennonites-and-potential-large-scale-deforestation-in-suriname-BaseMap-Menonitas-Surinam-PF-v10.jpg>)

Notes

1. Bolivian mennonites bring the «hell» of deforestation to Suriname
(<https://www.revistanomadas.com/bolivian-mennonites-bring-the-hell-of-deforestation-to-suriname/>)

Citation

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