**Wapishana Proposed Customary Resource Management of the Rupununi**

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The Wapishana peoples of the Rupununi (Guyana) have been working towards an autonomous response to environmental concerns arising in the southern savannahs through an exploratory biodiversity research project, a self-initiated cultural mapping project, and most recently through the publication of an outline customary natural resource management plan. These projects were designed to complement one another, and to present the Wapishana with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities to collaborate across the seventeen villages, involving leaders, culture specialists, and researchers, as well as the broader communities in deciding governance strategies for the ongoing care of their territories. Using culturally appropriate methodologies and being sensitive to Wapishana cultural practices has allowed these projects to reflect accurately the needs and ambitions of the Wapishana peoples, producing detailed documents regarding the current and future development and conservation of their lands. However, the challenge of the Wapishana people is to move their projects forward and convince the Government of Guyana to recognize both the value of Indigenous knowledge and the importance of listening to Indigenous voices from the Rupununi, a challenge exacerbated by a historically toxic relationship between the parties. This paper will highlight the positive contributions the Wapishana approach can offer conservation efforts, in particular discussing the importance of developing genuine relationships with communities, specifically partnerships that move beyond ‘consultation’ to collaborative engagement through shared research proposals and project development, and discuss how the Wapishana might ‘scale-up’ these techniques to foster more productive relationships with the national government.