

The Goldman Sachs Guy Now Investing in the Amazon

Like [Tate Williams](#)

The wealthy alumni of Goldman Sachs have gone on to many prominent positions, such as governor, U.S. Treasury Secretary, and high-ranking executive in other investment firms. Then there's Larry Linden, who devotes his experience, money and cachet to protecting rainforests. He most recently helped broker a deal that secured \$215 million from several sources to protect the Brazilian Amazon.

Since retiring from Goldman Sachs, Linden founded the Linden Trust for Conservation, which provides funds and strategic support for conservation efforts using market-based strategies. He recently played a big role in the creation of a [new fund](#) operated by the World Wildlife Fund that will support the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA), conserving a 150 million-acre chunk of rainforest that will eventually be handed over entirely to the Brazilian government.

Linden's involvement in a big play by WWF is not so surprising since he sits on the organization's board and is a major donor: In 2012, he gave WWF nearly a million dollars, according his foundation's [990](#). The WWF cited Linden as a driver of the unusual approach they took to establish the huge purse, forgoing gradual fundraising for a Wall Street-style "closing" strategy that asked supporters to pour in all their backing at one time. The massive financing plan has support from regional government, banks, investors, and foundations like Cargill and Moore.

While he's a mechanical engineer by training and an investor by trade, this kind of thing is not new for Linden. He served as managing director and general partner for the notorious investment titan (and SEC target) Goldman Sachs, before retiring, with excellent timing, in 2008.

But in his time at the investment firm, Linden was involved in the protection of 680,000 acres of land in Tierra del Fuego, which Goldman Sachs acquired more or less by accident in a bankruptcy settlement in 2003. As he told the [Sydney Morning Herald](#), which described him as "more like an inveterate backpacker than a suit and tie banker":

Goldman Sachs is an investment bank, so we know what to do with shopping malls and apartment complexes. But an ecosystem down in Tierra del Fuego? So we called in the Nature Conservancy to study the land and they came back with the conclusion that it was actually a very valuable piece of land from an environmental point of view.

Today, the land is the [Karukinka nature reserve](#).

Post-retirement, Linden continued using his financial savvy in conservation efforts through the Linden Trust, which has a mission "to help stabilize Earth's biodiversity and ecological processes for the benefit of humanity, by raising the quantity and improving the effectiveness of financial resources, public and private, brought to bear."

The trust provides grants to organizations, primarily the WWF and [Resources for the Future](#). Linden has served as a trustee and chair for both. But the more intriguing work of the trust is its Environmental Markets and Conservation Finance programs, which use market-based tools to finance huge conservation efforts such as ARPA.

Let's just hope those market-based tools don't get *too* creative.

Learn more about the Linden Trust [here](#), and ARPA [here](#).