

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

This case study is based on one of over 60 participatory assessments carried out with communities in 22 countries through the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI).

Lack of rights undermines Udege Indigenous Peoples' crucial work as Taiga ecosystem protectors

Government agencies need to recognise, respect and support indigenous conservation practices and the traditional knowledge that underpins them

Organisations and individuals involved

Friends of the Siberian Forests

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Local Udege activists in Primorsky region of Russia (Raisa Andreitseva, Nadezhda Seliuk, Valentina Gabova, Irina Kanchuga)

Global Forest Coalition
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Location

Ussuri taiga temperate forest in the Sikhote-Alin mountains between the Sea of Japan to the east and the Chinese border to the west, in the Russian Far East.



THE TEMPERATE FORESTS inhabited by the Udege Indigenous People contain the highest biodiversity in boreal Asia including the flagship Siberian tiger and other rare and endemic species of fauna and flora. The Udege have become an essential part of the entire forest ecosystem over the centuries and are an important link in the forest food chain. Wild meat and fish play a key role in Udege diets, which has been found to be environmentally sustainable. Dependence on the forest, fish and wildlife remains at the core of their livelihood.

However, the Udege's traditional territories are facing escalating and destructive resource use due to the rapid expansion of external logging, hunting, salmon fishing and mining operations. They are losing their struggle to control and conserve the resources that sustain their livelihoods, in large part due to an absence of recognised land rights. The overexploitation of fish and wildlife resources by poachers, especially the over-harvesting of salmon stocks by commercial fishing fleets, has also led to a serious decline in salmon resources.

Russian law formally recognises the existence of indigenous

territories and grants special hunting and fishing rights. However, there is a serious discrepancy between formal rights and law enforcement and management in practice, leading to deep conflicts around indigenous priorities. Regulations regarding indigenous privileges are overly complicated, unclear, and often changed without informing the communities.

Government authorities often react by limiting hunting and fishing opportunities for the Udege, who already lack natural resources. Social and political marginalisation and a lack of understanding of regulations trigger frequent conflicts between communities and government inspectors. Compounding this, the Udege are also facing the loss of their traditional knowledge, language and customary practices as women and youth move to urban areas.

There is an immediate need to create indigenous councils in order to develop regional regulations with indigenous participation. This would provide prioritised access to resources, and prevent overexploitation of salmon stocks and illegal logging.

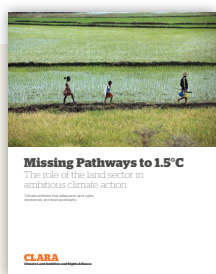
Testimony

Nadezha Selyuk, Vice Chair of the Primorye Association of Indigenous Peoples

“Russian law formally acknowledges the existence of indigenous territories, but in practice no specific territory has been recognised. Indigenous Peoples live there, can hunt and fish, but they have no tenure at all. Our experience collaborating with national parks authorities caused low trust in that model of conservation, until our rights to take part in territorial management are legally granted. There should also be an indigenous fund for protection of traditional knowledge and culture with an indigenous council under a federal programme.”

‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

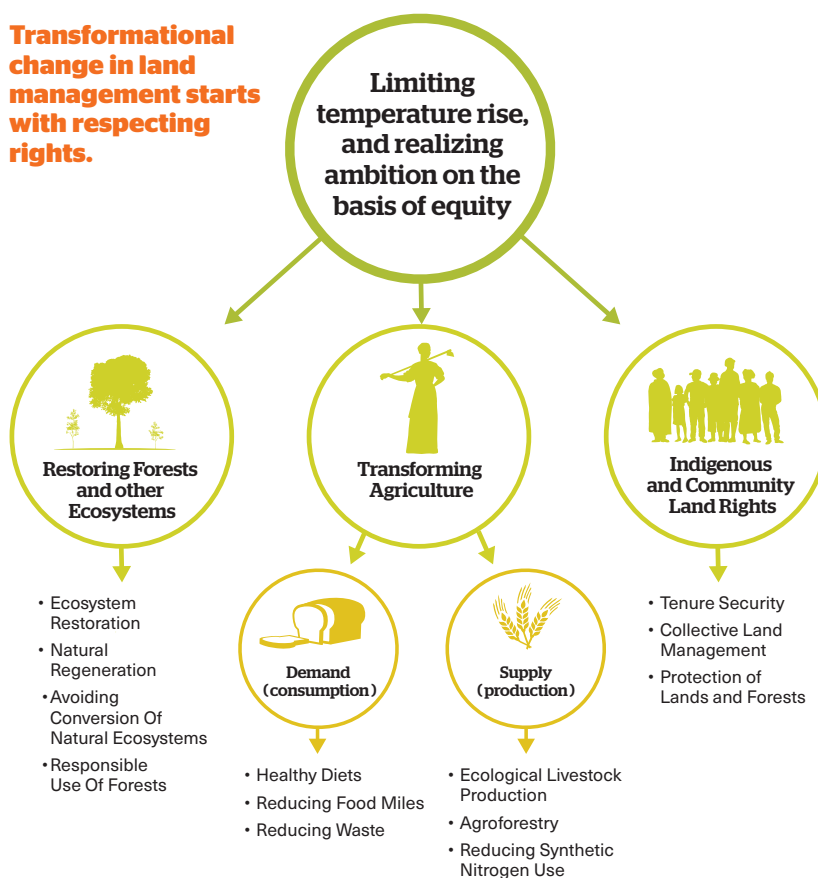
Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



The climate actions that are needed to support the efforts of this community are...

a right to self-governance and clear rights of tenure for Udege communities, such that they can participate in decision-making processes and implement policy and legislative changes that prioritise ecosystem-based solutions that are centred on rights, food sovereignty and the preservation of traditional knowledge. Government agencies must also take steps to limit the pressures placed on and overexploitation of forest ecosystems. Similar conclusions to this CCRI assessment were drawn in the Missing Pathways report.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



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