



ROAD TRIP

Toxic Tour of Ecuador | 2009

Over three decades of oil drilling in the Ecuadorean Amazon, Chevron dumped more than 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater into the rainforest, leaving local people suffering a wave of cancers, miscarriages, and birth defects. Now with the support of an international campaign for justice, the communities affected by Chevron's negligence are holding one of the world's largest oil companies to account.

Here are some of my photos from 2 trips to ride on the Toxi-tour bus with friends and the staff of Amazon Watch. Some of the photos got enhanced by this artist to more accurately convey the forces swirling around the struggle for the rights of ecosystems and the collective rights of Ecuador's Indigenous peoples versus those who would exploit them

Christy Rupp | 2009

Cover Photo: I wonder why this tree died?





Oil requires huge quantities of water which becomes toxic waste. Texaco chose to leave the waste in shallow pools which they hoped would fill up with leaves and disappear.



Indigenous communities have been driven away from their homelands by pollution and the clearing of forests. Burgeoning oil towns have sprung up on the edges of jungle oil blocks.





Cattle share the river with a vast infrastructure of pipelines.



The Rio Napo is part of a giant floodplain which nurtures a complex riparian structure of life. In the course of regular flooding, waste and residue are broadcast to settle into river and soil strata.



For the purposes of selling drilling rights, Eastern Ecuador is divided into oil blocks. Ironic Cartesian rectangles ignore the interdependence of living organisms.

Innumerable populations of insects and birds are incinerated when drawn to methane flares burning day and night, thus countless living creatures are removed from the cycle of pollination crucial for the maintenance of diversity.



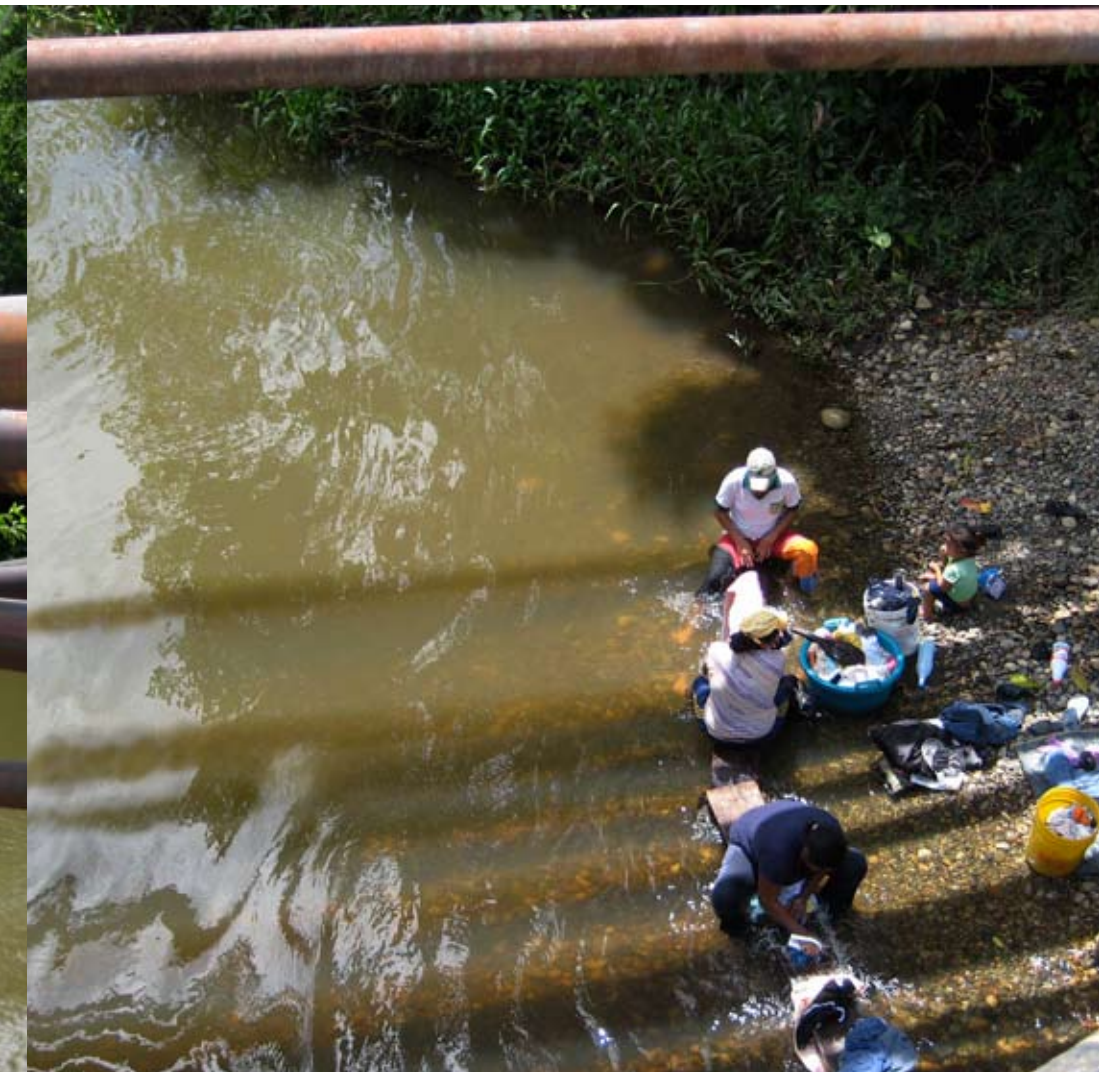
This used to be rainforest



Everywhere in the region pipes are close to the surface, like exposed veins. People drive over them in the driveway, dry their laundry on them, use them for seating.



To keep costs to a bare minimum, Chevron/Texaco admits that it systematically dumped into the Amazon waterways, 18 billion gallons of toxic waste in an area which is home to 6 indigenous peoples groups.



By running away from the true cost of cleanup, Chevron/Texaco acknowledges that injury caused by oil exploration to the rainforest and it's inhabitants is irreversible.



In the later 1970's, the early days of rainforest drilling, oil residue was sprayed on dirt roads where residents walk, farm, and live. People were told it was healthy.

For indigenous peoples, there is no separation between human communities and the natural world environment, they are interdependently linked.





Fictitious hotel for drillers



Cocoons from a butterfly farm, a sustainable export product from the rainforest. We slumber in a cocoon of denial



Reinjection wells As a way to make waste disappear from view, it is standard practice to reinject dirty formation waters back into the ground. Often a faulty and cheap process of filtering, this results in a toxic time bomb ticking deeply below one of the planet's most delicate and diverse ecosystems.

The Amazon basin bypassed by the great glaciers offered refuge to diverse populations of wildlife, but today shares the forest with billions of barrels of crude petroleum, an easy reach through fragile soil.



Road Trip by Christy Rupp
Thanks to Amazon Watch
Learn more at [Amazonwatch.org](https://amazonwatch.org)