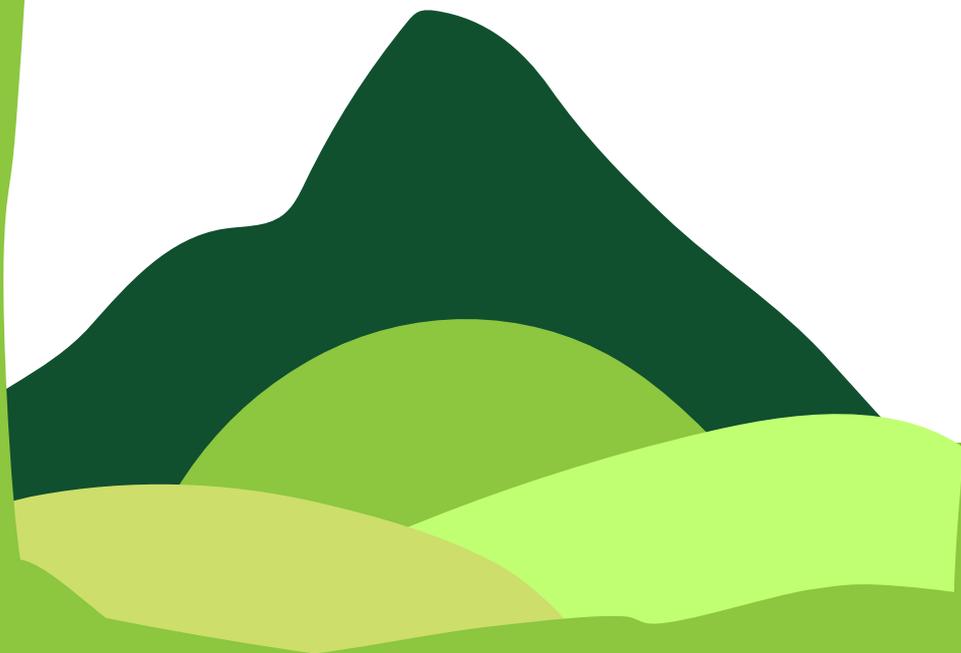


climate rights charter

# TERRA RONCA



# CHARTER CREDITS

## **Charter Credits**

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**Support:** *Parque Estadual de Terra Ronca, Reserva Extrativista de Recanto das Araras de Terra Ronca/ICMBio, Mulheres da Sociobiodiversidade, Coletivo de Mulheres do São João*, and *Pousada Sertão Veredas*

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# TERRA RONCA

## *“CERRADO IS OUR SOURCE OF LIFE”*

The Cerrado is the second largest biome in South America. Over the last 15 years, residents of the Terra Ronca region have seen this native vegetation burned and destroyed by the advance of the agricultural frontier, as well as predatory hunting and fishing. A symbol of what is most precious about the Cerrado, its historical appearance and diversity of fauna and flora, the Terra Ronca region, located in the municipalities of São Domingos and Guarani de Goiás, has seen its landscape modified. With resilience and collective actions, residents of the surrounding areas of the villages of São João Evangelista, Formiga, the Recanto das Araras de Terra Ronca Extractive Reserve, and small farms and ranches are coming together in community brigades and other popular strategies to confront the lack of monitoring by the government combined with the expansion of agribusiness. It is already known that the expansion of agricultural activities in the Cerrado is one of the main causes of the loss of 50% of the native vegetation in the Cerrado, on which different traditional peoples depend. Currently, the Cerrado, despite being the most biodiverse savanna in the world, is still seen as an agricultural frontier to be deforested for commercial agricultural purposes (ABRAMOVAY, 2010; Casari & Domiciano, 2016).





One of the biomes with the most history, archaeological sites reveal that the Cerrado is the land of several Indigenous peoples, including the *Xakriabás*, the *Xavantes*, the *Avá-canoeiros*, the *Caiapós*, the *Xerentes* and the *Crixás* (or *Quirixás*) and several other peoples.

These practices of peaceful coexistence between nature and community were erased with the colonization and commercialization of fauna and flora, impacted by agribusiness, and also by mining. The territory of Terra Ronca is located in the northeast of Goiás, a region that has historically suffered less economic pressure on its areas of native vegetation, due to its rugged landscape, less fertile soil and isolation from large urban centers, in recent years it has been rapidly dominated by livestock farming, despite its natural wealth and potential. Its landscape of native vegetation has been replaced by pastures and more intensive agriculture in the area surrounding Terra Ronca State Park and even in some areas inside it. The impacts are diverse.

Illegal burning to create pastures has been destroying vegetation and has led to health problems for the community. The decrease in air quality, resulting from human activities, such as extreme heat and pollution, causes discomfort and respiratory diseases. Pesticides are another issue that has a double impact on both the biome and the villages. Due to water contamination, which affects the quality of the region's water resources, as well as the presence of fish, residents report an increase in the number of people with cancer in São Domingos. The communities reported that in 2021, 16 cities in the Northeast of Goiás experienced a climate disaster. In addition, the following year, there were also records of animal deaths during a prolonged period of drought.

