Name _____ Date _____

To Build or Not To Build? Three Construction Scenarios in the Amazon

Read through your assigned scenario and complete Part 2. Scenario Research on the worksheet Exploring the Amazon Rain Forest.

Case Scenario 1: Constructing the Belo Monte Dam
Location: Xingu River, Brazil

Demand for energy is on the rise in Brazil. The country is responding to this demand by building more dams along its largest rivers, including the Amazon River. Brazil, which already has over 2,000 dams in operation, expects to build 20 new dams by 2022. One of those proposed dams is the Belo Monte Dam, which would be located along the Xingu River in the state of Para. Once constructed, this dam would be the third largest in the world. However, environmentalists and activists have criticized the project. They believe that the impact on wildlife and indigenous populations will be too great. Hydroelectric energy is important to the communities in the area. But the consequences of constructing a dam are many. Do you believe the dam should be constructed?

For Further Research:

- Amid Brazil's Rush to Develop, Workers Resist: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/world/americas/brazils-rush-to-develop-hydroelectric-power-brings-unrest.html?pagewanted=all&_moc.semityn.www&_r=0
- Work to resume on Brazil's Belo Monte dam: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19404740
- Belo Monte, Brazil: The tribes living in the shadow of a megadam: http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/16/belo-monte-brazil-tribes-living-in-shadow-megadam

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Case Scenario 2: Constructing the Pucallpa-Cruzeiro do Sul Road
Location: Pucallpa, Peru and Cruzeiro do Sul, Brazil

In South America, there is increasing demand for connecting rural, isolated communities through new transportation, energy, and telecommunications projects. One proposal includes the construction of several highways throughout the continent, five of them within the western Amazon Basin. The Pucallpa-Cruzeiro do Sul road is one such proposed highway. Supporters of the Pucallpa-Cruzeiro do Sul road say international demand for Amazonian resources could help develop the rural economies that are scattered throughout the Basin. Conservationists are concerned that the road will devastate an already-weakened Amazonian ecosystem, as road access is highly correlated with deforestation. Critics argue that the construction of a road along the Brazil-Peru corridor will provide easier access for loggers to valuable canopy trees and to ranchers to clear land for cattle grazing. In addition to the detrimental effects on the ecosystem, indigenous communities will be affected by disease, land theft, and probable relocation. The flora and fauna and the indigenous populations could be affected by the construction of the road. Do you believe the road should be constructed?

For Further Research:

- Infographic right at the Peru-Brazil border: http://www.amazonia-andina.org/sites/default/files/images/2014/01/infografia-purus-manu_en.jpg
- Conservationists Fight Proposed Amazon Road: http://www.worldwatch.org/node/6304

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To Build or Not To Build? Three Construction Scenarios in the Amazon, continued

Case Scenario 3: Constructing the S11D Iron Ore Mine
Location: Carajas National Forest, Brazil

Iron ore from Brazil is some of the purest in the world. Around the world, most iron ore is used to make steel, which is commonly used in construction. To extract iron ore, it must be mined. Currently, the largest iron ore mine in the world is in the state of Para, Brazil, on the southeast corner of the Amazon rain forest. There is a proposal to build another mine, the S11D mine, 30 miles south of this first mine. It is set to open in late 2016 and will produce nearly 100 million tons of iron ore per year. Environmentalists are concerned that the construction of the mine will damage the rare savannah ecosystem, particularly the unique plant and animal life around two lakes on top of rich iron ore deposits in the Carajas National Forest. There are also several caves in the area that potentially contain evidence of ancient Amazon habitations. These caves could also be damaged in the mine construction and development of the area around the mine. Forests must be cleared for mine development, diggers and explosions will be commonplace, and humans will start to settle in the area as jobs are created at the mine. The flora and the fauna and the indigenous populations could be affected by the construction of the S11D mine. Do you believe that the mine should be constructed?

For Further Research:

- Another Huge and Open Iron Mine is Carved out of Brazil's Rain Forest (article and video): http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/another-huge-and-open-iron-mine-is-carved-out-of-brazils-rain-forest/2015/04/13/cc1ce49a-cd75-11e4-8730-4f473416e759_story.html

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