On the other side of this story are the traditional peoples, the Cerrado peoples who sought, like the original peoples, a relationship with nature. To ensure their subsistence, they resorted to native fruits - such as *baru*, *pequi*, *buriti*, coconut, *catulé* and *cajuzinho-do-cerrado* - and roots, medicinal herbs, firewood, hunting, fishing and free-range cattle raising. The residents maintain their production aimed at self-consumption by family members and selling the surplus. These are the leaders who systematized their knowledge to plan, in a popular and collective way, a new possibility for the future of Cerrado.



# URGENT AXES:

**01. CERRADO CONSERVATION (FAUNA AND FLORA)**

**02. FIRE FIGHTING**

**03. RIGHT TO WATER**





Data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) indicate that in less than a year, Cerrado has lost 3,798 km<sup>2</sup> of native vegetation, between August 2023 and February of this year. In total, 49% of the native vegetation has been destroyed, equivalent to 110 million hectares of the biome. In addition to the loss of the Cerrado's characteristic flora, residents denounce the hunting and farming culture practiced in the surroundings of the park and preservation areas that contribute to the disappearance of animals. According to the people of the region, predatory fishing and hunting and monoculture that encourages desertification in the region are some of the biggest current challenges.

***“Terra Ronca is the community. You can only preserve what you love and you can only love what you know. The Cerrado will only be preserved in Terra Ronca with the population as protagonists!”***

## **01. Environmental Protection**

It is necessary to ensure equity in the protection of the Cerrado. Residents have already pointed out some important issues that should be covered by this legal protection: the limitation of cattle in the Veredas, monitoring of environmental crimes and the prohibition of the sale of slingshots, dragnets and fireworks to curb the current hunting culture. In addition, it is necessary to encourage and value local knowledge as a basis for the creation of public measures and policies for social and environmental protection.

## **02. Social and Bio-Economy**

We need to preserve what we still have to guarantee a future, while also promoting the sustainable way of life of Cerrado's peoples. Women from the region have started a collective that promotes local biodiversity products called *Mulheres da Sociobiodiversidade*, which needs to be strengthened. In addition, ensuring the stimulation and promotion of small industries focused on local fruits, such as *baru* and *buriti*, is to strengthen the culture of Cerrado while preserving its greatest wealth: its people and its fruits.

# CERRADO CONSERVATION (FAUNA AND FLORA)

## 03. Community-based tourism and environmental education

Another green strategy to ensure protection and income for local residents is through initiatives like these. Ecotourism can generate income for the local population while maintaining sustainable use of the region's natural and cultural heritage.

To ensure that this initiative works, it is necessary to train and educate the leaders of this sustainable tourism network, especially people from the region itself. These actors, who carry local knowledge, need to have access and a role in park management decisions. This is a priority set by the entire community. And to align these trainings with reality, it is necessary to create a research and analysis center for science aimed at the community, which will produce information that will be useful not only for the guides but for the entire population. With this center, it is possible to engage and increase the discussion of environmental education in schools, for example.





***“Community Fire Brigade is the true meaning of courage, determination, and attitude. A demonstration of love for Cerrado”***

Arson attacks are another historic challenge faced by the region. Terra Ronca State Park is one of the areas affected by fires that, according to residents, are common and last between 5 and 9 days on average. According to data from Map Biomas' Fire Monitor, there was a 152% increase in the number of fires in the entire Cerrado biome in the first two months of 2024 alone, affecting an area of 61,000 hectares. The number of fires recorded in the Cerrado is the highest since 1999. Residents report that the main motivations for these fires are the creation of pastures for cattle. Faced with this scenario, a group of volunteers are working in the opposite direction, putting out concrete and symbolic fires, which have affected the biome and the population, whose income and health are now extremely affected.

**People set fire to make pasture for cattle. Firefighters today have to decide between their income and fighting fires.**



## **01. Incentive for the Community Brigade**

Residents report that the brigade, a social technology created by the people themselves, now has to decide between fighting fires and finding sources of income. It is necessary to formalize and value this palliative work that has saved and mitigated the effects of fires. Therefore, it is necessary to finance this work, with the remuneration of the people involved and with the necessary equipment. One way to do this would be a monthly contribution from the city government, from the *ICMS Ecológico* and PSA (in the case of the municipality of Guarani de Goiás) to the Brigade fund, so this resource could cover the food and expenses of the brigade members while fighting the fires.

## **02. Education on prescribed and controlled burning**

Illegal fires degrade the Cerrado biome and disrupt natural processes. Residents emphasize that the expected policy does not need to be a "Zero Fire" policy, but rather a space for respecting fire as a natural process of the biome. To achieve this, it is necessary to monitor and track these fires and listen to those who already know and understand the biome: the people of the Cerrado. This educational process of expanding the topic of prescribed burning will contribute to maintaining the balance of the ecosystem for the local population, in addition to producing more specific studies on how the territory reacts to prescribed burning aimed at preserving the biome. Furthermore, it is important that this training also happens in schools.

## **03. Hiring more firefighters**

Fighting fires is a collective effort, and public agencies responsible for preserving the environment need to encourage and bring together more and more people to address this problem. For this reason, SEMAD, ICMBio and local governments need to hire and train more firefighters.

# FIRE FIGHTING

Fires are also a challenge in other biomes, which, unlike the Cerrado, have seen a decrease in occurrence rates in recent years. Therefore, an important step to enhance this work is to establish exchanges with other conservation units for mutual exchange and learning.



***“We demand the right to clean water. Essential for maintaining life and biodiversity in Terra Ronca”***

Of the shortages and dangers that the Cerrado population wants to protect, water is another vital asset at risk. Climate change and local changes caused by the phenomena described above have made access to water a challenge in itself. Changes in rainfall cycles lead to the extinction of fish, contamination and loss of river volume, as well as greater difficulty in accessing water, which is a warning of emergencies in the Cerrado that affect local water and food security. Residents denounce how predatory tourism and agribusiness have contributed to a change in the color of the water and the fish that ends up on the plate.

## **01. Accountability, payment and monitoring**

Despite being the least responsible, the Cerrado population is the most affected by the effects on water quality in the region. It is necessary to name and demand changes, and to do so, the first step is to hold agribusiness, the actors in water contamination, accountable. A process of reparation and mitigation (not only of the effects on nature but also of the direct impacts on the population) depends on a federative integration between the states of Bahia and Goiás. This dialogue is also essential for the discussion on key issues, such as the licensing of super wells on farms, to move forward. It is necessary for governments to charge those who profit from these impacts. Companies and farms must make payments to city governments for the use of natural resources. In addition to financial charges, it is crucial that municipalities, together with the responsible agencies, inspect and monitor new construction projects. In order to preserve what we still have, it is necessary to constantly monitor construction projects in the surrounding area to ensure the preservation of riparian forests and other areas of permanent preservation and to ensure that the material used in the construction projects does not come from deforestation.

## **02. Popular Water Governance:**

Water is a vital and collective common good. The people who feel the absence of this right most in the Cerrado today are the population, ordinary people who, in addition to not profiting from the changes that have occurred, still want and seek collective ways to contribute to a change in the course that has been given to water. That is why they are calling for the implementation of a Water Management Committee that will take care of this resource in a civic manner. Contamination and changes also need to be studied so that adaptation and mitigation strategies can be planned. That is why it is necessary to encourage more research to learn about water quality in order to monitor what is happening and indicate the next most strategic steps. These are medium and long-term measures that, in order to be consolidated, require emergency actions today, such as ensuring that water trucks are permanently and constantly in the village.

## **03. Protection of Springs**

The first step towards conservation and transformation is the recovery of the springs that give life and form to the Cerrado as a whole: the biome, the fauna, flora and people. It is also necessary to make the creation of new Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPN) attractive. These are private conservation units in which the owner voluntarily contributes to the conservation of the biological diversity of their land. This tool is strategic for the Cerrado due to local peculiarities, but it needs to receive greater government incentives.

# ABOUT THE CLIMATE RIGHTS CHARTERS PROJECT

The Climate Rights Charters are tools that enable the mobilization and engagement of territories in meeting traditional knowledge with climate science to present to society the priority demands of their communities for climate adaptation and mitigation measures. The residents determine these measures through the exchange of experiences and identification of the impacts already felt and in the pursuit of defending their rights and climate justice.

The Charter becomes an instrument for residents to become protagonists in leveraging solutions and occupying strategic speaking and decision-making spaces.

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Join us on this journey towards climate justice! Whether you are an expert on the subject or someone who has just started to be interested in climate, your contribution is valuable. Together, we can make a real impact and advocate for a greener, healthier world.

If you can help with any measures the territory demands, message [brasil@climatereality.com](mailto:brasil@climatereality.com) and we'll get back to you!

**The future is in our hands.**

# NOTES



# CLIMATE RIGHTS CHARTER



Get to know the other charters!

## REALIZATION:



The Climate  
Reality Project®  
BRASIL



## SUPPORT:



CENTRO  
BRASIL  
NO CLIMA



**CFLI/FCIL**  
Fundo Canadá para  
Iniciativas Locais



*Cultivar mulheres da*  
SOCIOBIODIVERSIDADE



**PETER**  
Parque Estadual  
de Terra Ronca



RESERVA EXTRATIVISTA  
DO SERTÃOZINHO DE  
TERRA RONCA  
ICMBIO-MMA



**ICMBio**  
INSTITUTO CHICO MENDES  
MMA



POUSADA  
**SERTÃO VEREDAS**



*Mulheres de São João*  
Guardãs dos saberes tradicionais



[www.climaterealityproject.org.br](http://www.climaterealityproject.org.br)